

**COST Action CA17114**

**Transdisciplinary solutions to  
cross sectoral disadvantage  
in youth (YOUNG-IN)**

**WG5**



**Working paper series**

# **Youth-oriented policies beyond ideal-typical welfare regimes in Europe:**

## **Situation and initiatives from the perspective of youth transition regimes**

### **Lithuania**

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This WP series contributes to the main aims of YOUNG-IN and WG5 (Knowledge-based social investment policy for youth) by aiming to:

- 1) Describe today's situation of youth in our nine case countries based on characteristics perceived to be the most relevant by the literature of Youth Transition Regimes (YTR);
- 2) Give an overview of the main policy initiatives targeted at youth within key policy areas relevant for YTR.

This WP is structured as follows: Part I gives a harmonised comparative overview of the existing situation in the analysed nine countries in comparison with EU28 (the analyses cover period before Brexit, thus kept EU28 instead of EU27). Part II consists of nine chapters about youth-oriented policy initiatives in those countries in two recent decades across policy areas especially relevant for youth (education, labour market, social inclusion, participation and housing). Part III concludes with an executive summary that compares the countries' youth-oriented policy directions in the modified framework of YTR.

The structure and authorship of respective chapters are as follows (current chapter highlighted):

- Part I: A comparative introduction of situation of youth, Triin Lauri
- Part II: Country reports on youth oriented policies:
  - Youth-oriented policies in Bulgaria (BG), Veneta Krasteva
  - Youth-oriented policies in Switzerland (CH), Berihun Wagaw, Matthias Drilling, Semhar Negash
  - Youth-oriented policies in Estonia (EE), Anu Toots and Triin Lauri
  - Youth-oriented policies in Spain (ES), Francisco Javier Moreno-Fuentes, Pau Marí-Klose
  - **Youth-oriented policies in Lithuania (LT), Daiva Skučienė, Natalija Mažeikienė**
  - Youth-oriented policies in Latvia (LV), Anna Broka
  - Youth-oriented policies in Moldova (MD), Crismaru Mariana
  - Youth-oriented policies in Malta (MT), Sue Vella
  - Youth-oriented policies in Turkey (TR), Hande Barlin, Nilufer Korkmaz Yaylagul
- Conclusion, Anu Toots, Triin Lauri

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## Brief information on country

**Lithuania** is the largest Baltic country, neighbouring Latvia in the north, Poland in the west and Belarus in the east. The population is 2.8 million. The majority (86.4%) are Lithuanians. Like all developed countries, Lithuania is suffering from population ageing; the share of youth (15-19 years) in the total population is 0.137 million compared to 0.552 million of the age group 65+ (Statistics Lithuania, 2019).

Lithuania is a parliamentary democracy governed by coalition governments. Lithuania, as other Baltic countries, was occupied by the Soviet Union in 1940-1990. After independence in 1990, Lithuania became a member of the EU, NATO, and OECD.

### 2.1. Education policy beyond the lower secondary risk level

Education is compulsory up to age 16 in Lithuania (Vaiko teisių pagrindų įstatymas, 2019). This indicates the predominance of general education and a high level of educational attainment, as defined by Hadjivassiliou et al. (2018). The state takes measures to ensure that every child in Lithuania has the opportunity to attend pre-school, primary, basic and secondary education programs (*LR Švietimo įstatymas*, 2016).

The development of the education system over the past twenty years has shown the increasing importance of non-formal and informal education, which are developed alongside formal education.

The duration of general education was defined as 12 years and it consists of three pillars in the 1991-2019 Lithuanian Law on Education. After the amendments to the Law on Education were introduced, basic and secondary education were distinguished. Basic education is provided after primary education and lasts six years. Secondary education is provided after basic education. Vocational education was classified as initial and continuous. The initial vocational education is provided for pupils, who completed basic and secondary education. Initial vocational education is provided from the age of 14. For the pupils who completed basic education, vocational education is provided together with the secondary education programme. A pupil who has not acquired basic education is provided with conditions to continue studies according to the basic education program. In individual cases, established in the list of general criteria for admission to the state and municipal general education and vocational school approved by the Minister's order, initial vocational education may be provided to students with special educational needs without the necessary education. The continuing vocational education is provided for adults and is dedicated to the development of a qualification or acquiring a new one. The purpose of higher education and special education was defined in the law in 2003. The informal education of children and adults was regulated in 2003. The purpose of informal education for children was defined to develop cognitive skills and self-expression. The purpose of informal education for adults was to ensure lifelong learning, development and acquiring a new qualification. New regulations for the legitimization of self-education were introduced in 2003.

The amendments of the Law on Education were adopted for informal education in 2011. Informal adult education is provided for persons over the age of 18. The new vocational guidance definition was defined.

The education of pupils with special needs is also defined in the Law on Education. It includes the adaptation of education programmes and the duration and schedule of education (2012-2019). The counselling services for the pupils and their parents are also defined in the Law of Education in Lithuania (2017-2019).

The concepts of career guidance, career specialists, and vocational counselling were specified by law in 2016-2017. Continuing vocational education is provided for persons who first entered the labour market (2017). Continuing vocational education includes formal and non-formal vocational education.

Educational aid and social and health care services for secondary school pupils and those in initial vocational education were defined in the Law on Education in 2017.

Early leavers from education can continue education in the same or other schools (Law on Education). Adult education programs are provided as a measure for adults, youth aged 16-17 who are employed or others (*Dėl nuosekliojo mokymosi pagal bendrojo ugdymo programas tvarkos aprašo patvirtinimo*, 2005)<sup>1</sup>.

Referring to different approaches of addressing disadvantage described by Pohl & Walther (2007), the Lithuanian educational system could be defined as a set of policies with a prevailing structure-related model that has some elements of the individualised approach (Table 1). The structural approach embraces such features as a compulsory education up to 16 years and structurally defined diversification of educational paths. The secondary education route is diversified mainly into two directions: vocational and further secondary education. After the completion of secondary education, the route can also be diversified towards college or university. However, the graduates in Lithuania give priority to studies in universities. The responsibility to address the issue of early leavers is prescribed by law. The second chance education system is well-developed in Lithuania. Together with the structure-related measures, the provision of educational aid, social and health services, and career counselling is assured by law since 2017. The education system has strong features of de-commodification in Lithuania since the state has the main responsibility for the provision of education for every young person up to 16 years, and the state system of further education is available (Busemeyer, 2014).

### **2.1.1. Policies against school drop-out, low achievement & NEET**

The NEET rate has been decreasing gradually since 2007 (see Part I). The legal basis is provided to create a monitoring framework to deal with this issue. The Law on Fundamentals of Protection of the Rights of the Child (*Vaiko teisių pagrindų įstatymas*, 2019) states that parents and other legal representatives of the child must create conditions enabling the child

<sup>1</sup> <https://e-seimas.lrs.lt/portal/legalAct/lt/TAD/TAIS.253802/asr>

to acquire the compulsory education or a possibility of study until the age of 16. Educational institutions must employ measures that would encourage children to attend school constantly, and reduce the number of pupils who have dropped out of school education. The Law on Education (2011) declares the accessibility of education for socially excluded children by providing social services and education assistance. The responsibility of the government and the institutions of the municipalities is defined as an obligation to observe pupils not attending school and address their needs. The institutions must implement special targeted assistance programs for this group of pupils (*Law on Education*, 2011).

