

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

ACFC/SR/IV(2017)004

**Fourth Report submitted by Lithuania pursuant to Article 25,
paragraph 2 of the Framework Convention for the Protection of
National Minorities - received on 23 February 2017**

**THE FOURTH REPORT
ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE COUNCIL OF
EUROPE FRAMEWORK CONVENTION FOR THE
PROTECTION OF NATIONAL MINORITIES
IN THE REPUBLIC OF LITHUANIA
SUBJECT TO ARTICLE 25 OF THE CONVENTION**

2016

TABLE OF CONTENTS:

▶	I. Introduction.....	3
▶	II. Report by Individual Article	
1.	Article 1.....	4
2.	Article 2.....	5
3.	Article 3.....	5
4.	Article 4.....	9
5.	Article 5.....	23
6.	Article 6.....	37
7.	Article 7.....	47
8.	Article 8.....	49
9.	Article 9.....	51
10.	Article 10.....	56
11.	Article 11.....	58
12.	Article 12.....	60
13.	Article 13.....	69
14.	Article 14.....	73
15.	Article 15.....	76
16.	Article 16.....	81
17.	Article 17.....	81
18.	Article 18.....	83

Introduction

The Fourth Report on the Implementation of the Council of Europe Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities in the Republic of Lithuania subject to Article 25 has been prepared by the Department of National Minorities under the Government of the Republic of Lithuania jointly with the Ministry of Education and Science, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Social Security and Labour, the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Culture, the Office of Equal Opportunities Ombudsperson, the Office of the Inspector of Journalist Ethics and municipalities. The Report covers the period between Q2 2011 and Q2 2016. The draft Report was made available to non-governmental organisations of national minorities and other non-governmental organisations, which were asked to provide their comments and recommendations.

II. Report by Individual Article

ARTICLE 1

The protection of national minorities and of the rights and freedoms of persons belonging to those minorities forms an integral part of the international protection of human rights, and as such falls within the scope of international co-operation.

The Republic of Lithuania continued to work together with international organisations active in the field of human rights protection, such as the United Nations, the European Union, the Council of Europe (including the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance) and the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe.

Reports under the following human rights treaties of the United Nations and the Council of Europe ratified by the Republic of Lithuania were submitted in 2011-2016:

1. International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights;
2. International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination;
3. United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women;
4. Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment;
5. Convention on the Rights of the Child;
6. European Social Charter.

The progress in implementing human rights treaties has been favourably assessed by human rights treaties' supervisory authorities, and expert recommendations have been received.

On 2 November 2016, the Second Report on Human Rights Situation in the Republic of Lithuania in 2012-2016 presented by the Republic of Lithuania was reviewed at the Universal Periodic Review session of the United Nations Human Rights Council.

The Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania ratified the following international treaties in 2011-2016:

1. Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness (ratified on 9 May 2013);
2. International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance (ratified on 23 April 2013);
3. Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (ratified on 3 December 2013);
4. Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse (ratified on 6 November 2012);
5. Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (ratified on 21 June 2012);
6. Protocol No 15 amending the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (ratified on 11 June 2015);
7. Protocol No 16 to the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (ratified on 11 June 2015).

The Republic of Lithuania was the first Baltic State to preside over the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe in 2011 and to hold the presidency of the Council of the European Union in 2013. The Council recommendation on effective Roma integration measures in the Member States was adopted during the Lithuanian presidency of the Council of the European Union in 2013.

ARTICLE 2

The provisions of this framework Convention shall be applied in good faith, in a spirit of understanding and tolerance and in conformity with the principles of good neighbourliness, friendly relations and co-operation between States.

To ensure efficient protection of the rights of national minorities, the Republic of Lithuania follows the principles of good neighbourliness, friendly relations and cooperation between States in the spirit of mutual understanding and tolerance and implements its international commitments in good faith.

The Republic of Lithuania cooperates with Poland, Russia, Belarus, Ukraine and Hungary in the implementation of bilateral treaties on friendly relations and good-neighbourly cooperation.

To date, Lithuania has signed about 50 bilateral cultural cooperation agreements and inter-departmental agreements on culture and art .

Two international documents were signed in 2001-2015, which identified the cultural and religious inclusion of persons belonging to national minorities as one of the areas for cooperation, viz. the Programme of Educational, Scientific, Cultural, Youth and Sports Cooperation between the Government of the Republic of Lithuania and the Government of the State of Israel for the Years 2012-2014, which was signed in 2012, and the Programme of Cooperation between the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Lithuania and the Ministry of Culture of Ukraine for 2016-2020, which was signed in 2016.

Moreover, the Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Lithuania and the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan on Cooperation in the Fields of Education, Science and Culture was signed in 2013, the Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Lithuania and the Government of the Republic of Armenia on Cooperation in the Field of Culture and the Programme of Cultural Cooperation between the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Lithuania, the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Estonia and the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Latvia for the Years 2015-2018 were signed in 2014, while the Programme of Cooperation in the Field of Culture between the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Lithuania and the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Belarus for the Years 2016-2018 and other inter-departmental agreements were signed in 2016.

These international documents provide for the intention to introduce and spread the national culture of the signatory States, which is especially relevant for national minority communities residing in Lithuania.

ARTICLE 3

1. Every person belonging to a national minority shall have the right freely to choose to be treated or not to be treated as such and no disadvantage shall result from this choice or from the exercise of the rights which are connected to that choice.

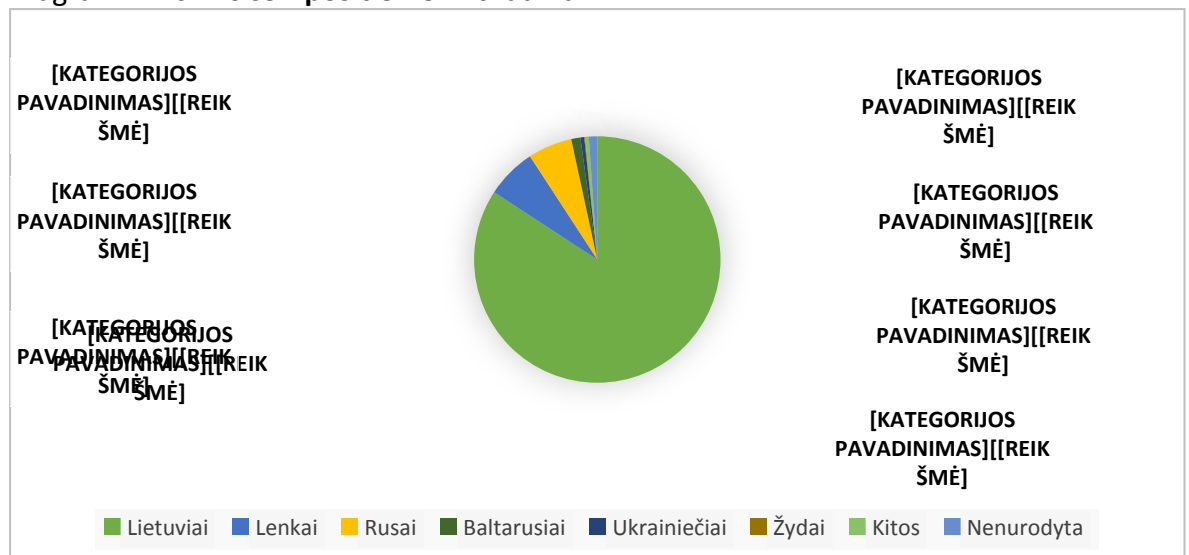
2. Persons belonging to national minorities may exercise the rights and enjoy the freedoms flowing from the principles enshrined in the present framework Convention individually as well as in community with others.

Statistics

Based on the findings of the 2011 general population and housing census of the Republic of Lithuania, Lithuania had 3,430,000 residents of 154 nationalities in 2011. The comparison with the general population census conducted in 2001 showed the growth in the national diversity from 115 to 154 nationalities declared. Vilnius was the most multinational city of Lithuania. In 2011, people of 128 nationalities lived in Vilnius, Kaunas had residents representing 85 nationalities, Klaipėda had residents of 77 nationalities, and people representing more than 50 nationalities lived in Šiauliai and Panevėžys.

84.2% (2,561,000) of the total population were Lithuanians, 6.6% (200,300) were Poles, 5.8% (176,900) were Russians, 1.2% (36,200) were Belarusians, 0.5% (16,400) were Ukrainians, 0.1% (3,000) were Jews and 0.5% (16,400) were people representing other nationalities. Almost 33,000 residents have not specified their nationality.

Diagram 1. Ethnic composition of Lithuania



Lithuanian	English
[KATEGORIJOS PAVADINIMAS]	[CATEGORY]
[REIKŠMĖ]	[VALUE]
<i>Lietuviai</i>	Lithuanians
<i>Lenkai</i>	Poles
<i>Rusai</i>	Russians
<i>Baltarusiai</i>	Belarusians
<i>Ukrainiečiai</i>	Ukrainians
<i>Žydai</i>	Jews
<i>Kitos</i>	Other
<i>Nenurodyta</i>	Not specified

Source: *Findings of the general population and housing census of the Republic of Lithuania conducted in 2011* (http://statistics.bookdesign.lt/table_043.htm?lang=lt)

The highest concentration of population representing national minorities can be found in the following seven municipalities of Lithuania: Vilnius City Municipality, Vilnius District Municipality, Šalčininkai District Municipality, Visaginas Municipality, Kaunas City Municipality and Klaipėda City Municipality. The majority of Poles reside in Vilnius City Municipality (88,400), Vilnius District Municipality (49,600), Šalčininkai District Municipality (26,800) and Trakai District Municipality (10,300), while the majority of Russians reside in Vilnius City Municipality (63,900), Klaipėda City Municipality (31,800), Kaunas City Municipality (11,900) and Visaginas Municipality (11,700). The majority of Belarusians reside in Vilnius City Municipality (18,900), Vilnius District Municipality (3,900), Klaipėda City Municipality (2,600) and Visaginas Municipality (2,200), the majority of Ukrainians reside in Vilnius City Municipality (5,300), Klaipėda City Municipality (3,100), Kaunas City Municipality (1,200) and Visaginas Municipality (1,100), while the majority of Jews reside in Vilnius City Municipality (2,000) and Kaunas City Municipality (300).

National minorities account for 87.7% of the total population in Šalčininkai District Municipality, 79% in Visaginas Municipality, 65.8% in Vilnius District Municipality, 45.1% in Švenčionys District Municipality, 42.1% in Trakai District Municipality, 34.2% in Vilnius City Municipality, 26.3% in Zarasai District Municipality and 24.7% in Klaipėda District Municipality. In 48 municipalities, including Kaunas City Municipality, Šiauliai City Municipality and Panevėžys City Municipality, 90% or more of the population are Lithuanians.

Table 1. **Ethnic composition (%) of the major cities of Lithuania in 2011**

	Total population	Lithuanians	Poles	Russians	Belarusians	Ukrainians	Jews	Other
Vilnius	535,631	63.2	16.5	12.0	3.5	1.0	0.4	0.9
Kaunas	315,933	93.6	0.4	3.8	0.2	0.4	0.1	0.4
Klaipėda	162,360	74.0	0.3	19.6	1.7	1.9	0.1	1.0
Šiauliai	109,328	93.6	0.2	4.1	0.3	0.5	0.1	0.5
Panevėžys	99,690	96.1	0.2	2.4	0.2	0.3	-	0.3

Source: http://statistics.bookdesign.lt/table_046.htm?lang=lt

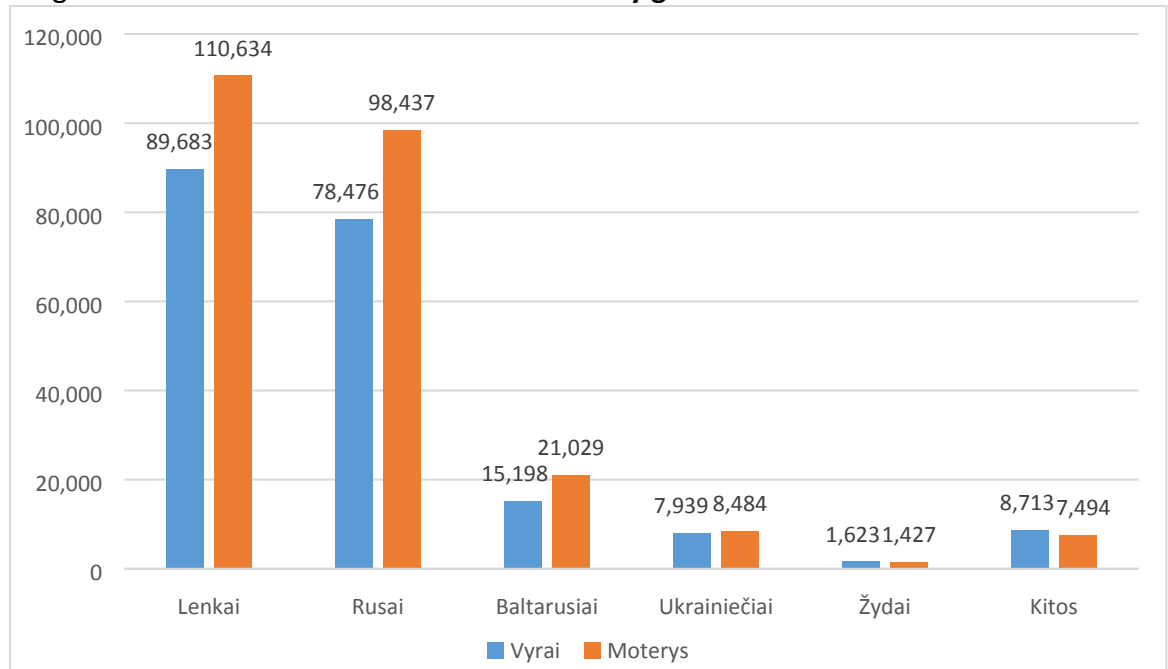
The findings of the 2011 general population and housing census revealed that the majority of the population of major ethnic groups, viz. 99.2% of Lithuanians, 77.1% of Poles and 87.2% of Russians, considered their ethnic language to be their native language. This percentage was lower among smaller national minorities, e.g. 18.4% of Belarusians and 31.9% of Ukrainians considered their ethnic language to be their native language.

17,200 residents of Lithuania indicated that they had two native languages, most frequently Lithuanian and Russian (56% of all the residents who indicated two native languages), Lithuanian and Polish (19%) or Polish and Russian (14.4%), and less frequently Belarusian and Russian (2.1%), Russian and Ukrainian (1.5%), Lithuanian and German (0.6%) or Lithuanian and English (0.6%).

In 2011, the Lithuanian population consisted of 1,402,600 men and 1,640,800 women. Women accounted for 53.9% of the total population. There were 238,200, i.e. 17% more women than men (in 2001, Lithuania had 225,700, i.e. 14% more women than men).

A similar trend was observed among Lithuanian national minorities. In 2011, there were 10.2% more Polish women than Polish men (110,600 women and 89,700 men); this percentage was 11.2% among Russians (98,400 women and 87,500 men), 16% among Belarusians (21,000 women and 15,200 men) and 3.4% among Ukrainians (8,400 women and 7,900 men). The number of women was also higher among Tartars, Roma and Latvians; however, there were 6.4% less Jewish women than Jewish men.

Diagram 2. Breakdown of national minorities by gender



<i>Lithuanian</i>	<i>English</i>
<i>Lenkai</i>	Poles
<i>Rusai</i>	Russians
<i>Baltarusiai</i>	Belarusians
<i>Ukrainiečiai</i>	Ukrainians
<i>Žydai</i>	Jews
<i>Kitos</i>	Other
<i>Vyrai</i>	Men
<i>Moterys</i>	Women

Source: http://statistics.bookdesign.lt/dalis_04.pdf

Draft Law on National Minorities

The drafting of the Law on National Minorities is provided in the Programme of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania for 2012-2016 (Chapter X. National Minorities). Presently, Draft Law No XIP-1648 on National Minorities has already passed two out of three stages of the adoption of legislation by the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania, viz. it has already been discussed – and approved – at the Committee of Human Rights and at the plenary sitting of the Seimas. The final stage – the adoption – remains.

ARTICLE 4

1. The Parties undertake to guarantee to persons belonging to national minorities the right of equality before the law and of equal protection of the law. In this respect, any discrimination based on belonging to a national minority shall be protected.

2. The Parties undertake to adopt, where necessary, adequate measures in order to promote, in all areas of economic, social, political and cultural life, full and effective equality between persons belonging to a national minority and those belonging to the majority. In this respect, they shall take due account of the specific conditions of the persons belonging to national minorities.

3. The measures adopted in accordance with paragraph 2 shall not be considered to be an act of discrimination.

Paragraph 1

With a view to ensuring the right of persons belonging to national minorities to equality, Lithuania continued the implementation of the Law on Equal Treatment, the Law on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men, the Labour Code and other legislation that prohibit national, racial, religious and social hatred, coercion, discrimination or its instigation on the basis of race, nationality, origin, language, religion or convictions. This legislation has not been amended since 2011 with the exception of Article 5 of the Law on Equal Treatment, which obligated State and municipal institutions to provide for measures in strategic planning documents to ensure equal treatment.

The implementation of the Law on Equal Treatment and the Law on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men is supervised by the Equal Opportunities Ombudsperson. He investigates complaints, carries out investigation at his initiative and provides consultations regarding inquiries, performs independent investigation,

publishes independent reports, submits findings and recommendations on any discrimination-related matters, and performs preventive and education activity. The year 2016 saw the implementation of an e-complaint form; therefore, the procedure of submitting a complaint became more simple.

Based on the study of the situation of Lithuanian residents belonging to national minorities conducted by the Institute for Ethnic Studies in 2015, 23% of representatives of national minorities think that discrimination based on nationality is widespread or quite common. 12.5% respondents (13.6% respondents from the Russian group and 12.9% respondents from the Polish group) indicated that they personally experienced discrimination based on nationality during the last 12 months. Respondents who experienced discrimination based on nationality pointed out that they have been discriminated at work (7% of all the respondents involved in the survey), at a public institution (6% of all the respondents) and in public, viz. on the street or on public transport (approximately 5% of all the respondents).

Realising the importance of education, training and prevention, the Office of Equal Opportunities Ombudsperson annually performs additional project activities for building public awareness of equal opportunities and for specific work with individual target groups, such as politicians, officials, civil servants and specialists taking part in the government of the country and decision-making, also local authority employees, employers, non-governmental organisations, journalists, academia, etc. Measures, experts and the subject-matter of projects are selected with regards to the knowledge and skills needed by these target groups. Based on their nature, the employed measures can be broken down to the following three groups: (1) information campaigns, (2) training, and (3) surveys. Some of them cover all grounds for discrimination and draw the attention to the multiple character of discrimination; however, with a view to the goals and scope of projects under implementation and to the needs of the target groups, both – training and surveys or information campaigns may target the specific ground for discrimination.

According to Eurobarometer 437 survey of 2015, 35% of the Lithuanian population would contact the Office of Equal Opportunities Ombudsperson in case of a discrimination. In this respect, Lithuania ranks second (after Sweden) in the EU. It shows that the Lithuanian population is well-aware of this Office (the average visibility of such offices among the EU population is 17%).

The funding of the Office of Equal Opportunities Ombudsperson was EUR 364,057 in 2011, EUR 384,057 in 2012 and 2013, EUR 424,000 in 2014, EUR 406,424 in 2015 and EUR 453,000 in 2016. Projects run by the Office are financed by European Union funds. The Office employs 14 persons.

Paragraphs 2 and 3

Programmes to ensure, in areas of economic, social, political and cultural life, full and effective equality between national minorities.

National anti-discrimination programmes

In 2011-2016, Lithuania was running two national anti-discrimination programmes, viz. the Inter-Institutional Action Plan for Promotion of Non-

Discrimination for 2012-2014 and the Inter-Institutional Action Plan for Promotion of Non-Discrimination for 2015-2017.

The Inter-Institutional Action Plan for Promotion of Non-Discrimination for 2012-2014 (hereinafter referred to as the Plan for 2012-2014) approved by Resolution No 1281 of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania of 2 November 2011 was coordinated by the Ministry of Social Security and Labour. The purpose of this Plan for 2012-2014 is to ensure the implementation of education measures for promotion of non-discrimination and equal opportunities, to raise legal consciousness, mutual understanding and tolerance on grounds of gender, race, nationality, language, origin, social status, beliefs, convictions or views, age, sexual orientation, disability, ethnicity and religion, and to inform the public about the discriminatory practices in Lithuania and the negative effects on the opportunities of certain groups of the society to participate in its activities under equal conditions. Having regard to the complexity of the policy of promotion of non-discrimination, the implementation of the Plan for 2012-2014 involved the Ministry of Social Security and Labour, the Office of Equal Opportunities Ombudsperson, the Ministry of the Interior, the Training Centre of the National Courts Administration, the Prosecutor General's Office, the Information Technology and Communications Department under the Ministry of the Interior, the Police Department under the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Culture, the Department of Youth Affairs under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour and the Department for the Affairs of the Disabled under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour. Competitive procedures for the selection of operational projects of non-governmental organisations engaged in the field of equal opportunities and promotion of non-discrimination were organised in 2012-2014. Allocations for the implementation of Plan for 2012 amounted to EUR 79,356 in 2012, EUR 50,973 in 2013 and EUR 51,552 in 2014.

To continue the successful implementation of the policy of equal opportunities and promotion of non-discrimination in Lithuania, the Government of the Republic of Lithuania approved the Inter-Institutional Action Plan for Promotion of Non-Discrimination for 2015-2017 (hereinafter referred to as the Plan for 2015-2017) by its Resolution No 46 of 28 January 2015. This plan aims at reducing discrimination on the grounds provided by the Law on Equal Treatment of the Republic of Lithuania by raising public awareness and promoting respect for human beings. The implementation of the Plan for 2015-2017 seeks to raise public awareness in the field of promotion of non-discrimination and equal opportunities and to assess the current situation of groups that need legal protection.

The implementation of the Plan for 2015-2017 is coordinated by the Ministry of Social Security and Labour. Having regard to the complexity of the policy of promotion of non-discrimination, the implementation of the plan also involves authorities such as the Office of Equal Opportunities Ombudsperson, the Ministry of Education and Science, the Ministry of Justice, the Department of National Minorities under the Government of the Republic of Lithuania, the Department of Youth Affairs under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour, the Law Institute of Lithuania and the Lithuanian Labour Exchange under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour.

The following measures were implemented in 2015:

1) The Office of Equal Opportunities Ombudsperson and the National Equality and Diversity Forum organised the National Equality and Diversity Awards on 28 April 2015. The National Equality and Diversity Awards were handed out for the first time on 20 February 2014 at the initiative of the Office of Equal Opportunities Ombudsperson and the National Equality and Diversity Forum to encourage individuals, companies, organisations and institutions to contribute to promoting equality and diversity ideas in Lithuania.

In 2015, individuals, organisations and initiatives that contributed most in the field of equality and diversity were honoured with awards in the following categories: 'Award for Gender Equality', 'Ethno Dialogue Award', 'Rainbow Appreciation Award', 'Golden Age Award', 'Overcoming Obstacles Award', 'Religious Diversity Award', 'Breakthrough of the Year', 'Journalist of the Year', 'Lifetime Achievements'. This event was organised for the second time. The event received a lot of attention and was attended by 250 guests. The public nominated candidates for the awards and voted online. The laureates were established by adding up the jury voting and the online voting results.

2) The Department of Youth Affairs under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour organised training for youth workers to master and improve methods and skills of tolerant and respectful communication, to develop kind conduct, to improve the ability to abandon any preconception on discrimination on the grounds provided by the Law on Equal Treatment of the Republic of Lithuania, and to learn to choose proper communication phrases. A two-day training session on promoting anti-discrimination and tolerance was held in Telšiai on 21-22 August 2015. The training session was attended by 25 youth workers. The second training session was held in Utena on 3-4 October 2015 and it was also attended by 25 youth workers. On 11 December 2015, conference *Hate Speech in Cyberspace: Do Young People Hear It?* was held in cooperation with the Ministry of Social Security and Labour and the National Institute for Social Integration.

3) The Ministry of Social Security and Labour organised competitive procedures for the selection of operational projects of non-governmental organisations engaged in the field of equal opportunities and promotion of non-discrimination in 2015. The goal of these competitive procedures was to select projects that best adhered to the priorities and the implementation of which aimed at reducing discrimination on the grounds provided by the Law on Equal Treatment of the Republic of Lithuania by raising public awareness and promoting respect for human beings. The funded activities were related to the organisation of seminars, round table discussions, conferences, etc., and the acquisition of necessary tools, organisation of information campaigns, dissemination of information online, preparation and publishing of printed matters (articles and books), involvement in projects (including international projects), wages of project operators, rent of the premises where project activities were being carried out, and cost of communications, transport fuel and utilities.

