

desk RESEARCH

Yes, that's our cover, because
we have to use all to use less.

greenACT

PREFACE

GreenACT is a 20 months' project designed to enhance ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION and AWARENESS of YOUNG PEOPLE through the organisation of SUMMER SCHOOL PROGRAMME to familiarize young people with the idea of environmental citizenship, based on the fact that the future depends on each and one of us by acting responsibly and positively towards our environment and developing sustainable solutions for addressing environmental challenges. In a period where Earth faces the consequences of climate change and global warming crisis and the need for mitigation of climate change is emerging, Green-ACT aims to support further these YOUTH INITIATIVES and raise more awareness in the 6 countries, by educating young people on environmental issues, inspire them in developing a firm ecological mind-set, and invite them to have a positive impact in their communities as active agents.

The partnership is composed of 6 partners from 6 countries: Romania, Lithuania, Cyprus, Slovenia, Bulgaria, Portugal

Furthermore, it aims:

- o To promote the idea of establishing SUMMER SCHOOLS for raising young people's environmental awareness;
- o To set up the GreenACT MOVEMENT (a network of young activists) for coordinating their actions and engaging citizens;
- o To build/increase the capacity of partner organizations to take action regarding the reduction of waste in the partner countries by encouraging local communities to recycle and reuse.
- o To equip youth workers with new sustainable environmental skills in order to empower more young people;
- o To facilitate brainstorming on challenges and possible solutions of topics such as alternative forms of socio-economy, biodiversity and food production, sustainable production and consumption, transport, etc.

The Desk Research template will be developed in each partner country with the purpose of recording gaps in policies related to environmental protection and awareness in partner countries and whether there are any good practices or not. As well known from before, there is a lack of reports based on what young people's opinion on climate crisis, eco-lifestyle, basic environmental issues, environmental awareness and reports to show their level of environmental education and awareness. Furthermore, this desk research will show the policies or good practices applied in the 6 partner countries for tackling the climate crisis and environmental degradation at the local level. The Desk Research along with the survey that will be later on realised, there will be provided evidence-based data in the participating countries on young people's attitudes towards climate crisis and eco-lifestyle and the EU policies in the 6 countries related to the protection of the environment.

The Desk Research template follows the below given structure, proposed by the Intellectual Output leader partner, D.G.T. Association, in order to allow an easier comparability of reported

information and outcomes across GreenACT partner countries and includes the following chapters (that each will have 2 subchapters) :

- o Chapter 1: Recording gaps in policies related to environmental protection and awareness
Lithuania
- o Chapter 2: Best practices in policies related to environmental protection and awareness
Lithuania

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Based on Desk research, in terms of gaps in policies regarding environment protection and awareness, Lithuania still have challenges with waste, water and nature protection. The Ministry of Environment in Lithuania needs to reach environment quality which match environment quality norms and international commitments that environment pollution doesn't raise a danger for people health and whole environment in country. Also, the Ministry of Environment must take an action in groundwater quality. Especially in internal surface water reservoirs, Kuršių lagoon and Baltic sea. Pollution must decline to a minimum. Moreover, Ministry creates projects about environmental care and communicate with residents. In this way it will help to raise awareness. Furthermore, Lithuania maintains a clean environment, particularly air and water quality. For water and nitrates Lithuania needs to make further efforts to reduce eutrophication of surface freshwater. The European Commission could not assess the second generation of river management plans under the Water Framework Directive as Lithuania has not yet completed all the required reporting. Lithuania could benefit from a more targeted use of the European Structural and Investment Funds

(ESIF), to better implement environmental rules, particularly on waste management and wastewater treatment, and to ensure that necessary administrative capacity and skills are available.

