

QUADRENNIAL PERIODIC REPORT

**ON MEASURES TO PROTECT AND PROMOTE THE DIVERSITY OF
CULTURAL EXPRESSIONS IN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE 2005
UNESCO CONVENTION IN THE REPUBLIC OF LITHUANIA**

SUMMARY

This report gives an overview of Lithuanian policy measures that comply with the provisions of the 2005 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (hereinafter referred to as the 'Convention'). Policy measures on both the national and local level are considered. As The Republic of Lithuania ratified the Convention on 14 December 2006, measures implemented from 2006 to 2011 are taken into account.

While drawing up the report, the Ministry of Culture was consulted by an interinstitutional working group which consisted of representatives from the Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of Economy, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Social Security and Labour, the State Service for Protected Areas under the Ministry of Environment, the department of Youth Affairs under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour, State Department of Tourism under the Ministry of Economy, the Lithuanian Statistics Department, the Lithuanian National Commission for UNESCO and the Association of Municipalities in Lithuania.

Chapter II.1.1 of the report looks at the measures for supporting dissemination of cultural expressions and participation in culture, especially in the different regions of Lithuania (hereinafter referred to as 'regions'). Chapter II.1.2 refers to measures that support diversity in creating cultural expressions (for example, the support scheme for projects by young artists). Chapter II.1.3 describes measures taken to support the creation and dissemination of cultural expressions of national minorities.

Chapter II.2 presents international cultural cooperation measures applied in Lithuania: different aspects of the *International Cultural Cooperation Programme*, culture-related measures of Development cooperation policy and procedures, as well as achievements of the Lithuania and Poland Youth Exchange Fund.

Chapter II.3 outlines measures that integrate culture in sustainable development policies. There were many such measures during the reporting period and they were carried out with support from both State and European Union Structural Funds: the *Programme of Renovation and Modernisation of Libraries*, *Programme of Museum Modernisation*, and *Cultural Heritage Digitisation* policy measures were implemented; cultural heritage objects were adapted to cultural tourism needs, a policy for development of cultural industries was formulated and the establishment of Art Incubators was supported.

A survey of municipalities about Convention-related measures implemented on a regional and local level was conducted while drawing up the report. A summary of the findings of this survey is presented in Chapter II.4.

Some of the most visible cultural NGO initiatives, which comply with the provisions of the Convention and reinforce its implementation, are outlined in Chapter 3. Chapter 4 summarises the results achieved by Lithuania in the reporting period and sets the goals for the next reporting period based on the challenges experienced in this reporting period.

1. GENERAL INFORMATION

- (a) **Name of Party**
Republic of Lithuania
- (b) **Date of Ratification**
14 December 2006
- (c) **Ratification process**
The Convention was ratified by passing the law in the Parliament.
- (d) **Total contribution to the IFCD (to date)**
-
- (e) **Organisation(s) or entity(ies) responsible for the preparation of the report**
Ministry of Culture
- (f) **Officially designated point of contact**
Ms Eglė Mečinskaitė, chief specialist at the Division of International Relations and European Affairs, Strategic Planning and Supervision Department, Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Lithuania. E-mail: e.mecinskaite@lrkm.lt
- (g) **Date report was prepared**
21 May 2012
- (h) **Name of designated official(s) signing the report**

Mr Arūnas Gelūnas, Minister of Culture
- (i) **Description of the consultation process established for the preparation of the report and name of representative(s) of participating civil society organisation(s)**
An interinstitutional working group was established to assist in drawing up the report. Members of the working group consisted of representatives from different divisions at the Ministry of Culture as well as representatives from other ministries and other institutions: Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Economy, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Social Security and Labour, State Service for Protected Areas under the Ministry of Environment, Department of Youth Affairs at the Ministry of Social Security and Labour, State Department of Tourism under the Ministry of Economy, Lithuanian Statistics Department, Lithuanian National Commission for UNESCO and the Association of Municipalities in Lithuania.

All members of the working group collected and provided information about the measures for protecting and promoting the diversity of cultural expressions within the sphere of their responsibility. The Association of Municipalities collected relevant information from the municipalities of Lithuania in order to report on the measures adopted and implemented on the regional and local level.

Regarding consultation with civil society organisations, the Ministry of Culture and the Lithuanian National UNESCO Commission Secretariat distributed a questionnaire to cultural NGOs: these included, among others 'Meno Avilys', 'Balta Scena', 'Meno Duobė', 'Menu Spaustuvė', 'Kultūros Kiemas' and they were asked about initiatives they have implemented in order to promote diversity of cultural expressions.

II. MEASURES

II.1 Cultural policies and measures

II.1.1 SUPPORTING DISSEMINATION OF CULTURAL EXPRESSIONS AND PARTICIPATION IN CULTURE

Support for Regional Culture Projects which aim to reduce cultural and social exclusion

One of the persisting challenges for Lithuania's cultural diversity is the remaining gap between so called 'centre' and 'periphery' – cities and regions. Regional culture institutions are putting a lot of effort into preserving certain forms of cultural expressions – especially national ethnic culture, traditional arts and crafts, Lithuanian language and its dialects, culture of minorities, etc. However high unemployment rates, emigration and the rural to urban migration of youth represent a challenge in the regions to engage people in cultural activities, to nurture creativity and to foster diversity of cultural expressions, especially those taking contemporary forms.

Responding to these challenges, the aim of this measure is to increase access to culture in the regions of Lithuania, to strengthen institutions which fulfil the cultural and social needs of the communities in the regions and to contribute to improving the socio-cultural environment in the regions. Implementation of this measure began in 2011 and supports the following activities:

- a) cultural education in museums, libraries, cultural centres, cultural industry hubs etc.;
- b) programmes aiming to engage local communities in cultural activities;
- c) creative initiatives of young people in the regions;
- d) innovative initiatives improving access to culture, especially to contemporary art forms.

