

**Universal Periodic Review  
(12<sup>th</sup> session, 3-14 October 2011)**

**Contribution of UNESCO**

**LITHUANIA**

**I. Human rights treaties which fall within the competence of UNESCO and international instruments adopted by UNESCO**

1. Table:

<i>Title</i>	<i>Date of ratification, accession or succession</i>	<i>Declarations /reservations</i>	<i>Recognition of specific competences of treaty bodies</i>	<i>Reference to the rights within UNESCO's fields of competence</i>
Convention against Discrimination in Education 1960	-	<i>Reservations to this Convention shall not be permitted</i>		Right to education
Convention on Technical and Vocational Education. 1989	28/01/1993			Right to education
Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage 1972	31/03/1992			Right to take part in cultural life
Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage 2003	21/01/2005			Right to take part in cultural life
Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions 2005	18/12/2006			Right to take part in cultural life

2. Lithuania reported to UNESCO in 2009 within the framework of the Fourth Consultation of Member States on the measures taken for the implementation of the 1974 UNESCO's Recommendation concerning Education for International Understanding, Co-operation and Peace and Education relating to Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (covering the period 2005-2008).

## **II. Promotion and protection of human rights on the ground**

### **1. Right to education<sup>1</sup>**

3. Constitutional framework: Principal components of the right to education are displayed in Article 41 of the Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania of 1992. According to this Article, education shall be compulsory for persons under the age of 16 and, at State and local government, secondary, vocational, and higher schools shall be free of charge. In addition, it guarantees that everyone shall have an equal opportunity to attain higher education according to their individual abilities. Citizens who demonstrate suitable academic progress shall be guaranteed education at establishments of higher education free of charge. Article 40 ensures educational principles such as secular teaching and education, establishment of non-governmental teaching institutions according to the procedure established by law and academic autonomy.

4. Legislative framework: In implementing the education policy and taking account of the changing political, economic and social situation, amendments to legal acts have been adopted and several new legal acts have been enacted. The Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania has passed the following laws and resolutions: Law on the Amendment of the Law on Science and studies (2002); Law amending the Law on Education (2003); Provisions for the National Education Strategy 2003-2012 (2003); Long-term civic and citizenship education programmes (2006); Law Amending the Law on Vocational Education and Training (2007); law on Minimum and Medium Supervision of the Child (2007); Concept of the State Policy on Child Welfare (2007) and other legal acts regulating various fields of education.

5. The main framework for education is the Law on Education of the Republic of Lithuania which was reformulated in 2003 and amended in 2006. UNESCO provided expert advice in the process of elaboration of this law. The Law reaffirms the right to education as a fundamental human right. It provides that the new Education System should promote equal education opportunities, efficiency and quality of education also the Adult and Special Education in particular for socially excluded persons, persons with

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<sup>1</sup> *Sources:*

- i) Lithuanian Report on the Development of Education, 2008, [http://www.ibe.unesco.org/National\\_Reports/ICE\\_2008/lithuania\\_NR08.pdf](http://www.ibe.unesco.org/National_Reports/ICE_2008/lithuania_NR08.pdf) (Accessed 15/02/2011);
- ii) Eurydice, EACEA, National summary sheets on education system in Europe and ongoing reforms, 2009 Edition, [http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/documents/eurybase/national\\_summary\\_sheets/047\\_LT\\_EN.pdf](http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/documents/eurybase/national_summary_sheets/047_LT_EN.pdf) (Accessed 15/02/2011).

disabilities and vulnerable and disadvantaged children. The new Law also guarantees the quality of education services and their constant improvement through co-ordination of policy formation, management, planning, delegation of powers and responsibilities, analysis and monitoring, as recommended in the Dakar Framework for Action. According to the law, children start compulsory education at the calendar year when they turn 7 years of age (or earlier if the child is mature for school). It ends when they reach the age of 16. At present a new Draft Law on Education is under way.

6. Regarding equal opportunity and non discrimination and in compliance with the European Union directive, the Law on Equal Treatment was adopted in 2003. According to Article 4 of this law, Educational institutions, science and academic institutions must ensure equal conditions for persons regardless of their age, sexual orientation, disability, racial or ethnic origin, religion or beliefs when admitting to schools of general education, vocational institutions, college level and university schools and refresher, retraining and other courses; awarding study grants and providing loans for studies; drawing up, drafting, approving and also, selecting curricula; assessing knowledge.

7. In 2006 the Law on Social Assistance for Pupils was passed with a view to improving accessibility of education for the children from disadvantaged and at-risk families. Pursuant to the law, such children are entitled to free schools meals and free learning material.

8. The new 2000 Law on Higher Education established the sector of non-university higher education. The amendment of July 2006 to the Law on Higher Education enables colleges from 2007/08 onwards to award a *Professional Bachelor* degree (*profesinis bakalauras*).

9. The new Law on Science and Studies adopted on 30 April 2009 introduces the change of funding methods of higher education by introducing the 'student's basket'. Study basket quotas for universities and colleges are stated by the Ministry of Education and Science. The students who do not get 'student baskets' can be supported with the help of State-guaranteed loans. Student's right to get the 'basket' is decided upon his/her school results (*matura* examination and study results), additional points that candidate may get, candidate's choice priorities, other candidates' choice, additional tests organised by higher schools (if they are planned). The sum of money allotted by the State to finance one student's studies is twice bigger after the adoption of the new law than before.

10. Policy Measures: While implementing the targets of the Provisions of the National Education Strategy 2003-2012 regarding the improvement of pre-school education availability, quality and effectiveness, in September 2007 the Lithuanian Government approved a 'Programme for the Development of Pre-school and Pre-Primary Preparatory Education' for 2007-2012 developed by the Ministry of Education and Science.

11. In November 2006, a 'Strategy for the Development, Implementation, Assessment and Renewal of the Content of General Education' for 2006-2012 was adopted.

12. The implementation programme for a new remuneration system of teachers, approved in 2004, was launched in September 2005. The implementation of the 'Long-term Programme of the Remuneration Increase for Pedagogical Staff' (approved by the Government in the beginning of March 2008 and (amended on 29 April) was started to be carried out from 1 May 2008.

13. In April 2006, the Government adopted a 'Plan of long-term development of higher education 2006-2010'.

## **2. Right to take part in cultural life**

14. Legislative framework: To implement the 1972 World Cultural and Natural Heritage Convention, Lithuania's legal framework includes: Law on Protection of Immovable Cultural Heritage (2004), Law on Protection of Immovable Cultural Properties (1995), Law on Protected Areas, Law on Territorial Planning, Law of the Sea Coastal Zone, and local level Management Plans and Regulations of Protected Areas. However, there is no specific planning legislation to protect World Heritage sites.

15. Institutional framework: To ensure the realization of the 1972 World Cultural and Natural Heritage Convention, various departments were established at the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Environment, including the Department of Cultural Heritage Protection, the State Protected Areas Service, the Centre of Cultural Heritage. At the level of municipalities, the following structures were created: Vilnius Old Town Renewal Agency, Administrations of National Park Reserves, etc.

16. Cooperation: In the framework of the 1972 World Cultural and Natural Heritage Convention, in 2006, the Government of Lithuania, Chair of the World Heritage Committee (WHC) at that time, hosted the WHC's 30th session in Vilnius. Lithuania cooperates with other States Parties to the Convention in the fields of protection, conservation and preservation of World Heritage sites and identification of new ones to be inscribed on the World Heritage List. This cooperation is carried out through bi- and multilateral agreements, hosting and/or attending international courses/seminars.

17. Work with civil society: In the framework of monitoring the implementation of the 1972 World Cultural and Natural Heritage Convention, the UNESCO's World Heritage Centre receives occasionally signals from civil society representatives concerning the state of conservation of natural and cultural properties, inscribed on the World Heritage List, or on Lithuania's Tentative List and also other sites of importance. Generally speaking, the protection and conservation of heritage involves a positive participation of private sector, local communities and NGOs.

18. Achievements, best practices, challenges and constraints: Laws, legal acts and institutions are updated in conformity with the standards of the Convention and the European Union's Directives on natural and cultural heritage. World Heritage

management institutions have been established. Lithuania has developed strong expertise in heritage protection and participates in relevant forums to share this knowledge.

19. However, the cooperation with municipalities in the process of the preparation of the relevant documents for the nomination of sites for inscription on the World Heritage List is not sufficient. There is also a lack of specific laws on the protection of World Heritage sites, while activities on natural and cultural heritage are not sufficiently harmonized. The role of civil society in the management of World Heritage sites could be further increased.

20. Capacity-building and technical assistance provided and/or recommended by UNESCO: Lithuania participated in the Workshop for the Nordic-Baltic sub-region on Drafting of Retrospective Statements of Outstanding Universal Value which was held in Tallinn, Estonia, in October 2010 and was co-organized by the Nordic World Heritage Foundation in the framework of the Second Cycle of the World Heritage Periodic Reporting for Europe.

21. Lithuania also participated in the Periodic Reporting Follow-up Meeting which brought together of the Focal Points from the countries of the Nordic-Baltic sub-region and was held in Stockholm, Sweden, in December 2009.

### **3. Freedom of opinion and expression**

22. Achievements, best practices, challenges and constraints: Lithuania respects freedom of speech and the press and access to the internet is not restricted. Media outlets of all forms express a wide variety of views. However, there is no written comprehensive code of conduct or professionalism for the Press.

23. Capacity-building and technical assistance provided and/or recommended by UNESCO: Consistent with its mandate, UNESCO collaborates at different levels with Lithuania to reinforce the right to freedom of expression. In November of 2010, UNESCO sponsored an event to strengthen multilingualism in cyberspace. In September of 2009, UNESCO held workshop on Privacy and Social Networking at 5th IGF meeting, as well as a workshop on Access, Diversity, and Freedom of Expression, and launched the report: “Freedom of Connection – Freedom of Expression: The Changing Legal and Regulatory Ecology Shaping the Internet” in Vilnius.

## **III. RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **Right to education**

24. Lithuania should be encouraged to ratify the 1960 UNESCO’s Convention against Discrimination in Education.

### **Right to take part in cultural life**

25. Lithuania should be encouraged to enhance the right to take part in cultural life of the community through the implementation of the Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (1972) by:

- i) Involving municipalities in the preparation of nominations for the inscription on the World Heritage List;
- ii) Enacting special law on the protection of World Heritage properties;
- iii) reinforcing cooperation with the Russian Federation on Curonian Spit in case of oil spill;
- iv) Raising awareness about *World Heritage Convention* and the outstanding universal value of the World Heritage sites on a political level and among civil society, in order to improve the decision-making processes regarding the World Heritage properties;
- v) Involving more actively civil society in the management and conservation of the World Heritage sites.

### **Freedom of opinion and expression**

26. There are several opportunities for developing and protecting freedom of expression in Lithuania. It is recommended to develop a written comprehensive code of conduct or professionalism for the Press.