SANTRAUKA (EXECUTIVE SUMMARY IN LITHUANIAN)

Remiantis „Desk“ tyrimais, apie aplinkos apsaugos ir sąmoningumo politikos spragas, Lietuva vis dar turi iššūkių atliekų, vandens ir gamtos sričių apsaugoje. Aplinkos Ministerijai reikia pasiekti išlaikyti aplinkos kokybės normas ir tarptautinius ES įsipareigojimus, aplinkos tarša nekelia pavojaus žmonių sveikatai ir aplinkai visoje šalies teritorijoje. Taip pat Aplinkos Ministerija turi imtis veiksmų, kurie gerintų dirvožemio vandens kokybę. Labiausiai prižiūrėti požeminio vandens, vidaus paviršių vandens telkinių, Kuršių marių ir Baltijos jūros būklę. Vandens užterštumas turi sumažėti iki minimumo. Ministerija kuria projektus apie aplinkosaugos priežiūrą ir komunikuoja su Lietuvos gyventojais. Šiuo atveju, tai padės didinti žmonių sąmoningumą. Lietuva palaiko švarią aplinką, būtent oro ir vandens. Tačiau Lietuva turi pasistengti sumažinti vandens paviršių eutrofikaciją, dėl vandens ir nitratų. Europos Komisija negalėjo įvertinti antrosios kartos upių valdymo planus pagal vandens pagrindų vadybą, nes Lietuva dar neužpildė visų privalomų ataskaitų. Lietuva galimai galėtų pasinaudoti tikslesnių Europos struktūrinių ir investicinių fondų (ESIF) naudojimu, siekiant geriau įgyvendinti aplinkosaugos taisykles, ypač atliekų tvarkymo ir nuotekų tvarkymo srityse, ir užtikrintų, kad būtų pasiekti būtini administraciniai gebėjimai ir įgūdžiai.

INTRODUCTION

This Desk Research was developed with the main aim to introduce the gaps and best practices in terms of environmental protection and awareness in Lithuania. The main source of information which was used for its preparation is the Environmental Implementation Review 2019 for Lithuania. This review is beneficial tool for the implementation of EU environmental law and policy. Environmental Implementation Review the main aim is to provide causes of implementation gaps and try to find solutions before problems get insistent.

1. Recording gaps in policies related to environmental protection and awareness in Lithuania

Key findings of Chapter 1:

- In the last 18 years, Lithuania's environment is polluting less and less and more attention is focused on environment quality, resident's rights to clean environment security: development of water supply, municipal waste and wastewater treatment public service delivery.
- Protection of the Baltic Sea is an issue as all saline water stations were reported to be in eutrophic or hypertrophic status.
- Lithuania's revenue from environment-related taxes remains below the EU average.
- There is no progress on the proportion of renewable energy used in transport. Progress is expected in the upcoming years.

1.1. Already existing gaps in Lithuania

•Policy for waste management

Illegal landfills and pollution in the sea must stop. Demographic, economic positions, environment condition changed and new factors appeared after Lithuania entered the European Union. The earlier environment protection politics were carried out. Increasing environment pollution, the use of growing nature resources caused a necessity to switch to wider, new quality and complex environment protection policy. In the last 18 years Lithuania's environment is polluting less and less and more attention is focused on environment quality,

resident's rights to clean environment security: development of water supply, municipal waste and wastewater treatment public service delivery. Lithuania improve their quality, expand forest and size of stands. According to heavy metals quantity in soil, Lithuania assigned to the most clean European countries. Also, Lithuania is one of few European countries which population consume only underground water for their needs. In the last decade emitted greenhouse effects caused gas amount declination, even though economy was still growing at the same time.

Although environment condition changes show that there are environment problems which need to be solved: about 17% utilities waste, which the major piece is appropriate for recycling and energy use production. This waste is still removed from landfills, for example, Kuršių lagoon, Baltic Sea coast and two thirds Lithuania's river and lakes don't match requirements of good water. In the biggest cities (Vilnius, Kaunas, Klaipėda, Šiauliai, Panevėžys) often exceed solid particles (KD10) and permanently exceeding benzo pyrenes concentration rate in the air. A significant decrease in landfilling has been achieved by increasing incineration with energy recovery capacity (the second least favourable option for waste treatment), the rate of which doubled since 2014 to 18 % (still below the EU average of 24 %); it may still increase in the future as new facilities are under construction

Policy for Protecting, conserving and enhancing natural capital (natural resources, such as geology, soils, air, water and all living organisms).