4) In the framework of the measures of the Plan for 2015-2017, the Ministry of Social Security and Labour organised national competition *Let's Be Together* to finance projects of cooperation between schools with different languages of instruction to foster exploration of other cultures: 23 projects involving more than

4,400 pupils were supported, two professional development seminars were organised during which teachers of Polish and Russian native languages learned about new methods of promoting tolerance and respect for the diversity of opinion during literature classes; a conference to discuss the issues of education of children from national minorities and migrating families was organised. 125 teachers attended these events.

The programme for the reduction of the economic and social disparities in regions inhabited by representatives of national minorities in substantial numbers

The minutes of the meeting of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania dated 14 January 2015 approved measures for the reduction of the economic and social disparities in regions inhabited by representatives of national minorities in substantial numbers. The Ministries were given a task to improve the availability of funding of projects in certain areas in five municipalities inhabited by national minorities in substantial numbers in relation to their competences, viz. as regards public projects (projects promoted by official authorities) – to include certain projects into the Public Investment Programme or lists of public projects; as regards regional/municipal projects (education, transport, urban development of cities and towns) – to raise the limits of allocations for regions; as regards projects selected through competitive procedures (business, employment, energy projects) – to apply the priority selection criteria (considering the specific character of the region). As a result of these decisions, allocations for this region can be approximately EUR 25 to 30 million higher than in other Lithuanian municipalities (EUR 4 million annually) by 2020. Public investment instruments for Vilnius, Šalčininkai, Švenčionys and Trakai district municipalities are included into the integrated territorial development programme of Vilnius region (approved by Order No 1V-685 of the Minister of the Interior of 3 September 2015), while instruments for Visaginas were included into the integrated territorial development programme of Utena region (approved by Order No 1V-722 of the Minister of the Interior of 14 September 2015).

Measures for the reduction of the economic and social disparities in municipalities of eastern Lithuania inhabited by national minorities in substantial numbers are financed by the state budget and the EU structural assistance for 2014-2020. Funds are allocated by concentrating assistance in target areas, viz. Šalčininkai, Baltoji Vokė and Eišiškės (Šalčininkai District Municipality), Švenčionys, Švenčionėliai and Pabradė (Švenčionys District Municipality), Lentvaris and Rūdiškės (Trakai District Municipality), Maišiagala, Nemenčinė and Juodšiliai (Vilnius District Municipality) (the total of EUR 55 million by 2020) and Visaginas (EUR 12.5 million by 2020). This amount excludes projects selected through competitive procedures (local employment initiatives, business support, cultural cooperation and community projects) the financing of which depends upon the activity level of companies and non-governmental organisations participating in competitive procedures; companies and non-governmental organisations participating in competitive procedures are expected to use at least EUR 25 million in assistance by 2020 (EUR 8.8 million were allocated in 2016).

Seeking to give a special attention to this region, the Government of the Republic of Lithuania has identified the fostering of the economic and social development of municipalities inhabited by national minorities in substantial

numbers as one of its priorities for 2016. In the framework of the implementation of the priorities for action for 2016 of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania approved by Resolution No 1087 of 14 October 2015, the Ministries were given a task to commence the implementation of the projects for the relevance of cultural and complex (natural and cultural) heritage of Vilnius region and its adaptation to the needs of local communities and businesses, and projects for the development of damaged areas; to provide consultations to Vilnius District Municipality, Šalčininkai District Municipality, Švenčionys District Municipality, Trakai District Municipality and Visaginas Municipality, i.e. municipalities of the region inhabited by national minorities in substantial numbers, on the development of marketing strategies (to attract domestic and foreign direct investments); to start the transformation of the territory of Visaginas military town and to adapt it as the site for innovative industry (SMART Park); to implement education projects in 50 schools (1,000 pupils) with a view to integrating schools with the national minority language as the language of instruction into the life of the country through non-formal education (cultural, explorative, etc.) activities; to provide the opportunity for adults belonging to national minorities to learn the state language, etc. The integrated territorial development programmes of Vilnius region (updated by Order No 1V-651 of the Minister of the Interior of 20 September 2016) and Utena region (updated by Order No 1V-686 of the Minister of the Interior of 3 October 2016) were accordingly supplemented with new measures and projects to ensure integrated solution of problems such as low income and employment of the representatives of national minorities.

In the framework of the programme for the reduction of the economic and social disparities in regions inhabited by representatives of national minorities in substantial numbers, the Department of National Minorities under the Government of the Republic of Lithuania allocated funding for the events and national festivals of communities of national minorities in south-eastern Lithuania, broadcastings and programmes on communities of various nationalities, projects promoting civil awareness, cultural festivals of national minorities, children and youth camps promoting intercultural dialogue. EUR 40,000 were allocated from the state budget for the co-financing of the projects.

In 2015-2016, the Ministry of the Interior adopted the required legislation allowing Visaginas Municipality to commence the project of the transformation of Visaginas military town by adapting this town as the site for innovative industry (SMART Park), while Visaginas Municipality completed the procurement of contracting works and entered into a contract with a contractor (on 31 August 2016). Pursuant to the list of public projects approved by the Ministry of the Interior, the project was granted the EUR 1.45 million of EU financial support and EUR 128,000 from the state budget. An action plan for the improvement of attracting investments has been developed in cooperation with the Ministry of Economy and Invest Lithuania.

The order of the Minister of the Interior approved the funding of EUR 765,000 for local development strategies of Visaginas and Švenčionys; these funds will be used for entrepreneurial projects, projects of social inclusion or acquisition of professional and practical skills, and similar projects. The expected number of participants is approximately 750 persons.

Projects for the prevention of social exclusion and social integration carried out by public organisations in south-eastern Lithuania are also financed under the Child Welfare Programme for 2013-2018, which provides for the financing of children day centres, and under the Action Plan for the Development of Non-governmental Organisations and Communities for 2014-2016.

Integration of Roma

In 2012-2016, Lithuania implemented the Action Plan for Roma Integration into Lithuanian Society for 2012-2014 and commenced the measures of the Action Plan for Roma Integration into Lithuanian Society for 2015-2020.

The Action Plan for Roma Integration into Lithuanian Society for 2012-2014 (hereinafter referred to as the Action Plan for 2012-2014) established the following two goals: (1) to improve the social status of Roma, and (2) to create conditions for intercultural dialogue. The following four objectives were planned to facilitate the achievement of the goals: (1) to develop education of Roma children and adults, (2) to develop social skills of Roma children and adults, (3) to promote the inclusion of Roma into the labour market, and (4) to enhance the openness of Romani culture and to increase public tolerance with regard to Roma. Thirty measures were developed to facilitate the implementation of these objectives, and twenty five of them were completed.

The Action Plan for 2012-2014 was financed by the state budget, the EU structural assistance and EU PROGRESS programme. Allocations for this plan amounted to EUR 189,085 in 2012, EUR 378,958 in 2013 and EUR 330,485 in 2014.

Following the implementation of the Action Plan for 2012-2014, sociological study *Situation of the Roma National Minority and Evaluation of Its Integration* (hereinafter referred to as the 2014 Study) was carried out at the end of 2014. The goal of this study was to analyse the change in the situation of the Roma National Minority since 2000 and to evaluate the results of all the programmes for the integration of Roma into Lithuanian society that have been implemented since 2000 (the Programme for Roma Integration into Lithuanian Society for 2000-2004, the Programme for Roma Integration into Lithuanian Society for 2008-2010 and the Action Plan for Roma Integration into Lithuanian Society for 2012-2014). The 2014 Study took into consideration the findings of the 2001 general population and housing census and the 2011 general population and housing census published in 2013 and 2014.

The findings of the 2014 Study on the situation of the Roma national minority

According to the findings of the population and housing census conducted in 2011, there were 2,115 Roma living in the country (in 2001, the resident Roma population was 2,571). 81% of Roma resided in urban areas, whereas 19% of Roma lived in rural areas. The majority of Roma lived in the counties of Vilnius (38% / 814 persons), Kaunas (23% / 482 persons), Šiauliai (11% / 224 persons), Marijampolė (10% / 214 persons) and Panevėžys (7% / 145 persons). Around one third of Lithuanian Roma (29% / 619 persons) resided in the city of Vilnius, and the majority of them (approximately 400) lived in Kirtimai neighbourhood.

The study revealed significant changes in Roma education in 2001-2011. There is a positive change in the reduction of illiteracy rates – the number of illiterate persons and persons who failed to attain primary education in the Roma

group decreased several times (from 26% in 2001 to 10%) in 2011, whereas the percentage of persons who attained primary education increased (from 31% to 42%). The number of persons who attained basic education grew as well (from 15% to 29%). However, negative trends can be observed as well. To compare with the findings of 2001, the percentage of persons who attained secondary and higher education in the Roma group decreased from 28% to 20%. The educational attainment among Roma children underwent marked changes between 2001 and 2011. To compare with the findings of 2001, the level of illiteracy and incomplete primary education in this age group was reduced by 36% (47% in 2001 and 11% in 2011) and the number of persons who attained basic education increased (7% and 26% respectively). In 2011, the difference between the educational attainment of Roma children (between 10 and 19 years of age) and that of their peers in Lithuania was more visible only at the level of secondary education, whereas the indicators of primary and basic education differed by a mere 1%-5% (in 2001, the difference was 11%-36%).

The findings of the 2014 Study reveal that over the last ten years the share of Roma whose main source of income is non-formal individual activity substantially decreased from 27% in 2001 to 5% in 2011. During the same period, the share of Roma whose main source of income is benefits grew twofold from 13% in 2001 to 26% in 2011. The share of Roma whose main source of income is wages grew slightly from 1% to 5%.

Within the framework of the promotion of the integration of Roma into the labour market, Lithuania finances projects with EU structural assistance funds aimed at helping Roma experiencing the social risk and social exclusion find employment. The implementation of project *Turn to Roma: Innovative measures for involvement of Roma in the labour market* was completed in 2012. The budget of the three-year project was EUR 580,000. During the implementation of the project, 37 Roma found employment, two Roma started their own business, and one Roma started studies at a vocational school. Upon the completion of this project, Lithuanian Gypsy Association *Čigonų laužas* (Gypsy Fire) commenced the implementation of another three-year project *Bachtalodrom* aiming at helping Roma find employment; EUR 580,000 were allocated for this project. During the implementation of this project, 240 Roma received social and vocational rehabilitation services, and 30 Roma found employment.

The 2014 Study revealed that 24% of Roma were not covered by the compulsory health insurance, whereas the share of non-insured persons in the country amounted to 9% during the same period (in 2011). The compulsory health insurance covers all children under the age of 18, also women who have been granted a maternity leave under the procedure prescribed by the law and unemployed women during their pregnancy for 70 days. The findings of the 2011 population census show that the share of persons who are unemployed because of their disability is significantly larger in the Roma group – 16% of economically inactive persons were unemployed because of their disability in the Roma group, where the national average stood at a mere 4%.

The 2014 Study was the first to analyse the situation of Roma women. Among Lithuanian Roma, women accounted for a slightly larger share (52% / 1,101 persons) than men (48% / 1,014 persons). There are certain differences in the educational

attainment of Roma women and men; however, they are minor – the number of women who are illiterate or who have not attained primary education (the difference is 1%) or who have attained primary education only (the difference is 3%) is slightly larger, whereas there are slightly more men who have attained basic education (the difference is 4%). The situation of women in terms of employment is worse than that of men. The integration of Roma women into the labour market is also encumbered by early marriages, as approximately one fourth (25%) of Roma girls give birth to their first child while being underage (younger than 18 years old).

One of the positive indicators of the implementation of Roma integration programmes is the decline in the negative attitudes towards Roma. The analysis of the results of public opinion polls shows that the negative attitudes towards the Roma national minority have been declining over the last few years: in 2012, 66% of the population claimed they would not be willing to live with Roma in the same neighbourhood; this number declined to 62.6% in 2013 and to 58% in 2014.

Taking into account the findings of the 2014 Study, the Action Plan for Roma Integration into Lithuanian Society for 2015-2020 has been developed. The goals of the Action Plan are as follows:

1. To promote the integration of Roma people into the education system;
2. To increase access to health services for Roma people;
3. To promote employment of Roma people;
4. To seek the empowerment of Roma women;
5. To improve housing conditions of Roma people;
6. To promote intercultural dialogue.

In the framework of the Action Plan for Roma Integration into Lithuanian Society for 2015-2020, the Ministry of Education and Science commenced the development of a training programme for the improvement of competences of teachers, school leaders, education assistance specialists and specialists of education departments in municipal government administrations, and organised a professional development seminar for teachers of general education teaching Roma children. The Ministry of Culture and the Department of National Minorities under the Government of the Republic of Lithuania organised non-formal education of Roma children in the Roma Community Centre, also a summer camp, state language and computer literacy classes, financed the provision of intercultural mediation services to the Roma community residing in Kirtimai neighbourhood of Vilnius and allocated funds for the dissemination of the culture of Roma. Vilnius City Public Health Bureau organised five lectures on sanitation and hygiene and six lectures on healthy lifestyle for Roma women and girls. The Lithuanian Labour Exchange provided consultation and information services to 389 Roma to improve the motivation of Roma to seek employment or education; 104 Roma found permanent jobs. The Office of Equal Opportunities Ombudsperson provided consultations to Roma and to non-governmental organisations that work with Roma on issues of equal opportunities and non-discrimination. Study *Situation of Roma People as Compared to Other Residents of Lithuania* commissioned by the Office has been conducted; it serves the basis for the monitoring of the Action Plan for Roma Integration into Lithuanian Society for 2015-2020.

The implementation of two major projects was commenced in 2016. The Roma employment project will be carried out by the Roma Community Centre in

cooperation with its partners, viz. Lithuanian Gypsy Association *Čigonų laužas* (Gypsy fire), the Lithuanian Roma Community, the Roma Integration House, the Roma Integration Centre and Šalčininkai District Division of Lithuanian Gypsy Association *Čigonų laužas*. EUR 868,860 are expected to be allocated for this four-year project. The following indicators are expected to be achieved:

- socially vulnerable persons who started seeking employment, education or started working, including self-employment, after their participation in ESF activities intended for social integration – 40%;
- socially vulnerable persons who participated in ESF activities intended for social integration – 300 persons;
- Roma people who received socio-cultural services – 300 persons.

In 2016-2017, the Department of National Minorities under the Government of the Republic of Lithuania will carry out project *Lithuanian Roma Platform- going local*. The main goal of the project is to develop a mechanism of cooperation between Roma communities and local municipalities and to ensure an efficient inclusion of local authority into Roma integration process.

In the framework of the project, Roma platforms will be set up in five municipalities of Lithuania with the largest Roma communities, viz. Vilnius, Šalčininkai district, Panevėžys, Šiauliai and Marijampolė. The role of the mediations between local Roma communities and municipal authorities will be performed by five representatives of the Roma community who underwent training for Roma community members in 2014 performed within the framework of the ROMED programme (*Mediation for Roma*) of the Council of Europe and European Commission. This aims at ensuring a sustainable dialogue between these two parties concerned.

Project activities will cover specialised training of specialists who work with the Roma community, such as municipal administration staff, social workers and teachers. They will be provided with knowledge how to work with this target group. Special training will also be organised for Roma women to encourage them to become more involved in public life.

Based on the project implementation results, the possibility to set up similar Roma platforms in other five municipalities of Lithuania, viz. Klaipėda, Jonava, Švenčionys, Ukmergė and Kybartai, will be analysed.

The project is funded from EU Funds, and the total value of the project is approximately EUR 68,000.

Roma national minority integration measures are also funded under other programmes. Children day centres that have Roma children are funded under the Child Welfare Programme for 2013-2018.

Municipalities grant social assistance and benefits to Roma and provide them with social services.

Programme for the Integration of Roma Community living in Vilnius (Kirtimai) Settlement into the Society for 2016-2019

On 19 April 2016, Vilnius City Municipality approved the Programme for the Integration of Roma Community living in Vilnius (Kirtimai) Settlement into the Society for 2016-2019. The goals of the programme are to promote the integration of Roma people into the education system, to increase access to health services, to seek the reduction of social exclusion, to improve living conditions of Roma people,

to enhance the openness of the unique Romani culture, to prevent the spread of drug abuse in Kirtimai and in the neighbouring area.

To ensure education of Roma children, adequate social assistance and healthcare, Vilnius City Municipality intends to offer social housing and subsidise housing rent for Roma families, to promote employment and creation of jobs, to improve the education system and non-formal education of Roma children. Social care services will be provided to 18 socially dysfunctional families raising 50 children, and their social skills will be developed.

Children who are either absent from or rarely attend day centres will be subject to 'street pedagogy' measures. Social workers-psychologists will talk to children and young people in places where they gather, and will provide personal and social assistance and education.

Performances and music forums will be held for the purpose of revealing and demonstrating the uniqueness of Romani culture. This is expected to encourage the cooperation between different cultures and cultural exchanges.

The implementation of the measures of the plan has already started: the transportation of Roma children from Kirtimai to kindergartens and schools has been organised; Roma families are being provided with social housing in the city.

More than EUR 722,000 will be allocated for the implementation of the programme measures.

State language courses

To ensure full integration of national minorities into public life, the Republic of Lithuania supports the organisation of state language courses in Vilnius and Visaginas.

In Vilnius, free courses are offered at the House of National Communities and at the Roma Community Centre.

Between 1 July 2011 and 31 December 2015, some 403 representatives of national minorities completed free Lithuanian language courses at Public Institution House of National Communities in Vilnius. Another 60 representatives of national minorities completed Lithuanian language courses under project *Settling of Third Country Nationals into the Multicultural Lithuanian Society*. Presently, 27 persons attend language courses at the House of National Communities.

40 Roma completed state language courses at the Roma Community Centre over the period of 2011 to 2016.

Language courses offered by Visaginas Language Centre were attended by 211 persons during the first half of 2011, 56 persons during the second half of 2011, 282 persons during the first half of 2012, 213 persons during the second half of 2012, 270 persons during the first half of 2013, 71 person during the second half of 2013, 100 persons during the first half of 2014, 76 persons during the second half of 2014, 60 persons during the first half of 2015, 49 persons during the second half of 2015, and 54 persons during the first half of 2016.

Sociological studies on the situation of national minorities in Lithuania

1. Social challenges for ethnic minority and new immigrant groups after the accession of Lithuania to the EU (2012)

In 2011-2012, the Institute for Ethnic Studies carried out project *Social Challenges for Ethnic Minority and New Immigrant Groups After the Accession of*

Lithuania to the EU financed by the Research Council of Lithuania. During the implementation of this project the features of the social development of Russian, Belarusian and Ukrainian ethnic minorities in Visaginas and of the three most numerous immigrant groups arriving to Lithuania (Russians, Belarusians and Ukrainians) as well as their integration into the society have been examined, the social status of these groups has been assessed and compared, and ethnic processes following the accession of Lithuania to the EU have been conceptualised.

2. Roma children in the education system: Comparison of Vilnius and Ukmergė municipalities (2012)

This study differs from previous studies, because it analyses the situation of Roma children of school age and their opportunities to go to school and receive the required assistance rather than the situation of the entire Roma community. To analyse the impact of structural factors on the participation of Roma children in the education system and to compare the availability of provided social services and education assistance, the review of legislation and secondary sources has been performed and qualitative interviews with the players in the education system, i.e. school staff, municipality specialists, representatives of NGOs, have been conducted in two Lithuanian municipalities, viz. Vilnius City Municipality, which has the largest number of Roma schoolchildren in Lithuania, and Ukmergė District Municipality in which the growth in the number of Roma schoolchildren was observed over the period of 2008 to 2012.

3. Challenges to religious diversity in Lithuania: A perspective of religious minorities (2012)

Members of 362 religious minority communities of Lithuania, representatives of 17 communities of religious minorities that are not recognised as traditional, including Christian communities (*Tikėjimo žodis* (Word of Faith), Baptists, Pentecostals, Seventh-day Adventists, New Generation, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, The New Apostolic Church, Salvation Army, The International Church of Christ), eastern religion communities (Krishna Consciousness Society, Brahma Kumaris Spiritual University, Sahaja yoga, Tibetan Buddhists, Baha'i) and *Romuva* religious community of the ancient Baltic faith participated in the empirical study.

4. Assessment of possible manifestations of discrimination and the tolerance in society in respect of various social groups (2012)

Key remarks:

- It should be noted that the top four least desirable colleagues and neighbours remain the same, viz. Roma are in the first place, ex-prisoners are in the second place, homosexuals and people with mental disabilities are in the third place, and Jehovah's witnesses are in the fourth place.
- According to public opinion, discrimination based on age is the most prevalent in Lithuania (49% of the population think that it is either widespread or quite common). Discrimination based on sexual orientation (41%) and disability (40%) is in the second place, while discrimination based on lower social status (35%) comes third. According to public opinion, discrimination based on high

social status is the least common. Also, less common is the discrimination based on religion and faith or on personal/family financial situation.

- According to public opinion, discrimination is the most prevalent in labour relations (when searching for a job or at the time of employment); this opinion is supported by 62% of the population. The field of law enforcement comes second (46%), and the field of healthcare comes third (33%). Discrimination is the least common in shops, cafeterias, on the street and on public transport.
- Two thirds (67%) of the population learn about discrimination on TV. Four out of 10 (44%) read about it in a newspaper, heard about it in the immediate environment (from their friends, neighbours) (42%) or heard about it on a radio (41%). 12% admitted of having personally experienced discrimination, one fourth (24%) of the population neither heard nor witnessed nor experienced discrimination.
- Only 11% of the population think that they know whom to contact in the case of discrimination. The Office of Equal Opportunities Ombudsperson is the most frequently mentioned organisation. Mention was also made of law enforcement (courts, police), the Seimas Ombudsmen's Office and the Centre for Human Rights.
- A mere 1% of the population informed about cases of discrimination, 18% did not inform. 56% of those who failed to inform indicated that the main reason for keeping silent was because they did not trust that informing would change anything or help them. Four out of 10 (40%) think that efforts to contact would cause them inconvenience, there would be too much bureaucracy or trouble, or they failed to contact the authorities because they thought that nothing wrong has happened and though this to be a standard event. One third (33%) of those who failed to contact the authorities did not whom to contact.
- The findings of the study allow to state that the perception of equal treatment by the population and the understanding that people cannot be discriminated and their rights cannot be restricted because of their origin is rather poor and has changed insignificantly over the last few years. The understanding of equal opportunities and the strengthening of the awareness of human rights still remain a challenge for the entire society.

5. Omnibus survey (2013)

The goal of the survey is to analyse the opinion of the Lithuanian population regarding the discrimination against various groups of the society. 1,003 respondents aged between 18 and 75 have been interviewed.

The survey revealed the experience and knowledge of the respondents regarding discrimination. 84% claimed that they have not experienced any discrimination. 8% claimed that they have experienced discrimination based on age, 4% have experienced discrimination based on gender, 3% have experienced discrimination based on ethnic origin or nationality, 2% have experienced discrimination based on religion or convictions, and 1% has experienced discrimination based on sexual orientation (*there was an option to select several*

answers to the same question, therefore the sum total of the answers in percentage exceeds 100%).

The survey has also verified the respondents' knowledge about discrimination. 7%-8% of the respondents consider themselves to be "well aware" of discrimination (8% claim to be well aware of discrimination based on disability and sexual orientation, and 7% claim to be well aware of discrimination based on age, gender, religion or ethnic origin). 21%-24% of the respondents indicated that they were "rather aware" about discrimination. 29%-35% of the respondents were "somewhat aware", whereas 8%-15% of the respondents "knew nothing" about discrimination (8% knew nothing about discrimination based on sexual orientation, 10% knew nothing about discrimination based on gender, and 15% knew nothing about discrimination based on ethnic origin).

According to the Omnibus survey, as many as 43% of the foreign-born persons claim that ethnic groups belonging to national minorities encounter discrimination in Lithuania. However, a mere 7% of the Lithuanian respondents recognise such discrimination. The main reasons for discrimination are obscurantism and ignorance of people (22%), another faith or religion (17%), or language-related problems (16%). Insufficient knowledge of Lithuanian is the main obstacle for representatives of national minorities to find employment (53% of all the respondents, 62% of the foreign-born respondents). The attitude towards national minorities is mostly shaped by the media (56%) and personal experience (22%). 17% of the respondents are influenced by the opinion of friends, co-workers or family on ethnic minorities, and a mere 5% of the respondents are influenced by school.

6. Study and assessment of the situation of women in the framework of recommendations for Lithuania by the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (2013)

The goal of the study is to perform the analysis of the situation of the target groups specified in the recommendations for Lithuania by the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, viz. disabled women, women belonging to national minorities (including Roma women), elderly women (aged between 55 and 60 and above) and migrant women, according to the specified aspects, to identify the existing problems, to assess the impact of applied measures, to propose the specific measures to solve the problems, and to estimate costs required for the implementation of these measures.