LTL 500,000 was dedicated to this support scheme and 46 projects were supported in 2011. The Ministry of Culture introduced this support scheme and is responsible for its implementation.

Support for Children and Youth Education Projects

The support scheme aims to introduce children and youth, especially young people from the regions of Lithuania, to a diversity of cultural expressions. It was noticed that informal cultural education, especially in the regions, was mainly conducted by schools and museums, therefore the scope of cultural expressions presented was rather limited. In addition, information about existing initiatives was not widespread.

The support scheme was introduced in 2006 and supports innovative children and youth education projects. Priority is given to projects which:

- a) take place in the regions and involve children and young people who do not usually participate in cultural activities;
- b) are joint initiatives between state institutions, municipality institutions and/or NGOs
- c) directly involve artists in educational programmes.

Due to the economic recession funding of this measure was halted in 2009 and 2010. The renewed support scheme delivered LTL 300,000 to 33 projects in 2011. The Ministry of Culture introduced this measure and is responsible for its implementation.

Competition 'Lithuanian Capital of Culture'

This is another measure that is being implemented in order to enliven cultural life and to increase access to culture in the regions of Lithuania. Inspired by the EU competition of *European Capitals of Culture* (in which at least two cities are proclaimed the cultural capitals of Europe each year), this measure selects one Lithuanian town (with the exception of the capital Vilnius) each year as the capital of culture of Lithuania. The town is selected after experts evaluate the *Capital of Culture* projects submitted by the municipalities of participating and competing towns. The main assessment criteria are: innovativeness of the project and its relevance to the development of the town and the surrounding region, relevance of the project to the cultural needs of the community of the town and the surrounding region, integration of the project with other major events in the town and the surrounding region.

The measure has been implemented since 2008. The competition is organised every three years and cultural capitals for three consecutive years are announced as a result. Selected projects receive partial financial support from the Ministry of Culture.

The Ministry of Culture introduced this measure and is responsible for its implementation.

Vilnius European Capital of Culture 2009

In 2009 the Lithuanian capital Vilnius held the title of European Capital of Culture (ECOC), which was the biggest, and the most ambitious cultural project in Lithuania to date. Promoting diversity of cultural expressions was at the heart of this project because one of its main goals was to involve citizens and communities in the cultural process. The slogan of Vilnius European Capital of Culture 2009 was 'Culture Live' which claimed that art and culture are constantly changing and are an ever-developing process involving everyone in the action, be they culture professionals, devoted admirers, city visitors or just passers-by. Organisers of Vilnius ECOC also aimed to encourage cultural exchange: to promote culture and art of other European countries in Lithuania and vice versa as well as to encourage partnerships between Lithuanian cultural operators and cultural operators from other countries.

One of the most prominent projects in the framework of Vilnius ECOC 2009 was ARTscape. The project introduced the most unique contemporary visual arts, jazz and cinema representatives from 12 European Capitals of Culture. Their works were presented together with the works of 12 representatives of the same fields of art in Lithuania. The purpose of this intensive programme, which lasted for 18 months, was to build cultural links between former, existing and future Capitals of Culture.

Another project which promoted the diversity of cultural expressions was *European School of Arts*. The project consisted of two parts: creative workshops and residencies for young artists, and cooperation projects between higher schools of art. Creative workshops and long-term residency programmes covered all fields of art: cinema, media, theatre or dance, visual and

applied arts, music, literature and translation. Young artists from Lithuania and foreign countries worked together and presented their works to Vilnius citizens and guests, and art school students implemented cooperation projects. New feature and documentary films and performances about Vilnius were created, hospitals were rejuvenated with works created by artists together with the patients; students offered public area management and design solutions, whereas writers searched for inspiration while wandering the streets of Vilnius. The *European School of Arts* invited Vilnius, and guests to participate in artistic games, which introduced new art trends, and teams of artists competed for the Audience Choice Prize.

In general Vilnius European Capital of Culture 2009 offered around 1,000 events. Some of the biggest events have now become annual ones, namely Street Music Day and Culture night 'Let There Be Night'.

ECOC 2009 was important to Lithuania as an experience of creating, developing and managing a large-scale project. Moreover, ECOC 2009 once again proved that an active, vital, thriving cultural sector, access to artistic skills and knowledge enriches individuals and communities and raises the role of culture in people's lives and consequently turns the attention of governments to the field of culture.

The Ministry of Culture and Vilnius Municipality were responsible for carrying out the project of Vilnius Capital of Culture 2009.

II.1.2 SUPPORTING DIVERSITY IN CREATING CULTURAL EXPRESSIONS

Support for Projects by Young Artists

Young artists are often a source of new ideas and less conventional art forms and art works which might contribute to increased diversity of cultural expressions. The aim of the *Support for Projects by Young Artists* scheme is therefore to allow young artists (age 14-35) to develop their professional skills as well as to present the works of young artists both in traditional and experimental ways. Like the measures mentioned above, *Support for Projects by Young Artists* also aims to enliven cultural life in the regions as it prioritises projects submitted by organisations outside of the capital. Partial support for selected projects by young artists was provided from 2007 to 2009. In 2010 the scheme was not funded due to financial difficulties as a result of the economic recession. This funding scheme was renewed in 2011 and currently also supports projects implemented by youth subcultures. This scheme supports various activities: from youth subcultures, street art etc. to academic music. From 2007 the Ministry also gives awards for young artists

The Ministry of Culture introduced this measure and is responsible for its implementation.

Social Security Programme for Artists

As opposed to other professions, the profession of an artist generally does not lead to having a permanent employer and steady income; however, artists remain liable for all taxes, including contributions to the state social insurance fund and the state health insurance fund, and thus find themselves in a vulnerable position regarding social security.