In 2015, Lithuania adopted an action plan on the conservation of landscape and biological diversity for 2015-2020 . Nature in Lithuania is in a relatively good state. The condition of its air, water and soil is assessed as good — there are no significant ecological problems. Considering this, Lithuania can develop it ecological compensation system based on the 'where it is necessary' principle rather than the 'where it is left' principle. Lithuania continues to develop species conservation plans and management plans for protected areas as required by EU legislation. At present, there are 104 adopted management plans for Natura 2000 sites, and 142 are in preparation, at different stages of development.

In Lithuania, the topic of ecosystem services is still rather new, with limited knowledge and experience across different sectors (government, academia, NGOs, private). No systemic mapping of ecosystems has yet been done. However, MAES has been included in the current Lithuanian government's work programs for 2016- 2020. It requires the mapping and assessing

of at least 24 main ecosystem services, and urges the adoption of legislation to foster integration of the ecosystem services approach into sectoral policies. However, there is no coherent strategy or outlined set of actions yet.

The EU soil thematic strategy underlines the need to ensure a sustainable use of soils. This entails preventing further soil degradation and preserving its functions, as well as restoring degraded soils. The 2011 Roadmap to a Resource Efficient Europe states that by 2020, EU policies must take into account their direct and indirect impact on land use. Soil is a finite and extremely fragile resource and it is increasingly degrading in the EU. The percentage of artificial land³⁹ in Lithuania (Figure 12) is amongst the lowest in the EU (surpassing only Sweden, Finland, Latvia, Bulgaria, Estonia and Romania). This is partly linked to the population density of 45.8/km², significantly below the EU average

For Lithuania, the Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission (Helsinki Commission) plays an important role in achieving the goals required by the Marine Strategy Framework Directive. Marine strategies comprise different steps to be developed and implemented over six-year cycles. The latest step required Member States to set up a program of measures and report on it to the Commission. This was due by 31 March 2016. Although it has reported its measures in the meantime, this was too late for the Commission to include them in this assessment exercise.

- Policy for improving water management

The existing EU water legislation puts in place a protective framework to ensure high standards for all water bodies in the EU and addresses specific pollution sources (for example, from agriculture, urban areas and industrial activities). It also requires that the projected impacts of climate change are integrated into the corresponding planning instruments e.g. flood risk management plans and river basin management plans, including programme of measures which include the actions that Member States plan to take in order to achieve the environmental objectives.

Lithuania has adopted the second generation of river basin management plans under the Water Framework Directive albeit not finished the electronic reporting to WISE as agreed by the water directors under the common implementation strategy related to the Water Framework Directive, in June 2014. The European Commission has therefore not yet conducted

an assessment and not been able to assess the status and development since the first EIR report.

Protection of the Baltic Sea is an issue as all saline water stations were reported to be in eutrophic or hypertrophic status. Under the Nitrates Directive report for 2012-2015, Lithuania also reported that nitrate concentrations in surface water are not likely to decrease if no additional measures are taken to reduce pollution. However, one of Lithuania's bathing waters was of poor quality. Detailed information on Lithuania's bathing waters is available on a national portal and via an interactive map viewer designed and hosted by the European Environment Agency.

- Environmental taxation

Lithuania's revenue from environment-related taxes remains below the EU average. In the European Country reports, the Commission has repeatedly indicated that there is further potential to increase environmental taxes. Lithuania has the lowest excise duties on motor fuel, petrol and diesel in the EU91 and the proposals to introduce a CO₂-based motor vehicle tax have been rejected so far. Nevertheless, there are several cases that show the implementation of sound fiscal measures related to the environment. Seven widely used products, which account for a large portion of the waste stream, were added to the products taxed under the Law on the Tax on Environmental Pollution of the Republic of Lithuania: tyres, accumulators, galvanic elements (batteries), fuel or oil filters, air intake filters, shock absorbers and mercury lamps. In 2018, some efforts have been made to reduce the 'diesel differential' (difference in the price of diesel versus petrol). Lithuania has increased the rate for diesel (propellant) in 2018 by 5%, however rate for petrol has not been changed. In 2016, there was still a 32 % gap between petrol and diesel tax rates; whereas in 2005 it was only 17 %. There are no CO₂-based motor vehicle taxes in place in Lithuania. Incentives to encourage the purchase of cars with lower CO₂ emissions were low in 2016. New vehicles purchased in Lithuania are among the least environmentally friendly in the EU, with average CO₂ emissions of 126.2 grams per kilometre, above the EU average of 118 grams in 2016 . The proportion of alternative fuels used in road transport is low in Lithuania. The focus is on electric vehicles, but Lithuania does not yet have a dense enough network of publicly accessible recharging points. The spatial distribution of recharging points does not currently cover the needs of vehicles in terms of distance requirements.