7. A study performed by Equal Opportunities Ombudsperson on making the work of teachers' assistants more efficient in schools attended by Roma children in order to reduce the social exclusion of children attending these schools (2014)

Over 30 municipalities with the largest numbers of Roma residents were interviewed during the study. The study concluded with the recommendation for the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania to establish a position of the teacher's assistant in schools with more than five Roma children in primary grades, and to supplement the description of the procedure for providing special assistance in schools (except higher education institutions) approved by Order No V-1229 of the Minister of Education and Science of 8 July 2011.

Insufficient language skills of children whose language at home is other than the language of instruction at school (the state language or, for example, a national minority language) often prevent them from successful studies. The school should identify such children (including Roma children, children of other national minorities, emigrants or re-emigrants) and should provide assistance to them. Classes intended to meet the educational needs or to improve the learning outcomes of pupils can be used for this purpose, or consultations can be provided. The school curriculum should include the methods of providing and implementation of learning assistance.

8. Situation of the Roma national minority and evaluation of its integration (2014)

The study is discussed in more detail in this Article under *Integration of Roma*.

9. Study On Ensuring the Right of Roma Children to Education conducted by the Ombudsperson for Children's Rights (2014)

The study conducted by the Ombudsperson for Children's Rights in 2014 revealed that Roma children (the total of 50 children) attended 11 special schools. Dabikinė special school in Akmenė district and Žagarė special school in Joniškis district had the majority of Roma schoolchildren, 11 each. The comparison with the total number of Lithuanian Roma schoolchildren revealed that 8.7% of Roma children attend special schools. The study conducted by the Ombudsperson for Children's Rights identified only one case of unjustified attendance of a special school by a Roma child; therefore, it can be concluded that in cases analysed in the study the attendance of a special school by children was justified, i.e. pursuant to the procedure for sending children to special schools and for identifying special educational needs regulated by legislation, based on the parents' request, etc. However, the Ombudsperson for Children's Rights noticed that the system of special education somewhat encourages Roma parents to take their children to special schools. Should the need for social assistance be met in other ways, at least some of the schoolchildren presently attending special schools could be integrated into the system of general education.

10. Survey on the change of public attitudes and causes of discrimination (2014)

In 2014, the survey on the change of public attitudes and causes of discrimination was performed. It found that discrimination based on disability is the most prevalent. Experts who performed the survey and analysed its findings noted that the labour market was still a sensitive area where persons encounter discrimination; therefore, particular attention must be paid to educating employers about non-discrimination, human rights and respect for human beings. The media also contributes to the shaping of an unfavourable image of vulnerable groups; therefore, experts who performed the said survey recommend to further raise public awareness in the field of promotion of non-discrimination, equal opportunities and respect for human beings, the role of non-governmental organisations and the civil society, to monitor the change of public attitudes, i.e. to perform surveys and the analysis of the assessment of the situation. The shaping of discriminatory attitudes is

mostly encouraged by the lack of information and knowledge (31% of the respondents), superstitious beliefs and preconceptions (30% of the respondents) and the attitude shaped by the media (28% of the respondents). Residents think that they have an average knowledge of discrimination (31%-49% of the population know little or nothing at all about discrimination or forms of discrimination).

11. Study of the identity of the Polish national minority in Lithuania (2014)

Researchers carried out a multidimensional study, which structured previous surveys on Polish identity, analysed Lithuanian publications in Polish and performed qualitative and quantitative research. Qualitative interviews with residents of Vilnius city and Vilnius and Šalčininkai districts were conducted between November 2012 and July 2013. The quantitative research was carried out in Vilnius city and Vilnius and Šalčininkai districts, and 411 respondents were interviewed between November 2013 and February 2014. The analysis of publications in Polish published between 2004 and 2013 was performed. The research study discusses different aspects and topic, such as the Polish identity, the political behaviour and the media content.

12. Ethnic minorities in south-eastern Lithuania (2014)

In 2012-2014, the Institute for Ethnic Studies implemented a project aiming at the interdisciplinary research of the ethnic, civil, regional and local identity of the population of the south-eastern region of Lithuania (Polish, Belarusian Russian ethnic groups), i.e. the area near the state border of Lithuania, and the manifestation of this identity. The project employed sociological, historical and political perspectives, which allowed the integrated analysis of the diversity, preconditions, conditions to the existence and ways of manifestation of the identity of the population of the south-eastern region of Lithuania (the towns of Eišiškės, Švenčionys and Šalčininkai). The sociological qualitative research revealed the variations and manifestation of the identity of ethnic minorities in the analysed region. The historical analysis included the assessment of the impact of historical processes on the present-day situation and identity of the population. The political study included the analysis of the impact of the actors in the international and local political framework on the present-day ethnic processes and the identity of the population.

13. Situation of Roma people as compared to other residents of Lithuania (2015)

The goal of the study was to gather the missing data about the situation of Roma people in the priority areas, such as household, financial situation, the level of attained education, economic activity or the status of health. The gathered new data will thus fill in the information gap regarding the 2015 indicators in Roma group and will become the point of departure for the assessment of Roma integration progress (results) over the period of 2015-2020.

14. Incidence of bullying because of various features of identity in Lithuanian schools (2015)

The problem of bullying among children and young people is directly related to discrimination, stigmas and preconceptions of the society based on gender,

disability, social status, sexual orientation, nationality or religion or the variety of other features of personal identity. The findings of the study confirm that the prevailing forms and manifestation of discrimination are sustained by harmful and deep rooted social attitudes that continue to affect younger generations and to shape their attitudes and relationship with people surrounding them.

15. Study of the situation of Lithuanian residents belonging to national minorities (2015)

The goal of the study was to collect data about the situation of national minorities that could be used for providing measures to promote the integration and the preservation of national identity of national minorities. The total of 600 respondents (286 Poles, 206 Russians, 43 Belarusians, 35 Ukrainians, 8 Jews, 6 Latvians, 3 Tartars, 3 Armenians, 2 Karaites, other nationalities – 1 each) were surveyed. The study was carried out in five survey locations, viz. Vilnius city (334 respondents), Vilnius district (111 respondents), Klaipėda city (72 respondents), Šalčininkai district (52 respondents) and Visaginas (31 respondent).

This study revealed that persons belonging to national minorities consider their ethnic identity to be an important part of their personal identity. The respondents attached special importance to the teaching of the native language at schools of general education (whether the language of instruction was Lithuanian or a national minority language), the teaching of history and culture of different ethnic groups at school, also to the preservation of their customs, culture and traditions, the every-day usage of their native language, the opportunity to attend cultural events held in their native language, etc. Sunday/Saturday schools are the most relevant to smaller ethnic groups for the education of children and for non-formal education of adults.

Based on the study, the media-related habits of persons belonging to national minorities remain similar to previous years. Television and news websites are the most popular types of media. In the younger age (18-39) group, news websites in Lithuanian are the most popular source of media, whereas newspapers in Russian published in Lithuania are completely unpopular; programmes of Russian television stations are also of a lower importance. In the older age group, television (especially Russian television stations) remains the most popular source of media; many people also read newspapers in Russian published in Lithuania.

The study reveals that the majority of the members of national minority groups knows and uses the Lithuanian language. In the poll of national minorities 69.2% of the Polish respondents, 64.1 of the Russian respondents and 53.7% of the respondents from the group of other national minorities indicated that they were fluent in speaking, writing and reading in Lithuanian, while a comparatively small percentage (11%) of the respondents indicated that they had problems while becoming employed or during their labour relations because of their lack of knowledge of the state language. It is only the older people that do not use or lack the knowledge of the Lithuanian language, whereas middle-aged and young people know Lithuanian and usually are fluent in Lithuanian. On the other hand, there are some regional differences, viz. people who lack the knowledge of Lithuanian reside in Visaginas Municipality, Šalčininkai District Municipality and Švenčionys District Municipality.

Based on the finding of the said study, the representatives of national minorities were slightly more active than the Lithuanian population in social activities, i.e. in the activities of public organisations and movements, in demonstrations, rallies and pickets, and in social or civil campaigns.

The study also disclosed the necessity to have a modern policy on national minorities with the view to new global challenges (migration, new geopolitical tensions, etc.). The concept of a nation as a community developed on the civil rather than on the ethnic ground (pursuant to the interpretation of the Constitutional Court given in 2006) must be consolidated in the public sphere, the mutual understanding of persons belonging to different ethnic groups and their openness for cooperation must be developed, positive initiatives of young people and the dialogue between schools with different languages of instruction (Lithuanian, Russian, Polish, etc.) must be promoted.

ARTICLE 5

1. The Parties undertake to promote the conditions necessary for persons belonging to national minorities to maintain and develop their culture, and to preserve the essential elements of their identity, namely their religion, language, traditions and cultural heritage.

2. Without prejudice to measures taken in pursuance of their general integration policy, the Parties shall refrain from policies or practices aimed at assimilation of persons belonging to national minorities against their will and shall protect these persons from any action aimed at such assimilation.

By implementing the provisions of the Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania and national and international legal acts, Lithuania aims to ensure that persons belonging to national minorities are guaranteed with equal political, economic, social and cultural rights and freedoms, that their national identity and cultural continuity be recognised, and that their national self-awareness and its expression be promoted. Lithuania provides favourable conditions for the education of the self-awareness and cultures of national minorities. National minorities in Lithuania are guaranteed with the right and freedom to establish non-governmental organisations and develop cultural links with compatriots residing in other countries.

The Department of National Minorities under the Government of the Republic of Lithuania

With a view to ensuring the cultural integration of national minorities, on 24 November 2014, the Government of the Republic of Lithuania passed the decision to establish the budgetary institution Department of National Minorities under the Government of the Republic of Lithuania. The department started operations on 1 July 2015 and has become the institution responsible for the coordination and implementation of national minorities policy.

The Department of National Minorities under the Government of the Republic of Lithuania was assigned to participate in the formation and implementation of the national minorities policy that guarantees the satisfaction of lawful interests and needs of residents of the Republic of Lithuania belonging to national minorities and the protection of their national identity and that provides conditions for their active involvement in the country's public, political and cultural

life, education of their civil awareness, tolerance and intolerance to attempts to create national discord. In 2015, the Department of National Minorities under the Government of the Republic of Lithuania, in the process of implementing the Strategy for Development Until 2015 of the National Minorities Policy, co-financed cultural projects promoting the development of cultures of national minorities and the activities of cultural centres of national minorities. By Order No. JV-118 dated 22 February 2016 of the Minister of Culture of the Republic of Lithuania, the Strategic Action Plan of the Department of National Minorities under the Government of the Republic of Lithuania for 2016–2018 was approved; the action plan outlines specific tasks in the field of the national minorities policy and the budget allocated to these tasks.

In the process of implementing the national minorities policy and with the aim to prevent various manifestations of discrimination based on nationality or language, the Department of National Minorities under the Government of the Republic of Lithuania cooperates with other governmental institutions, ministries, local governance institutions, national minority communities, and non-governmental organisations. The department also takes part in interinstitutional programmes and implements non-discrimination and national minorities cultural integration measures, e.g. the Action Plan for Roma Integration into the Lithuanian Society for 2015–2020, the Interinstitutional Action Plan for the Promotion of Non-Discrimination for 2015–2017 of the Ministry of Social Security and Labour, the Interinstitutional Action Plan for the Civil, Lithuanian Studies and National Education of the Ministry of Education and Science, and the Programme of Measures for Reducing Social and Economic Differences in Regions Densely Populated by National Minorities (also called the South-Eastern Lithuania Programme) of the Ministry of the Interior aimed at supporting local initiatives and projects of national minorities in the field of support for national minorities, cultures of national minorities, and cultural cooperation.

Cultural centres of national minorities

To promote the integration of national minorities while retaining their identity and the activities of non-governmental organisations as well as to preserve the cultures of national minorities and ensure their dissemination, to promote social tolerance and involve children and youth belonging to national minorities in social activities, co-financing was provided to four cultural centres of national minorities. In cooperation with these cultural centres of national minorities, non-governmental organisations of national minorities were provided with an opportunity to gather and hold events and non-formal educational activities.

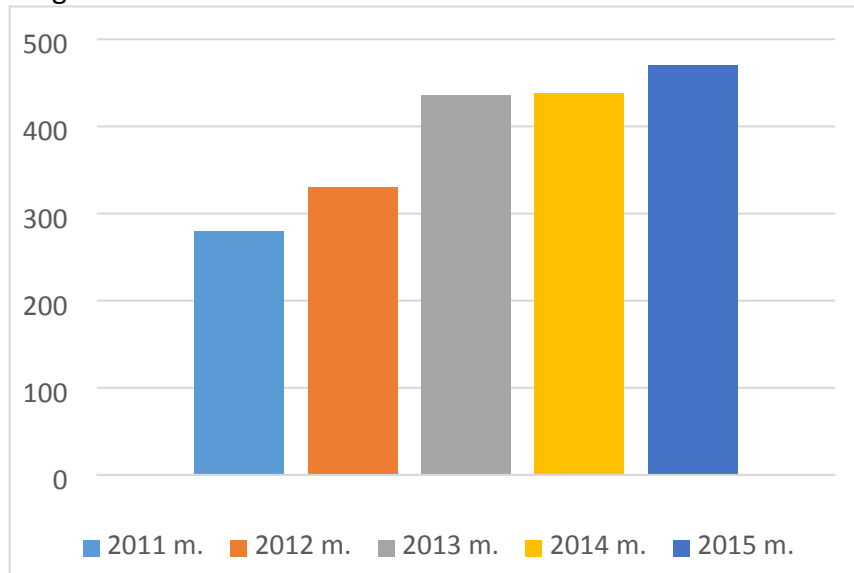
In the time period from 1 January 2010 to 30 June 2015, the rights of the stakeholder of the Kaunas Cultural Centre of Various Nations, the Centre of Folklore and Ethnography of Ethnic Minorities in Lithuania and the Roma Community Centre and the rights of the owner of the House of National Communities belonged to the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Lithuania. On 1 July 2015, these rights were overtaken by the Department of National Minorities under the Government of the Republic of Lithuania.

Public Institution House of National Communities

This public institution operates in the fields of culture, education and science and provides the respective services to members of society to contribute to the preservation of the cultural and ethnic identity of Lithuania's national minorities as they integrate into the country's social life. The main measures implemented include the organisation of events promoting the preservation and promotion of cultures and traditions of national minorities, organisation of art exhibitions, meetings with cultural and social activists, seminars and roundtable discussions, and organisation of training for leaders and representatives of non-governmental organisations of national minorities.

In 2011, 280 events of various type (meetings, concerts, national and state celebrations, exhibitions, seminars, festivals, etc.) were held at the House of National Communities; these events were organised by the House of National Communities or various organisations of national communities of the country. This figure was 330 in 2012, 436 in 2013, 438 in 2014, and 470 in 2015 (see diagram 3).

Diagram 3. **Number of events at the House of National Communities**



In 2015, the institution received over 48,000 visitors (in 2013 – over 35,000 visitors, in 2014 – over 40,000 visitors).

The House of National Communities has an information centre, and leaders and members of national communities are provided with conditions to learn, improve and develop their qualifications using the opportunities provided by Lithuanian and foreign information networks and the accumulated literature and video and audio materials. The staff of the House of National Communities contributes to the development of programmes of financing of the activities of public organisations of individual national minorities. Thirty to forty programmes of non-governmental organisations of national minorities are developed every year and subsequently submitted to various institutions in Lithuania and to international foundations. Methodological and practical consultancy on issues of accounting, financial reporting, office-keeping and other issues of relevance to national minorities is provided on a regular basis.

The State Language Teaching Centre has been operating at the House of National Communities since 2005. The centre offers Lithuanian language lessons, courses of development and improvement of language skills, and consultancy. In the time period from 1 July 2011 to 31 December 2015, 463 representatives of national minorities have completed free Lithuanian language courses at the centre (see article in section II).

The House of National Communities collects and digitalises informational documents about participation in the process of restoration of independence of Lithuania based on historical and archive materials from non-governmental organisations of Lithuania's national minorities. In 2012, approximately 400 documents of this type (photographs, images, certificates, protocols, etc.) were collected and digitalised. The initiative was also continued in Q2 2015 (50 documents were digitalised) and in 2016.

With a view to creating conditions for the country's national minorities to engage in activities that protect and retain their national identity, the institution provides common-use spaces free of charge for holding events of non-governmental organisations of national minorities. In 2011–2015, the premises of the House of National Minorities and the required equipment were provided, on business days and days off and free of charge, for nearly 2,000 events – concerts, meetings, festivals, rehearsals, language courses, discussions and other events – of national communities. In 2015 alone, on business days and days off, the premises and the required equipment were provided free of charge to 479 events of national communities (for comparison: in 2014, the premises were provided for 392 events). The premises are mostly used by non-governmental organisations of the Lithuanian Greek, Belarusian, Ukrainian, Romanian, Moldovan, German, Azerbaijani, Estonian, Latvian and Russian communities.

In 2011–2015, the House of National Communities implemented the projects C.A.F.E. Changing Attitude Fostering Equality and the Self-Evaluation of Third Country Nationals in Lithuania's Multicultural Society aimed at reducing discrimination, attitude changing and promoting tolerance towards vulnerable social groups according to the European Action Plan of the Integration of Third Country Nationals 2015. These projects were co-financed by EU funds.

The House of National Communities issues a quarterly informational publication, viz. the *Tautinių bendrijų naujienos* magazine. The magazine informs national communities residing in Lithuania about new legal acts and resolutions concerning national minorities, publishes speeches by high-ranking state officials and notices about meetings with representatives of national communities, describes festivals and cultural events attended by teams from national communities, reports on exhibitions, conferences, etc. The magazine is provided to national minorities centres in Alytus, Kaunas, Klaipėda, Vilnius and Visaginas and to the Roma Community Centre.

The financing data for the House of National Communities is presented in table 2 below.

Table 2. Support allocated to cultural centres of national minorities (EUR)

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
House of National Communities	92,678	86,883	86,883	86,883	87,870	102,990
Kaunas Cultural Centre of Various Nations	51,353	46,069	58,393	56,359	68,119	31,700
Centre of Folklore and Ethnography of Ethnic Minorities in Lithuania	24,617	24,617	24,617	24,617	25,000	34,995
Roma Community Centre	169,717	222,463	176,777	159,577	125,284	59,958

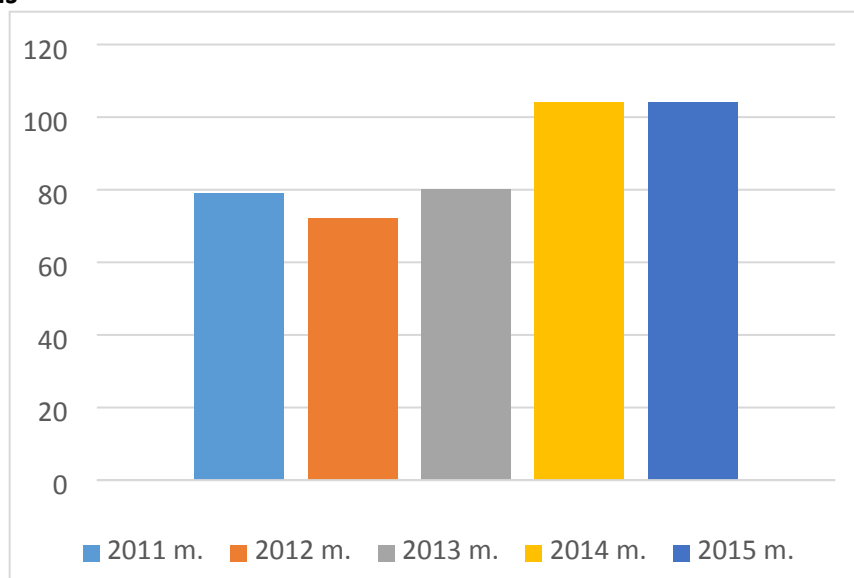
Public Institution Kaunas Cultural Centre of Various Nations

This institution operates in the field of culture, science and education, and provides the respective services to members of society with a view to providing conditions to learn about national cultures and preserve the individuality of national minorities. It encourages the cultural activities and artistic self-expression of national minorities, promotes national tolerance and urban traditions of a multinational and multicultural city among the population. The main measures implemented by the institution include the initiation of diverse cultural, artistic, heritage and interdisciplinary projects, and organisation of cultural events (concerts, art exhibitions, meetings, poetry readings, presentations of culinary heritage, books, etc.), and organisation of training courses and seminars for leaders, members, and active young people of national minority communities. The institution invites researchers and experts to take part in scientific conferences, seminars, and on the history and activity of national minorities, and other key issues or problems, and integration processes. It collects, systemises and disseminates information or other data about national minorities, assists researchers, students and pupils in conducting studies, prepares news releases and articles for the media, and participates in TV and radio programmes.

In the process of implementing cultural activities, non-formal education, adult training, international cooperation and other initiatives, the Kaunas Cultural Centre of Various Nations organises a variety of cultural and educational events (concerts, exhibitions, meetings, poetry readings, book presentations, seminars, discussions, etc.), with the number of these increasing every year. The annual number of participants of these events is around 7,000. In cooperation with non-governmental organisations of national minorities (Armenian, Polish, Russian, Tatar, Ukrainian, Jewish, etc.), the premises of the institution host events, meetings, and artistic rehearsals of the national communities on a regular basis. The premises are used for approximately 1,400 hours of cultural activities per year. In 2011, the Kaunas Cultural Centre of Various Nations organised 79 events. This figure was 72 in 2012, 80 in 2013, 104 in 2014, and 105 (50 concerts, 13 exhibitions and 41 other events) in 2015.

This institution provides consultancy to leaders of national minority organisations and students and pupils conducting research of the cultures and heritages of national minorities every year. In 2015 alone, 90 consultations were provided to national minority organisations and 10 consultations were provided to students conducting research of the cultures of national minorities.

Diagram 4. **Number of events at the Kaunas Cultural Centre of Various Nations**



In 2011–2015, the events at the Kaunas Cultural Centre of Various Nations were attended by approximately 34,000 visitors: approximately 6,500 visitors in 2011, approximately 6,000 visitors in 2012, approximately 7,000 visitors in 2013, approximately 7,400 visitors in 2014, and approximately 7,200 visitors in 2015.

Over the past 4 years, the institution has strengthened its project activities that receive support from EU funds: in 2012, the financing amounted to EUR 900, in 2013 – to EUR 3,900, in 2014 – to EUR 6,000, and in 2015 – to EUR 12,600.

In 2012–2014, with a view to improving the involvement of national minority youth in social activities as well as developing their abilities and competences, the Kaunas Cultural Centre of Various Nations took part in and contributed as a partner to the implementation of 4 international projects of the EU programme Youth in Action and 2 projects of the programme Erasmus+ youth KA1: Bridges for New Routes (the main activities were implemented in 2012 in the Netherlands), Art Up! Cultural Methodologies in International Youth Work (the main activities were implemented in 2013 in Germany), FIT – Fair, Involved and Together (the main activities were implemented in 2013 in Germany), The Roots & Routes Experience 2014 (the main activities were implemented in 2014 in Germany), Building Europe (the main activities were implemented in 2014 in Spain), The Intercultural Mode of Expression (IMOE) (the main activities were implemented in 2014 in France).

Thirty-one participants from Lithuania, including 11 participants selected from national communities (Russian, Ukrainian, Jewish and Armenian), took part in the activities in the framework of these projects abroad. In 2014, youth representing national minorities contributed to the creation of Enter At Own Risk, an interdisciplinary artistic performance dedicated to intercultural challenges and anti-

discrimination in Europe, which was presented for the first time in Cologne (Germany). Starting from 2014, youth representing national communities are taking part in projects according to the objective of the Erasmus+ programme to facilitate the inclusion of people with fewer opportunities, including people encountering difficulties due to cultural differences and belonging to ethnic minorities.

In 2015, the Kaunas Cultural Centre of Various Nations took part in and contributed as a partner to the implementation of 5 international projects of the EU Erasmus+ programme: Charisma Maxima (the main activities were implemented in 2015 in Croatia), Non-Formal Education – Key to success (the main activities were implemented in 2015 in Croatia), Educate! Connect! Participate! ewoca³ – A Sustainable Network in Europe (the main activities were implemented in 2015 in Germany), Urban Arts and Media Exchange 2015: War and Peace (the main activities were implemented in 2015 in Germany), I-CARE – Inter-Culture Against Racism in Europe (the main activities were implemented in 2015 in Germany). The implementation of the strategic partnership KA2 project OnGea – ONline GEAR Enhancing Youth Work of the Erasmus+ programme was also commenced.