Following the practice of many European Union countries, special social security measures for artists were introduced in Lithuania. In 2011 Parliament passed an amendment to the Law on the Status of an Artist and the Status of an Organisation of Artists. As a result of this amendment, the *Social Security Programme for Artists* was approved by the government. As stated in this Programme, the State now pays the state social insurance fund and state health insurance fund contributions for artists on low, irregular incomes as well as for artists who are at a creative standstill (a temporary period of time during which an artist for personal reasons does not have the conditions to work or disseminate his works and therefore receive income). Moreover, artists at a creative standstill are entitled to financial benefits during this period.

The *Social Security Programme for Artists* was drawn up by the Ministry of Culture and approved by the government. The State Social Insurance Fund Board is responsible for paying contributions to the state social insurance fund and the state health insurance fund for the artists. The Ministry of Culture is responsible for assessing applications and providing financial benefits.

II.1.3 MEASURES REGARDING CREATION AND DISSEMINATION OF CULTURAL EXPRESSIONS OF NATIONAL MINORITIES

Coordinating state policy of national minorities is currently regarded as one of the main goals of the Ministry of Culture. This concept is stated in the new Regulations of the Ministry of Culture that entered into force in 2010. Before 2010, the affairs of national minorities were coordinated by the Department for National Minorities and Lithuanians Living Abroad under the Government of the Republic of Lithuania. As of 1 January 2010 the aforementioned institution no longer exists and its functions have been taken over by the newly created Division for National Minorities Affairs in the Ministry of Culture. This division is directly responsible to the vice-minister for national minorities affairs. Here is an overview of the most important measures implemented by the Division:

Integrating national minorities and fostering their culture through events and training activities

The Ministry of Culture funds centres for national minorities that carry out activities for national minorities. In 2010-2011 more than 180 events were organised at national, regional and local level to promote cultural expressions of minorities: concerts, book launches, discussions, presentation of the works of minority artists, meetings with minority, Lithuanian and foreign artists, exhibitions etc. Some of the events were dedicated to introducing the cultural expressions of minorities to the wider society. Another group of events was aimed at integration of national minorities: Lithuanian language courses, management courses, and courses on administration of projects. A periodic information bulletin about national minorities in Lithuania is also supported.

The Ministry of Culture introduced this measure and is responsible for its implementation.

Support for cultural projects of national minority NGOs

There are more than 300 national minority NGOs carrying out cultural activities in Lithuania. To foster the cultural identity of national minorities and to support the diversity of cultural expressions, in 2011 the Ministry of Culture introduced a measure to support projects by national minority NGOs. The competition focuses on projects which promote dissemination of the culture

of national minorities both in Lithuania and abroad, promotes cultural activities of children and youth from national minorities, aims to preserve the cultural heritage of national minorities, fights national and cultural discrimination, contributes to integrating the Roma national minority and organises Saturday and Sunday schools activities of national minorities. A total of 99 projects valued at LTL 270,000 were supported in 2011.

The Ministry of Culture introduced this measure and is responsible for its implementation. It is worth mentioning that this measure is not the only source of support for projects of national minority NGOs administrated by the Ministry of Culture. The main support body for cultural projects – Culture Support Foundation also funds national minority projects and in 2011 allocated LTL 236,000 for this purpose.

Measures for promoting the culture of national minorities in the media

Lithuania encourages the media to foster society's openness to national minority cultures, to encourage society's respect for the diversity of cultural expressions and to contribute to integration processes of national minorities. In 2011 the Ministry of Culture revived an initiative first implemented in 2007 by the Department for National Minorities and Lithuanians Living Abroad – a nomination 'For national tolerance' given to persons each year for promoting tolerance, fighting against racial and national discrimination in society as well as promoting different national and cultural identities in public media. In 2011, 9 works (publications and broadcasts) were submitted to this competition. The prize went to DELFI.RU editor and reporter Natalija Zverko.

Newspapers in Russian, Polish and Yiddish as well as internet news websites in Russian and Polish (<http://ru.delfi.lt/>, <http://pl.delfi.lt/>, <http://kurierwilenski.lt/>, <http://nedelia.lt/>, <http://kurier.lt/>) are available in Lithuania. The media can apply for support from the Ministry of Culture through the programme *Support for Cultural Projects of National Minority NGOs*. Moreover, by supporting Lithuanian National Radio and Television the Ministry of Culture supports its broadcasts in Russian, Belarusian, Polish and Ukrainian. These broadcasts are a mandatory feature of the mission of National Radio and Television. The Ministry of Culture also supports the informational bulletin *News of National Communities* published once every three months. Information about events, publications and other news related to dissemination of the culture of national minorities and/or important to national minorities is published in the bulletin.

Measures for integration of Roma into Lithuanian society

In comparison to other European countries the Roma are not a large national minority in Lithuania. There are about 2,500 Roma nationals living here. However, there is a need for policy measures facilitating Roma integration, especially in places where the Roma minority lives in a closed diaspora community, which might result in Roma children not attending school, adults not entering the job market etc. (these issues are especially topical in the capital). In 2008 the Government of Lithuania approved the *Programme of Roma Integration into Local Society 2008-2010*. The goals of this Programme were: 1) ensure integration of the Roma national minority into Lithuanian society and decrease their social exclusion; 2) preserve the national and cultural identity of Roma people; 3) improve the image of Roma people in the wider society.

Many Programme implementation activities were carried out by the Roma Community Centre – an organisation established in 2001 with the aim of integrating the Roma community into Lithuanian society. As part of the Programme the Roma Community Centre organised integration and socialisation activities for pre-school children, leisure time cultural activities for

Roma schoolchildren, provided free Lithuanian language courses to Roma adults and organised courses about the job market for Roma adults; organised a camp at the Baltic Sea to foster cultural identity and encourage socialisation of Roma children. However, it has to be noted that due to the economic recession not all activities foreseen in the Programme were implemented.