The programme for non-attending pupils<sup>2</sup> includes these tasks: to increase the number of aid specialists for education; to improve the qualification of teachers; to organise training for parents, members of self-government; to ensure attendance risk monitoring; to provide aid to non-attending pupils; to modernise education institutions; and to disseminate information about the education aid (*Dėl mokyklos nelankančių vaikų sugrąžinimo į mokyklas programas patvirtinimo*, 2010).

The Department of Youth Affairs (JRD, Jaunimo reikalų departamentas) collects information about NEET in municipalities, and published it on websites. In March 2019, the new project "Judam" ("Let's Move" in English) started to reduce the number of NEET aged 15-29 by applying early intervention measures and activity motivation according to the young person's needs and possibilities.

The policy to address issues of NEET could be viewed as a structure-related approach (Pohl & Walther, 2007) when the system of the observation, monitoring, control, and aid provision (Youth centres) is created. Meanwhile, the individualised approach is developed mainly through project initiatives.

### 2.1.2. Access to different tracks and levels

The career consulting services, the responsibilities of institutions, and their functions related to these services were specified in 2005 (*Profesinio informavimo ir konsultavimo paslaugų teikimo reikalavimų aprašas*, 2005)<sup>3</sup>. Methodological recommendations for vocational education of early leavers and specialists working with them were prepared in 2005 (*Socialinis pranešimas*, 2005-2006)<sup>4</sup>.

The vocational education system structure, qualifications, organisation, management and funding were described in legal regulations in 2007 (*Lietuvos Respublikos profesinio mokymo įstatymo pakeitimo įstatymas*, 2007)<sup>5</sup>. The structure of vocational education was changed in 2007. Primary vocational education, continuing vocational education, and career counselling were discerned. The legal documents introduced a measure of apprenticeships as a new form

<sup>2</sup> Lietuvos Respublikos Švietimo ir mokslo ministro įsakymas: Dėl mokyklos nelankančių vaikų sugrąžinimo į mokyklas programos patvirtinimo, 2010 m. spalio 7 d. Nr. V-1688, Vilnius

<sup>3</sup> Profesinio informavimo ir konsultavimo paslaugų teikimo reikalavimų aprašas (Žin., 2005, Nr. 60-2132).

<sup>4</sup> Socialinis pranešimas, 2005-2006

<sup>5</sup> Lietuvos Respublikos profesinio mokymo įstatymo pakeitimo įstatymas (Žin., 2007, Nr.43-1627)



of vocational education. The active participation of employers in the evaluation of vocational competences was envisaged in the regulations.

To improve the quality of vocational education and in seeking to provide effective services of vocational education in regions, a Vocational Education Development Concept was prepared (*Dėl profesinio mokymo regionuose infrastruktūros suaugusiems asmenims ir jaunimui plėtojimo koncepcijos patvirtinimo*, 2008)<sup>6</sup>.

It is worth mentioning that policy attention to vocational education has been paid for a long time. The National Audit Office in Lithuania (*Ar profesinis mokymas organizuojamas efektyviai?*, 2020)<sup>7</sup> highlighted and concluded in its report that the number of pupils in vocational training has been declining, vocational education has been organised ineffectively, only one-third of the pupils have an opportunity to use the newest equipment in their studies, and the quality of the education is not good enough. Only 27% of youth is involved in acquiring vocational qualification together with secondary school education, and this number is lower than the EU average (48%), see also Part I. Apprenticeship as a measure aimed at smoothing the transition from education to the labour market is not widely applied. Only 1.9% of pupils took advantage of this measure in 2018-2019. The National Audit Office also stated in its reports that vocational education is not accessible for the youth at social risk and with special needs, there is a lack of aid specialists, the scholarships and other material support are not sufficient to reduce these pupils' social exclusion.

These issues in vocational training in Lithuania are consistent with the characteristics of vocational education in the post-socialist transitional model described by Hadjivassiliou et al. (2018).

### 2.1.3. Policies on educational quality

To improve the quality of education, a new remuneration system programme for teachers was established (*Dėl naujos mokytojų darbo apmokėjimo sistemos įgyvendinimo programos patvirtinimo*, 2004)<sup>8</sup>.

In the Provisions for the National Education Strategy 2003–2012 (*Valstybinės švietimo strategijos 2003–2012 metų nuostatos*<sup>9</sup>), the goal was set to modernise the national curriculum aiming at the development of new personal competencies. Six groups of competencies were discerned: social, health protection, cognition (*pažinimo*), communication and art competency. The National Education Strategy for 2013–2022 (*Valstybinė švietimo 2003–2012 metų strategija*<sup>10</sup>) set several main targets – to foster the professional competence development

<sup>6</sup> Lietuvos Respublikos Socialinės apsaugos ir darbo ministro ir Lietuvos Respublikos Švietimo ir mokslo ministro įsakymas. Dėl profesinio mokymo regionuose infrastruktūros suaugusiems asmenims ir jaunimui plėtojimo koncepcijos patvirtinimo 2008 m. gegužės 21 d. Nr. A1-167/ISAK-1447 Vilnius

<sup>7</sup> Valstybinio audito ataskaita. Ar profesinis mokymas organizuojamas efektyviai. 2020 m. sausio 31 d. Nr. VAE-2

<sup>8</sup> Lietuvos Respublikos Vyriausybės nutarimas dėl naujos mokytojų darbo apmokėjimo sistemos įgyvendinimo programos patvirtinimo 2004 m. rugsėjo 30 d. Nr. 1231 Vilnius

<sup>9</sup> <https://e-seimas.lrs.lt/portal/legalAct/lt/TAD/TAIS.249299/asr>

<sup>10</sup> <https://e-seimas.lrs.lt/portal/legalAct/lt/TAD/TAIS.463390>

of teachers and lecturers and **improve the teaching quality culture**; to **expand learning accessibility and equal opportunities** (some concrete measures have been introduced – preschool education became mandatory (2018); funding for non-formal children's education has been provided (2015); multiple prevention programs including a program for prevention of bullying and violence were initiated (2017), All-Day School models have been strengthened; coordination of necessary support needed for children and their parents in cooperation with educational, social and health institutions has been facilitated.

While implementing the National Education Strategy for 2013–2022 (*Valstybinė švietimo 2003–2012 metų strategija*)<sup>11</sup>, important policy documents have been issued – Guidelines for the Change of General Education Schools (*Bendrojo ugdymo mokyklos kaitos gairės* (2017)<sup>12</sup>, The Good School Concept (*Geros mokyklos koncepcija*, 2016)<sup>13</sup>, The Teacher Training Model (*Dėl pedagogų rengimo modelio aprašo patvirtinimo*, 2017)<sup>14</sup>, Descriptions of Primary, Lower Secondary and Upper Secondary Curricula (*Dėl pradinio, pagrindinio ir vidurinio ugdymo programų aprašo patvirtinimo*, 2016<sup>15</sup>), etc.

The Guidelines for the General Programmes Renewal (*Bendrujų programų atnaujinimo gairės*, 2019) describe the renewal of programmes for **primary, lower secondary and upper secondary curricula** and raise aim to develop social, emotional, cultural and communication, creativity, cognitive, healthy life and citizenship competences. Guidelines for an Integrated Curriculum (*Integruojamųjų programų gairės*, 2019<sup>16</sup>) set up such competencies as learning to learn, communication, active citizenship, entrepreneurship, cultural competence, ability to maintain a healthy lifestyle and secure environment.

Teachers' professional competencies were defined in the Lithuanian Teacher Training Concept (*Pedagogų rengimo koncepcija*, 2004<sup>17</sup>). Later the teacher competencies were specified in the new Teacher Training Regulation (*Pedagogų rengimo reglamentas*, 2018)<sup>18</sup>.