Twenty-six participants from Lithuania, including 7 representatives of national communities (Latvian, Polish, Russian, Tatar and Ukrainian), took part in the activities of these projects abroad in 2015. They attended an international congress in Hattingen (North Rhine-Westphalia, Germany), a variety of non-formal education events in Zagreb and Zadar (Croatia), and the street art festival 24Hz in Cologne (Germany) and created the international performance Roommates that tackles the topic of anti-discrimination, which was first presented at a theatre in Cologne on 19–20 October 2015.

In 2015, the Kaunas Cultural Centre of Various Nations was accredited to receive volunteers from abroad and acquired the receiving organisation status from the European Voluntary Service (EVS). This accreditation is valid for 3 years (until 2018); according to the accreditation, the Kaunas Cultural Centre of Various Nations plans to receive one volunteer from Armenia to work at the Sunday school of the Armenian community in Kaunas for at least one year starting from autumn 2016.

In 2015, the Kaunas Cultural Centre of Various Nations joined the Roots & Routes international association and became the first Lithuanian member of the association. One of the key objectives of this association is to look for talented young artists in groups experiencing social exclusion, including national minority communities, and provide these artists with the conditions for improving wellbeing and giving access to creative intercultural activities.

The financing data for the Kaunas Cultural Centre of Various Nations is presented in table 2.

Public Institution Centre of Folklore and Ethnography of Ethnic Minorities in Lithuania

This institution operates in the fields of culture, science and education and provides the respective services to members of society with the aim to preserve and protect the traditional cultural heritage of national minorities in Lithuania. The main measures being implemented include the organisation of the activities of a national minorities folklore school, organisation of folklore festivals and concerts of representatives of national minorities in Lithuania, organisation of exhibitions and

international folklore festivals, promotion of the traditional cultures of national minorities in Lithuania, organisation of seminars and courses for teachers, students, pupils and members of folklore groups, certification of folklore groups, issue of publications and audio and video recordings representing traditional cultures of national minorities in Lithuania, organisation of annual summer folklore schools, provision of premises for activities of folklore groups, audio and video recording of the folklore of national minorities in Lithuania, and archiving of collected materials.

The Centre of Folklore and Ethnography of Ethnic Minorities in Lithuania has established a traditional music school that offers an ongoing training process in five sections (Russian, Belarusian, Polish and Ukrainian, as well as Tatar from 2011); *Arinuška* Russian Folk Group, *Traikotka* Polish Folk Group, *Juraj* Belarusian Folk Group, *Sviato* Ukrainian Group, and *Ilsu* Tatar Group all rehearse here.

The institution organises annual international folklore camp *Tradicija* for folk groups and teachers of Lithuania's national minorities and guests from Russia, Poland, Latvia, Ukraine, and Belarus, traditional festival *Pokrovskye Kolokola*, and national contest of children's and youth folk groups.

In 2011–2015, the Centre of Folklore and Ethnography of Ethnic Minorities in Lithuania organised more than 470 concerts in Lithuania (folklore groups of national minorities participated in these) and 35 concerts abroad.

The Centre of Folklore and Ethnography of Ethnic Minorities in Lithuania collects and archives objects of cultural heritage of national minorities. In 2011–2015, folklore expeditions and individual trips to places of residence of Lithuania's national minority communities were organised. The expeditions covered over 30 villages and settlements. Recordings of traditional Polish, Belarusian and Russian Old Believers songs and customs were recorded. Furthermore, annual international folklore camps and international folklore festival concert recordings (e.g. the Symphonic Suite Soloists, folklore group and orchestra 'Ethnosphere – A New Breath of Traditions') are organised.

The centre provides methodological assistance to folklore groups and their leaders. Over 50 consultations on issues of folklore and ethnography are provided every year.

The financing data for the Centre of Folklore and Ethnography of Ethnic Minorities in Lithuania is presented in table 2.

Public Institution Roma Community Centre

This institution provides educational, social and cultural protection services to the Roma residing in Kirtimai village on the outskirts of Vilnius. The main measures being implemented include the organisation of preschool education for Roma children, organisation of extracurricular activities, development of social skills, provision of intercultural intermediation services, assurance of the operation of a day centre, provision of computer literacy and free internet access services, organisation of Lithuanian language courses, promotion of the Roma culture (concerts of the children's ensemble Roma de Drom, exhibitions, seminars, conferences), and provision of premises and equipment for the activities of Roma non-governmental organisations.

Non-formal education for children

All Roma children of preschool age (a total of 20 children) residing in Kirtimai attend a preschool group at the Roma Community Centre. Together with schoolchildren, they participate in integration and socialisation lessons, various educational trips, summer camps and attend computer literacy lessons.

Day centre *Laipteliai j viršų* (Stairway to the Top) is attended by 80 children who receive non-formal educational services and develop their social skills; attempts are made to change the attitude to education of both these children and their parents.

Intercultural intermediation

The purpose of intercultural intermediation is to help Roma to deal with a variety of social issues and to assist them in various state institutions. The staff engaged in intercultural intermediation and working at the Roma Community Centre draft 70 to 90 letters to various state institutions on an annual basis. They accompany Roma to the Social Support Centre, the Migration Service, courts, the Vilnius Labour Exchange, patient funds, banks, the Probation Service, the State Social Insurance Fund Board, LESTO units, the Vilnius Adult Education Centre, notary offices and bailiff offices 50 to 70 times per year.

Adult education

In 2007, the Roma Community Centre created conditions for distance learning at general education schools for adult Roma who left the learning process early. The pupils study according to programme of grades 5-12: they receive consultancy, learn online, use Moodle to do their homework, and view Adobe Connect video lessons organised by teachers of the Akmenė Adult and Youth Centre.

Number of pupils:

The 2015–2016 academic year: 17 pupils (grade 12: 1 pupil preparing to pass final examinations);

The 2014–2015 academic year: 21 pupils (grade 12: 2 pupils, of which 1 pupil passed examinations, grade 10: 1 pupil who passed the basic academic achievements examinations);

The 2013–2014 academic year: 23 pupils (grade 12: 5 pupils, of which 3 pupils passed examinations, grade 10: 2 pupils, all of which passed the basic academic achievements examinations). Twenty-one pupils left school and 2 pupils went abroad;

The 2012–2013 academic year: 21 pupils (grade 12: 3 pupils, grade 10: 6 pupils, all of them were promoted to the upper grade. Examinations in grade 10 were not mandatory);

The 2011–2012 academic year: 18 pupils (grade 12: 1 pupil who passed school-leaving examinations, grade 10: 3 pupils, all of them were promoted to the upper grade).

Lithuanian language and computer literacy courses for adults are also offered every year.

The Roma Community Centre is actively implementing a variety of international projects (see table 3 below).

Table 3. International projects implemented by the Roma Community Centre

Project name	Project description	Project outcomes
Contribution to the Educational Role: Training of Educators	The project has encouraged and strengthened the integration of Roma into the educational process and contributed to the creation of a social environment favourable for Roma, in which they can enjoy equal opportunities for learning and presenting their culture and history.	Two publications were prepared and published: 'The Roma history and culture teaching tool' and 'A summary of good practice in the field of Roma integration'.
My Magnificent School: a Place Where You Can Be Happy	In the framework of the project, the relevance of the Montessori-Hallgarten Method in the Roma community for reducing exclusion was explained. During the project, with the help of this method, a system of practical guidelines was developed, which is intended to ensure a more effective communication of the Roma community and representatives of educational institutions, with both formal and non-formal education covered; didactic tools for developing the social skills of Roma children and strengthening their understanding of the social context in which they live were selected. To ensure that the Montessori-Hallgarten Method is understood as clearly as possible, educators from Italy, Romania and Lithuania conducted an experiment in Roma communities and used individual elements of the method in the educational process.	The guidelines 'Application of the Montessori-Hallgarten Method in the educational process and integration of Roma children' and the video essay 'My day at school' were created.
MOMA: the Montessori Method for Orienting and Motivating Adults	The purpose of the MOMA project was to overcome the cultural barriers which make it difficult for adults with special	The study 'The Montessori Method in Lithuania' was conducted, the didactic

	<p>needs to participate in formal education and to improve the level of social competences of these adults. The project implementers tried to develop a system of educational ideas that could confirm that every adult is a unique individual willing to freely develop through his or her own activities. This system promotes the creation of a pleasant, relaxing and unrestricted learning environment with a view to helping adults who need to identify themselves and their competences and who need to acquire social skills to help them in their daily lives. Project partners from 7 European countries applied the Montessori-Hallgarten Method as an experiment and used individual elements of the method in their work with adults.</p>	<p>guidelines of the method (e-version) were developed, 4 seminars for adult educators were held, and a closing conference of the project was held.</p>
<p>PS CLUB – Prosociality Sport Club – Prosociality for Integration and Multiculturalism</p>	<p>The project was implemented by schools and educational centres from Bulgaria, Greece, Italy, Lithuania, Romania, Slovenia and Spain. The main purpose of the project was to prevent early school leaving by groups facing the treat of social exclusion by developing their social and emotional skills and supporting them during their studies at school and institutions of higher education.</p>	<p>The video essay ‘All are equal in sports’ was created, an educational and didactic prosocial model (PDP model) was developed, and a closing conference was held.</p>
<p>Creation of videos together with socially vulnerable, socially excluded people and people with disability</p>	<p>Non-formal instruments and tools were used to create an environment for independent learning. The video creation tools used in the framework of the project were intended for people of different categories, adults</p>	<p>The video essay ‘I would build a church in the Roma settlement’ was created, the guidelines ‘Creation of videos together with socially vulnerable, socially</p>

	<p>with low qualifications, people with disability and people with lengthy diseases, people who have been unemployed for lengthy periods of time, minority groups, including the Roma, and other people finding themselves in an unfavourable situation and facing social exclusion. The video film and social skills development method encouraged the participants to think socially and responsibly and helped them to look for answers to their questions independently. The films created by project participants were presented in the European Parliament in Brussels.</p>	<p>excluded people and people with disability. Brief guidelines for practitioners and teachers' were developed, and a trial seminar and a closing conference were held.</p>
<p>History of Early Modern Painting</p>	<p>The project contributed to the improvement of the social integration of elderly learners and of the understanding of European culture among these learners. In the course of the projects, learners familiarised themselves not only with the history of local early modern painting but also collaborated with other learners from seven EU countries. A work of art was created jointly in each of these countries.</p>	<p>One of the walls of the Roma Community Centre buildings was decorated with a fresco inspired by the artworks of M. K. Čiurlionis.</p>

Financing from the national budget of projects that promote the development of cultures of national minorities

In the first half of 2015, the Ministry of Culture provided support to 57 projects of national minority organisations; the support amounted to EUR 52,000. In the second half of 2015, the Department of National Minorities under the Government of the Republic of Lithuania co-financed 44 cultural projects that promote the development of national minority cultures; EUR 31,000 was allocated for these projects. In 2016, 135 projects were selected. Under the national minority culture dissemination evaluation priority, a further EUR 116,000 was allocated from the funds of the Department of National Minorities under the Government of the Republic of Lithuania. A further EUR 40,000 was allocated under the national minority culture and cultural cooperation in south-eastern Lithuania priority. In

2012–2016, state support was allocated to over 500 projects that promote the development of national minority cultures (see table 3).

Financing for activities of national minority organisations was also allocated by the Culture Support Foundation; from 2014, support has also been allocated by the Lithuanian Council for Culture. The Culture Support Foundation allocated to cultural and art projects of national minorities EUR 56,765 in 2011, EUR 35,334 in 2012, and EUR 43,733 in 2013.

In 2014, the Lithuanian Council for Culture allocated EUR 108,318 to cultural and art projects of national minorities. In 2015, the financing amounted to EUR 63,992, and EUR 29,863 was allocated in the framework of the first stage of 2016.

Table 4. Financing of projects that promote national minority cultures (EUR)

2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
113,531	127,143	209,135	146,992	185,863*

Source: Data from the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Lithuania, the Department of National Minorities under the Government of the Republic of Lithuania, the Culture Support Foundation, and the Lithuanian Council for Culture.

*Financing of projects that promote the development of national minority cultures in 2016 by the Department of National Minorities under the Government of the Republic of Lithuania and first stage financing of cultural and art projects of national minorities by the Lithuanian Council for Culture.

Municipalities of Lithuanian cities and towns also provided support to non-governmental organisations of national minorities.

Alytus City Municipality, in 2011–2016, allocated EUR 16,310 to events of non-governmental organisations of national minorities and cultural events of national minorities in the process of implementing the General Programme for Cultural Education and Ethnic Culture Protection and the Education Quality Programme to develop non-formal education for children.

Kaunas City Municipality, 2011–2015, allocated EUR 62,268 to projects and activities of the Kaunas Cultural Centre of Various Nations and a further EUR 7,347 to co-finance the activities of Kaunas groups and public institutions of national minority communities.

Klaipėda City Municipality, 2011–2015, allocated EUR 76,500 to events of national communities. A further EUR 34,750 was allocated to cultural projects of national minorities from the budget of the Centre of Ethnic Cultures of Klaipėda City Municipality in the time period from the date of establishment of the centre (5 March 2012) to 2015.

Šiauliai City Municipality, in the time period from February 2011 to April 2016, allocated EUR 4,035 to projects of non-governmental organisations of national minorities under the measure ‘Support for initiatives of non-governmental organisations and youth organisations’.

Vilnius District Municipality, in the time period from 1 July 2011 to 1 March 2016, allocated EUR 24,214 to cultural activities of non-governmental organisations of national minorities.

Vilnius City Municipality, with a view to contributing to the protection of the identity of national minorities and promotion of their cultures, provides support to

cultural projects of national minority organisations. In 2011–2015, EUR 112,100 was allocated from the municipal budget to cultural events of national minorities.

Objects of heritage of national minorities

Starting from 1 July 2011, funds from the national budget intended for the implementation of the Heritage Management Programme have been allocated to co-finance studies of synagogues (synagogue complexes in Joniškis and Kalvarija, Vilnius Synagogue, Kėdainiai Synagogue, Žiežmariai Synagogue), Orthodox churches (Bobriškis Old Believers Church, Švenčionys Holy Trinity Orthodox Church) and other religious buildings (Kalvarija Talmud School, Trakai Kenesa), development of management work projects, and works of management and elimination of emergencies in these sites. Studies, management design, and the works were also implemented in Jašiūnai Estate (Šalčininkai district), Merkinė Estate, the so called Paul's Republic (Šalčininkai district).

Favourable conditions are created in Lithuania for developing the self-awareness and cultures of national minorities, with consideration to the fact that the national minority heritage is a constituent part of the Lithuanian cultural heritage. To satisfy the cultural needs of the Lithuanian population in the context of development of a knowledge society and improve the conditions in museums for promoting cultural literacy and civil education in society, the Strategic Directions of Development of Museums for 2015–2020 were approved by Order No. JIV-247 dated 16 April 2015 of the Minister of Culture of the Republic of Lithuania. This document clearly defines the mission, vision and values of modern museums and formulates five key strategic directions of museum development for the implementation of which specific tasks were set: to improve the access to Lithuanian museums exhibitions by various groups of visitors, to promote cooperation of museums, local communities and non-governmental organisations, and to ensure teaching process and lifelong learning at museums, thanks to modern, innovative, and involving educational programmes for different target groups.

The Vilna Gaon Jewish State Museum presents the visitors permanent exhibitions to commemorate the Holocaust at its divisions – the Tolerance Centre, Paneriai Memorial Museum and the Holocaust Exhibition; the museum also organises educational sessions intended to presenting the Jewish culture and educating tolerance towards different national groups and religious views. Being an institution that protects Jewish culture and traditions, the museum pays considerable attention to the propagation of individual aspects of the Jewish historical and cultural heritage and tragic history.

Trakai History Museum, in its section of Seraja Šapšalas Museum, introduces the history, daily household routines and customs of Karaites and provides the only opportunity to learn about the nation some of the representatives of which came to Lithuania from Crimea 600 years ago. Trakai Castle also houses a permanent exhibition dedicated to the history of Lithuanian Tatars and presenting valuable exhibits that best illustrate the daily household routines, traditions, religion and soldiery of Lithuanian Tatars.

The Alexander Pushkin Literary Museum introduces the life of the Russian intelligentsia in Lithuania and promotes tolerance to different cultures. The museum boasts an intense cultural life and houses concerts, literary and music nights,

meetings, educational activities, and organises contests of artistic self-expression for schoolchildren (e.g. 'My Alexander Pushkin').

Čekoniškės Granary-Museum of Lithuanian Palms and Rural Life, a branch of the Ethnographic Museum of Vilnius Region, introduces the traditions, customs, and culture of Vilnius region, provides visitors with authentic, comprehensive information about folk songs, traditional crafts, popular medicine, local dialect, and other aspects of authentic folklore. The granary has its own ethnographic palm-makers group which demonstrates the palm production process to visitors and presents an artistic programme featuring Polish, Lithuanian and Belarusian songs collected in Vilnius region.

Lithuanian museums have been actively cooperating with foreign museums for many years: joint exhibitions, scientific conferences, cultural meetings, concerts and other projects are organised.

The National Museum Palace of the Grand Dukes of Lithuania has signed cooperation agreements with Wawel Royal Castle in Krakow, Warsaw Royal Castle, Krakow Jagiellonian University Museum, the National Archaeological Museum in Warsaw, the National Museum in Warsaw, the National Museum in Krakow, the Library and Archive of Krakow Cathedral Chapter, and other Polish museums. In 2010–2011, in cooperation with Wawel Royal Castle, the joint exhibition 'How this happened in the Great Battle... Expose of Grunwald' was held; in 2012, the joint exhibition 'Crosses are symbols of virtue and the arrow is the symbol of victory... The Sapiehas: statesmen, art patrons and collectors' was held; in 2013, the joint exhibition 'Historical tapestries from Polish royal residences' was presented; in 2015, Wawel Royal Castle hosted the exhibition 'Sigismund Augustus' armorial tapestry from the Vilnius collection'.

Furthermore, the National Museum Palace of the Grand Dukes of Lithuania actively cooperates with Belarusian museums. Until 2012, there was a cooperation agreement with the cultural institution Hrodna State Museum of History and Archaeology located in Hrodna Castle, and in 2016, the cooperation agreement with the Belarusian state institution National History and Culture Museum and Reservation Niasvizh was signed; until 2017, there is an agreement with the Mir Castle Complex and State Museum of History of Religion in Hrodna. In cooperation with these Belarusian museums, the National Museum Palace of the Grand Dukes of Lithuania developed and exhibited in the National History Museum of the Republic of Belarus in Minsk the exhibition 'The Palace of the Grand Dukes of Lithuania and its restoration' and the one-exhibit exhibition 'Medieval ornaments. The mysterious belt of the Vytautas Magnus epoch'; furthermore, an exhibition of graphic works of the 19th century was exhibited in Vilnius.

Trakai History Museum had cooperation agreements with the Museum of Warmia and Mazury in Olsztyn and the Malbork Castle Museum until 2011 and organised joint exhibitions both in Trakai and Poland. In 2013, an agreement for joint activities was signed with the Museum in Brodnica (Poland); in 2015, an agreement was signed with the Museum of Doctor Wladyslaw Lega in Grudziadz. In 2016, Trakai History Museum signed cooperation agreements with the National Museum in Krakow and the Masovian Museum in Plock. Under these agreements, plans are to organise the exhibition 'Castles of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania' in Krakow and Plock and the exhibition 'Images of the city of Krakow' in Trakai.

In 2014, Trakai History Museum signed a cooperation agreement with the State Museum of Religion History in Hrodna, under which the exhibition 'Smart as a London dandy' was held in Hrodna in 2014. In 2015, Trakai History Museum signed a cooperation agreement with the State Literary Museum of Yanka Kupala in Minsk, under which the exhibition 'Men's accessories in the 19th and early 20th centuries' was held in Minsk in 2015. In 2016, Trakai History Museum signed cooperation agreements with Mogilev County Museum, Vitebsk Museum of Local History, Gomel Palace and Park Ensemble, and M. K. Oginski Museum-Estate.

The Lithuanian Art Museum cooperates with the National Museum in Warsaw, Warsaw Royal Castle, the State Museum of Archaeology in Warsaw, the National Museum in Krakow, Wawel Royal Castle in Krakow, Lodz Art Museum, Torun Area Museum, the National Museum in Gdansk, the Museum of History of Gdansk, Ossolinski National Collections in Wroclaw, and other Polish museums. It organises joint exhibitions, provides exhibits to exhibitions organised by these museums, and borrows exhibits from them for its own exhibitions, and exchanges research information and digital images required for publications and exhibitions. Some of the most important exhibitions organised in cooperation with Polish museums were as follows: in 2012, in cooperation with the National Museum Palace of the Grand Dukes of Lithuania, the international exhibition 'Crosses are symbols of virtue and the arrow is the symbol of victory... The Sapiehas: statesmen, art patrons and collectors' was held; the 2013 exhibition presented at the National Museum in Warsaw and Podlachia Museum in Bialystok, 'The Vilnius of Michal Rouba'; a joint exhibition from the Museum of Archaeology and History in Glogow, 'The treasures of Glogow'; in 2015, the exhibition from the collections of the National Museum in Krakow 'Forever young! Polish art in 1890–1914' was presented, not to forget the joint exhibition 'The Radziwill: the start of the great epoch of dukes', with Biržai Museum Sėla, Kėdainiai Area Museum, the Museum of South Podlasie in Biala Podlaska and the Belarusian National Museum as partners. Plans are to inaugurate in 2016 the exhibition 'Leon Bakst. The epoch and the works', which will feature exhibits from the National Art Museum of the Republic of Belarus, the Latvian National Art Museum and the Lithuanian Art Museum.

The Lithuanian Art Museum also organises exhibitions in cooperation with non-governmental cultural institutions: an exhibition of artworks of Tadeusz Kantor was held in 2012 in cooperation with the Cricoteca Centre in Krakow, and the exhibition of Michal Budny 'The big country' was organised in 2012 in cooperation with Warsaw-based Raster Gallery. The Polish Institute in Vilnius actively assists during organisation of exhibitions in cooperation with Polish partners.

The Lithuanian Art Museum signed cooperation agreements concerning organisation of joint exhibitions, exhibition exchange, and dissemination of research and restoration experience with the National Art Museum of the Republic of Belarus, the National Museum in Warsaw, and Gdansk History Museum. One of the most important exhibitions featuring exhibits from the National Art Museum of the Republic of Belarus and other institutions – 'Paris school artists from Belarus' – was also brought to Lithuania in 2014.

To present the multiculturalism historically formed in Lithuania and introduce the diversity of the heritage of other cultures to Lithuanians, the collection of panoramic photographs 'Objects of movable and immovable cultural heritage of

national minorities residing in Lithuania' was published in Lithuania for the first time in 2012. The publication contains panoramic, 3D photographs of the key objects of cultural heritage of national minorities, which portray not only the beauty of the sites but also the surrounding environment. Plans are to continue the project and issue DVDs dedicated to the cultural heritage of Lithuanian Poles and Jews.

To preserve, protect and promote the Jewish cultural heritage in Lithuania, the Jewish Culture Day has been celebrated in Lithuania on an annual basis since 2005, which is a constituent part of the programme 'The European Route of Jewish Heritage' supported by the Council of Europe. This project is coordinated on the international scale by the European Association for the Preservation and Promotion of Jewish Culture and Heritage, which proposes a topic of the events of the European Jewish Culture Day on an annual basis. In Lithuania, these events are organised by the Department of Cultural Heritage under the Ministry of Culture in cooperation with Lithuanian Jewish communities, city and district municipalities, museums, schools, and other educational and cultural institutions.

To promote the creation and development of the Jewish cultural heritage route in Lithuania and join the European Jewish cultural heritage route approved by the Council of Europe, on 15 December 2015, on the initiative of the Department of Cultural Heritage under the Ministry of Culture, the Jewish Cultural Heritage Route Association was officially established, which will ensure the creation and development of the Jewish cultural heritage route in Lithuania, develop a consistent map of this cultural route, and take care of its promotion.

In the process of implementing the Programme of Co-Financing from the National Budget of Projects of Promotion and Revival of Immovable Cultural Heritage and Publishing, promotional and publishing projects dedicated to the Jewish Cultural Heritage Day are co-financed every year.

In 2011, the project 'Introduction and promotion of the multifaceted and multinational cultural heritage of Šalčininkai district. From the hidden treasures of the Paul's Republic to the Jewish heritage in Eišiškės' of Public Institution Centre for Economic and Social Studies and Training aimed at the promotion of Polish heritage sites was co-financed. In 2014, co-financing was allocated to '20', an educational project of the Lithuanian Karaites Cultural Community dedicated to the 20th anniversary of restoration of the Karaites school building in Trakai.