At the moment Roma integration activities are based on the *Roma Integration into Lithuanian Society Action Plan 2012-2014*, approved by the Ministry of Culture. The main goals of the plan are to improve the social conditions of the Roma minority and to create conditions for intercultural dialogue. Together with social integration measures this plan pays special attention to fostering Roma culture and increasing its openness to wider society. Support for dissemination of Roma culture, publishing books and CDs about Roma history and folklore as well as promotion of positive information about Roma culture in the mass media are among the activities foreseen in the Plan. Funds totalling LTL 5,458,000 have been allocated for the plan over the 3-year period. The Ministry of Culture is responsible for the implementation.

II.2 International cooperation and preferential treatment

International Cultural Cooperation Programme

The main goals of the *International Cultural Cooperation Programme* is promoting the openness of Lithuanian culture by taking part in international cultural dialogue and contributing to creating a positive image of Lithuania in the world.

Since 1991 Lithuania has signed bilateral and multilateral, interinstitutional and intergovernmental cultural cooperation agreements with more than 40 countries. Lithuania has signed and is implementing cultural cooperation programmes with Austria, China, Croatia, Russia and Ukraine as well as multilateral cooperation programmes with neighbouring Latvia and Estonia. The *International Cultural Cooperation Programme* funds these programmes.

The Ministry of Culture coordinates a network of 11 cultural attaches: in the Permanent Representation of Lithuania to the European Union, Kaliningrad region (Russian Federation), United Kingdom, France, Italy, Poland, Denmark (also covers Iceland and Norway), Ukraine, Germany, USA and the Russian Federation. Cultural attaches are responsible for fostering international cultural relations and presenting Lithuanian culture abroad. Cultural attaches implement around 250 projects each year.

The International Cultural Programmes Centre – a subordinate institution to the Ministry of Culture, implements many of the activities presenting Lithuanian culture abroad. The International Cultural Programmes Centre supports literary translation projects, Lithuania's participation in international Book Fairs (Bologna, Frankfurt, Gothenburg, London, Tel Aviv etc.), and workshops for translators, publishing industry visits etc. The Centre also coordinates Lithuania's participation in European Union programmes for supporting international cooperation in the cultural and audio-visual sector – 'Culture 2007', 'Europe for Citizens', 'Media'.

The Ministry of Culture is currently implementing new activities under its *International Cultural Cooperation Programme*. In 2012 a new support scheme for funding artist residencies has been introduced. The costs of Lithuanian artist residencies accommodating international artists will be covered by this scheme. Moreover, a mobility programme for arts organisations as well as co-

financing scheme for projects already funded by EU cultural programmes will be implemented from 2013.

The Ministry of Culture is responsible for implementation of the International Cultural Cooperation Programme.

Development cooperation policy

After becoming a member of the European Union Lithuania started implementing a development cooperation policy, which is part of every developed country's foreign policy. Development cooperation policy aims to maintain peace and foster economic development and social stability in the world by reducing disparities between developed and developing countries.

Support for partner countries in the spheres of culture, education, science and cultural heritage protection is one of the priority areas of Lithuania's development cooperation policy. Around 150 cultural projects were supported in the period between 2007 and 2011. A majority of these projects were implemented in Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Russia and Ukraine. There were several projects in Afghanistan. The total amount allocated to development cooperation policy in 2007-2011 is approximately LTL 554 million.

One example of a significant project could be the *Archaeological – heritage protection mission in Ghor province* project, which took place in 2007-2008 in Afghanistan. Making contacts with Afghan scientists and introducing Lithuanians to Afghan culture were among the aims of the project. During the implementation of the project archaeological research in Afghanistan was conducted, catalogues of discovered items were compiled and discovered items were given to the Afghanistan National Museum.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is responsible for the implementation of this measure.

Lithuania and Poland Youth Exchange Fund

The Lithuania and Poland Youth Exchange Fund was established in 2007 by an agreement between the Lithuanian prime minister and the President of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Poland. This Fund is based on the idea that young people have a special role in strengthening relations between countries. Thus, the main goals of the Fund are:

- to strengthen the role of the young generation in shaping international and bilateral relations;
- encourage young people to work together towards closer relations between Lithuania and Poland;
- to look together for common roots between Lithuanian and Polish people;
- to help overcome negative attitudes and stereotypes assessing common history and fostering current relations between Lithuania and Poland;
- to develop an effective youth exchange support mechanism.

Activities supported by this fund include: events; meetings; projects implemented by organisations which support joint activity of young people from Lithuania and Poland; information projects aiming to encourage cultural cooperation as well as mutual understanding between the two states; exchange of experience; publications which aim to bring the Lithuanian and Polish nations closer. There are 5 project selection procedures and 76 projects had been

funded by the end of 2011. Since the fund was established LTL 1,980,000 and PLN 5,000,000 have been spent on activities and administration of the Fund.

The Department of Youth Affairs at the Ministry of Social Security and Labour administers the *Lithuania and Poland Youth Exchange Fund* in Lithuania.

II.3 Integration of culture in sustainable development policies

II.3.1 MODERNISATION OF CULTURAL INFRASTRUCTURE

Programme for Renovation and Modernisation of Libraries 2003-2013

The work of public libraries is dependent on the social, political and economic environment and needs of society – in order to be successful these institutions must react promptly to changing circumstances. The growing influence of information technologies and the internet in 2000s was a time of rapid change which libraries had to accommodate in order to continue fulfilling their most important function – to archive, organise and disseminate the ideas, knowledge, information and experience recorded in various documents.

The goals of the *Programme for Renovation and Modernisation of Libraries* are:

- 1) to enable Lithuanian citizens to gain knowledge and qualifications which would allow them to adapt to quickly changing living and working conditions as well as successfully compete in the world markets;
- 2) to decrease inequalities between big towns and regions as regards the use of information technologies;
- 3) to allow libraries archive, preserve and present to society national, cultural and scientific heritage objects and ensure access to library funds.