The concept of the *formal education quality assurance system* (*Formaliojo švietimo kokybės užtikrinimo sistemos koncepcija*, 2008)<sup>19</sup> sets up the aim to provide a conceptual basis for politicians and society to agree on the quality of education and the implementation of measures.

<sup>11</sup> <https://e-seimas.lrs.lt/portal/legalAct/lt/TAD/TAIS.215471>

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.e-tar.lt/portal/lt/legalAct/aa1823b06c7d11e7827cd63159af616c>

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.e-tar.lt/portal/lt/legalAct/f2f65120a7bb11e5be7fbc3f919a1ebeb>

<sup>14</sup> <https://e-seimas.lrs.lt/portal/legalAct/lt/TAD/01388c40998611e78d46b68e19efc509?jfwid=5w7avl4go>

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.e-tar.lt/portal/lt/legalAct/37350520a7bc11e5be7fbc3f919a1ebebhttps://www.e-tar.lt/portal/lt/legalAct/685f-3fe0992211e78871f4322bb82f27>

<sup>16</sup> file:///C:/Users/user/Downloads/Desktop/11+pr.Integruojamosios+ir+prevencin%C4%97s+programos%20(6).pdf

<sup>17</sup> <https://e-seimas.lrs.lt/portal/legalAct/lt/TAD/TAIS.364217?jfwid=q8i88m27g>

<sup>18</sup> <https://e-seimas.lrs.lt/portal/legalAct/lt/TAD/0a6ba1f0fcbb11e89b04a534c5aaf5ce>

<sup>19</sup> <https://e-seimas.lrs.lt/portal/legalAct/lt/TAD/TAIS.332022?jfwid=q86m1vx7v>

The National Audit Office in Lithuania in its report<sup>20</sup> concluded that there is a lack of quality in monitoring indicators of the general education system (*Ar gali gerėti Lietuvos mokinių pasiekimai*, 2017). In the report, it was pointed out that private tutoring helping pupils to pass state exams is widespread in Lithuania (34% of parents hired private tutors for their children in 2017). The management quality of education institutions was also pointed out as an issue in the Report of the National Audit Office in 2017. To monitor the quality of education, the self-assessment and external evaluation, the evaluation of teachers' competencies and education achievements was launched in 2018. Regular external evaluations have been introduced since 2019.

From the social investment perspective (Esping-Andersen et al., 2002; Hemerijck, 2017), the quality issues in education and unequal opportunities in education create inequality and unfavourable conditions throughout the life course.

#### 2.1.4. Social support to learners

Students in bachelor's and master's degree studies have a right to a scholarship if their studies are not funded by the state and if they were accepted with high admission scores<sup>21</sup>. Scholarships are provided to students with high academic achievements.

The social scholarships are provided for those, who have a right to social assistance benefit, for people with disabilities or orphans (*Socialinių stipendijų aukštųjų mokyklų studentams skyrimo ir administravimo tvarkos aprašas*, 2009)<sup>22</sup>. In 2020, the amount of social scholarship was doubled (from 126, 75 to 253,5 Eur). However, this amount is insufficient to live independently from a family in the biggest cities of Lithuania. Thus, students need either support from their families or they have to work to get the necessary means for subsistence during their studies.

**Housing in dormitories of HEIs.** In some cases, student dormitories are serving as social housing. Under the current practice, priority is given to those students who are from low-income families, however, this is not a single condition to be taken into account, and some other students are also admitted to dormitories.

Pupils from low-income families receive social support in schools, including the provision of free school meals and basic school supplies. The Law on Social Assistance to Pupils was passed in 2006<sup>23</sup> (later Amendments to the Law on Social Assistance to Pupils were passed in 2018<sup>24</sup>). Social assistance for pupils facing social exclusion in general and vocational education was defined in that legislation. Two kinds of social assistance were discerned: the provision of free school meals and the free provision of school supplies before the beginning of a new school year, depending on family income. The free meals can be provided also during

<sup>20</sup> Valstybinio audito ataskaita AR GALI GERĖTI LIETUVOS MOKINIŲ PASIEKIMAI 2017 m. lapkričio 28 d. Nr. VA-2017-P-50-1-20

<sup>21</sup> <https://e-seimas.lrs.lt/portal/legalAct/lt/TAD/TAIS.425772>

<sup>22</sup> Socialinių stipendijų aukštųjų mokyklų studentams skyrimo ir administravimo tvarkos aprašas, patvirtintas Lietuvos Respublikos Vyriausybės 2009 m. gruodžio 23 d. nutarimu Nr. 1801

<sup>23</sup> <https://e-seimas.lrs.lt/portal/legalAct/lt/TAD/TAIS.279123>

<sup>24</sup> <https://e-seimas.lrs.lt/portal/legalAct/lt/TAD/07afc8d2f9f311e89b04a534c5aaf5ce>



summer holidays in summer day camps arranged at schools. The basic school supplies are provided based on individual needs and according to the living location of the pupil. The administration of municipalities is responsible for the provision of basic school supplies.

The new right to apply for social assistance was defined for pupils who are 18 years old, married or emancipated (who are under the age of 18 and became independent from parents or other adult supervisors by a court decision or actions).

In 2009, the general free school meals framework was redefined<sup>25</sup>. Free breakfast at school can be provided only after the financial status of the family is evaluated (*LR Socialinės paramos mokiniams įstatymo 3,4,5,7,9,12,13 ir 14 straipsnių pakeitimo įstatymas*, 2009).

In 2015, financial assistance for basic school supplies was increased from 45,6 to 57 Eur<sup>26</sup> (*LR Socialinės paramos mokiniams įstatymo Nr. X-686 8, 10,11,12 ir 14 straipsnių pakeitimo įstatymas*, 2015).

In 2018, access to free school meals was expanded by raising the amount of the family income up to the amount of 2 SSI (State-Supported Income) for one household, as well 1,5 SSI for the social assistance<sup>27</sup>. The law also defined the monetary amount of free school meals for children. The amount of social support for the basic school supplies was defined as 2 BSB (Basic Social Benefit).

It was also set out in law that the provision of school supplies may be substituted with a cash payment, except if a pupil is from a family at social risk.

To sum up the system of social scholarships and social support in the form of free school meals and basic school supplies, we observe a **high level of familialisation** (Chevalier, 2016), because the provision is based on an evaluation of the family income, and the shift toward individualisation was done with the introduction of a universal child benefit. Looking at it from the social investment perspective, the low provision of students with accommodation and housing doesn't ensure a sufficient basis for human capital development. Social support is an important measure in the frame of social investment (Esping-Andersen et al., 2002; Hemerijck, 2017). Looking at the youth social policies in Lithuania from the point of view of the dichotomy between social investment and compensatory approaches (Lauri and Toots, 2015), compensatory welfare in Lithuania is based mainly on family income and it is not generous, thus, the risk of poverty among youth is still quite high.