Financing to Roma cultural projects is allocated on an annual basis: a variety of festivals, the celebration of the International Roma Day on 8 April, the commemoration of Roma genocide on 2 August, and projects aimed at empowering Roma women receive support. In 2012–2015, the Ministry of Culture allocated EUR 23,040 to projects implemented by Roma organisations. In 2015–2016, the Department of National Minorities under the Government of the Lithuania allocated EUR 7,400.

In 2012, to promote the Roma history, culture, and traditions, a leaflet dedicated to the Romani Holocaust was published; in 2013, the first fiction book in the Romani language, *The White Gypsy* by Vidoe Podgorec, and the Roma folklore CD, *Romano Folklore. Fairytales and Small Folklore Forms*, were published.

ARTICLE 6

1. The Parties shall encourage a spirit of tolerance and intercultural dialogue and take effective measures to promote mutual respect and understanding and co-operation among all persons living on their territory, irrespective of those persons' ethnic, cultural, linguistic or religious identity, in particular in the fields of education, culture and the media.

2. The Parties undertake to take appropriate measures to protect persons who may be subject to threats or acts of discrimination, hostility or violence as a result of their ethnic, cultural, linguistic or religious identity

Promotion of tolerance and intercultural dialogue in the field of education

Education on the crimes of totalitarian regimes, prevention of crimes against humanity and tolerance

With a view to fostering intercultural tolerance and dialogue, the general syllabuses of basic and secondary education of Lithuanian schools of general education include education on the holocaust and development of tolerance. The International Commission for the Evaluation of the Crimes of the Nazi and Soviet Occupation Regimes in Lithuania (hereinafter referred to as the International Commission) is in charge of this education activity based on the Programme for Education on the Crimes of Totalitarian Regimes, Prevention of Crimes Against Humanity and Tolerance Education (hereinafter referred to as the Education and Tolerance Development Programme) approved in 2002. The programme is developed along the four axes:

1. Creation and development of tolerance education centres;
2. Education of the teaching staff of schools of general education;
3. Initiation of celebration of days of remembrance and project activities;
4. Preparation of methodological materials.

One of the aims of the programme is to involve teachers of other subjects (ethics and religion, languages, music, arts) in addition to history teachers into its implementation. Education of teachers is carried out at seminars in Lithuania and abroad. These seminars introduce studies conducted by the historians of the International Commission, invite competent historians, present methodological experience of other countries, discuss both the holocaust of Jews and Roma genocide. Each year, the International Commission hosts 10–15 seminars in Lithuania.

Education on the Roma genocide

The International Commission and the Genocide and Resistance Research Centre of Lithuania, in cooperation with the Lithuanian archives and museums as well as survivors of the Roma genocide or their family members, collect and analyse information on this topic. In 2015, the Genocide and Resistance Research Centre of Lithuania hosted an exhibition based on various studies to commemorate the Roma victims of the Nazi occupation. The exhibition opened on 3 August 2015 on the International Memorial Day of Roma Holocaust Victims and ended on 2 January 2016.

Seeking to disseminate information on the Roma genocide, the Ministry of Culture published a booklet in 2012 outlining basic information about the Roma victims of World War II.

Non-governmental organisations contribute actively to education on the Roma genocide. In 2016, the Centre for Human Rights has been implementing the project *Illuminated Displays, Speaking Stones. Reflections on the Legacy of Lithuanian Jews and Roma*. The project envisages to perpetuate the memory of Roma victims in Panevėžys.

Promotion of tolerance and intercultural dialogue in the field of culture

The Strategy for the Development of the National Minority Policy until 2015 was implemented to ensure an efficient integration of various national minorities into the Lithuanian society and promote intercultural dialogue, respect for the diversity of cultural expression, preservation of cultural heritage at local, regional and national level.

During the implementation of the strategy, over 300 events of non-governmental organisations of national minorities were organised at national and local level every year (parties, concerts, presentations of publications, seminars and round-table discussions, recitals, conversations, etc.). The events were designed to disseminate the culture of national communities, foster their traditions and integrate national minorities into the Lithuanian society. Concert programmes of folklore groups of national minorities representing the culture of national minorities of Lithuania were also organised in Lithuania and abroad. The Roma Community Centre hosted events to raise public awareness of the Roma culture and traditions. Every year, traditional events were held, including international festival *Pokrovskije kolokola* aimed at representing Vilnius as a multicultural city and raise public awareness of traditional crafts of national minorities living in Lithuania; festival *Cultural Bridges* which takes place in Kaunas; traditional festival of Polish Culture *Kwiaty Polski*; the Day of National Communities on 21 May; the festival of Sunday schools; the concert to celebrate the International Roma Day on 8 April; celebration of the International Memorial Day of Roma Holocaust Victims on 2 August and other events.

The competition for the nomination “For National Tolerance”, which has been held since 2007, is also contributing to public awareness and tolerance promotion. The Department of National Minorities under the Government of the Republic of Lithuania organises competition entitled “For Intercultural Dialogue Promotion”. The nominees of this competition are the works published or broadcasted on the Lithuanian national and regional media (press, radio, television, and online media) that promote national identity, tolerance to national minorities, and fight against national and racial discrimination.

The Person of Tolerance Awards have been organised in Lithuania since 2001. This title is awarded for the promotion of remembrance and community ties, lessons of understanding that Lithuania was and is a multinational country, for the advocacy of civil reconciliation and civil tolerance, defence of civil society and promotion of its values, advocacy of the historic truth and remembrance of the Holocaust victims in the form of actions and words against insensitivity to the fate of Roma in Lithuania.

Since 2014, the Government has been hosting the ceremonies of the Tolerance Awards. These awards represent the initiative of the Jewish Community of Lithuania to celebrate those who live in a tolerant environment and are able to spread the good around them through the tolerance campaign The Bagel Shop.

In 2012, panoramic 3D photographs (recorded on a compact disk as a virtual cultural tourism tour) of cultural heritage properties of the important cultural value for national minorities were published for the first time; the compact disc also contains written information in Lithuanian, Polish, Russian and English.

On 23 May 2014, an international conference Cultural Diversity: The Present and the Outlook was organised. Lithuanian and foreign experts gave presentations during the conference. Sonja Kralj Bervar, the Chair of the expert working group on the cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue of the open method of coordination of the EU Member States, presented the Handbook of Good Practices and recommendations to the European Commission, national cultural institutions and public authorities outlined in the publication.

Information campaigns

In 2011, a social advertising campaign Discrimination is Bad for Everyone was conducted by order of the Office of the Equal Opportunities Ombudsperson. The social advertising campaign (3 television spots and 3 outdoor advertising posters) was aimed at teaching the target audiences to recognise discrimination and discriminating behaviours, disclose the negative social impact of discrimination and nurture respect towards the diversity of people. Television clips were broadcasted on the Lithuanian national television channel and commercial channel LNK. Outdoor advertising posters were displayed in public transport stops in 15 towns across Lithuania. A series of radio shows Discrimination is Bad for Everyone on radio stations *Lietus* and *Kauno fonas* comprised 10 shows aimed at raising public awareness of the right to equality and non-discrimination as well as the negative consequences of discrimination for each person.

In 2012, the Days of Equality were organised. Regional discussions Gender Equality Landing together with movie viewing and discussion, public campaigns Rainbow Days 2012, Marathon of Tolerance, Youth Days 2012 on the Lithuanian sea coast, events to celebrate the Day of the Elderly were organised in order to draw the attention of the public to the situation of various social groups.

Commissioned by the Office of the Equal Opportunities Ombudsperson, 5 radio shows were prepared on the topic of equal opportunities and broadcast on radio stations *Žinių radijas* and *Pūkas* as well as 5 live-air shows *Nuomonų ratas* on the Šiauliai television channel; an interactive online game *Pažink* (www.pazink.org) was created in which each player has to answer 20 random questions about equal opportunities, discrimination and human diversity in various aspects; educational events for higher education students were organised in Šiauliai, Panevėžys and Klaipėda to discuss the stereotypes prevailing in society and pop culture which shapes and reproduces them, the concept of tolerance, change in prejudice, the role of local government and communities in creating an integral society; a publication All Truth about Discrimination was prepared in order to clarify the concept of discrimination, help recognise discrimination, introduce the necessary laws and

provide information on what to do and whom to contact for people exposed to discrimination.

In 2013, Lithuania joined the Dosta! campaign of the Council of Europe aimed at raising public awareness of prejudices and stereotypes related to Roma. The International Roma Day is celebrated each year in Lithuania under the auspices of this campaign. In 2016, the concert to celebrate 8 April had an audience of several thousand spectators.

In 2013, the Office of the Equal Opportunities Ombudsperson carried out social campaign Days of Equality in 6 towns across Lithuania: in Vilnius (during the days of street music), Druskininkai, Marijampolė, Šiauliai, Panevėžys and Klaipėda, launched a competition of short videos Open Your Eyes, See, Create aimed at raising the awareness of youths of discrimination and intolerance, teaching how to recognise degrading and discriminating behaviour and contribute to the promotion of tolerance in society. Public lectures for communities of higher education institutions were held at the Gymnasium of Kaunas University of Technology, Vilnius College of Technology and Design and the University of Educational Sciences. Moderated discussions About Us, Others and Stereotypes with students of higher education institutions were held in Tauragė, Tauragė Branch of Kaunas College, Utena College and Alytus College. The Office commissioned a series of shows Equality Dialogue: To Hear and Understand on radio station *Pūkas* to promote tolerance. Shows on the following topics were prepared: Various Minorities in Lithuania: What Do We Know About Them?, Diverse Families in Lithuania, Language of Hatred. In addition, information publications were prepared for different target groups such as employers, representatives of trade unions and non-governmental organisations, municipal specialists working in communities, representatives of science community of schools and higher education institutions:

Trade Unions as a Form of Exercise of Employee Rights and Equal Opportunities;

How to Ensure Equal Opportunities and Diversity in the NGO Sector;

Equality and Diversity Policies in Our Workplaces;

Equality and Diversity at Higher Education Institutions;

Equal Opportunities and Local Government;

Equality and Diversity for Teachers and Senior Pupils.

These publications briefly present information on the forms of discrimination, application of non-discrimination legislation, the Law on Equal Treatment and the Law on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men, contain advice on the preparation of a strategy and action plan to ensure equality and diversity at the workplace and in education institutions.

In 2015, the Equal Opportunities Ombudsperson took steps to brief municipalities on the competence of the institution, activities in progress and importance of ensuring the principle of equal opportunities in employment relations, education, products and services, legal acts issued by central and local government bodies and institutions. In 2015, visits were conducted to 30 municipalities. Meetings with the Equal Opportunities Ombudsperson were attended by 734 persons in total. On average, each meeting was attended by 24 people.

Training for target groups

Training for officers

Implementing the memorandum of understanding signed between the Police Department under the Ministry of the Interior and the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) in 2015, a training programme on the fight against hate crimes adapted for Lithuanian police officers was drawn up. The training programme is aimed at improving the knowledge and skills of police officers to respond to hate crimes and train police officers to recognise hate crimes and understand their effect on victims; understand and properly apply the relevant provisions of the Criminal Code; use the skills acquired in response to hate crimes and during their investigation. During the training which took place on 10–12 November 2015, 24 police trainers were trained and instructed to transfer their knowledge to other officers. These training sessions were also attended by prosecutors specialising in investigations of criminal acts of hate and discrimination. In 2016, 398 police officers underwent training under the above-mentioned programme.

In 2013–2014, the Vilnius Office of the International Organisation for Migration and the Police Department under the Ministry of the Interior implemented the project Innovative Improvement of Intercultural Competence of the Police Force financed by the European Union. Under the project, the professional improvement programme Improvement of Intercultural Competence of the Police Force was drawn up and one of its objectives was to provide information to officers on discrimination and key legal acts which help ensure the principles of equality and non-discrimination, foster tolerance and shape correct attitudes towards otherness. In 2014, over 150 police officers took part in training under this programme.

177 police officers participated in professional improvement courses Dealing with the Victims held in 2011–2012 which discussed potential discrimination in Lithuania and 26 police officers took part in professional improvement courses Promotion of Non-discrimination. Implementation of the Equal Opportunities Policy organised in 2012.

Between 8 November 2013 and May 2014, the Prosecutor General's Office, in cooperation with the Lithuanian Bar Association uniting Lithuanian lawyers, organised and carried out the project on interactive anti-discrimination training of prosecutors, lawyers and associate lawyers under the relevant case-law of the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) which was funded by the Council of Europe under the HELP Programme. The training was attended by 15 prosecutors specialising in investigation of hate and discrimination crimes as well as 15 lawyers and assistant lawyers. The inception and 5-session programme of training was based on the legal acts of the United Nations and Council of Europe, their practical implementation and case-law of the ECHR.

In cooperation with the Police Headquarters of Utena County, the Inspector of Journalist Ethics organised training for police officers working at police stations in Anykščiai, Ignalina, Molėtai, Visaginas and Zarasai: a workshop Public Information in Police Activities: Between the Duty to Inform and Protection of Human Rights was held on 11 September 2014. The workshop also discussed issues related to the investigation of hate incitement online.

On 20–21 April 2016, the House of National Communities organised an educational seminar National Communities in Lithuania: Historical Aspects and the Present for police officers (patrolling officers and investigators) of Vilnius County. The seminar was attended by 52 participants from Vilnius, Vilnius district, Širvintos, Šalčininkai, Švenčionys and Elektrėnai.

Training for journalists

Training for journalists was organised in 2014.

The international movement Media4change which strives to promote responsible and ethical journalism organised training for the local media representatives. This event discussed how to recognise hate speech and avoid it in the activities of a journalist as well as the ethics of journalists through the prism of Roma integration and lexis used.

The Office of the Inspector of Journalist Ethics organised training for the representatives of the Lithuanian Union of Journalists on the topic Ethics of Journalists and Media Law: Is Competition for Ethical Journalism Possible? which provided recommendations to journalists how to avoid the spread of hate speech when reporting events and quoting sources of information and how to respond properly. The expert of the office attended 7 training sessions (4 academic hours each) Hate Speech in the Media: Incitement or Not? as well as the scientific conference held at Vytautas Magnus University on 10 December 2014 Hatred Online as a Challenge for Securing Human Rights and Freedoms: Theory and Practice, which analysed the relationship between the hate speech and expression of opinion.

Within the framework of the project NGO Network to Empower the Roma Community, the Lithuanian Children's Fund organised training on the Roma minority for journalists working in the Lithuanian regions in 2014.

The Office of the Equal Opportunities Ombudsperson organised a seminar for the media representatives of Lithuanian western and northern regions in Klaipėda in 2014. Renowned experts of this area spoke about the impact of the media on the understanding of discrimination and personal responsibility of a journalist.

Training for employers

Within the framework of the EU Life-long Learning Programme Leonardo da Vinci, the Office of the Equal Opportunities Ombudsperson implemented the project Workplace Planning of Gender Equality and Diversity in 2011. It included the preparation of the training programme composed of theoretical materials, practical exercises as well as other methodological and didactic materials. This training programme was presented in 10 municipalities to employers, representatives of trade unions, local politicians and municipal staff.

In 2013, the Office of the Equal Opportunities Ombudsperson renewed the project Diversity Park which is aimed at providing more information on the mitigation of discrimination on the labour market to different target groups. During the project, lectures-discussions were offered to employers and representatives of trade unions, employee organisations and non-governmental organisations, communities of general education schools and higher education institutions,

municipal specialists working in communities. Lectures took place in Telšiai, Tauragė, Rietavas, Jonava, Rokiškis, Utena, Kaunas. The participants took part in the discussions on the origins, manifestation and causes of discrimination, were explained European Union legislation and practical implementation of equal opportunities.

In 2013, the Office of the Equal Opportunities Ombudsperson organised a series of lectures-discussions to employers and representatives of trade unions, employee organisations and non-governmental organisations, communities of general education schools and higher education institutions, municipal specialists working in communities across 6 regions of Lithuania: Druskininkai, Marijampolė, Šiauliai, Panevėžys, Vilnius and Klaipėda. During these lectures-discussions, meetings were held with representatives of different target groups to discuss various forms of discrimination, introduce legal acts prohibiting discrimination on various grounds and share work experience in the field of equality and diversity.

Training for teachers

In 2012, the Office of the Equal Opportunities Ombudsperson organised a two-day training session Participation of Roma Children in the Education System designed for teachers working with Roma children. 20 teachers took part in this training.

Training for social workers

In 2011, training on the Roma culture and traditions were organised for social workers of Klaipėda. Around 20 social workers participated in this training.

Impact of training and campaigns on eradication of racial discrimination

The Office of the Equal Opportunities Ombudsperson ordered a survey Assessment of Possible Discrimination and Public Tolerance of Various Social Groups in 2012. The survey showed an improvement in the views of the respondents towards more than a half of social groups included in the survey over the last five years. The most significant improvement was in the public opinion of people with physical disabilities (the balance, i.e. the difference between the comparative percentage of positive and negative answers, was +21), people of Russian nationality (+14), representatives of traditional Christian faiths (+12), Tartars and persons speaking in another native language (+11). 33% of the respondents said that their view of the persons of Polish nationality improved during this period, 29% indicated persons of other races, 22% referred to Roma and 30% indicated black people.

The Institute for Ethnic Studies of the Lithuanian Social Research Centre carries out the annual survey of public perceptions to analyse the social distance towards various social groups (see Table 5).

Table 5. Results of surveys of the Institute for Ethnic Studies of the Lithuanian Social Research Centre (%)

Would not like to live with:	2012	2013	2014	Would not like to work with:	2012	2013	2014
Poles	7.6	8	4.3	Poles	7.5	9	4.7
Russians	5.1	5	7	Russians	3.9	6	5.8
Ukrainians	4.3	5	3.2	Ukrainians	2.7	6	3.2
Belarusians	5.4	6	3.6	Belarusians	3.4	7	3
Jews	14.7	15	10	Jews	11.9	13	7.2
Roma	62.6	66	58.2	Roma	43.1	48	40.3

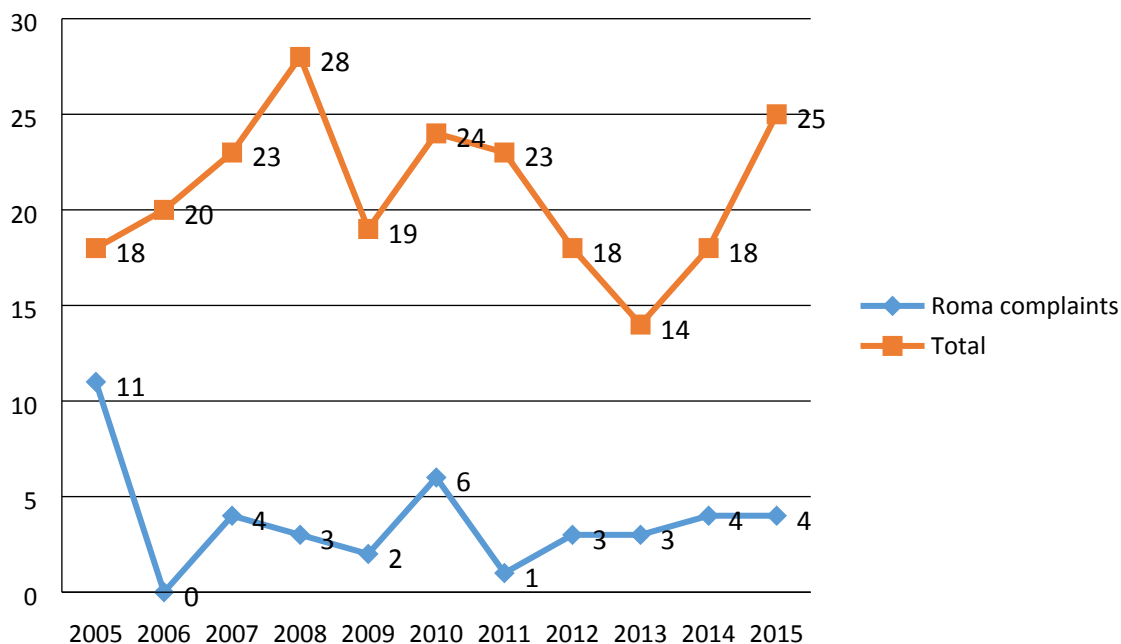
Paragraph 2

The Republic of Lithuania continued the implementation of the Law on Equal Treatment, Articles 169–171 of the Criminal Code and other legal acts prohibiting any discrimination of persons belonging to national minorities and incitement of hatred (for more about these legal acts, see Report No 3, Article 6, paragraph 2).

Complaints examined by the Office of the Equal Opportunities Ombudsperson

The number of complaints over discrimination on the grounds of race, ethnic background, nationality, origin or language fell in 2013 but has been growing moderately since 2014. Each year, most complaints deal with discrimination on the grounds of nationality and the smallest portion of complaints refer to discrimination on the grounds of origin, ethnic background or race. Complaints over offensive comments in the virtual space are grouped together with the complaints over discrimination on the grounds of ethnic and racial background. They are forwarded to pre-trial investigation authorities according to their competence for the initiation of pre-trial investigations. A trend has been observed that complaints usually refer to two grounds of discrimination: nationality and language, nationality and age, nationality and disability.

Figure 5. Changes in the number of investigations into possible discrimination on the grounds of nationality, language or origin compared to the complaints of Roma



According to various social studies, the Roma is deemed to be the most discriminated group but the number of discrimination complaints received from them by the Office of the Equal Opportunities Ombudsperson is low.

In 2015, four complaints were received from Roma and one of them was found to be substantiated as discrimination on the grounds of nationality was determined. Roma were unwelcome in one of the coffee houses in Kaunas as the owner of the coffee house refused to serve them alleging that they misbehaved in the coffee house. The owner was issued a warning. Two Roma complained of mistreatment by the medical staff but the information was found to be incorrect in both cases (complaints were filed against the Central Prison Hospital and Panevėžys Hospital of Infectious Diseases).

Most complaints are filed over the actions of central and local government authorities as well as the provision of health services.

Expert examinations conducted by the Office of the Inspector of Journalist Ethics

The Inspector of Journalist Ethics looks into the cases of incitement of discord (hatred, discrimination, bullying) in the public information. In 2011–2016, the Office of the Inspector of Journalist Ethics carried out 509 expert examinations of the content of public information at the request of pre-trial investigation authorities (104 in 2011; 129 in 2012; 123 in 2013; 46 in 2014; 103 in 2015; 4 in 2016). The incitement of discord (hatred, discrimination) on the grounds of race, nationality, origin or language was found in 110 cases (11 in 2011; 32 in 2012; 16 in 2013; 18 in 2014; 29 in 2015; 4 in 2016), taunting (contempt, insulting) on the basis of race, nationality, origin or language was found in 453 cases (87 in 2011; 158 in 2012; 69 in 2013; 32 in 2014; 104 in 2015; 3 in 2016), incitement of violence (physical action) on the grounds of race, nationality, origin or language was found in 174 cases (29 in 2011; 58 in 2012; 38 in 2013; 7 in 2014; 42 in 2015; no data available for 2016 as of 20 April).

In 2016, the Office of the Inspector of Journalist Ethics asked the law enforcement authorities to launch 2 pre-trial investigations into the cases of

incitement of discord on the grounds of race, nationality, origin or language in the public space, while the number of the same requests made to law enforcement authorities in 2015 and 2014 was 3 and 2 respectively.

Investigation of crimes under Articles 169–170¹ of the Criminal Code

Pre-trial investigation authorities, prosecution office and courts investigate cases and conduct proceedings in relation to the crimes provided for in Article 169. Discrimination on grounds of nationality, race, sex, descent, religion or belonging to other groups and Article 170. Incitement against any national, racial, ethnic, religious or other group of persons of the Criminal Code.

Table 6. **Data on investigation of crimes under Articles 169 and 170 of the Criminal Code**

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Registered crimes under CC Article 169	4 (2)*	5 (3)*	4	0	0
Registered crimes under CC Article 170	328 (63)*	266 (197)*	152 (84)*	102 (32)*	138 (93)*
Cases in courts under CC Article 169	0	1	4	1	n/a
Cases in courts under CC Article 170	94	59	37	40	n/a
Proceedings conducted by courts under CC Article 169	1	1	4	1	n/a
Proceedings conducted by courts under CC Article 170	95	61	36	37	n/a
Number of convictions	91	55	n/a	n/a	n/a
Number of convicted persons	95	56	n/a	n/a	n/a

* Of them on the basis of nationality, race, religion, language

In 2011–2015, there were no crimes registered under Article 170¹. Creation and activities of the groups and organisations aiming at discriminating a group of persons or inciting against it of the Criminal Code.