Both the Ministry of Culture and municipalities are responsible for implementation of this Programme, which is funded from the state budget, budgets of municipalities and external funds. A total of LTL 280 million was allocated for implementation of the Programme from the state budget in 2003-2011. During this time 27 library buildings were renovated, which allowed the modernised libraries to provide new services to the public and attract new visitors. Furthermore, a new library – the Vilnius Jewish Library was established in 2011.

A significant contribution to reaching the goals of the *Programme for Renovation and Modernisation of Libraries* has been the project *Libraries for Innovation* implemented by the Ministry of Culture with joint support from the state and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. The project began in 2008 and will be finished in June 2012. Amongst the project activities are expansion of internet access points in public libraries, improvement of internet connection, training of librarians and library visitors in the use of information technologies, and making libraries more attractive to the public.

By the end of 2011 there were 6,185 computers for the use of library visitors in 1,306 public libraries in Lithuania. This is an increase of 250 per cent compared to the number of computers in libraries in 2007; 97 per cent of libraries in Lithuania now have internet connection. During the implementation of the project almost 1,000 libraries began using broadband connection or improved their broadband connection.

During the project special attention was given to public libraries in villages – consequently, by the end of 2011 the number of village libraries providing public internet access had increased by 200 per cent compared to the number in 2008. Today the proportion of libraries with public internet access in the big towns and villages is nearly the same. It is also worth mentioning that due to establishing internet connections in the libraries, the libraries themselves changed – many of them were partly refurbished, reconstructed and modernised in order to adapt to the new needs. Moreover, the librarians have improved their skills in using information technologies and now librarians encourage and help library visitors to embrace the opportunities for using information technologies.

Programme of Museum Modernisation 2007-2015

The goals of the *Programme of Museum Modernisation 2007-2015* are:

- 1) to develop society's historical consciousness;
- 2) to update the activities of museums and to provide them with suitable conditions to archive, preserve and promote objects of historical, literary, cultural, art, natural, scientific and technical heritage so that society can get to know the different kinds of cultural heritage and members of society can develop their creativity.

The activities of the Programme include both developing museum infrastructure (renovation of the buildings, acquisition of new storage as well as equipment for the restoration and display of exhibits, improvement of security measures) and improving the quality of museum activities and services using innovative means and information technologies in order to make museum exhibitions more attractive to contemporary society. A total of 23 investment projects costing LTL 82 million (including EU funding) were carried out in museums in 2007-2011. Equipment for restoring and displaying exhibits costing LTL 3.25 million was acquired during the same period and LTL 1.4 million were allocated to the improvement of security measures in the museums. The Ministry of Culture is responsible for implementing this Programme.

Even if the economic recession impeded some of the planned activities of the *Programme of Museum Modernisation*, for example, the acquisition of exhibits and their restoration had to be halted for some years due to lack of funding, the Programme nevertheless achieved substantial results. Among the biggest achievements of the Programme one can mention the renovated National Gallery of Art, which was opened in 2009, as well as the new Museum of Ethno cosmology opened in Northern Lithuania, near the town of Molėtai. Moreover, around 10 renewed exhibitions in different museums were opened by the end of 2011, while it is expected to open a further 20 renewed exhibitions in 2012.

Another important aspect of the *Programme of Museum Modernisation* has been promotion of museums online and the digitisation of museum exhibits. The website www.muziejai.lt, which presents and promotes museums online, was developed by the Lithuanian Art Museum during the course of the Programme. As for digitisation of exhibits, museum specialists have been taking part in training activities aimed at improving their competences, while museums have taken part in a number of digitisation projects: 3 regional digitisation centres were established in the National M. K. Čiurlionis Museum in Kaunas, the Šiauliai 'Aušra' Museum and Klaipėda Sea Museum. According to statistical data provided by the museums, by the end of 2011 Lithuanian museums had 467,000 exhibits digitised. The Lithuanian Art Museum submitted 1,293 digitised objects to the European cultural heritage digitisation portal 'Europeana' (www.europeana.eu).

Cultural Heritage Digitisation Policy

Lithuanian cultural heritage digitisation policy is based on the Lithuanian Cultural Heritage Digitisation Paper (issued by Government decree in 2005) and the Lithuanian Cultural Heritage Digitisation Strategy (issued by Government decree in 2009). The goal of Cultural Heritage Digitisation policy is to digitise unique and valuable cultural heritage objects which are important for preserving Lithuanian cultural identity, developing science, art and education as well as enhancing creativity and cohesion in society. Digitisation allows society to be introduced to cultural heritage values even when physically they cannot access them. Lithuanian Cultural Heritage Digitisation policy aims to ensure the integration of Lithuanian cultural heritage into the digital space for world cultural heritage.

While implementing the Lithuanian Cultural Heritage Digitisation Strategy, eight large cultural heritage digitisation and promotion projects are being implemented in Lithuania between 2009 and 2012. A total of LTL 45 million is allocated to these projects, LTL 6.7 million of which come from the state budget and LTL 38.3 million from EU Structural Funds.

One of the largest projects is a virtual digitised cultural heritage information system www.epaveldas.lt. This virtual system was created in cooperation between the Lithuanian National Martynas Mažvydas Library, the Lithuanian Art Museum and the Lithuanian Archives Department under the Government of the Republic of Lithuania. Epaveldas.lt comprises a database of around 3 million digitised cultural heritage objects. In 2010 the portal was visited by 200,000 visitors who looked at 138,620 digitised objects. Epaveldas.lt is funded jointly by the state and EU Structural Funds and has received LTL 12.4 million in support.