- Making cities more sustainable

Lithuanian cities generally have low levels of traffic congestion. The capital city Vilnius has a traffic congestion level of 28 %. Regarding urban mobility, there has been an increase in the use of public transport in recent years, especially buses and trolleybuses, but also other transportation alternatives to the private car. In freight transport, the proportion of road transport in Lithuania was far below the EU average in 2015. Railways played an important role for freight transport in 2015 and are far above the EU average. There is no progress on the proportion of renewable energy used in transport. The proportion of renewable energy in fuel

consumption is decreasing: 4.3 % in 2014, 4.6 % in 2015 and 3.6 % in 2016. The Lithuanian rail network remains among the lowest electrified rail networks in the EU: only 6.9 % of rail tracks are electrified. However, with the help of various funding instruments, progress is expected in the upcoming years.

2. BEST PRACTICES IN POLICIES RELATED TO ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AND AWARENESS IN LITHUANIA

Good practices existing in Lithuania:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Cities sustainable development.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Participation in CIVITAS which make smart and sustainable urban mobility reality for cities.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Creation of green infrastructure.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Green taxation.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● School involvement in environmental projects "We are Doing". ● Healthy living in Lithuania: air and water quality. ● Waste management practices improvement.
Significant progress in environmental protection in Lithuania in 2019.

2.1 Already existing best practices in Lithuania

The Environmental Implementation Review 2019 report highlighted the following examples of good practices in Lithuania:

Through three national programs, Lithuania has been allocated EUR 8.39 billion from ESIF funds for 2014-2020. With a national contribution of EUR 1.56 billion, Lithuania has a total budget of EUR 9.95 billion to be invested in various areas, from innovation and competitiveness to SME support, resource efficiency, promoting employment, quality education and social inclusion. According to the Sustainable Governance Index, Lithuania scores rather well in terms of policy performance (including economic, social and environmental policies); it is ranked 11th amongst 41 countries world-wide. EU funds are a key asset for protecting the environment in Lithuania. The investment priorities for Lithuania in

2014-2020 include climate change, water, waste, air, biodiversity and nature, and sustainable urban transport.

•**Making cities more sustainable:**

a) Financing greener cities: Lithuania has allocated EUR 204.7 million or 5.85 % of its allocation under the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and EUR 6 million or 0.5 % of its allocation under the European Social Fund (ESF) to sustainable urban development. Also, Lithuania participates in the European Urban Development Network (UDN)⁸¹, which includes more than 500 cities across the EU responsible for carrying out integrated measures based on sustainable urban development strategies financed by the ERDF in 2014- 2020. In June 2018, the UDN organized a workshop open to Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian cities implementing sustainable urban development measures.

b) Participation in EU urban initiatives and networks: Lithuanian municipalities are generally involved in EU initiatives on environmental protection and climate change. Three Lithuanian municipalities are involved in the URBACT initiative, which supports sustainable urban development through five thematic networks. None of these networks are currently led by Lithuania. Several Horizon 2020 network projects have also contributed to the sustainability of Lithuanian cities. Four cities, namely Vilnius, Kaunas, Klaipeda and Palanga, participate in CIVITAS initiative, which aims to improve the efficiency of urban transport in Europe and beyond, while reducing the negative impacts of the transport sector and combatting harmful emissions. In 2017, 21.6 % of Lithuanians living in cities considered that their residential area was affected by pollution, grime or other environmental problems, a slight increase compared to 2015 (21.2 %) and 2014 (20.8 %).

c) Creating green infrastructure: Around 9 % of Lithuania's Natura 2000 network is in functional urban areas, above the EU average of 15 %. Several Lithuanian cities are taking positive action towards greening urban regeneration. Lithuanian cities generally have low levels of traffic congestion. The capital city Vilnius has a traffic congestion level of 28 %. Regarding urban mobility, there has been an increase in the use of public transport in recent years, especially buses and trolleybuses, but also other transportation alternatives to the private car. There is no

progress on the proportion of renewable energy used in transport. The proportion of renewable energy in fuel consumption is decreasing: 4.3 % in 2014, 4.6 % in 2015 and 3.6 % in 2016. However, with the help of various funding instruments, progress is expected in the coming years.

Schools go green: Schools participate in projects which are related with environment care. Students learn about environmental issues, engage in problem-solving, and take action to improve their community and school environment. In these projects participate primary school and even high school students. For example, the main project is "We are Doing" which aim is to make Lithuania clean. Also, this project is not only for students, but for all age groups because it's not specified.

Name of the practice	We are doing
Responsible organization/public body	Lithuanian Republic Ministry of the Environment
Website	https://www.mesdarom.lt/
Summary	The project We are doing, which partner is Lithuanian Republic Ministry of the Environment, is the biggest project in Lithuania. The main aims of the project is to make Lithuania cleaner, raise awareness on issues which are related with environment protection. Their vision is clean and healthy environment without trashes. The project wants to inspire to choose

	smarter design, production and consumption.
Target group	Lithuanians and all age groups
Geographical location	Lithuania
Reached audience/number of participants	Every year participants numbers are increasing. In 2015 years participated 250 000 people.
Results of the practice	According to the Lithuanian Republic Ministry of the Environment, volunteers and participants brought 770,18 tons of trashes which belongs to nobody.

d) Healthy living in Lithuania:

Air: EU clean air policy and legislation require the significant improvement of air quality in the EU, moving the EU closer to the quality recommended by the World Health Organization. Air quality in Lithuania is reported to be generally good, with exceptions. For 2015, the European Environment Agency estimated that about 2 600 premature deaths were attributable to fine particulate matter concentrations 90 to ozone concentrations and 70 to nitrogen dioxide concentrations.

Water Framework Directive: Lithuania has adopted the second generation of river basin management plans under the Water Framework Directive albeit not finished the electronic reporting to WISE as agreed by the water directors under the common implementation strategy related to the Water Framework Directive, in June 2014. The Cohesion Fund has supported the construction of a sludge treatment facility at Vilnius's wastewater treatment plant with nearly EUR 29 million. The project addresses a number of environmental challenges, while improving the quality of life of more than 590 000 local residents.

e) Green taxation: In the European Country reports, the Commission has repeatedly indicated that there is further potential to increase environmental taxes. Lithuania has the lowest excise duties on motor fuel, petrol and diesel in the EU91 and the proposals to introduce a CO₂-based motor vehicle tax have been rejected so far.

f) Waste management practices: they have improved substantially in recent years. For example, in 2018, recycling and composting 53% was the main treatment option. Above the OECD average of around 36%, and in line with the 50% recycling 2020 target. This development is in large part due to the increase in composting, to 28%, more than doubling since 2015, and well above the EU average of around 17%. Following the National Waste Management Plan, the opening of free of charge, green waste composting sites has been a major factor behind the growth in composting.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

In conclusion, a big progress has been made – during the last 18 years Lithuania's environment has become polluted less, significant decrease in landfilling has been achieved by increasing incineration with energy recovery capacity, making cities greener and water quality higher. In addition, schools are involved in projects which help to raise students' awareness towards environmental danger, resulting the youth becoming more aware of environmental problems and the need to take immediate action.

However, environmental action implementation is still a challenge for Lithuania. More efficient actions are needed from all those involved in implementing environmental legislation at EU, national, regional and local levels, in order to ensure that the legislation and the law enforcement processes respond to the need of protecting water, air and nature and manage waste. Lithuania still needs to catch up with the proportion of renewable energy which is used in transport. For instance, there are no CO₂-based motor vehicle taxes in place in Lithuania. Incentives to encourage the purchase of cars with lower CO₂ emissions are low. New vehicles purchased in Lithuania are among the least environmentally friendly in the EU.

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Project "We are Doing":

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CIVITAS Initiative:

<https://www.google.lt/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=2ahUKEwjFgtrZnLrzAhVBiYsKHc9LDw0QFnoECAoQAQ&url=https%3A%2F%2Fcivitas.eu%2F&usg=AOvVaw2Bhrd0neo13CHjnl7sJ6r>