Protection of victims

In cases laid down in the Law on State-Guaranteed Legal Aid of the Republic of Lithuania, a victim in the criminal proceedings for offences against the equality or freedom of conscience are entitled to receive state-guaranteed secondary legal aid. The secondary legal aid is the state-guaranteed assistance by an attorney in the proceedings which includes the drafting of documents, defence and representation in the proceedings, including the enforcement process. The above-mentioned law stipulates that the state-guaranteed secondary legal aid is available to persons whose assets and annual income are below the thresholds of assets and income for

eligibility to legal aid established by the Government of the Republic of Lithuania. Victims in the cases for damages for criminal actions, including cases when the issue of damages is part of the criminal proceedings, are entitled to the secondary legal aid regardless of the thresholds of assets and income for eligibility to legal aid established by the Government of the Republic of Lithuania. The eligibility of these persons to the secondary legal aid is proven by the decision of the pre-trial investigation officer, prosecutor or court which recognises the person to be a victim and/or by the judgment of the court.

Article 128 of the Code of Criminal Procedure (CCP) The 'notice of detention of the suspect' requires the prosecutor or pre-trial investigation officer to notify the victim about the detention of the person suspected of a criminal act (suspect) in the case of criminal act of racist or discriminatory nature and to verify if the victim wishes to be notified of the future release of the suspect. The notice of the detention of the suspect is not required only if the place of residence of the victim is unknown. Neither the suspect nor the defence counsel are entitled to have access to the content of all documents supporting these actions.

According to CCP Article 198. Entitlement of the victim or witness to anonymity and CCP Article 199. Basis for ensuring the anonymity of the victim or witness , a victim or a witness of a very serious, serious or moderate crime, when there is a real threat to life, health, freedom or property of the victim, witness or their family members or relatives as well as service, business or other legitimate interests, when the testimony of the victim or witness is important for the criminal proceedings as well as in cases of crimes without racial or discriminatory motivation, may ask the prosecutor or pre-trial investigation officer to ensure their anonymity according to the procedure laid down in the Code. Such anonymity may also be used on the initiative of the prosecutor when all the above-mentioned grounds are present.

In exceptional cases, when there is a real threat to life, the victim of racial discrimination or xenophobia may be granted state protection.

ARTICLE 7

The Parties shall ensure respect for the right of every person belonging to a national minority to freedom of peaceful assembly, freedom of association, freedom of expression, and freedom of thought, conscience and religion.

Non-governmental organisations of national minorities

Once Lithuania's independence was restored, the systemic transformation process was commenced and democratic public authorities started taking shape, favourable conditions emerged for establishing associations of citizens. Many non-governmental organisations were set up at that time. National communities were also actively involved in this process.

In 2015, there were 261 various types of non-governmental organisations of national communities operating in Lithuania. The number of non-governmental organisations has changed insignificantly in comparison with 2006 (see Table 5). Organisations of Lithuanian national communities develop their activities to preserve the national identity of community members and contribute to open societies, enrich the cultural, economic and social life of the country.

Table 7. Number of non-governmental organisations

Nationality	Number of non-governmental organisations in 2001	Number of non-governmental organisations in 2006	Number of non-governmental organisations in 2015
Armenians	2	6	9
Azerbaijani	1	5	10
Belarusians	18	23	20
Bulgarians	1	1	1
Chechens	-	1	1
Estonians	1	1	1
Greeks	5	9	11
Georgians	1	1	2
Karaites	1	2	1
Kazakhs	-	-	1
Koreans	1	1	-
Latvians	4	9	6
Poles	53	49	71
Lebanese	-	-	1
Roma	13	12	8
Romanians	1	1	1
Russians	56	73	58
Tajiks	-	1	-
Tartars	12	18	21
Ukrainians	11	17	13
Uzbeks	1	6	6
Hungarians	1	1	1
Germans	32	16	9
Jews	29	19	9
Total	244	272	261

Source: Information provided by the Department of National Minorities under the Government of the Republic of Lithuania

ARTICLE 8

The Parties undertake to recognise that every person belonging to a national minority has the right to manifest his or her religion or belief and to establish religious institutions, organisations and associations.

Population in terms of religion

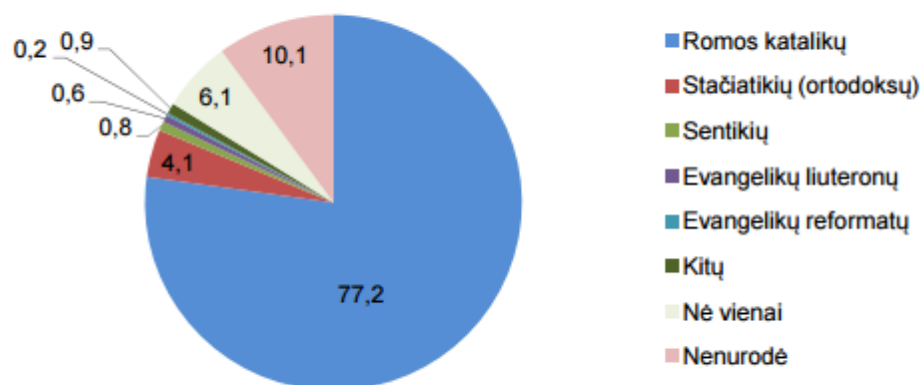
According to the findings of the population and housing census conducted in 2011, the residents attributed themselves to 59 religious communities (28 religious communities in 2001). The census registered 11 religions, each manifested by more than 1,000 residents. 2,350,000 residents (77.2%) stated they were Roman Catholics, 125,200 residents (4.1%) stated they were Orthodox, 23,300 residents (0.8%) stated they were Old Believers, 18,400 residents (0.6%) stated they were Evangelical Lutherans, 6,700 residents (0.2%) stated they were Evangelical Reformed Believers, and 24,900 residents (0.8%) stated they practised other religion (see Diagram 5).

The structure of the population in terms of religion has not changed since 2001. In 2011, 186,700 residents (or 6.1% of the population) did not attribute themselves to any one of the religious communities (in 2001, this number was 331,100 (or 9.5%)). In 2011, one in ten residents did not specify to which religious community he or she would attribute himself or herself (in 2001, this number was one in eighteen).

The percentage of the population which attributed themselves to the Roman Catholic community as compared to the total number of the population varies between 86.7% and 70.6%. More than 80% of the population in Alytus, Marijampolė, Panevėžys, Tauragė and Telšiai counties indicated that they were Roman Catholics. Ethnically more diverse counties (Klaipėda, Vilnius and Utena counties) have a smaller percentage of the population stating that they were Roman Catholics; viz. between 70.6% and 75.3%. The majority of Orthodox believers lived in the counties of Klaipėda (8.6%), Utena (8.3%) and Vilnius (7.5%), whereas the majority of Old Believers resided in Utena county (2.9%).

Diagram 6. **Breakdown of population by religion**

Gyventojai pagal religinę bendruomenę, kuriai save prisiskyrė, procentais



Lithuanian	English
<i>Gyventojai pagal religinę bendruomenę, kuriai save priskyrė, procentais</i>	Population by religious community to which they attributed themselves, %
<i>Romos katalikų</i>	Roman Catholics (77,2)
<i>Staciatikių (ortodoksų)</i>	Orthodox (0,8)
<i>Sentikių</i>	Old Believers (0,6)
<i>Evangelikų liuteronų</i>	Evangelical Lutherans (0,2)
<i>Evangelikų reformatų</i>	Evangelical Reformed Believers (0,1)
<i>Kitų</i>	Other (0,9)
<i>Nė vienai</i>	Neither (6,1)
<i>Nenurodė</i>	N/A (4,1)

Source: http://statistics.bookdesign.lt/esu_04.htm?lang=lt

Legal uncertainty regarding the property rights to religious immovable property existed for a long time after the restoration of independence of the Republic of Lithuania; such immovable property has been officially nationalised by the Soviet government, yet left for religious communities to use, and has been used for religious purposes both during the Soviet times and after the restoration of Lithuania's independence. Even though they actually used the buildings, the religious

communities often did not have the property rights registered. This issue with regard to the religious community of *Keturiasdešimt totorių* village was mentioned in paragraph 55 and 57 of the Third Opinion on the Republic of Lithuania of the Advisory Committee of the Convention.

The Law on the Procedure for the Registration of the Property Right of Religious Communities and Associations to Religious Immovable Property adopted in 2012 provided religious communities and association with the opportunity to submit applications between 1 July 2012 and 1 July 2015 regarding the recognition of their property right to their places of worship. Taking into consideration the received applications of religious communities, the Government of the Republic of Lithuania adopted resolutions on religious immovable property over the period of 2012-2016 which recognised the property right of Roman Catholic, Orthodox, Old Believers, Evangelical Lutheran, Karaite and Sunni Muslim (of Tartar origin) religious communities to religious immovable property that these religious communities were using.

Resolution No 97 of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania of 4 February 2015 recognised the property right of the Sunni Muslim community of *Keturiasdešimt totorių* village to the building of the mosque, whereas Resolution No 346 of 6 April 2016 recognised the property right of the Sunni Muslim religious community of Nemėžis to the building of the mosque. These religious communities were thus provided with the opportunity to register their property right to their place of worship.

Funding of religious communities

Over the period of 2011-2016, the Government of the Republic of Lithuania allocated targeted appropriations to restore the places of worship of Lithuania's traditional religious communities, associations and centres and for their other needs (see Table 6).

Table 8. Funding of religious communities over the period of 2011-2015 (EUR)

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Lithuanian Bishops' Conference	464,551	434,025	432,750	432,750	570,840
Orthodox Archdiocese of Lithuania	26,674	25,110	25,805	25,805	33,146
Supreme Council of the Old Believers' Church of Lithuania	6,661	6,430	6,430	6,430	7,764
East Old Believers' Church without a spiritual hierarchy, the Religious Community of Old Believers of Vilnius	637	724	724	724	769
Consistory of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Lithuania	6,198	5,966	6,256	6,256	7,336
Spiritual Centre of Sunni Muslims of Lithuania	3,389	3,359	3 389	3 389	3 555
Religious Community of Lithuanian Jews	2,230	2,201	2,259	2,259	2,309
Religious Community of Kaunas Jews	579	608	579	579	584

Religious Community of Vilnius <i>Jews Chassidie Chabad Lubavitch</i>	290	290	290	290	300
St. Joseph of the Basilian Order – Vilnius Monastery	2,954	2,954	3,041	3,012	3,067
Religious Community of Lithuanian Karaites	2,925	2,925	2,954	2,954	2,971
Synod College of the Reformed Evangelical Church of Lithuania	1,216	1,912	1,651	–	–
Synod of the Reformed Evangelical Church of Lithuania – <i>Unitas Lithuaniae</i>	2,867	2,230	2,462	4,142	4,523

Source: *Resolutions of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania: No 663 of 8 June 2011, No 766 of 27 June 2012, No 463 of 22 May 2013, No 239 of 12 March 2014, No 254 of 13 March 2015, No 242 of 16 March 2016.*

ARTICLE 9

1. The Parties undertake to recognise that the right to freedom of expression of every person belonging to a national minority includes freedom to hold opinions and to receive and impart information and ideas in the minority language, without interference by public authorities and regardless of frontiers. The Parties shall ensure, within the framework of their legal systems, that persons belonging to a national minority are not discriminated against in their access to the media.

2. Paragraph 1 shall not prevent Parties from requiring the licensing, without discrimination and based on objective criteria, of sound radio and television broadcasting, or cinema enterprises.

3. The Parties shall not hinder the creation and the use of printed media by persons belonging to national minorities. In the legal framework of sound radio and television broadcasting, they shall ensure, as far as possible, and taking into account the provisions of paragraph 1, that persons belonging to national minorities are granted the possibility of creating and using their own media.

4. In the framework of their legal systems, the Parties shall adopt adequate measures in order to facilitate access to the media for persons belonging to national minorities and in order to promote tolerance and permit cultural pluralism.

The Republic of Lithuania guarantees freedom of expression for all persons irrespective of their origin, race, religion or convictions.

Article 25 of the Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania guarantees the right to have convictions and freely express them. It also states that “no one must be hindered from seeking, receiving, or imparting information and ideas. The freedom to express convictions, as well as to receive and impart information, may not be limited otherwise than by law when this is necessary to protect human health, honour or dignity, private life, or morals, or to defend the constitutional order.” Moreover, Article 44 of the Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania provides that the State,

political parties or public organisations, or other institutions or persons may not monopolise the mass media. Censorship of mass information shall be prohibited.

The Law on the Provision of Information to the Public of the Republic of Lithuania also regulates the right to freely express ideas and convictions and to collect, obtain and disseminate information and ideas; this law also establishes the rights, duties and liability of producers and disseminators of public information, their participants, journalists and institutions regulating their activities, thus eliminating preconditions for persons belonging to a national minority to be discriminated against in their access to the media.

Pursuant to Article 8 of the Law on the Provision of Information to the Public of the Republic of Lithuania, *“it shall be prohibited to instigate war or national, racial or religious tensions in the media.”* Article 4(2) of the Law on the Provision of Information to the Public of the Republic of Lithuania provides that *“unrestricted reception and re-broadcasting of television programmes from the EU Member States and other European states which have ratified the Council of Europe Convention on Transfrontier Television, broadcast in accordance with the requirements laid down in treaties of the Republic of Lithuania, shall be guaranteed in the Republic of Lithuania.”* This provides access to different programmes of foreign television stations. Moreover, Lithuania allows free distribution of foreign press in foreign languages.

Pursuant to Article 34 of the Law on the Provision of Information to the Public of the Republic of Lithuania, *“radio and/or television programmes broadcast in a language other than Lithuanian must be translated into Lithuanian or shown with Lithuanian subtitles, except for educational, occasional, special, music and re-broadcast foreign radio and/or television programmes or parts of programmes as well as programmes produced by broadcasters of radio and/or television programmes intended for the ethnic minorities of Lithuania.”* The Radio and Television Commission of Lithuania, *“taking into account the needs of ethnic minorities residing in the coverage zone of broadcast radio and/or television programmes, where necessary, when specifying the terms and conditions of the licence may determine the share of broadcast and/or re-broadcast radio and/or television programmes or parts thereof which must be comprised of radio and/or television programmes or parts of programmes in the language of the ethnic minorities.”*

In Lithuania, communities of national minorities enjoy adequate conditions to create and use the mass media in their native language. Periodicals in Russian and Polish are published and distributed in the country. Lithuanian Tartars publish their newspaper in three languages, viz. in Lithuanian, Russian and Polish (see Table 7). Lithuania has private radio stations broadcasting in Russian and Polish, whereas the Lithuanian National Radio and Television broadcasts information programmes in the languages of major national minorities of Lithuania. The sources of funding of the media of national minorities are the Press, Radio and Television Support Fund (which has been operating since 1996), revenues generated from advertising or the support from their historical motherland.

Persons belonging to national minorities have equal opportunities with all other persons to engage in the activity of providing information to the public in the Republic of Lithuania. The laws of the Republic of Lithuania set forth the opportunity

to provide financial support for culture and education projects. Pursuant to Article 28 of the Law on the Provision of Information to the Public of the Republic of Lithuania, Public Institution Press, Radio and Television Support Fund invites tenders for co-assistance of the state with the aim to promote creation of projects that are significant for the national culture and have a lasting value in the country and in the regions, to ensure their continuity, and to guarantee minimum support for public expression, implementation of prevention programmes and moral education of children and youth. The aforementioned projects contribute to the development of the identity of Lithuanian national minorities and to the fostering of integration of Lithuanian and European society and a multilingual dialogue.

Table 9. Support provided by the Press, Radio and Television Support Fund to projects of public information producers of national minorities over the period of 2011-2016 (EUR)

2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
37,889	16,508	13,844	31,569	37,090	44,900

Source: Information provided by the Press, Radio and Television Support Fund (<http://www.srtfondas.lt/konkursai>)

Press in the national minority languages

Lithuanian population has access to 16 newspapers and 6 magazines in Russian, e.g. *Ekspress nedelia* (Экспресс-неделя), *Obzor* (Обзор), *Litovskij kurjer* (Литовский курьер), *Pensioner* (Пенсионер), *Domashnij doktor v Litve* (Домашний доктор в Литве), *Živoj kolos* (Живой Колос), *Vesti šalči* (Вести Шальчи), *Sugardas* (Сугардас), *V každyj dom* (В каждый дом). Other publications are imported, e.g. *Argumenty i fakty* (Аргументы и факты), *Komsomolskaja pravda* (Комсомольская правда), *Tajny zvezd* (Тайны звезд), *Burda* (Бурда), *Liza* (Лиза), *Domašnij očaj* (Домашний Очаг), etc. The *Klaipėda* (in Russian) Lithuanian daily is published in Lithuania. The *Vakaro žinios* daily has been published in Russian since 2014 (it was a Russian version of the *Respublika* newspaper before 2014). Publications from neighbouring countries are mostly distributed through newspaper stands, shopping centres and fuel stations. Distribution of press and books and foreign publication subscription services are provided by UAB Press Express that has over 1,150 points of sale in the territory of Lithuania.

Since 2008, information in Russian has been posted on the following Internet dailies: <http://ru.delfi.lt/> and www.runet.lt. In 2012, Lithuanian news portal *15min.lt* opened a website in Russian, which was active until 2014. Portal *L24.lt* has been running since 2013 (information is posted in four languages, viz. in Lithuanian, Polish, Russian and English). Portal *Novaja gazeta – Baltija* (novayagazeta.lt) was opened in Lithuania at the end of 2015. News in Russian are also available at EUROUA.INFO.

Six periodicals and magazines in Polish are published in Lithuania, viz. the *Kurier Wileński* daily, the *Tygodnik Wileńszczyzny* weekly, the Catholic newspaper *Spotkania*, the *Magazyn Wileński* monthly, and the *Znad Wilii* published on a

quarterly basis. *Nasza Gazeta*, a weekly of the Association of Poles in Lithuania, has been published since 2003 as a supplement to the *Tygodnik Wileńszczyzny* weekly.

As a result of the growing need of the society to use Internet media, relevant information in Polish has been posted on the following websites since 2008: www.zw.lt, www.l24.lt, www.wilnoteka.lt, www.pl.delfi.lt, www.pogon.lt.

Table 10. **Periodicals by language**

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Total					
Number of publications	820	815	828	788	772
Per-issue circulation, copies ('000)	6,417.0	5,559.0	5,311.0	5,018.0	4,976.0
Annual circulation, copies (million)	237.9	201.5	183.7	163.6	150.2
Lithuanian					
Number of publications	736	730	737	698	685
Per-issue circulation, copies ('000)	6,011.0	5,185.0	4,945.0	4,672.0	4,668.0
Annual circulation, copies (million)	224.7	189.8	172.4	153.0	141.0
Russian					
Number of publications	25	27	25	24	24
Per-issue circulation, copies ('000)	222.0	196.0	194.0	182.0	161.0
Annual circulation, copies (million)	11.3	9.9	9.5	9.0	7.7
Polish					
Number of publications	6	6	6	7	6
Per-issue circulation, copies ('000)	15.0	15.0	15.0	18.0	16.0
Annual circulation, copies (million)	1.1	1.0	1.0	0.9	1.0
English					
Number of publications	45	44	52	53	48
Per-issue circulation, copies ('000)	131.0	121.0	115.0	117.0	99.0
Annual circulation, copies ('000)	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.2
Other languages					
Number of publications	8	8	8	6	11
Per-issue circulation, copies ('000)	38.0	44.0	42.0	29.0	32.0
Annual circulation, copies ('000)	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.4	0.3

Source: *Figures of the Centre for Bibliography and Book Science of Martynas Mažvydas National Library of Lithuania provided in the Database of Indicators of Statistics Lithuania.*

The restoration of Lithuania's independence has brought material changes to the Lithuanian National Radio and Television. As far back as 1990 the then Presidium of the Supreme Council adopted a resolution on the broadcasting of national television programmes. This resolution instructed the Lithuanian Radio and Television to restructure programmes by providing slots for broadcasting in the languages of other nations residing in Lithuania. Based on this resolution, the already existing broadcasts in Russian and Polish were supplemented with broadcasts in Belarusian and Ukrainian and with broadcasts intended for Jews, Tartars and Karaites. Radio also has similar programmes.

Activities of national minorities are reflected in *Tautinių bendrijų naujienos*, a magazine published in Lithuanian by Public Institution House of National Communities.

Radio and television

Activities of TV and radio stations can be seen and heard in public. LRT television and radio broadcast information programmes of various duration for national minorities. The programme of national communities, *Santara*, is prepared by 11 journalists of six different nationalities. The programme is broadcast in Lithuanian, Polish, Russian, Belarusian and Ukrainian. On 31 August 2015, the broadcast of the programme focusing on south-eastern Lithuania, *Misija: Vilnija*, started.

International media group *Baltic Media Alliance* (BMA), which is established in Riga, operates across the Baltic States, including Lithuania. The principal activity of this international media group is broadcasting of television channels, mobile media and content production for television and other media. The basket of BMA TV channels is based on television channels broadcasting in Russian (e.g. *Pirmasis Baltijos kanalas* in Lithuania, *NTV*, *REN-TV Baltija*).

Programmes in Russian are broadcast by radio station *Ruskoje radio Baltija* in Lithuania and by local radio station *Raduga* in Klaipėda. Private Polish radio station *Znad Wilii* broadcasting 24-7 has been operating in Lithuania since 1992. On 3 April 2016, another Polish radio station, *Radio Wilno*, was launched.

Lithuanian national television

DW news in Russian (news prepared in Russian by German channel *Deutsche Welle* and broadcast at 12:00-12:15 on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays and at 21:50-22:00 on Mondays through Fridays);

Rusų gatvė. Žinios (Russian Street. News) (broadcast at 18:00-18:30 on Mondays, rerun at 5:30-6:00 on Fridays);

Kultūry kryžkelė. Vilniaus albumas (Cultural Crossroads: Album of Vilnius) (programme in Polish, broadcast at 18:15-18:30 on Tuesdays and at 9:00-9:15 on Saturdays);

Kultūry kryžkelė. Trembita (Cultural Crossroads: Trembita) (programme in Ukrainian, broadcast at 18:15-18:30 on Wednesdays and at 9:15-9:30 on Saturdays);

Kultūry kryžkelė. Menora (Cultural Crossroads: Menorah) (programme in Lithuanian about Lithuanian Jews, broadcast at 18:15-18:30 on Thursdays and at 9:30-9:45 on Saturdays);

Kultūry kryžkelė. Vilniaus sąsiuvinis (Cultural Crossroads: Notebook of Vilnius) (programme in Belarusian, broadcast at 9:45-10:00 on Saturdays);

Krikščionio žodis (Christian Word) (educational religious programme for those who are interested in Orthodox history, traditions and culture, broadcast at 10:00-10:15 on every other Saturday);

Misija: Vilnija (Mission: Vilnija) (programme about Vilnija region, broadcast at 8:30-9:00 and 22:45-23:15 on Saturdays and at 9:45-10:15 and 16:15-16:45 on Tuesdays).

Lithuanian national radio

Programme in Russian (daily news broadcast on LRT 1 aired daily at 16:30-17:00);

Santara. Apie įvairių tautinių bendrijų gyvenimą Lietuvoje (Concord: About the Life of National Communities in Lithuania) (programme about the life of various national minorities of Lithuania, aired at 15:00-15:30 on Mondays);

Santara. Laida apie baltarusius (Concord: Programme about Belarusians) (aired at 15:00-15:30 on Tuesdays);

Santara. Laida rusų kalba (Concord: Programme in Russian) (aired at 15:00-15:30 on Wednesdays, Saturdays and Sundays and at 15:00-15:30 on the second and fourth Thursday each month);

Programmes about Lithuanian Jews (aired at 15:00-15:30 on the first and third Thursday each month) and Ukrainians (aired at 15:00-15:30 on the second and fourth Friday each month);

Pusvalandis lenkiškai (Thirty Minutes in Polish) (programme in Polish that is the oldest national minority programme on the Lithuanian radio. As far back as 1944 it informed the Lithuanian population about military operations and their completion during World War 2. Since then, the programme in Polish has been constantly broadcast with changes of its content, form or broadcasting times being made over time. Presently, the programme in Polish is aired daily at 15:30-16:00).

ARTICLE 10

- 1. The Parties undertake to recognise that every person belonging to a national minority has the right to use freely and without interference his or her minority language, in private and in public, orally and in writing.**
- 2. In areas inhabited by persons belonging to national minorities traditionally or in substantial numbers, if those persons so request and where such a request corresponds to a real need, the Parties shall endeavour to ensure, as far as possible, the conditions which would make it possible to use the minority language in relations between those persons and the administrative authorities.**
- 3. The Parties undertake to guarantee the right of every person belonging to a national minority to be informed promptly, in a language which he or she understands, of the reasons for his or her arrest, and of the nature and**

cause of any accusation against him or her, and to defend himself or herself in this language, if necessary with the free assistance of an interpreter.