Another important digitisation project is development of the Lithuanian Integral Museum Information System (LIMIS), which connects the databases of Lithuanian museums. As a result of the project a joint public catalogue intended for museum specialists working with museum exhibits (archivists, conservators, researchers, curators, etc.) and for registered users (public officers, scholars, etc.) will be established. Information for public users will be available on the LIMIS database or electronic catalogues accessed via www.limis.lt portal and museum websites respectively. The first stage of the LIMIS project started in 2009 and is expected to be finished in 2012. Funding in the order of LTL 7 million has been allocated by the state and the EU Structural Funds to complete the first stage of the project. It is planned to install LIMIS in 19 museums in Lithuania by the end of 2012.

One more source of funding related to Cultural Heritage Digitisation policy is the grant scheme for digitised cultural heritage promotion projects. This scheme was introduced in 2010 and every year allocates grants for projects, which aim to apply digitised cultural heritage in education as well as enrich the leisure time activities of society and make cultural heritage more publicly accessible in general.

The Cultural Heritage Digitisation Policy is implemented by the Ministry of Culture.

II.3.2 SUPPORT FOR CULTURAL PROJECTS INVOLVING DISABLED PERSONS

Support for social rehabilitation services for disabled persons in communities

The goal of this support scheme is to diminish social exclusion of disabled persons and improve their social integration by encouraging organisations to provide social rehabilitation services that would increase self-sufficiency of the disabled persons and allow them to participate in cultural and sports activities. Development of the art competences of the disabled, by encouraging them to take part in art collectives and clubs, is one of the main strands of support under this support scheme.

This support scheme has been in force since 2011 following the implementation plan for the *National Programme for Disabled Persons' Integration 2010-2012*. One call for projects has been organised so far: LTL 1,793,860 has been assigned from the state budget for projects which develop the art competences of disabled persons; to date 10,000 disabled persons have taken part in project activities.

The Department for the Affairs of the Disabled at the Ministry of Social Security and Labour introduced this measure and is responsible for its implementation.

Support for activities of the associations of disabled persons

The goal of this support scheme is to diminish social exclusion of disabled persons and to improve their social integration by defending the rights of disabled persons, recruiting disabled persons for common actions, increasing self-sufficiency of disabled persons, developing various skills of disabled persons, and integrating disabled persons into society. Cultural projects and events which help to develop art and social competences, encourage creativity and cultural exchange of disabled persons as well as social partnerships in the community are among those funded by this scheme.

This support scheme started in 2011 following the implementation plan for the *National Programme for Disabled Persons' Integration 2010-2012*. A sum of LTL531,940 has been assigned from the state budget for projects involving cultural events. The project included 63 cultural events (concerts by collectives of disabled persons, creative competitions, open air, exhibitions, festivals, social interactions, performances etc. with 24,008 people attending the events of whom 8,655 were disabled).

The Department for the Affairs of Disabled introduced this measure and is responsible for its implementation.

II.3.3 DEVELOPING CULTURAL TOURISM

Operational programme *Promotion of Cohesion*

The European Commission approved this major development programme in Lithuania for 2007-2013 on 30 July 2007. The programme involves European Union support for the whole of Lithuania within the framework of the Convergence objective. One of the priorities under this programme is 'Local and urban development, conservation of cultural heritage and nature, and adaptation for tourism development' which includes:

- reducing disparities in the standard of living among major cities and other cities;
- creating an environment for faster diversification of economic activities in rural areas;

- promoting tourism through adequate use of natural resources, cultural heritage and creation of better conditions for active leisure;
- conservation of natural resources (especially water resources, landscape and biodiversity) facilitating their efficient adaptation for needs of population and economy.

Under this priority 74 projects were funded with an overall amount of around LTL 240 million. Monasteries, manors, castles, museums etc. are among the cultural heritage objects which have been restored and adapted to the needs of cultural tourism

The Ministry of Economy is responsible for implementing this measure.

The Programme of developing the John Paul II route for pilgrims and applying the objects of this route to the needs of pilgrims and tourists 2007-2013

This Programme was approved by Government decree in 2007. Sacral objects visited by Pope John Paul II during his trip to Lithuania and other sacral objects related to John Paul II are funded under this Programme with LTL 30 million assigned for its implementation until the end of 2011.

The Ministry of Economy is responsible for implementing this measure.

Development of protected areas

Since 2006, 18 visitor centres and countryside information points for visitors have been established in national and regional parks. Some of them have special regional exhibitions, including presentations of specific features of ethno-cultural regions. Each visitor centre presents facts about natural and cultural heritage, unique landscapes and biodiversity, promotes ethno-cultural traditions of Lithuanian regions and suggests recreational activities (tourism tracks, trails and resting places) in the respective national or regional park. Visitor centres have become part of the cultural life of the local communities with many cultural events taking place.

Another way of managing protected areas was to adapt natural and cultural heritage as well as the landscape for tourism: 13 natural and cultural objects and 36 Natura 2000 territories have been adapted for tourism in protected areas since 2006.

More than LTL 200 million from the state budget and EU structural funds was allocated to the abovementioned activities.

The State Service for Protected Areas under the Ministry of Environment is responsible for development of protected areas.

II.3.4 CULTURE WITHIN EDUCATIONAL POLICIES

Reading Promotion Programme

The goal of this Programme is increase the number of citizens who read regularly in order to develop personalities that are creative, critically thinking, and active members of society. The Programme encourages people of different ages and social groups to engage in reading by improving their reading skills and raising the prestige of reading. The *Reading Promotion*

Programme officially ended in 2011 but some of its activities, which have become traditional events in Lithuania, will be continued (for example, the 'Book of the Year' competition).

Reading is being promoted through the following activities:

- Prize for teachers for promoting children literature and reading. This prize is given to one teacher each year;
- 'Book of the Year' competition. This competition is one of the most popular activities of the Programme and has become an important annual cultural event in Lithuania. Books are usually nominated in three categories (children, teenagers and adult literature) and the best book is chosen by the public;
- Reading promotion website www.skaitymometai.lt;
- Meetings with authors;
- Readings in unconventional spaces;
- Initiatives to encourage children to read during the summer;
- The year 2008 was announced as the Year of Reading in Lithuania.