<sup>25</sup> <https://e-seimas.lrs.lt/portal/legalAct/lt/TAP/TAIS.360095>

<sup>26</sup> <https://e-seimas.lrs.lt/portal/legalAct/lt/TAD/e2cc2030a49c11e59010bea026bdb259>

<sup>27</sup> <https://e-seimas.lrs.lt/portal/legalAct/lt/TAD/TAIS.413828>

**Table 1: Mapping education policy initiatives in Lithuania**

Issues in education	Main instruments to address it	Direction
Dropouts, NEET	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Compulsory education prescribed by law</li> <li>• Legal responsibility of parents to ensure children's education</li> <li>• Monitoring of school attendance on national, municipality and school level</li> <li>• Special targeted assistance programs</li> <li>• Social services and education assistance to disadvantaged pupils and families (incl. free school meals and basic school supplies).</li> <li>• Aid specialists for education;</li> <li>• improving qualification of teachers</li> <li>• Establishment of Youth centres</li> <li>• Training to parents</li> <li>• Career counselling</li> <li>• All-Day School model</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• De-commodification</li> <li>• Structure-related approach</li> <li>• High level of familialisation</li> </ul>
Restricted access to quality education, increasing inequalities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mandatory preschool education</li> <li>• Funding for non-formal children's education multiple prevention programs</li> <li>• All-Day School model Coordination of cooperation of educational, social and health institutions Social support to school pupils and their families (, lunches, etc.)</li> <li>• Social support of HEI students (social scholarships, dormitories)</li> </ul>	High stratification
Quality of school education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Modernisation of school curriculum</li> <li>• New competences</li> <li>• Formal education quality assurance system</li> <li>• Improving teachers' professional competence</li> <li>• New remuneration system for teachers</li> </ul>	High stratification
Weak links between education and labour market	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improvement of VET system</li> <li>• Apprenticeships</li> <li>• Employers' participation in VET</li> </ul>	Structural approach

Education	Low stratification	High stratification
High commodification		
Low commodification	X 	

## 2.2. Labour market policy for youth

### 2.2.1. Unemployment protection (PLMP)

Unemployment protection is guaranteed for persons, who are insured by unemployment social insurance and became unemployed in Lithuania<sup>28</sup>. Unemployment social protection was introduced by law in 2003 (*LR nedarbo socialinio draudimo įstatymas*, 2003).

The National Demographic (population) policy family welfare measures plan for 2008-2010<sup>29</sup> sought to improve the employment of youth and to assist family members to reconcile family duties and employment (*Dėl nacionalinės demografinės (gyventojų) politikos strategijos šeimos gerovės įgyvendinimo 2008-2010 metų priemonių plano patvirtinimo*, 2007). Thus, this document reflects a shift towards social investment practice. The family-work balance is at risk and requires measures to improve possibilities to work (Bonoli, 2066, 2013).

Starting from 2010<sup>30</sup>, persons below the age of 29 were assigned to a group in need of additional assistance. For subsidising the unemployed below the age of 29, the compensation of wages was established up to 6 months. For persons entering the labour market for the first time or participating in training programmes, this subsidy is given up to 12 months. The concession of taxes for one year was established in 2010 for people entering the labour market for the first time. This regulation was in force until 2012 (*LR Užimtumo rėmimo įstatymas*, 2006).

For employers, hiring the first-time entrants to the labour market and providing support to acquire employment skills, a subsidised employment measure is applied. Employers can have 50% of the wage and social insurance reimbursed for a period not exceeding six months. For young people who either do not have a qualification or it doesn't meet the needs of the labour market, vocational training is proposed to improve employability. For the improvement of the employability of youth, the ESF project "Be active in the labour market" was implemented in 2010-2012. 75.2 % of participants who participated in motivating seminars were employed after the training (*Socialinis pranešimas*, 2011-2012)<sup>31</sup>. In the *Lithuanian Progress Strategy* (*Nacionalinė pažangos programa*)<sup>32</sup>, the youth is distinguished as a separate specific social group and addressing the needs of this group was set as a horizontal priority (*Dėl 2014-2020 metų nacionalinės pažangos programos patvirtinimo*, 2012).

<sup>28</sup> <https://e-seimas.lrs.lt/portal/legalAct/lt/TAD/TAIS.224462/asr>

<sup>29</sup> <https://e-seimas.lrs.lt/portal/legalAct/lt/TAD/TAIS.304152?jfwid=5sjolg1ox>

<sup>30</sup> <https://e-seimas.lrs.lt/portal/legalAct/lt/TAD/TAIS.279173/MPAwioPrGI>

<sup>31</sup> Socialinis pranešimas 2011-2012

<sup>32</sup> <https://www.e-tar.lt/portal/lt/legalAct/TAR.31A566B1512D/OKkwPNbfzS>

The project "The improvement of youth employability" started in 2012. The aim of this project was to help youth with no work experience to acquire the skills they need in the labour market and to enter the labour market. Measures to support employability were implemented (acquiring employment skills and subsidising employment). These measures encompassed encouraging employers to employ youth with no experience (*LR užimtumo rėmimo įstatymo Nr. X-694 1, 2, 3, 13, 23, 24, 26, 29, 32 straipsnių pakeitimo ir įstatymo papildymo 261, 341 straipsniais ir priedu įstatymas*, 2014)<sup>33</sup>. The new measure "The employment and youth motivation encouragement" was established in 2013. The aim of this measure is to motivate disadvantaged young people to engage in the labour market or formal education by providing personal, social and occupational competencies and creating conditions to foster young people's employment and activity.

The Youth Guarantees Initiatives (YGI) were established in 2013 (*Dėl Jaunimo garantijų iniciatyvos įgyvendinimo plano patvirtinimo*, 2013)<sup>34</sup>. Apprenticeship, training, and the development of practical learning (placement) provisions were highlighted in the document. Youth is defined in the document as young people up to 29 years. The new system of distinguishing young people aged 14-29 years who are not in education or employment was introduced. The age limit up to 29 years was defined in the YGI. The needs of youth and individual needs-based services were distinguished in the document of the YGI. A network of youth centres and areas has started to develop. These centres were designated to provide a safe environment for the youth and new forms of bringing young people together in a community.

The amendments to the Law on Support for Employment were made in 2014 (*LR užimtumo rėmimo įstatymo Nr. X-694 1, 2, 3, 13, 23, 24, 26, 29, 32 straipsnių pakeitimo ir įstatymo papildymo 261, 341 straipsniais ir priedu įstatymas*, 2014)<sup>35</sup>. More employment support measures were introduced. Possibilities for the youth below 29 years of age were defined in the law to encourage entrepreneurship and allow for acquiring more employment experience. Three measures were introduced by the law: subsidies for job creation (subsidised employment); a contract between a job seeker (a trainee) and employer on the acquisition of professional skills at the workplace, and a contract between the jobseeker/trainee and the employer on voluntary practice/placement. In both cases, the job seeker doesn't receive a salary, however, he/she has an opportunity to acquire professional skills. The framework of subsidising was changed. According to the amendments of the law, the employer, who assigned a person responsible for the training of a new employee, can get the highest subsidy (among all possible amounts) if the responsible person (the trainer/ mentor) is more than 50 years old and the trainee is below 29 years. This measure aimed at keeping older employees in the labour market and improving the employability of youth.

The wage subsidy for youth in Lithuania can be viewed as a measure stimulating labour demand (Hadjivassiliou et al., 2018). On the other hand, we observe measures applied from

<sup>33</sup> Socialinis pranešimas 2013-2014

<sup>34</sup> <https://e-seimas.lrs.lt/portal/legalActEditions/lt/TAD/TAIS.463301>

<sup>35</sup> Lietuvos Respublikos užimtumo rėmimo įstatymo Nr. X-694 1, 2, 3, 13, 23, 24, 26, 29, 32 straipsnių pakeitimo ir įstatymo papildymo 261, 341 straipsniais ir priedu įstatymas, 2014 m. liepos 10 d. Nr. XII-999

the point of view of labour supply. Hadjivassiliou et al. (2018) called it an employment-centred policy. The structural approach with expanding elements of individualised approach is observed in Lithuania. Individualised activation based on limited entitlements is prevalent (Pohl & Walther, 2007). Personal conditions, abilities and professional skills are usually put in the focus, seeking for reintegration into the labour market. The unemployment protection reflects the features of compensatory welfare (Lauri and Toots, 2015), provided by the social insurance system. The unemployment protection in Lithuania is more focused on cash benefits than on services.

### 2.2.2. Active labour market policy (ALMP)

The Employment Support Fund in 2000 prioritised the occupational training of unemployed youth (up to 25 years age) and the long-term unemployed (*Socialinis pranešimas*, 2000)<sup>36</sup>.

The Lithuanian Labour Market Training Office prepared a programme in 2005–2006 for persons aged 14–29 who are early leavers education and have not completed their general compulsory education (*Socialinis pranešimas*, 2006–2007)<sup>37</sup>. While implementing these measures, consultants were educated to work with early leavers. The occupational counselling was implemented with secondary school pupils by running various programmes.

The ALMP measures were defined in the Law on Support for Employment (2016) (*LR Užimtumo įstatymas*, 2016)<sup>38</sup>. Measures for improving the employability of working-age persons were introduced by the law. The working age is defined from 16 years until retirement. Special attention is given to young unemployed persons. This group is entitled to additional support. The group includes the long-term unemployed below the age of 25, with unemployment lasting longer than 6 months and unemployment lasting longer than 12 months. The list of services is provided in the law: a register of free workplaces; information provision; consulting; evaluation of employment possibilities; mediation of employment; and individual planning of employment.

Employers can have 40% of the wage and social insurance reimbursed, when hiring an employee under the apprenticeship contract. For the apprentice, the wage or scholarship (in case of acquiring theoretical knowledge) is paid during the apprenticeship (2016).

Internships up to 6 months are intended for young people with a professional qualification. A scholarship is paid during the internship (2016).

Vocational services, vocational career planning and psychological counselling, and individual employment activity planning services were defined by the law (2016). Such services as setting up an Individual Activity Plan, psychological counselling, and assessment of the need for social services can be provided (2016). The possibility of voluntary job placement for the persons aged 16–29 was introduced by law (2016). Additional support is defined in the law (wage subsidy) for first-time entrants into the labour market (2017).

<sup>36</sup> *Socialinis pranešimas*, 2000

<sup>37</sup> *Socialinis pranešimas* 2006–2007

<sup>38</sup> <https://e-seimas.lrs.lt/portal/legalAct/lt/TAD/b9ca8ad03de611e68f278e2f1841c088>



Despite the special attention to youth in ALMP, the general ALMP is weak: expenditures on ALMP have been lower in Lithuania than on average in the EU since 2005 (Skuciene and Lazutka, 2019 and Part I).

From a social investment perspective (Bonoli, 2011), the measures of ALMP are directed toward youth, however, dependent on the design of measures these may be aimed at promoting activity in the labour market rather than at facilitating investments in human capital.

Active labour market policy can be characterised as an expression of a structural approach with expanding features of the individualised approach (i.e. enhanced focus on counselling) (Pohl & Walther, 2007) (Table 2). The measures are provided by the social security system in Lithuania.

### 2.2.3. Industrial and other labour relations

The Labour Code defines the working time for persons working during night time and those younger than 18. The conditions are defined in the Law on Employees' Security and Health. Government act in 2017 06 28 No. 518 provided permission for children aged 14-16 to engage in light works in line with their physical abilities, which have no adverse impact on the child's safety, health and physical, mental, moral, or social development. Persons younger than 18 years of age shall be protected against any specific risk for their safety, health or development, which might be caused by their lack of experience or ignorance of the present or potential risk. In 2017 this act also defined a list of jobs, in which persons under the age of 18 are not allowed to work.

The Law on Safety and Health at Work (*Lietuvos Respublikos darbuotojų saugos ir sveikatos įstatymas*<sup>39</sup>) defines that the annual holiday is provided for children (aged 14-16) at their request during their school holiday during summer if the children work during the summer.

Minimum wages are set up for all employees; there is no differentiation by age in Lithuania (*Nutarimas dėl minimaliojo darbo užmokesčio*, 2019)<sup>40</sup>. The regulation of working time is defined by Lithuanian laws for persons younger than 18 years.

<sup>39</sup> <https://e-seimas.lrs.lt/portal/legalAct/lt/TAD/TAIS.215253/asr>

<sup>40</sup> <https://e-seimas.lrs.lt/portal/legalAct/lt/TAD/c6d989909e4811e9aab6d8dd69c6da66?positionInSearchResults=0&searchModelUUID=a5786405-9870-43b2-9ab6-292e760ef73f>

**Table 2: Mapping youth oriented labour market policy initiatives in Lithuania**

Issue in the labour market	Main instruments	Direction
PIMP: low coverage due to strict eligibility	Not addressed (requirement of a minimum length of professional experience)	Youth not targeted
ALMP: High unemployment rates of youth	Variety of measures; targeted to youth and often vis employers	Activation and employability focus
Working conditions of youth up to 18 year	Measures toward working time	Structural

Labour Market	Compensatory	Preventive
Structure-related	X	
Individualising		

## 2.3. Social welfare policy

### 2.3.1. Access and eligibility to social assistance

In Lithuania, a person under the age of 18 is considered a child. The Law on Child Rights Protection (*LR vaiko teisių apsaugos pagrindų įstatymas*, 1999-2020)<sup>41</sup> defines that a child, who doesn't have protection from their parents or other representatives according to the law, has the right to social protection and state-provided financial support.

Therefore, cash social assistance is provided on the means-tested base for persons with insufficient resources to live. Among eligibility conditions listed in the law, a group of young people is mentioned. It is full-time students below the age of 24 and persons registered with the Employment Services or with another EU Member State's employment service, which can also include the youth. Under the law, any household member over 18 years of age can claim the support (MISSOC 01/01/2019). Starting from 2004, eligibility conditions were the same as the youth rights to social assistance.

Since 2008, a family raising one or two children from 3 to 18 years old (or older if studying full-time in a comprehensive school, vocational school, or institution of higher education), but not longer than until they are 24 years old, is paid a benefit equal to 0.4 times the MSL (*Minimum Standard of Living*) per month for every child.

Since 2004, a settlement grant has been paid for children at the end of guardianship. The lump sum benefit grant is granted to those who have been placed under guardianship (curatorship),

<sup>41</sup> <https://e-seimas.lrs.lt/portal/legalActEditions/lt/TAD/TAIS.26397>

upon termination of the guardianship of the child because they reach the age of majority or if they get married. The lump sum benefit for obtaining the housing or other housing-related measures is provided. This benefit comprises 50 MSL (*Minimum Standard of Living*) (*Lietuvos Respublikos išmokų vaikams įstatymas*)<sup>42</sup>.

The cash social assistance increased after 2008<sup>43</sup> because the calculation basis was changed. The child benefit, social scholarship and cash aid are not included in family income (*LR piniginės socialinės paramos nepasiturintiems gyventojams įstatymas*, 2008).

Since 2011, an income received from a charity is not included in family income and disregarded when calculating the social assistance benefit (*LR piniginės socialinės paramos nepasiturintiems gyventojams įstatymas*, 2011)<sup>44</sup>.

Scholarships of students studying in higher education institutions and other material aid are not included in family income from 2012. This measure allowed families with students to have no worse income situation than families without students.