Paragraph 1

Language is one of the principal features of the identity of national minorities. The opportunity to use the native language in writing and orally in a free and unrestricted way is of special relevance in the areas of the state inhabited by substantial numbers of persons belonging to national minorities.

Provisions of Article 14 of the Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania enshrine the Lithuanian language as the state language (using Lithuanian in public life is an absolute requirement, whereas in their private life persons belonging to a national minority may use, whether orally or in writing, any language that they find acceptable). In addition, Article 37 of the Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania sets forth the provision that “citizens belonging to ethnic communities shall have the right to foster their language.”

Following the Third Report, the Law on the State Language of the Republic of Lithuania, which does not regulate unofficial communication of the population of Lithuania or the language of events of religious communities and of persons belonging to national communities, has been in effect to date (see Article 10(1) of the Second Report).

Article 1(2) of the draft Law on the State Language of the Republic of Lithuania submitted to the Seimas stipulates that “the Law shall not regulate the right of persons belonging to national minorities or ethnic groups or their communities established by other laws to foster their native language, neither the language of religious communities.”

Paragraph 2

Pursuant to Article 6 of the Law on the State Language of the Republic of Lithuania, heads, employees and officers of state and local government institutions, offices, services, as well as heads, employees and officers of other services and offices must know the state language according to the language knowledge categories established by the Government of the Republic of Lithuania. Article 7 of this Law provides that “heads of state and local government institutions, offices and organisations, as well as heads of communications, transportation, health and social security, police and law-enforcement services, trade and other institutions providing services to the population must ensure that the population be provided with services in the state language.” These requirements laid down in both articles apply to all aforementioned persons without exceptions, including persons belonging to national minorities. It should be noted that all citizens of Lithuania have all the facilities to exercise their cultural and political rights and opportunities. This is consistent with the principle of equality of human beings enshrined in Article 29 of the Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania, which stipulates that the rights of the human being may not be restricted, nor may he/she be granted any privileges on the grounds of gender, race, nationality, language, origin, social status, belief, convictions, or views.

The Law on Public Administration of the Republic of Lithuania establishes the right for natural persons to apply to administrative authorities and institutions (both municipal and on the state level) in their native language. Article 32(2) of this Law lays down the provision that when a person in whose respect the administrative

procedure has been initiated or other persons concerned do not speak or understand Lithuanian, an interpreter must be present at the administrative procedure. Enforcement of the Law on Public Administration of the Republic of Lithuania is governed by the Regulations for Examination of Requests of Persons and for their Servicing at Public Administration Authorities, Institutions and Other Entities of Public Administration approved by Resolution No 875 of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania of 22 August 2007 (as amended by Resolution No 913 of 26 August 2015) (hereinafter referred to as the Regulations).

Clause 22.1 of the Regulations provide that requests of persons must be done in the state language or must be supplemented with a translation into the state language certified according to the established procedure, except for cases specified in clause 24 and 25 of the Regulations.

Clause 24 of the Regulations provides that, with due consideration to the functions performed by the authority and the competence of the civil servants employed there, the head of the authority shall be entitled to establish in what other languages requests can also be accepted. Pursuant to clause 25 of the Regulations, written requests of persons may be accepted in a language other than the state language and other than the languages established under clause 24 of the Regulations if, pursuant to international legislation, the authority is contacted in writing by a foreign public authority or an international organisation.

Šalčininkai District Municipality and its authorities ensure the conditions for persons to use their minority language in relations between them and the administration and administrative authorities, and to submit requests by mail in Polish or Russian; however, all responses are provided exclusively in the state language.

Vilnius City Municipality ensures the conditions for persons to use four languages, viz. Lithuanian, English, Polish or Russian, in relations between them and Vilnius City Municipal Government Administration and for submitting requests in writing.

Visaginas Municipality ensures the conditions for representatives of the Russian minority to use the Russian language in relations between them and Visaginas Municipal Government Administration. The Russian minority is the largest national minority inhabiting the area of Visaginas Municipality. The Regulations for Examination of Requests of Persons and for their Servicing at Visaginas Municipal Government Administration has been amended by Order No JV-1309 of the Director of Visaginas Municipal Government Administration of 10 December 2015. The regulations provide that requests of persons can also be accepted in a language other than the state language. Oral requests can be submitted in a language which the person submitting the request and the civil servant providing services to such person understand. The Municipal Government Administration accepts requests of persons written in a language other than the state language.

Paragraph 3

After the Second Report there have been no changes to the legal regulation of Lithuania, which guarantees that persons who have no command of the state language have the right and the opportunity to use interpreting services in legal proceedings and in administrative proceedings, regulatory offence proceedings as

well as criminal and civil proceedings. Each arrested or detained person shall receive immediate explanation of the reason for detention or arrest in the language he or she understands (see Article 10(3) of the Second Report).

Based on the information provided by the Lithuanian Criminal Police Bureau in May 2016, police offices employ 47 translators providing translations to/from English, German, Russian, Polish and French. In addition, the Lithuanian Criminal Police Bureau and county police headquarters have translation service agreements with translation agencies the translators of which provide oral and written translations from/to the aforementioned and other languages.

According to the figures of the National Courts Administration, in 2015 the courts of the Republic of Lithuania employed 81 translators. The majority of translators workers for Vilnius City District Court (15 translators), Vilnius Regional Court (8 translators), the District Court of Vilnius Region (6 translators) and the District Court of Klaipėda City (6 translators).

ARTICLE 11

1. The Parties undertake to recognise that every person belonging to a national minority has the right to use his or her surname (patronym) and first names in the minority language and the right to official recognition of them, according to modalities provided for in their legal system.

2. The Parties undertake to recognise that every person belonging to a national minority has the right to display in his or her minority language signs, inscriptions and other information of a private nature visible to the public.

3. In areas traditionally inhabited by substantial numbers of persons belonging to a national minority, the Parties shall endeavour, in the framework of their legal system, including, where appropriate, agreements with other States, and taking into account their specific conditions, to display traditional local names, street names and other topographical indications intended for the public also in the minority language when there is sufficient demand for such indications.

In July 2013, the Minister of Justice asked the Constitution Court of the Republic of Lithuania (hereinafter referred to as the Constitutional Court) to explain several issues regarding the spelling of names and surnames. By its decision of 27 February 2014, the Constitutional Court explained certain provisions of Resolution No 14/98 of 21 October 1999 again and provided a wider interpretation of the possibility to spell names and surnames in passports of the Republic of Lithuania in non-Lithuanian characters. The Constitutional Court stated that the State Commission of the Lithuanian Language “<...> must provide the official report of whether the rules of spelling a person’s names and surname in the citizen’s passport of the Republic of Lithuania can be different from those established by clause 2 of Resolution *On the Spelling of Names and Surnames in the Citizen’s Passport of the Republic of Lithuania* of the Supreme Council of 31 January 1991, inter alia whether wording ‘in the state language’ provided in the constitutional provision that “a person’s names and surname must be written in the citizen’s passport in the state language” as well as wording ‘in Lithuanian characters’ can be

interpreted as allowing in certain cases to spell non-Lithuanian names and surnames in the citizen's passport of the Republic of Lithuania using not only the letters of the Lithuanian alphabet but also other letters of Latin origin to the extent they comply with the tradition of the Lithuanian language and violate neither the system nor the uniqueness of the Lithuanian language" (clause 7 of the statement of reasons).

Presently, Draft Law No XIIP-1654 amending Article 3.282 of the Civil Code of the Republic of Lithuania as well as related Draft Law No XIIP-1653 on Spelling of Names and Surnames in Documents of the Republic of Lithuania (containing the suggestion to write personal names on the main page of the passport) and alternative Draft Law No XIIP-1675 on Spelling of Names and Surnames in Documents of the Republic of Lithuania (containing a suggestion to write personal names in non-Lithuanian characters in the other entries section of the passport, whereas the main page of the passport would contain the personal names in Lithuanian characters) are registered at the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania.

Draft Law No XIIP-3796 amending Article 5 of Law No XII-1519 on Identity Card and Passport of the Republic of Lithuania submitted by the steering group of citizens of the Republic of Lithuania has also been registered at the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania. This draft contains a suggestion to write personal names in non-Lithuanian characters on the first page of the other entries section of the passport and on the reverse side of the identity card.

Legal regulation regarding information inscriptions of a private nature has not changed.

ARTICLE 12

- 1. The Parties shall, where appropriate, take measures in the fields of education and research to foster knowledge of the culture, history, language and religion of their national minorities and of the majority.**
- 2. In this context the Parties shall inter alia provide adequate opportunities for teacher training and access to textbooks, and facilitate contacts among students and teachers of different communities.**
- 3. The Parties undertake to promote equal opportunities for access to education at all levels for persons belonging to national minorities.**

Paragraph 1

In these areas of education and research an important role is played by the Ministry of Education and Science, the Ministry of Culture, the Department of Cultural Heritage under the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Lithuania, the Department of National Minorities under the Government of the Republic of Lithuania, Vilnius University (hereinafter referred to as VU), VU Institute of International Relations and Political Science, VU Centre of Oriental Studies, VU Religious Studies and Research Centre, Vytautas Magnus University, the Institute for Ethnic Studies of the Lithuanian Social Research Centre, as well as NGO – the Lithuanian Centre for Human Rights. The aforementioned institutions conduct or organise sociological and scientific research, participate in national and international projects, organise conferences, seminars and other events, as well as develop and implement educational programmes in this field. In addition, these institutions analyse legislation regulating the rights and freedoms of national minorities, collect information materials on their culture, history and religion, provide methodological

and consultancy assistance and bring together the potential of scientists, specialists and representatives of the public in this field.

National minority issues trigger high interest among scientists in many fields. Quite a few theses have been presented recently, viz. thesis *Early Drop-out of Roma Children from the Education System in Vilnius: Analysis of the Educational Field* by Vita Petrušauskaitė; thesis *Right to Housing* by Dovilė Gailiūtė analysing the right of Roma to housing; thesis *Linguistic Guarantees for Persons Belonging to National Minorities: The Implementation of International Standards in the Republic of Lithuania* by Aistė Račkauskaitė-Burneikienė, etc.

Paragraph 2

Higher education institutions in Lithuania, which implement university and non-university (college) study programmes train educators of all preschool institutions and schools of general education under First Cycle programmes (basic studies) that confer the Bachelor's degree in pedagogy and in the specific teaching subject as well as the professional qualification of an educator or a teacher.

Lithuanian higher education institutions deliver instruction in the Lithuanian language because all future teacher must be duly prepared for educational activity in any school which follows preschool, pre-primary, primary, basic and secondary education programmes in the state language, viz. Lithuanian. The Lithuanian University of Educational Sciences confers the qualification degree of a Bachelor in Polish, Russian and German philology and the professional qualification of a teacher. This ensures the opportunity to work as teachers of the national language at schools which instruct in the national minority language.

Professional development and certification of educators working in the language of a national minority at preschool institutions and schools of general education is arranged according to the general professional development and certification procedure for educators that operates in the Lithuanian education system. Based on international agreements, teachers have the opportunity to develop their qualification at foreign higher education institutions.

Publishing and supply of textbooks for schools of national minorities in Lithuania are arranged according to the general principles laid down in the provisions of the Description of the Procedure for the Assessment of the Compliance of General Education Textbooks and Teaching Aids with Legal Acts and Supply Thereof (approved by Order No V-2310 of the Minister of Education and Science of 30 November 2011) and the recently approved Description of the Procedure for the Assessment of Content of General Education Textbooks (approved by Order No VK-24 of the Director of the Education Development Centre of 29 February 2016). Original textbooks in the Polish and Russian native languages for grades 1-12 are published in Lithuania, their authors being representatives of Polish and Russian national communities, teachers and researchers working at Lithuanian universities and general education schools. To ensure successful education process, textbooks in 32 titles for teaching Polish as a native language and textbooks in 26 titles for teaching Russian as a native language have been developed and published. Digital teaching aids for teaching Belarusian, Russian and Polish as a native language have been developed for grades 9-12 in the framework of EU Structural Funds project. Textbooks of other teaching subjects designed to implement the primary and basic education curriculum are being translated from Lithuanian. 85 textbooks have been

translated and published in Polish and 71 textbooks have been translated and published in Russian.

As of 2001, schools order textbooks themselves whereas publishing houses publish them on the commission of school communities. Schools procure textbooks using the financial resources allocated from the “student’s basket”.

Paragraph 3

Article 41 of the Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania stipulates that education shall be compulsory for persons under the age of 16. Teaching at state and municipal schools of general education and at schools providing vocational training is free of charge. Higher education is available to all according to the abilities of each individual. School graduates with good grades may apply for state-funded studies at state higher education institutions (which follow university or non-university (college) study programmes).

The right and duty to study is stipulated in the 2011 Law on Education of the Republic of Lithuania. Article 24(3) of this Law provides that “the State shall guarantee each citizen of the Republic of Lithuania and each alien who has the right of permanent or temporary residence in the Republic of Lithuania: 1) primary, basic and secondary education; 2) access to higher education study programmes or vocational training programmes that result in the acquisition of the first qualification.”

The Law on Education also discusses the opportunity for learners belonging to national minorities to learn their native language or to study in their native language. This is provided by Article 28(7), viz. “If the community requests so, in areas where a national minority traditionally constitutes a substantial part of the population, the municipality shall guarantee the teaching in the national minority language or the learning of the national minority language”; also, by paragraph 2 of Article 30 *The right to receive instruction in the state language and in the native language*, viz. “General education and non-formal education schools shall create opportunities for learners belonging to national minorities to foster the national, ethnic and linguistic identity, to learn the native language, history and culture. At a general education and non-formal education school the regulations (statutes) of which (respecting the requests of parents (guardians, curators) and learners) provide for teaching of national minority language, the teaching process may be conducted or certain subjects may be taught in the national minority language. At such schools the subject of the Lithuanian language shall be a constituent part of the curriculum and the time allotted for teaching it shall not be less than the time allotted for teaching the native language.”

School graduation stage: *Matura* examinations

Upon completion of the secondary education programme, *Matura* examinations are held. These examinations perform two functions, viz. they are used for the certification of maturity (to receive a *Matura* attestation) and performing the selection for continuing education under university and college study programmes at Lithuanian higher education institutions.

To obtain a *Matura* attestation, learners must pass the examination in the Lithuanian language and literature and one other optional examination. Once a learner attains secondary education, he or she has substantial opportunities for

further activities, viz. he or she may study under vocational training programmes that have a prerequisite of secondary education, or may seek higher education in Lithuania, search for study opportunities abroad or engage in other activities. A graduate intending to participate in the selection process to get a student place funded by the state at a Lithuanian higher education institution must provide his or her outcomes according to the minimum criteria for learning outcomes set by the Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania. As of 2015, the minimum criteria for learning outcomes includes the *Matura* examination in a foreign language. As of 2016, the said criteria includes the *Matura* examination in mathematics. However, the aforementioned examinations are not mandatory in order to obtain a *Matura* attestation.

The *Matura* examination in the Polish, Russian or Belarusian language is included into the list of optional examinations. Each school is free to decide whether the *Matura* examination in the Polish language is mandatory, pursuant to clause 4 of the Description of the Procedure for Organising and Holding *Matura* Examinations, which provides that the school principal shall make a decision aligned with the school board regarding the *Matura* examination in the language (Belarusian, Polish, Russian, German) that was taught as the native language before 10 January of the current year.

Information provided by the National Examination Centre about the outcomes of the *Matura* examination in the native language

Table 11 shows that the number of learners selecting to take school *Matura* examinations (hereinafter referred to SME) in the Polish or Russian language as the native language remained rather stable over the last three years. Achievements of learners with regard to the percentage of learners who passed examinations and the percentage of learners who received the top grades showed very slight changes over the last three years. It can be observed that in 2015 the number of learners who passed the SME in the Russian language as the native language grew by over 4% in comparison with 2014, whereas the percentage of learners who passed this examination with the top grades of 9 or 10 grew over the last three years. In recent years, the percentage of learners who passed the SME in the Polish language as the native language has always exceeded 98%. The number of learners who passed this examination with the grades of 9 or 10 grew by over 8% as compared to 2013 and 2014, and the level of 35% achieved in 2014 and 2015 has been preserved.

Table 11. Selection of the school *Matura* examination in the Polish or Russian language as the native language and outcomes over the period of 2013-2015

Examination	Number of learners who took the examination	Percentage of learners who passed the examination	Percentage of learners who received the top grades (9 or 10)
2013			
Polish language	1,081	100	26.7
Russian language	591	100	25

2014			
Polish language	1,089	98.5	35
Russian language	453	94.5	30
2015			
Polish language	943	99.5	35
Russian language	485	98.6	32

About the *Matura* examination in the Lithuanian language and literature

The State seeks to ensure the required level of teaching the state language so that all learners would have equal opportunities to seek further goals of education or employment in Lithuania. Article 38 of the Law amending the Law on Education of the Republic of Lithuania passed in 2011 stipulates that testing of learning achievements according to general education programmes (*Matura* examinations, credit-tests and other ways of testing learning achievements) will be carried out in compliance with programmes for testing of learning achievements approved by the Minister of Education and Science and descriptions of the procedure for organising and implementing the testing of learning achievements as well as studies of learners' achievements. Such testing of learning achievements shall be identical for learners of all schools regardless of the language of instruction and without prejudice to the principle of equal opportunities defined in Article 5 of this Law. All schools of general education shall ensure the command of the Lithuanian language according to the general programme approved by the Minister of Education and Science (basic education achievements testing and *Matura* examinations). Pursuant to this Article, a uniform secondary education programme of the Lithuanian language and literature has been introduced for all learners in Lithuania and the *Matura* examination based on the uniform examination programme has been foreseen, starting in 2013. Prior to 2011, there were two secondary education programmes, viz. Lithuanian as the native language and Lithuanian as the state language; also, there were two examination programmes.

Matura examination programmes were approved by Order No V-1197 of the Minister of Education and Science on 1 July 2011. On 9 May 2012, one of these programmes, viz. the programme of the *Matura* examination in the Lithuanian language and literature, was adjusted by Order No V-776 of the Minister providing for a transition period of 8 years during which different evaluation standards shall be applied for learners from schools with a minority language as the language of instruction even though a uniform *Matura* examination of the Lithuanian language and literature shall be taken.

ARTICLE 13

1. Within the framework of their education systems, the Parties shall recognise that persons belonging to a national minority have the right to set up and to manage their own private educational and training establishments.

2. The exercise of this right shall not entail any financial obligation for the Parties.

Paragraph 1

Vilnius has a private school of national minorities offering state education, viz. Marina Mižigurskaja Secondary School. Jewish Secondary School Menachem House operated until 2013. Klaipėda non-state special basic school *Svetliaciok* (operating since 1991) with Russian and Lithuanian as languages of instruction operates in Klaipėda.

Lithuania also has non-formal schools with the language of instruction other than Lithuanian. Some national minorities such as Armenians, Belarusians, Ukrainians, Germans, Jews, Poles, Latvians, Karaites, Tartars and Greeks have their Saturday / Sunday schools. In the school years between 2011 and 2016, there were over 40 such schools (see Table 18). These schools provide the opportunity to learn the native language and introduce learners to their national culture and traditions as well as cultural heritage.

Table 20. Saturday / Sunday schools

Item No	Name of school
ARMENIAN SUNDAY SCHOOLS – 3	
1.	Sunday school of the Armenian Community of Kaunas
2.	Sunday school of VAN Armenian Community of Klaipėda
AZERBAIJANI SUNDAY SCHOOL – 1	
1.	Sunday school of <i>Azeris</i> Azerbaijani Community
BELARUSIAN SUNDAY SCHOOLS – 2	
1.	<i>Krynička</i> Belarusian Sunday School
2.	Belarusian class of <i>Gimtoji mokykla</i> Visaginas Centre of Ethnic Communities
ESTONIAN SUNDAY SCHOOL – 1	
1.	Sunday school of the Lithuanian Estonian Society
GREEK SUNDAY SCHOOL – 2	
1.	Sunday school of <i>Patrida</i> Lithuanian Greek Community
2.	Sunday school of <i>Pontos</i> Greek Community in Lithuania
KARAITE SUNDAY SCHOOL – 1	
1.	Sunday school of the Lithuanian Karaite Cultural Community
KAZAKH SUNDAY SCHOOL – 1	

1.	Sunday school of <i>Nurstaule</i> Kazakh Community
LATVIAN SUNDAY SCHOOLS – 2	
1.	Sunday school of <i>Sakta</i> Latvian Society of Akmené
2.	Sunday school of the Latvian Association of Vilnius
POLISH SUNDAY SCHOOLS – 12	
1.	Sunday school at <i>Tolerancija</i> Non-formal Education Centre of Alytus
2.	Polish Sunday school of Druskininkai
3.	Saturday school of the Kaunas branch of the Lithuanian Polish Union
4.	<i>Plomyczek</i> Sunday school of the Klaipėda branch of the Lithuanian Polish Union
5.	Sunday school of the Šilutė branch of the Lithuanian Polish Union
6.	Polish Sunday school of the Lithuanian Polish Union in Švenčionėliai
7.	Polish Sunday school of the Lithuanian Polish Union in Švenčionys
8.	Usmiech Saturday school of the Zarasai branch of the Lithuanian Polish Union in Turmantas
9.	Polish language school at the Polish Society in Kėdainiai
10.	Polish class of <i>Gimtoji mokykla</i> Visaginas Centre of Ethnic Communities
11.	Polish Sunday school in Naujoji Vilnia
12.	<i>Kogucik</i> ('Rooster') Sunday aesthetic education studio for Polish children at M. Syrokomla Secondary School
RUSSIAN SUNDAY SCHOOLS – 4	
1.	Public Institution Russian Sunday School of Alytus Youth Centre
2.	Russian Sunday school in Kėdainiai
3.	Public Institution Russian Sunday School
4.	Slavonic Folklore Centre of Vilnius
ROMANI SUNDAY SCHOOL – 1	
1.	Panevėžys Children Day Occupation Centre
TARTAR SUNDAY SCHOOLS – 4	
1.	Sunday school of the Tartars of Klaipėda
2.	Sunday school of <i>Ilsu</i> Folklore Group of the Tartar Cultural Centre
3.	Sunday school of the Lithuanian Tartar Community of Vilnius region
4.	Tartar class of <i>Gimtoji mokykla</i> Visaginas Centre of Ethnic Communities

UKRAINIAN SUNDAY SCHOOLS – 3	
1.	<i>Rodyna</i> Ukrainian Sunday school
2.	Ukrainian Sunday school in Vilnius
3.	Ukrainian class of <i>Gimtoji mokykla</i> Visaginas Centre of Ethnic Communities
UZBEK SUNDAY SCHOOLS – 1	
1.	Sunday school of <i>Pachtakor</i> Lithuanian Uzbek Community
GERMAN SUNDAY SCHOOLS – 3	
1.	Sunday school for children at the German Cultural and Education Centre
2.	Sunday school for children at the German Cultural Society in Kaunas
3.	German class of <i>Gimtoji mokykla</i> Visaginas Centre of Ethnic Communities
JEWISH SUNDAY SCHOOLS – 2	
1.	Sunday school of the Jewish Community of Kaunas
2.	Sunday school of the Jewish Community of Klaipėda
Total:	42

Source: Information provided by the Department of National Minorities and Lithuanians Living Abroad under the Government of the Republic of Lithuania

Paragraph 2

The Ministry of Culture has fostered the setting up of new Saturday and Sunday schools and has attempted to enable representatives of all nations living in Lithuania to learn their native language and to receive instruction in the native language. The Ministry has considered organisational and financial support for these schools one of its priorities and has allocated over EUR 50,000 to them over the period of 2011-2016. Support for Saturday / Sunday schools of national minorities also came from the Ministry of Education and Science with the allocation of approximately EUR 10,000 in 2011 to 2016.

In 2012-2014, the Ministry of Culture supported, and since 2015 the Department of National Minorities under the Government of the Republic of Lithuania has been supporting Sunday school festivals of Lithuanian national minorities. In 2016, such festival will be held for the 14th time already.

ARTICLE 14

1. The Parties undertake to recognise that every person belonging to a national minority has the right to learn his or her minority language.

2. In areas inhabited by persons belonging to national minorities traditionally or in substantial numbers, if there is sufficient demand, the Parties shall endeavour to ensure, as far as possible and within the framework of their education system, that persons belonging to those minorities have adequate opportunities for being taught the minority language and for receiving instructions in this language.

3. Paragraph 2 of this article shall be implemented without prejudice to the learning of the official language or the teaching in this language.

Paragraphs 1 and 2

See Article 12(3) regarding the opportunity to learn the minority language or to receive instruction in the minority language.

Schools that instruct in the languages of national minorities are located in areas densely populated by substantial numbers of representatives of national minorities. Schools with Polish as the language of instruction are located in Vilnius and in Vilnius, Šalčininkai, Trakai and Švenčionys district municipalities, whereas schools with Russian as the language of instruction are located in Vilnius, Klaipėda and Visaginas, one school is located in Kaunas, one school is in Šiauliai and one school is in Mažeikiai, and several schools are located in Vilnius, Šalčininkai, Trakai and Švenčionys district municipalities accordingly. Schools of national minorities, which provide state-standard education, are registered with the Legal Entities Register (just as any other legal entity) and with the Register of Education and Research Establishments, which provides information in the website at www.aikos.smm.lt (please note that in some cases schools listed in the Register may not have any students in a given year; however, if there is demand, they may start teaching activities next year; see Tables 21 and 22 and provided explanations).

The number of schools and their pupils changes regularly and has been declining for over 15 years already. The number of schools of general education teaching national minority pupils where the majority of subjects are taught in the minority language as well as the number of pupils at such schools has been steadily declining; however, over the recent years the decline has been not as rapid as the decline in the number of schools which instruct in Lithuanian and the number of pupils at such schools (see Tables 21 and 22). This has been influenced by the amended regulations for the setting up of the network of schools following formal education programmes. More favourable conditions has been provided for national minority schools, viz. the requirement for the number of pupils has been lowered so as to allow small village secondary schools and schools located in the outskirts of cities and in the periphery of the country and having 30 pupils in grades 11-12 to become gymnasiums. If a village has two schools with different languages of instruction, such schools can follow the secondary education programme and become gymnasiums, provided 20 pupils study under the said programme.

The Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania established by the Law on Education that the secondary school will cease its existence as a type as of 1 September 2015; however, having considered the progress of the reorganisation of the school network, the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania decided to extend the existence of the secondary school as a type until 1 September 2017.

The optimisation of the school network of the Republic of Lithuania aims at providing conditions for the development of quality mandatory and universal education and increasing its availability for reasonable prices that the state and municipalities can afford. Efforts are made to ensure that the network of general education schools and vocational training institutions is the consistently operating and continuously regenerating system of state and private schools that ensure their availability and share the responsibility for the quality of education.

Table 21. Number of pupils studying in different languages of instruction

School year	2010/ 2011	2012/ 2013	2013/20 14	2014/ 2015	2015/ 2016*
Total number of pupils	415,873	373,874	357,530	344,721	335,202
Including pupils studying in the following language of instruction					
Lithuania	385,652	346,194	330,449	317,772	308382
Russian	16,293	14,836	14,347	14,435	14,442
Polish	13,393	12,265	11,884	11,563	11,418
Belarusia	173	177	180	176	171
English	286	301	558	637	631
French	76	101	112	138	158
Percentage					
Lithuania	92.7	92.6	92.4	92.2	92.0
Russian	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.2	4.3
Polish	3.2	3.3	3.3	3.4	3.4
Belarusia	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.05
English	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.2
French	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.04

Table 22. Number of schools

School year	2010/ 2011	2012/ 2013	2013/ 2014	2014/ 2015	2015/ 2016*
Total	1,321	1,242	1,208	1,200	1,193
Schools with one language of instruction	1,274	1,190	1,159	1,158	1,153
Lithuanian	1,179	1,106	1,073	1,067	1,065¹
Russian	36	31	32	33	33
Polish	56	50	50	54	51 ²
Belarusian	1	1	1	1	1
English	1	1	2	2	2
French	1	1	1	1	1
Schools with several	47	52	49	42	40

languages of instruction					
Lithuanian and Russian	18	21	14	13	11
Lithuanian and Polish	12	13	14	10	10 ³
Russian and Polish	10	11	11	9	9
Lithuanian, Russian and Polish	5	5	6	6	6 ⁴
Lithuanian and English	2	2	4	4	4

Sources:

Information provided by Statistics Lithuania;

*Information about pupils and registered schools, including explanations, provided by the Ministry of Education and Science:

¹ 12 schools, which do not have pupils studying under the general education programmes on a permanent basis (sanatorium and hospital schools)

² One school, which does not have pupils studying under the general education programmes

³ Two schools, which do not have pupils studying under the general education programmes

⁴ One school, which does not have pupils studying under the general education programmes (sanatorium school)

Financing of general education schools that instruct in national minority languages

Funds allocated from the state budget to schools of general education established by municipalities are calculated on the basis of the methodology for the calculation of the number of reference pupils. The methodology for the calculation of the number of reference pupils determines the amount of funds required for educating one child according to the type of school, the education programme (grades 1-4, grades 5-8, grades 9-10, grades 11-12), location (whether the school is situated in an urban or a rural area), pupils with special needs, pupils of national minority schools and other indicators. This methodology provides for a 20% higher “student’s basket” for a pupil at general education schools of national minorities than for a pupil attaining education at a school instructing in the Lithuanian language. The funds of the “student’s basket” are spent on salaries for educators, professional development of teachers, for the acquisition of textbooks as well as visual and technical aids, and for the financing of other activities.

ARTICLE 15

The Parties shall create the conditions necessary for the effective participation of persons belonging to national minorities in cultural, social and economic life and in public affairs, in particular those affecting them.

Participation in political life

Lithuanian legislation ensures the right to democratic elections: all citizens of Lithuania, regardless of their nationality, race or beliefs, have the right to elect and be elected to the office of the President of the Republic of Lithuania, member of the Seimas, member of the European Parliament and a municipal councillor. Article 3 of the Law on Elections to Municipal Councils of the Republic of Lithuania stipulates the right to equal suffrage: 'all candidates for municipal councillor, whether nominated or self-nominated, shall be equal'. Thus, it should be stated that representatives of all nationalities may exercise the right provided in the Law on Elections to Municipal Councils of the Republic of Lithuania to nominate themselves for municipal councillors and be elected to the municipal council.

It should be noted that any national of an EU country who has declared their place of residence and has a permanent permit to reside in Lithuania has been entitled to elect and to be elected a municipal councillor since 30 December 2003. This is fully in line with the provisions of the Maastricht Treaty. These rights are exercised by foreigners living in Lithuania.

Representatives of national minorities participated in every elections between 2009 and 2015 (European Parliament elections in 2009 and 2014; municipal council elections in 2011 and 2015; Seimas elections in 2012) (see Table 21).

Currently, three political parties of national minorities are active in the Lithuanian political life. These are the Electoral Action of Poles in Lithuania, the Lithuanian Russian Union and the political party Russian Alliance.

Two ethnically-based parties represent the Russian national minority, i.e. the Lithuanian Russian Union set up in 1995 in Vilnius and the political party Russian Alliance set up in 2002 in Klaipėda.

The Electoral Action of Poles in Lithuania was registered in 1994. The Lithuanian Polish People's Party was also established in 2002. It took part in the municipal council elections in 2002 and 2007, and elections to the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania in 2004. However it carries out no activity any longer.

In the municipal council elections of 2011, the Electoral Action of Poles in Lithuania and political party Russian Alliance ran on a joint platform. The Bloc of Valdemar Tomaševski, a coalition of the Electoral Action of Poles and the Russian Alliance, received 61 mandates, including 22 seats on the Council of the Šalčininkai District Municipality, 19 on the Council of the Vilnius District Municipality, 11 on the Council of the Vilnius City Municipality, 5 in the Trakai District Municipality and 4 in the Švenčionys District Municipality. The Electoral Action of Poles took four more seats – two in the Širvintos District Municipality and Visaginas Municipality – and the political party Russian Alliance took three mandates in the Klaipėda City Municipality.

The Lithuanian Russian Union, the other party of the Russian national minority, won two seats in the Klaipėda City Municipality and one seat in the Visaginas Municipality in the municipal council elections of 2011.

In the elections to the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania of 2012, the Electoral Action of Poles in Lithuania and political party Russian Alliance also ran on a joint platform. The Electoral Action of Poles in Lithuania got over the 5% electoral threshold and took 5 mandates under the electoral list and 3 more in the single-seat constituencies. These parties were part of the governing coalition for half of the Seimas term of office. Jaroslavas Narkevičius took the office of the Deputy

Spokesperson of the Seimas, Leonardas Talmontas served as the Chair of the Human Rights Committee and Michalas Mackevičius was the Vice Chair of the National Security and Defence Committee.

The Bloc of Valdemar Tomaševski, a coalition of the Electoral Action of Poles and the Russian Alliance, took part in the elections to the European Parliament held on 25 May 2014. Valdemar Tomaševski, the Chair of the Electoral Action of Poles, was elected to the European Parliament.

The Bloc of Valdemar Tomaševski, a coalition of the Electoral Action of Poles and the Russian Alliance, received 68 mandates during the municipal elections of 2015, including 20 seats on the Council of the Šalčininkai District Municipality, 20 on the Council of the Vilnius District Municipality, 10 on the Council of the Vilnius City Municipality, 5 on the Council of the Švenčionys District Municipality, 5 on the Council of the Trakai District Municipality and 3 on the Council of the Visaginas Municipality. The Electoral Action of Poles in Lithuania took another seat on the Council of the Širvintos District Municipality.

As in the municipal council elections of 2011, the Lithuanian Russian Union took 3 mandates in 2015: one candidate of the Lithuanian Russian Union was elected to the Council of the Visaginas City Municipality and two candidates to the Council of the Klaipėda City Municipality.

Table 23. Breakdown of candidates elected in the elections of 2009–2015 by nationality

Nationality	European Parliament elections of 2009	Municipal elections of 2011	Seimas elections of 2012	European Parliament elections of 2014	Municipal council elections of 2015
English					1
Belarusian		3			3
Italian		1			
Polish	1	71	7	1	55
Lithuanian	10	1,355		9	992
Moldavian		1			
Russian		27	2		20
Tartar					1
Udmurt		1			
Ukrainian		3			3
Jewish		1	1		
N/A	1	64		1	397
Total:	12	1,526	141	11	1,473

Source: *Data of the Central Electoral Commission of the Republic of Lithuania*

According to Article 5(3) of the Law on Political Parties of the Republic of Lithuania, 'in order to establish a political party it shall be necessary that the political party would have not less than two thousand founders in the Republic of Lithuania'.

As stipulated in Article 8(8) of the Law on Political Parties of the Republic of Lithuania, 'each year but no later than by 1 March and by 1 October, a political party must, in accordance with the procedure laid down by the Government of the Republic of Lithuania, submit to the Ministry of Justice a list of its members'.

According to Article 9(5) of this law, "If the number of members left in a political party is less than required for founding a political party, the political party or the Ministry of Justice must, within 30 days after having established in accordance with the procedure laid down in Article 8(8) of this Law that the number of political party members does not satisfy the requirements of this Law, notify the administrator of the Register of Legal Entities about such decrease in accordance with the procedure laid down by the regulations of the Register of Legal Entities. A political party shall be liquidated in accordance with the procedure laid down by the Civil Code, if within six months after the decrease in the number of members the members of the political party did not decide to reorganise or reform the political party."

Currently, only three parties of national minorities comply with the requirements of the Law on Political Parties of the Republic of Lithuania. Since 2012, the list of members of the Electoral Action of Poles in Lithuania has increased from 1,280 members to 2,207 members, the membership of the Lithuanian Russian Union has gone up from 1,186 to 2,044 members and the number of members of the political party Russian Alliance rose from 1,039 to 2,104 members.

Table 24. Number of members of the political parties of national minorities

Party	Number of party members in 2012	Number of party members in 2013	Number of party members on 1 October 2014	Number of party members on 1 October 2015	Number of party members on 1 March 2016
Electoral Action of Poles in Lithuania	1,280	1,284	1,520	2,173	2,207
Lithuanian Russian Union	1,186	1,082	1,570	1,534	2,044
Political party Russian Alliance	1,037	1,007	1,022	1,107	2,104

Representatives of national minorities play an active role in the country's political life and have considerable influence on the decision-making on issues important to national minorities living in Lithuania. Therefore, representation of national minorities is twofold in Lithuania: through the parties of national minorities (ethnically-based) and through other political parties operating in Lithuania.

National minorities are also represented by the Council of National Communities on the issues of coordination of the Lithuanian national minority

policies. It is an advisory body under the Department of National Minorities under the Government of the Republic of Lithuania. By involving representatives of national minorities into the decision-making processes, the Council acts in accordance with the principles of international law, Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania, laws of the Republic of Lithuania, other legal acts and Regulations of the Council of National Communities.

The Council of National Communities was set up on 31 January 1991 under the Department of Nationalities under the Government of the Republic of Lithuania. Eusejus Jacovskis was elected the first Chair of the Council in 1991. In 2009–2012, the Council of National Communities was chaired by Mahir Hemzeyev, a representative of the national community of Azerbaijanis. On 10 January 2013, Lucia Bartkienė, a representative of the Romanian community, was elected the Chair of the Council of National Communities who was replaced by Galina Miškinienė, a representative of the Tartar community, on 3 April 2013. In 2015, Gunta Rone, a representative of the Latvian community, was elected the Chair of the Council of National Communities for the term of office of four years.

The Council is composed of persons elected by each national minority united in an organisation and having the articles of associations registered with the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Lithuania or the Centre of Registers. Representatives to the Council are elected depending on the number of national minorities, i.e. if population of national minority exceed 100,000 people across the country, three representatives of that national minority organisations are elected to the Council. National minorities with a total membership of 10,000–100,000 persons across Lithuania elect two representatives, and national minorities with less than 10,000 members across the Republic of Lithuania elect one representative.

In 2015, 25 members were elected to the Council of National Communities and they represented national communities of Poles, Russians, Belarusians, Ukrainians, Jews, Karaites, Germans, Roma, Latvians, Estonians, Hungarians, Romanians, Tartars, Armenians, Azerbaijanis, Greeks, Chechens, Uzbeks and Lebanese.

Members of the Council are invited to working groups which draft legal acts related to the protection of national minorities, act as experts and advisors on the issues of national minorities of strategic importance, take care of the preservation of the national identity of national minorities, monitor, according to their competence, the implementation of laws regulating the rights of national minorities in the Republic of Lithuania, foster national tolerance, eliminate racism and xenophobia, promote discussions on these issues and also seek to involve Lithuanian residents belonging to national minorities in the public and cultural life of the country, analyse draft laws and other legal acts dealing with the issues relevant to national minorities and put forward comments and proposals regarding their content to the committees of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania, President of the Republic of Lithuania, Government of the Republic of Lithuania, Department of National Minorities under the Government of the Republic of Lithuania, municipalities and other authorities.

Participation in cultural activities

The culture of national minorities of Lithuania is an integral part of the Lithuanian culture. National minorities play an active role in the public and cultural life of the country, thereby contributing to the integrity of society and preservation of harmony within it. National minorities support their ethnic culture by taking part in amateur art activities, setting up song, dance and folklore groups, choirs, show groups, theatres and clubs, organising festivals, competitions, culture days.

Over 260 non-governmental organisations operate in Lithuania. They are culture, education, vocational, charity and other associations. Non-governmental organisations cover various age groups and professions (writers, journalists, businesspeople, doctors, lawyers, etc.).

International folklore festivals *Pokrovskije kolokola*, *Kwiaty polskie*, *Teatro Idos*, which are financed by the state, are held every year. *V krugu druzej*, a festival of art groups of national communities, celebration of the International Roma Day, *Kupalle*, a traditional Belarus festival, *Znad Issy* and *Dzwięcz Polska Piesni*, festivals of Polish culture, *Bloom of Eastern Lithuania*, an art festival of pupils of eastern Lithuania, *Maj nad Wilią*, the days of poetry of Poles in Lithuania, European Days of Jewish Culture and others also attract a lot of attention.

Lithuania aims to create equal conditions for various social groups to participate in cultural activities and develop social and cultural capital. To that end, a number of programmes have been approved and implemented:

The Programme for Modernisation of Cultural Centres 2007–2020 provides for the facilitation of cultural activities of municipal cultural centres;

The Strategy for the Development of the National Minority Policy until 2015 provided for the integration of persons living in Lithuania that belong to national minorities into the Lithuanian society by providing appropriate conditions for them to live, work and study in Lithuania, to preserve their culture, identity and ensure the harmony of national relations;

The Regional Cultural Development Programme 2012–2020 provides for the facilitation of the expression of human creativity and complete personal development in regions, diversity, dissemination and accessibility of culture as the foundation of social and economic progress in the region, development of civil self-awareness by fostering the exclusivity and attractiveness of regions;

The National Youth Policy Development Programme 2011–2019 provides for the creation of the environment (conditions) favourable for the valuable life and self-expression of youth in Lithuania;

The Library Renovation and Modernisation Programme is aimed at ensuring access to knowledge and occupation for people in Lithuania; removing disparities between the information infrastructure in urban and rural areas and providing equal opportunities to all residents to have access to information technologies to meet their social and public needs; creating the necessary conditions at libraries for collection, storage and public presentation of items of national cultural and scientific heritage, ensuring the accessibility of library stock.

To ensure that the funds available under the EU Financial Framework 2014–2020 are used efficiently, the National Progress Programme 2014–2020 was drawn up providing for a targeted improvement of accessibility of all cultural sectors and

expansion of quality cultural services to all social and age groups. This entails striking the balance between cultural services and creativity (bridging the gap between the centre and periphery) throughout Lithuania by investing into the infrastructure of the network of Lithuanian cultural institutions in regions, improving the management of institutions which provide public cultural services and spurring the development of new services, products and initiatives.

Participation in economic life

Representatives of national minorities play an active role in the economic life of the country. For instance, the Businesswomen Organisation of Lithuanian Ethnic Groups, financed by the Government of the United States of America, organised English language courses in 2014–2015 entitled Business English for Migrant Women Leaders and aimed at encouraging people to integrate into society, especially by developing their entrepreneurship and innovativeness.

Another project which involved the Businesswomen Organisation of Lithuanian Ethnic Groups was the international workshop INTEGRA: Institutional Capacity Building of NGOs Working with Migrant Women. This project sought to address a number of issues important to migrant women and provide answers to their questions. The project discussed the issues of xenophobia, racism, discrimination in the workplace and society and looked for ways to promote tolerance and intercultural dialogue. Women who are leaders of Lithuanian non-governmental organisations took part in training.

The Polish and Lithuanian Chamber of Commerce, a bilateral organisation for economic cooperation between Lithuania and Poland, was set up in 2015. It collects information for its members on business opportunities in both countries, cooperates with organisations and persons in charge of business management and development, organises conferences and thematic events. Its board also includes the Poles of Lithuania.

ARTICLE 16

The Parties shall refrain from measures which alter the proportions of the population in areas inhabited by persons belonging to national minorities and are aimed at restricting the rights and freedoms flowing from the principles enshrined in the present framework Convention.

The Republic of Lithuania refrains from actions which alter the proportions of the population in municipalities inhabited by persons belonging to national minorities and from restricting the rights of such persons.

No territorial reorganisation of the administrative units of the territory of the Republic of Lithuania were made between 2011 and 2016.

Prior to each elections to the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania and to municipal councils, the Central Electoral Commission decides on the division of the territory of a municipality into polling districts. Prior to the elections to municipal councils held in 2015, the Central Electoral Commission altered boundaries of the polling districts so as to equalise the number of voters, which has been changed due to demographic reasons. Major alterations were related to major cities, i.e. Vilnius, Kaunas and Šiauliai. These alterations did not have any negative impact on the

political representation of national minorities (more information about the participation in political activity is provided in Article 15).

ARTICLE 17

1. The Parties undertake not to interfere with the right of persons belonging to national minorities to establish and maintain free and peaceful contacts across frontiers with persons lawfully staying in other States, in particular those with whom they share an ethnic, cultural, linguistic or religious identity, or a common cultural heritage.

2. The Parties undertake not to interfere with the right of persons belonging to national minorities to participate in the activities of non-governmental organisations, both at the national and international levels.

Paragraph 1

As a Member State and a member of the Schengen Area, Lithuania ensures the right of persons belonging to national minorities to establish and maintain free and peaceful contacts across frontiers with persons lawfully staying in other States with whom they share an ethnic, cultural, linguistic or religious identity, or a common cultural heritage.

Representatives of the Estonian, Greek, Latvian, Polish and Hungarian national minorities and of other members of the Schengen Area have no obstacles to freely communicate with persons residing in states that are members of the Schengen Area. Lithuanian Poles actively participate in various cultural and sports festivals held in Poland, e.g. in the World Games of Poles, the annual festival of Polish culture *Festiwal Kultury Kresowej* held in Mragowo, Poland, etc.

Other national minorities also participate in international festivals, cultural or sports events and congresses of their nationals. For example, in July 2012, HAYRENIK Armenian Group from Kaunas participated in *Im Hayastan* International Armenian Dance and Song Festival held in Armenia; in 2014, *Ilsu* Folklore Group of the Tartar Cultural Centre participated in an international children's festival in Turkey organised to commemorate the National Sovereignty Day; BIRLIK Karaite Folklore Group is a participant of festivals of national minorities of Poland which has an active Karaite community, for example, in 2012, Karaite children's group participated in the festivities commemorating the Karaite Day in Szczecin, Poland, etc.

Since Lithuania became a member of the Schengen Area, the conditions for representatives of the Russian, Belarusian and Ukrainian national minorities to communicate with persons living in the Russian Federation, Belarus and Ukraine have not changed. Representatives of these national minorities also participate in international festivals and in other events held across frontiers.

Paragraph 2

National minorities of the Republic of Lithuania have the right to participate in the activities of international non-governmental organisations without limitation:

The Baltic Chechnyan Confederation is a member of the Council of Ethno-cultural Chechen Organisations and Associations in Europe. Eminat Saijeva, the chairwoman of the Confederation, is also a member of *Peace and Law* International Chechen Human Rights Organisation;

Mahir Hemzeyev, the chairman of the Community of Lithuanian Azerbaijanis, is a member of the World Azerbaijani Coordination Council, a member of the Executive Committee of the European Azeri Congress, and the vice-president of the Baltic Azeri Congress;

The Lithuanian Estonian Society is a member of the Estonian World Council and a member of the Estonian Cultural Council. The Association of Businesswomen of Lithuanian Ethnic Groups is a member of international organisation European Network of Migrant Women, while Liia Urman, the chairwoman of the Association, is a member of this organisation.

Kurier Wilenski, a daily in Polish published in Lithuania, is a member of MIDAS European Association of Daily Newspapers in Minority and Regional Languages;

The Society of Teachers of Polish Schools in Lithuania is a member of the World Polish Education Congress;

The Lithuanian Polish Union is a member of the Union of European Polish Communities;

The Lithuanian Roma Community is a member of the International Roma Union;

Lucia Bartkienė, the chairwoman of *Dačija* Lithuanian Romanian Cultural Society, is a member of the Congress of Romanian Spirituality and the Coordination Committee of the World Moldovan Diasporas. Alongside other members of the Association of Businesswomen of Lithuanian Ethnic Groups, members of *Dačija* Lithuanian Romanian Cultural Society are members of international organisation European Network of Migrant Women;

The Stefan Batory Hungarian Culture Society of Lithuania is a member of the Council of the Association of Hungarian Societies of Western European Countries;

In 2015, Adas Jakubauskas, the chairman of the Lithuanian Tartar Communities Union, was elected a deputy General Secretary of the World Congress of Crimean Tartars;

The Lithuanian Ukrainian Society and the Association of Baltic Ukrainians are members of the Ukrainian World Congress;

The Association of Baltic Ukrainians is also a member of the Ukrainian World Coordinating Council;

Božena Karvelienė, the chairwoman of the Roma Integration House and Public Institution Romane Women, is a member of the Union of European Roma Women;

Latvian Association of Vilnius is a member of the Organisational Committee for World Latvian Associations;

The Ukrainian Society of Vilnius is a member of the Ukrainian World Congress and the Ukrainian World Coordinating Council. Natalija Šertvytienė, the chairwoman of the Ukrainian Society of Vilnius and the Association of Lithuanian Ukrainian Physicians, is a member of the World Federation of Ukrainian Women's Organisations.

Galina Miškinienė, the chairwoman of the Tartar Community of Vilnius County, is a member of the National Committee of the International Association of Slavists and a member of the National Committee of Belarusists.

The right to participate in the activities of national and international non-governmental organisations without limitation is enshrined in Article 35 of the Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania and the Law on Associations of the Republic of Lithuania (see Article 17(2) of Part II of the Second Report).

ARTICLE 18

- 1. The Parties shall endeavour to conclude, where necessary, bilateral and multilateral agreements with other States, in particular neighbouring States, in order to ensure the protection of persons belonging to the national minorities concerned.**
- 2. Where relevant, the Parties shall take measures to encourage transfrontier co-operation.**

(See Article II)