The Ministry of Culture and Ministry of Education are both responsible for implementing the *Reading Promotion Programme*.

Creative Partnerships

Implementation of Creative Partnerships started in 2011. The goal of this project is to develop cooperation between creators (artists, cultural sector activists, scientists) and schools by inviting creators to work together with teachers in schools, so that together with students these teachers can implement creative and unique projects. It is expected that by the end of the project in 2014 creative learning methods will be used in schools more frequently, and more professional and creative learning will become part of the majority of all subjects taught at school, and not only art classes. It is expected that these results will be achieved by developing and promoting the methodology for creative learning, by training teachers and representatives from the creative sector as well as by establishing long-term relations between schools and representatives from the creative sector. Creative Partnerships in Lithuania is based on the Creative Partnerships Programme, which has been operating successfully in the UK for 8 years.

In 2011, 43 schools were already involved in the Creative Partnerships project. It is expected that 100 schools will be involved in the Project's activities by the end of 2014, with 200 unique creative learning projects being implemented and 4,000 students participating .

Creative Partnerships is funded from the EU Social Fund. The Ministry of Education is responsible for implementing this Project.

II.3.5 DEVELOPING CREATIVE INDUSTRIES

Implementation of Creative Industries Promotion and Development Strategy

The Creative Industries Promotion and Development Strategy was approved by the decree of the Minister of Culture in 2007 and reviewed in 2009. The goals of this strategy are:

- to create favourable conditions for the development of creative industries;
- to increase the contribution of creative industries to the economy and knowledge economy;

- to increase the competitiveness of creative industries in Lithuania and abroad.

According to the strategy, creative industries in Lithuania include the following: crafts, architecture, design, cinema and video art, publishing, visual and applied art, music, software, producing and broadcasting radio and television programmes, advertising, performing arts and other sectors in which culture and economy intertwine.

While implementing this strategy, the Creative and Cultural Industries Association was established in 2008. The role of this organisation is to aim for cooperation between artists, arts and cultural organisations, communities and education and science institutions in order to promote and raise the profile of cultural industries in Lithuania. While striving to reach its goal the Creative and Cultural Industries Association spreads information related to cultural industries, organises conferences, conducts research, represents Lithuanian cultural industries in the policymaking process in Lithuania as well as in a European and world context, organises training and consults its members about managing their businesses and attracting funding.

Another measure for implementing the *Creative Industries Promotion and Development Strategy* is support for art incubators under the Operational Programme 'Economic Growth' co-funded with resources from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and the Cohesion Fund (CF). According to financing rules for this measure, an art incubator is a non-profit organisation which provides its infrastructure to artists and people who are developing cultural industries in order to create and present their works to the public, start their own businesses, develop creative industries and encourage the local community to take part in cultural life. Building, reconstruction and/or equipping of 8 art incubators in different regions of Lithuania were funded with more than LTL 40 million by the end of 2011. The Ministry of Economy administers the support scheme.

The *Creative Industries Promotion and Development Strategy* also includes a measure of partial funding of cultural industry projects. This measure has been implemented since 2010 and funding has been given to such events as an international art fair 'Art Vilnius', Design Week, Vilnius Book Fair, as well as international fairs for creative industry. Since 2012 part of the funding (around LTL 500,000 2012) goes to the new support scheme 'Development of Creative Industries by Renewing and Promoting Museum Exhibitions' administered by the Ministry of Culture.

The Ministry of Culture is responsible for implementation of the *Creative Industries Promotion and Development Strategy*.

Development of traditional crafts

In 2008 the *Programme for Protection of National Heritage Products and Development of Traditional Crafts* was approved by Government decree. This can be seen as promotion of cultural industries, as traditional crafts fall under the definition of cultural industries in Lithuania. Traditional crafts centres in 13 municipalities were established while implementing this Programme in 2010 and 2011. Each project for establishing a traditional crafts centre received joint support of around LTL 700,000 Litas from the state and European Union Structural Funds. The Structural Funds also supported 6 projects in 2010 and 4 projects in 2011; these are being implemented by traditional craftsmen to develop and promote their crafts.

The Ministry of Agriculture is responsible for implementation of the *Programme for Protection of National Heritage Products and Development of Traditional Crafts*.

II.4 Regional and local initiatives

While drawing up this report the Ministry of Culture has conducted an extensive survey of municipalities about measures taken to implement the Convention. A short overview of the reported initiatives on the municipal level is provided here.

- 1. Municipal funds for culture.** A majority of municipalities in Lithuania have grant schemes for cultural projects and organise calls for project proposals at least once a year. Even if in most cases the allocated funds for culture are scarce, they still exist and contribute to activating cultural life and promoting cultural diversity in the regions. Some funds are also allocated to renovation and application of new technologies in regional cultural infrastructure – cultural centres, libraries, museums.
- 2. International cooperation through participation in European Union funded projects.** All regions reported that their organisations – from schools to cultural centres and libraries – actively take part in international projects funded by various EU schemes. The most popular are European territorial cooperation objective (formerly INTERREG) programmes. As a result, most cooperation projects are implemented together with Lithuania's neighbouring countries: Poland, Latvia and Russia. One of the reasons for cross-border cooperation is that partners from neighbouring countries know each other's language, communicate better and have similar lifestyles. However, a number of projects are also implemented with the help of the EU programmes 'Youth in Action' and 'Europe for Citizens', which embrace more diverse partner countries.
- 3. Active ageing initiatives.** As young people from the regions tend to move to bigger towns or even abroad, a lot of senior citizens remain in the regions. Initiatives, which try to respond to the cultural needs of this social group and to promote understanding between different generations, were reported from many regions. One such initiative taking place in several regions is called 'A Book to Home' – volunteers from the local community bring wanted books to the homes of senior citizens.
- 4. Applying new technologies to culture.** Some regions have begun to digitise their heritage and/or provide encyclopaedic information about their region online. Some of the reported initiatives are: www.pasvalia.lt (digital library of cultural heritage of the Pasvalys area), www.kretingosenciklopedija.lt (a virtual encyclopaedia of the Kretinga area), www.vilnijosvartai.lt (a virtual encyclopaedia of Vilnius region).
- 5. Preserving local dialects.** One of the features defining cultural diversity inside Lithuania are local dialects. Not being used in public life, some of these dialects are disappearing. Initiatives are being taken in some regions to preserve the dialects for future generations – by filming and recording people who speak the dialects, publishing dialect dictionaries, organising competitions for the best story told in a dialect etc.