The change of conditions of the cash social assistance provision in 2016<sup>45</sup> dealt with the encouragement of re-entrance into the labour market (*Lietuvos Respublikos piniginės socialinės paramos nepasiturintiems gyventojams įstatymas*, 2016). The gradual reduction of the benefit of social assistance was connected to receiving a salary after getting a job.

Family policy. Child benefit is paid for every child from birth to the age of 18 years and up to 21 if the child is studying in the general education curriculum (*Lietuvos Respublikos išmokų vaikams įstatymas*, 2019)<sup>46</sup>. The universal child benefit programme was started in 2019<sup>47</sup>. Before that, the child benefit was paid on the basis of means-testing.

The monthly amounts of universal child benefit are as follows: 1,32 BSB (€50.16) for all children regardless of family income<sup>48</sup>.

The requirement to pay social assistance benefits after 60 months of unemployment was abolished by the law. It was defined that 50 percent of benefit should be paid in kind. The period of being registered at the public employment office as unemployed was shortened from 12 to 6 months. After employment, 50 percent of the social assistance benefit is paid. Additionally, seeking to encourage the employment of children from disadvantaged families, their salary is not included in the family income when calculating social assistance benefits for the family.

For students with disabilities, a monthly benefit is provided, which makes up 50 per cent of the state social insurance pension. Regarding social assistance related to studies, additionally,

<sup>42</sup> Lietuvos Respublikos išmokų vaikams įstatyme (Žin., 1994, Nr.89-1706; 2004, Nr. 88-3208);

<sup>43</sup> <https://e-seimas.lrs.lt/portal/legalActEditions/lt/TAD/TAIS.215633>

<sup>44</sup> <https://e-seimas.lrs.lt/portal/legalActEditions/lt/TAD/TAIS.215633>

<sup>45</sup> <https://e-seimas.lrs.lt/portal/legalActEditions/lt/TAD/TAIS.215633>

<sup>46</sup> <https://e-seimas.lrs.lt/portal/legalActEditions/lt/TAD/TAIS.5981?faces-redirect=true>

<sup>47</sup> <https://e-seimas.lrs.lt/portal/legalAct/lt/TAD/TAIS.5981/arntTiaQiK>

<sup>48</sup> MISSOC 01/01/2019

a benefit of 3.2 BSB is provided. That regulation came into force in 2011 (*Dėl Finansinės pagalbos priemonių teikimo neįgaliesiems, studijuojantiems aukštosiose mokyklose, tvarkos aprašo patvirtinimo*, 2006)<sup>49</sup>.

The provision of social assistance benefits is familialised for youth under 18 years in Lithuania. The same familialisation can also be observed in providing child benefits (Chevalier, 2016). Regarding social citizenship in Lithuania, we observe a strong expression of the familialised approach described by Chevalier (2018), as a youth (persons under 18) and even older individuals are considered children. Young people under 18 who are financially dependent on their families don't get an independent status in social security. Only some measures such as the universal child benefit, which in 2021 is about 70 euros per month, can be considered as an expression of an individualised approach. However, in general, the individualised approach is quite weak, since young people are not considered adults. The level of social support is so low that it is implicitly assumed that parents have to support their children.

The overview of measures of social support to families and children reveal that the responsibility of the state is relatively low and limited mainly to means-tested benefits.

### 2.3.2. Access and eligibility to social services

The Lithuanian Law on Transport Discount (*LR Transporto lengvatų įstatymas*<sup>50</sup>) defines that students of secondary schools and higher education institutions are eligible for a 50 percent discount on public transport.

## 2.4. Housing policy

### 2.4.1. Access to public housing

Families with children under 18 are entitled to social housing. For youth under 18, the Child Rights Protection Law (2019) establishes the right of a child to have living premises.

### 2.4.2. Access to and affordability of commercial housing

The Lithuanian Law on Support for the Acquisition or Rental of Housing (*Lietuvos Respublikos paramos būstui įsigyti ar išsinuomoti įstatymas*, 2014<sup>51</sup>) establishes the rules of housing support. Housing support is implemented by providing subsidies for acquiring or renting housing. The groups eligible for housing support are the following: persons without parents below the age of 35 and their families, families with three or more children, people with disabilities or families with children with disabilities. 20 per cent of the mortgage loan is

<sup>49</sup> Lietuvos Respublikos Vyriausybės 2006 m. rugpjūčio 29 nutarimas Nr. 117-5021 „Dėl Finansinės pagalbos priemonių teikimo neįgaliesiems, studijuojantiems aukštosiose mokyklose, tvarkos aprašo patvirtinimo“ (Žin., 2006, Nr. 93-3655; 2009, Nr. 93-3655)

<sup>50</sup> <https://e-seimas.lrs.lt/portal/legalAct/lt/TAD/TAIS.98950/PNzVPwblxB>

<sup>51</sup> Lietuvos Respublikos paramos būstui įsigyti ar išsinuomoti įstatymas (2014 m. spalio 9 d. Nr. XII-1215 Vilnius)

covered by the state. For young families with one or two children or single-parent families, 10 per cent of the mortgage loan is covered by the state.

To improve housing conditions, the Special Government Programme was established (*Specialiosios valstybės paramos gyvenamiesiems namams, butams įsigyti finansavimo programos*, 2001)<sup>52</sup>. The Programme of Social Housing<sup>53</sup> was launched aiming to improve conditions for those persons and families who have a right to acquire housing premises (*Dėl socialinio būsto fondo plėtros 2008-2010 metų programos patvirtinimo*, 2008).

The social assistance complies with a model of compensatory welfare (Lauri and Toots, 2015) since the most disadvantaged groups (families with children with disabilities, with 3 children, etc.) receive social assistance. However, it should be noted again that compensatory measures are not generous and sufficient to meet actual needs.

## 2.5. Health policy

### 2.5.1. Access to the public health care

The Law on Public Health Monitoring (*Visuomenės sveikatos priežiūros įstatymas*, 2020)<sup>54</sup> establishes the general regulation of public health insurance, the prevention of diseases and injuries and control, and the strengthening of public health.

A separate regulation is also provided for pupils studying in the general education system. The Law on Education establishes that the aim of health care at schools is to help pupils secure and strengthen their health. The primary care of health is provided at schools, as are consultations on how to strengthen health.

The health check-up of pupils is organised by physicians at primary health care centres<sup>55</sup> (*Dėl LR sveikatos apsaugos ministro 2000 m. gegužės 31 d. įsakymo nr. 301 "Dėl profilaktinių sveikatos tikrinimų sveikatos priežiūros įstaigose" pakeitimo*, 2019).

The following information and consultation services about health safety are provided: personal hygiene, rational nutrition, rest and work regimes, oral hygiene, physical activity, visionary disorder, and others. Health care of youth can be evaluated as a domain when social investment and compensatory approaches are mixed (Lauri and Toots, 2015). This type of provision can be treated as a case of a cross-sectoral collaboration since two sectors (health care and education system) are intertwined. The health system is de-commodified in Lithuania.

<sup>52</sup> Specialiosios valstybės paramos gyvenamiesiems namams, butams įsigyti finansavimo programos" (Žin., 2001, Nr. 70-2511)

<sup>53</sup> <https://e-seimas.lrs.lt/portal/legalAct/lt/TAD/TAIS.322003/sDNIAGihzM>

<sup>54</sup> [http://www.infolex.lt/portal/start\\_ta.asp?act=doc&fr=pop&doc=113237](http://www.infolex.lt/portal/start_ta.asp?act=doc&fr=pop&doc=113237)

<sup>55</sup> <https://e-seimas.lrs.lt/portal/legalAct/lt/TAD/9e02a5c1764711e99ceae2890faa4193>



## 2.5.2. Public health and awareness-raising

The measure “youth-friendly health care services model”<sup>56</sup> was devoted to establishing an integrated model connecting all health services providers, to improve their collaboration to provide health care services for the youth. An agreement for funding this programme was signed by the Kingdom of Norway and Lithuania in 2013 (*LR Sveikatos apsaugos ministerija: apie projektus ir priemones*, 2019).

## 2.6. Active citizenship

### 2.6.1. Regulations of youth involvement in decision making

Participation of youth in representative democracy. Voters in Lithuania elect members of the parliament, the president, members of the municipal councils and mayors, as well as delegates to the European Parliament. Voting in elections is not compulsory. The minimum voting age in Lithuania is 18.

According to the Law on Elections to Seimas (1993, last amendment in 2015), any citizen of the Republic of Lithuania who is at least 25 years of age may stand as a candidate for election to the Seimas. It is worth noting that Lithuania belongs to the list of 4 countries (Cyprus, Greece, Italy, and Lithuania) in the EU, where the age of eligibility for election to national parliament is 25 or more. Meanwhile, the minimum age to be eligible to stand as a candidate in the European Parliament elections is 21 years. In September 2020, the government approved a proposal to initiate a change of Article 56 of the Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania to set 21 years as the minimum age of a candidate for the right to stand for election to the Seimas. It will allow expanding the political participation of youth.

According to the Law on Elections to Municipal Councils (1994, last amendment in 2016), to be eligible for election to the council of the municipality, candidates must be at least 20 years old. In 2018, an amendment was accepted defining that candidates must be at least 18 years old to be eligible for elections to municipal councils and the mayor's position.

According to the Law on Presidential Elections (1993, last amendment in 2015), to be eligible for a presidential election, candidates must be at least 40 years old.

The Lithuanian School Students' Union (LMS) is a non-profit association, uniting Lithuanian school students' councils. 'LMS represents secondary school students by forming Education and Youth policies, educating school students with urgent issues, joining them in common activities by cooperating with governmental and non-governmental institutions, creating a community for schools and their students' (Youth policies in Lithuania, 2017).

One of the forms of participation in decision making for young people is to be members of the Lithuanian Pupils' Parliament (LMP). This organisation was founded in 1999. To become a member of this parliament, a student must participate in elections. The Lithuanian

<sup>56</sup> <http://sam.lrv.lt/lt/veiklos-sritys/programos-ir-projektai/apie-projektus-ir-priemones>

Pupils' Parliament consists of 6 committees: Human Rights, Culture, Health, Foreign Affairs, Education and Social Affairs.

One of the organisations which represents the youth is the Lithuanian Youth Council (usually referred to as LiJOT). It is a youth NGO uniting 62 Lithuanian national youth organisations and regional unions of youth organisations and representing more than 200 000 young people. LiJOT is a full member of the European Youth Forum.

### 2.6.2. Programs on advancing youth citizenship and political participation

The 2003 Law on Youth Policy Framework<sup>57</sup> defined the formation and implementation of youth policy, work with youth issues, and competence of youth organisations. The age of youth was defined as 14-29 years (*LR Jaunimo politikos pagrindų įstatymas*, 2003).

The youth policy embraces measures that help solve the main issues faced by youth, ensure favourable conditions for the development of a young person's personality, and help to integrate the young person into society. Forms of work with youth were established in the law: open work with youth, work in the street; mobile work with youth, the development of practical skills, etc.

The first changes of this law were accepted in 2005<sup>58</sup> (*LR Jaunimo politikos pagrindų įstatymas*, 2005). The institutional restructuring was legitimated. The youth policy areas were defined: public education, military duties, education and training, informal training, employment, housing, recreation, creativity and culture, social and health security, addiction, etc.

Lithuania participated in the EU programme "Youth" since 2000 and Eurodesk since 2004 (*Socialinis pranešimas*, 2005-2006)<sup>59</sup>. From 2005 the new programme "Active Youth" was prepared as continuing the programme "Youth". The main objectives of the programme "Active Youth" were to encourage the public activity of young people; the solidarity of young people; the understanding of different nations; encourage European collaboration among youth, etc.

The Youth policy programme in municipalities 2007-2009 was prepared and established in 2007<sup>60</sup>. This programme aims to develop youth policy in municipalities, improve the development of youth organisations, improve their relations with institutions of municipalities, develop the activity of youth coordinators, improve the legal regulation of youth activity, etc. A youth coordinator was established in every municipality.

The two-year project "Youth centre for youth needs" was established in 2007 (*Socialinis pranešimas*, 2008-2009)<sup>61</sup>. The Youth Affairs Department organised and coordinated the

<sup>57</sup> <https://e-seimas.lrs.lt/portal/legalAct/lt/TAD/TAIS.223790/asr>

<sup>58</sup> <https://e-seimas.lrs.lt/portal/legalAct/lt/TAD/TAIS.223790/XpnjcsvbTc>

<sup>59</sup> *Socialinis pranešimas*, 2005-2006

<sup>60</sup> <https://e-seimas.lrs.lt/portal/legalAct/lt/TAD/TAIS.303657?jfwid=5sjolfxyz>

<sup>61</sup> *Socialinis pranešimas* 2008-2009

campaign “Every different and every equal”, whose aim was to encourage and empower young people to participate in building communities, to promote tolerance of youth in Europe.

The Youth Affairs Department administered the Lithuanian and Poland youth exchange programme in 2007. The exchange of youth, meetings, projects and common events were funded to bring youth from both nations together. International relations with Belgium, Germany, Norway, the UK, Moldova, the South Caucasus and Lithuanian youth organisations were developed and supported in 2007. The international collaborations focused on the following topics: quality standards for the education of youth workers/leaders; strengthening youth representation; developing new approaches of work with youths; sharing best practices; the information and participation of youth, etc.<sup>62</sup>

The new project “Partnership between governmental and non-governmental sectors for the implementation of youth policy strengthening” was started in 2009 (*Socialinis pranešimas, 2009-2010*)<sup>63</sup>. Youth Centers were established in four municipalities (Kelmės, Klaipėdos, Skuodo, Jonavos). A database of volunteers was created in 2009 (*Socialinis pranešimas, 2009-2010*)<sup>64</sup>. The Eurodesk content was adjusted for people with disabilities.

The National Youth Policy Development Programme 2011-2019<sup>65</sup> formulated the priorities of youth policy, including activities for nine years (*Dėl nacionalinės jaunimo politikos 2011-2019 metų plėtros programos patvirtinimo, 2010*).

The strategic aim of this programme was formulated as follows: to create a favourable environment (conditions) for the life of a young person and her/his self-expression. To implement this aim the following objectives were raised: to ensure the development of social security, education, and health care systems according to the needs of young people; to educate the mature, patriotic, cultural and creative personality of a young person; to develop the system of work with youth; to ensure favourable conditions for the youth organisations; to foster collaboration of all sectors to implement youth policy.

To implement this programme, the National Youth Programme Development Measures Plan<sup>66</sup> was confirmed (*Dėl nacionalinės jaunimo politikos 2011-2019 metų plėtros programos įgyvendinimo 2017-2019 metų veiksmų plano patvirtinimo, 2017*). Information and consultation services were envisaged in this plan to improve the informed decisions of youth in the choice of their profession.

Entrepreneurship education measures were created, developed and implemented in 2008–2010 (*Socialinis pranešimas, 2010-2011*)<sup>67</sup>. The youth and young farmers were motivated to start their own businesses; the supervision of youth businesses was started. An entrepreneurship programme was included in the general education curriculum.

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<sup>62</sup> Socialinis pranešimas 2008-2009

<sup>63</sup> Socialinis pranešimas 2009-2010

<sup>64</sup> Socialinis pranešimas 2009-2010

<sup>65</sup> <https://e-seimas.lrs.lt/portal/legalAct/lt/TAD/TAIS.387971/BBMONneZWg>

<sup>66</sup> <https://e-seimas.lrs.lt/portal/legalAct/lt/TAD/a905d6a0214d11e79f4996496b137f39/asr>

<sup>67</sup> Socialinis pranešimas 2010-2011

In 2011, responsibility was assigned to the National Work Group for information dissemination in Lithuania to collect, analyse and disseminate information on youth policy (*Socialinis pranešimas, 2010-2011*)<sup>68</sup>. These measures aim to develop a structural dialogue with young people. The Ministry of Social Security and Labour, the Youth Affairs Department, and the Lithuanian Centre for Social Research were institutions responsible for the development of the dialogue. The priority of youth policy was set at increasing youth participation and motivation to act.

For 2012–2016<sup>69</sup>, the Government of Lithuania confirmed these priorities of youth policy: to introduce measures to improve the employment and business of young people; to define work with youth and its principles; to improve the activity of institutions working with youth; to strengthen the prevention of youth unemployment; to develop information dissemination, consulting and professional orientation, etc. (*Dėl nacionalinės jaunimo politikos 2011-2019 metų plėtros programos įgyvendinimo 2017-2019 metų veiksmų plano patvirtinimo, 2017*). The new plan of implementation of Youth Guarantees Initiatives was confirmed in 2013 (*Dėl jaunimo garantijų iniciatyvos įgyvendinimo plano patvirtinimo, 2013*)<sup>70</sup>. The plan aimed at the employment of youth below the age of 29. The objective was to ensure that every unemployed young person could find a job after no longer than 4 months after becoming unemployed. Another objective was to create youth opportunities to participate in voluntary action and education. The National Youth Voluntary Action Program was confirmed in 2013<sup>71</sup>. The Intensive Aid for NEET Programme<sup>72</sup> was started this year. This programme aimed at encouraging socially vulnerable youth to integrate into the labour market and providing education services for social rehabilitation and the promotion of employment.

In 2014, the Erasmus+ programme started the new EU education, training and sport programme (2014–2020) (*Socialinis pranešimas, 2013-2014*)<sup>73</sup>. This programme seeks to improve the abilities and skills of youth and encourage participation in democratic life and fostering employment.

Among the various objectives of this programme, youth exchange from different countries, informal education, fostering cultural dialogue comprise measures to handle problems faced by youth.

More clear benchmarks of collaboration between youth representatives and labour market representatives were established in 2014 (*Dėl Jaunimo garantijų iniciatyvos įgyvendinimo tvarkos aprašo patvirtinimo, 2014*)<sup>74</sup>.

<sup>68</sup> Socialinis pranešimas 2010-2011

<sup>69</sup> <https://e-seimas.lrs.lt/portal/legalAct/lt/TAD/a905d6a0214d11e79f4996496b137f39/asr>

<sup>70</sup> <https://e-seimas.lrs.lt/portal/legalAct/lt/TAD/TAIS.463301?jfwid=8qkvldw2>

<sup>71</sup> <https://e-seimas.lrs.lt/portal/legalAct/lt/TAD/TAIS.443631/asr>

<sup>72</sup> Socialinis pranešimas 2013-2014

<sup>73</sup> Socialinis pranešimas 2013-2014

<sup>74</sup> Lietuvos Respublikos socialinės apsaugos ir darbo ministro 2014 m. rugpjūčio 19 d. įsakymas Nr. A1-416 "Dėl Jaunimo garantijų iniciatyvos įgyvendinimo tvarkos aprašo patvirtinimo".

In 2015-2017, the *Plan for Strengthening Regional Youth Policy* set objectives to improve youth employment and development of youth established regional businesses (*Dėl regioninės jaunimo politikos stiprinimo 2015-2017 metų veiksmų plano patvirtinimo*, 2015).<sup>75</sup>

The main direction of youth policy for the next three years in the programme for 2017-2019<sup>76</sup> was: the integration of NEET in society (*Dėl nacionalinės jaunimo politikos 2011-2019 metų plėtros programos įgyvendinimo 2017-2019 metų veiksmų plano patvirtinimo*, 2017).

The programme "Kurk Lietuvai" started in 2012 (*Kurk Lietuvai*, 2019). The Youth Guarantees Initiatives project "Atrask save" set a priority to improve youth employment in municipalities. The main focus was put on services for NEET in municipalities.

Inter-institutional networks in municipalities were formed by youth coordinators in 2016–2017 (*Socialinis pranešimas*, 2016-2017). These networks aim to ensure a smooth transition of inactive youth to the labour market or education. The measure "The improvement of Youth Employment" funded by the European Social Fund was devoted to reducing the number of NEET (*Socialinis pranešimas*, 2016-2017). The early intervention and integration encouragement services were set as the targets of this project.

Lithuania has signed bilateral youth exchange agreements with Poland, Hungary, Ukraine, Canada, and New Zealand. Inter-institutional agreements were signed with Georgia, Germany, and Moldova to promote an exchange of information on youth policies (*Socialinis pranešimas* 2016-2017).

## Conclusion

After regaining independence in 1990, Lithuania created and enshrined in law a system of education, labour market, social support and citizenship which protects and supports the youth. The comprehensive and compulsory education system has led to the small NEET rate in the country. The necessary protection of youth labour is ensured, the active labour market policy targeted toward the youth is defined by law. The structural approach (Pohl & Walther, 2007) is dominating in Lithuania and just recently the new individualised measures have been introduced. The career route after compulsory secondary education is directed (by choice) mainly toward studies at universities, which determines a lower labour market participation rate and a higher rate of youth studying at universities. The social support system in Lithuania is familialised. The newly introduced universal child benefit shapes the new emerging features of the individualised approach. However, compensatory (Lauri and Toots, 2015) welfare is low in Lithuania, so the rate of youth at risk of poverty is high in the country. The social investment (Lauri and Toots, 2015) approach dominates concerning those under 18 only, while active labour market policy measures are funded insufficiently in the country. Active labour market policy complies more with the structural approach. Meanwhile, some measures reflecting the individualised approach such as individual counselling and individual activity plans for

<sup>75</sup> <https://e-seimas.lrs.lt/portal/legalAct/lt/TAD/b1523f309b6f11e48d7bacdf30d64d66?jfwid=rivwzvvpvg>

<sup>76</sup> <https://e-seimas.lrs.lt/portal/legalAct/lt/TAD/a905d6a0214d11e79f4996496b137f39/asr>



the unemployed have been introduced. Unemployment protection has the characteristics of compensatory (based on social insurance) welfare. Working youth below 18 are protected by the law. This demonstrates a high level of the structural approach. Housing policy is familialised and a low level of housing provision is offered for youth older than 18 years. Some health care and health education services are provided at secondary schools.

Health and education system is decommodified in Lithuania. The social protection system mainly emphasises cash benefits; meanwhile, less attention is paid to welfare services.

The youth policy is implemented within separate sectors: the education system, social security system, and health care system. The lack of an intersectional approach in addressing youth issues is observed.

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