3. Awareness raising and participation of civil society

Civil society organisations in Lithuania are becoming more active in raising awareness about the diversity of cultural expressions. Some initiatives and events have become a regular part of Lithuanian cultural life and here are a few examples:

Human rights film festival 'Ad Hoc: Inconvenient Films'. This is an annual documentary film festival established in 2007. The mission of this non-profit initiative is to raise awareness on human rights issues around the world and to link them to those that are present in Lithuania. By presenting various documentaries on human rights, and inviting filmmakers and activists from all over the world, organisers hope to encourage public debate on human rights issues. Despite the project's social mission and non-commercial character, 'Ad Hoc: Inconvenient Films' is one of the most popular and most visited film festivals in Lithuania. More than 42,000 viewers have visited the festival's educational screenings since its foundation. 'Ad Hoc: Inconvenient Films' is organised by the Lithuanian Centre for Human Rights.

Street Music Day. Street music day was initiated by the Lithuanian rock musician Andrius Mamontovas and first organised in 2007. On the first Saturday of May both professional and amateur musicians take to the streets and busk for the whole day. Street Music Day was started in Vilnius, and since 2008 has been picked up by different NGOs and municipalities in other cities and towns in Lithuania and is now organised throughout the country each year. Musicians from other countries have also brought the idea home and there is now a Street Music Day in Riga, Tallinn, St Petersburg, Minsk and Tbilisi.

African Days. African Days is an annual festival of Sub-Saharan African culture which started in 2011. The festival presents a range of events related to Sub-Saharan African culture: African cinema, music, dances, exhibitions and open discussions. The organisers claim to be looking for similarities rather than differences between African countries and Lithuania as well as trying to involve the local community, promote multicultural dialogue and discuss current political affairs. 'African Days is organised by the association 'Balta scena' which initiates and implements social and cultural projects. It aims to create links between various artists and social institutions and to promote the involvement of artistic methods to deal with social problems. The association unites young people from the field of culture and cooperation.

These activities are in line with the objectives of the Convention, however, one has to admit that they were not carried out with the conscious goal of implementing the Convention. The Ministry of Culture and the Lithuanian National Commission for UNESCO contacted the organisers of the abovementioned and other initiatives with a questionnaire about how they promote and raise awareness of the objectives and principles of the Convention as well as monitor its implementation by the Government. Only a few replies were received and the organisations that did reply said that this was the first they had heard about the Convention and did not take up any special measures to implement it. The Ministry of Culture sees raising awareness of the Convention as one of the main challenges and goals for the next reporting period.

4. Main achievements and challenges to the implementation of the convention

The reporting period has been an active period in Lithuanian cultural policy – a number of policy documents have been approved, new priorities have been formulated and matching changes have begun to be implemented. The main cultural policy defining document is 'Benchmarks for Lithuanian Cultural Policy Change', approved by the Parliament in 2010. Like the Convention, the Benchmarks affirm the cross-cutting nature of culture in many spheres of politics – the Benchmarks emphasise the important role of culture in sustainable economic and social development of the country (its cities and regions), promoting cultural industries and creativity as well as increasing access to culture.

The need to implement the Benchmarks has also reinforced implementation of the Convention. Several policy measures to promote access to culture for people of different social groups, especially in the regions of Lithuania, have been introduced (for example, Support for Regional Culture Projects which aim to reduce cultural and social exclusion, the *Lithuanian Capital of Culture* competition). Nurturing creativity was also put forward in several measures (for example, *Support for Children and Youth* projects, *Support for Projects by Young Artists*, and the *Creative Partnerships* initiative).

This report dedicates most of its space to describing measures for integrating culture in sustainable development policies. In the reporting period much funding, both national and EU, has been dedicated to the renovation of museums, libraries, cultural centres, integration of new technologies in their work and exhibitions, training of staff to use modern technologies and applying them to attract new visitors to cultural institutions. EU structural funds were also used to adapt cultural heritage buildings to cultural tourism needs and to establish art incubators – spaces for artists and creative industries to develop their activities.

The reporting period was also the beginning of formulating the policy of the development of cultural industries – the *Creative Industries Promotion and Development Strategy* was approved, the *Creative and Cultural Industries Association* was established, art incubators were funded and a support scheme for cultural industry projects was introduced.

Goals for the next reporting period stem from challenges experienced in this reporting period. One of the goals of the next period is to develop the capacities of cultural operators to work internationally; to facilitate mobility of cultural operators and works of art; to support international cooperation and to expand collaboration with the artists and art organisations beyond EU Member States. In 2012 a new grant scheme for artist residencies has been introduced. Priority is given to non-EU artists residing in under this scheme. Mobility programme for arts organisations as well as a co-financing scheme for projects already funded by the EU programme *Culture 2007* will be implemented from 2013.

Another challenging goal is to increase awareness of the Convention itself among institutions and the public. The task is challenging because the Convention is an abstract document that is not easy to summarise, explain or communicate. We believe that the Lithuanian National Commission for UNESCO and other National Commissions should take a more active role in increasing the visibility of the Convention and the awareness of society.

Signature:


