

Lithuania

[LIETUVOS RESPUBLIKA]

RESEARCH PARTNER CENTRE

NISC

NEVYRIAUSYBINIŲ ORGANIZACIJŲ INFORMACIJOS

IR PARAMOS CENTRAS

Martinas Žaltauskas

COUNTRY FACT SHEET	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Population 3,384,900 inhabitants (January 2007) Area 65,300 sq. km Population density 51.8 inhabitants per sq. km System of government Presidential Republic Social security and welfare system Social security, including pensions, unemployment benefits, family benefits and targeted social assistance programmes have an important impact on the welfare of the population in Lithuania. The social security and welfare system is based on laws set out by the Lithuanian Republic (the Labour Code, laws regarding pensions, complementary funds, social insurance pensions, social security, social services, and employment offices). Public health system The public health system is organised at national, regional, and local levels. The health care system consists of two levels: primary and secondary. Primary level services are accessible to all citizens and are oriented towards providing basic health care. First of all, the sick person goes to his family doctor, who decides what help is necessary. The expenses for the family doctor's services are paid for by local health funds. According to law, every citizen of the Republic of Lithuania has the right to choose the nearest or the best available health care institution and family doctor. Secondary and higher levels of health care integrate proximity and hospital services. These come under the Local and Regional Authorities and the Ministry of Social Security. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Level of education 20-24 years old who have completed secondary schooling 70.2% 25-64 years old who have completed secondary schooling 45.3% Immigration rate 0.2% Growth rate Birth rate per 1,000 population 9.2 Death rate per 1,000 population 13.2 Employment rate (2006) 15 – 64 years old: total 63.6% male 66.3% female 61% 55 – 64 years old: total 49.6% male 55.7% female 45.1% Unemployment rate 25 – 54 years old beginning 2006: total 5.6% male 5.8% female 5.4% then during the year decreased by 2.7% arriving in April 2007 to total 3.4% 15 – 24 years old total 9.8% 55 – 64 years old total 12.9%

NISC

Nevyriausybinų Organizacijų Informacijos ir Paramos Centras

The Non-Governmental Organisations' Information and Support Centre (*NISC*) is a non-governmental organisation, established by the Lithuanian *Open Society Fund* in 1995 under the United Nations Development Programme.

The vision of *NISC* is that of the main institution of this kind in the country. Its aim is to ensure balanced co-operation between non-governmental organisations and public administration bodies, as well as to represent the interests of NGOs. The mission of *NISC* is to unite the non-governmental organisations in the country in order to represent their interests and strengthen the NGO sector at all levels.

NISC STRATEGIC AIMS

To strengthen organisations of the NGO sector: propagation of information, consultancy, training, methodical tools, databases, various conferences, and forums.

To establish and strengthen the NGO coalitions: to establish NGO coalitions in various fields of public administration, develop the NGO Centres' Network, establish an organisation that unites national NGOs, and create a unified accountability system for the coalition.

To strengthen Government - NGO Cooperation: to monitor State regulations connected with NGO activities, propose bills to submit to the Seimas (the Lithuanian Parliament) and the Government, promote the 2% income tax donation mechanism, improve the NGO funding system at the national and local authorities' level, and establish an NGO representation mechanism.

To improve the NGO situation: to increase NGO visibility in society, expand the NGO information bulletin "The Third Sector", disseminate information about the Lithuanian NGO sector in national and international publications, run and update *NISC* web sites, and develop the positive image of the NGO sector.

To develop a tradition of voluntary work: to develop laws regulating voluntary work, develop conditions to guarantee a voluntary work compensation system, raise public awareness regarding volunteering, and strengthen the "Volunteer Centre" established by *NISC*.

NISC WORK PRINCIPLES

We care about every NGO.

Positive results for the NGO sector can only be reached through co-operation.

We believe in clear aims and meaningful results that are value-added for the NGO sector.

We welcome all organisations that wish to co-operate and support us.

The future success of our organisation depends on the transparency and credibility of today's activities.

COMMITMENTS WITH THE NGO SECTOR

NISC pledges to be a partner and not a competitor to any other non-governmental organisation.

NISC pledges to work in order to strengthen the NGO sector and not to avoid co-operation with the governmental and business sectors.

NISC pledges to remain independent from sponsors and politicians, and to remain loyal to the NGO sector.

NISC pledges to be an objective non-governmental organisations' delegate when regulating and representing their interests.

NISC IN 10 YEARS

Administration of the EU PHARE Civil Society Development and EU PHARE ACCESS programmes.

Technical support to the European Union Programmes, providing financial support to non-governmental organisations.

Annual organisation of Lithuanian Non-governmental Organisations Forum since 1996.

Publication of the information bulletin "The Third Sector" since 1995, which was replaced by the informational portal in 2007.

Creation and administration of the public database of non-governmental organisations.

Conducted numerous research projects regarding the Lithuanian non-profit sector.

Co-ordination of the Lithuanian NGO Centres Network's activities.

Establishment of the Lithuanian NGOs coalition for philanthropy.

This resulted in the opportunity for citizens to donate 2% of their income tax to non-profit organisations.

Initiatives to establish the National Anti Poverty Network and the Platform of Non-Governmental Development Organisations in Lithuania.

[PUBLICATIONS]

"Writing Winning Grant Proposals. Step by Step"

"Foreign Support to the Lithuanian NGOs"

"Practical Guide for Lithuanian Non-Governmental Organisations"

"A Handbook of NGO Governance"

"Non-Profit Organisations: Nature and Regulation"

etc.

[CONTACT]

NISC

NEVYRIAUSYBINIŲ ORGANIZACIJŲ INFORMACIJOS

PARAMOS CENTRAS

Odminių 2

LT-01122 Vilnius

PARTNER CENTRE FACT SHEET

NISC

■ **Population served** Lithuania: 3,384,900 inhabitants (January 2007)

■ **Geographic area** Lithuania: 65,300 sq. km

■ **Number of member organisations** NGO sector and the general public (individuals, government, local authorities, institutions, and private companies)

■ **People employed** Full-time: 3

■ **Number of volunteers** 6

■ Annual budget year 2006	Euro 130,000
■ Agencies and local branches	none
■ Services offered	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training Advice Information Practical resources Representation International networking

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1 DEFINITIONS

VOLUNTEERING ACROSS EUROPE

Non governmental organization is an organization founded by democratic free will of citizens which serves for community sake, do not seek profit and direct participation in country control.

Voluntary work is an action performed with the free will of the individual and with no remuneration for the purposes established by the Law on Charity and Sponsorship.

Volunteers are 'individuals working for benefit of society on their free will under no pressure, and receiving no remuneration'. Lithuanian citizens and citizens of other states residing in Lithuania are lawfully allowed to perform voluntary work.

Source:

Country Report on the Legal Status of Volunteers in Lithuania
AVSO & CEV Project: Legal status of Volunteers - Country Report: Lithuania, Brussels 2005
http://www.cev.be/data/File/Lithuania_legalstatus.pdf

1 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND: DEVELOPMENTS OF THE PAST TWO DECADES

VOLUNTEERING ACROSS EUROPE

Since its independence (1990), the development of democracy and civic society in Lithuania has been quite rapid. However, the fragmentary development process has not yet provided opportunities for non-governmental organisations (NGO) to become institutionally strong and independent from various interest groups or from governmental influence. Moreover, there has been no possibility to establish a stable system of co-operation with institutional or parliamentary bodies, even though non-governmental organisations form the basis of civil society.

Since 1990, non-governmental organisations have operated on the basis of laws approved by the Lithuanian Parliament. In 1995, the first law on Public Organisations was passed regulating NGOs, and a year later a law regarding charity and support funds, public institutions and not for profit organisations was adopted. However, many aspects have yet to be clarified. For example, it is still unclear as to what type of organisation can be considered as non-governmental, how it can be financed, in what way it can co-operate with governmental institutions, and what is its role in implementing public policy and rendering public services. All the above-mentioned issues are either not regulated, or regulated in a very complex manner which often makes the matter very ambiguous, not only for the non-governmental sector, but also for governmental institutions themselves. In addition, most donors still do not have clear principles on how or whom to sponsor, as it is not clear what kind of organisations are clients of funds, and which, on the other hand, are supported by donors. At the moment, many discussions are underway in order to define forms of co-operation between NGOs and governmental institutions, as well as the necessary mechanisms to ensure financial stability, independence, and the sustainability of activities carried out by the sector. At the same time, the ways to ensure the development of civil society and increase a tradition of volunteering in the country are also being discussed.

Initially, financial support provided by foreign governmental institutions, embassies and funds (Great Britain, the Netherlands, the USA, Norway, Denmark, etc.) contributed greatly to develop the NGO sector in Lithuania. However, the situation changed dramatically since Lithuania joined the European Union. The NGO sector is currently undergoing a strong institutional decline, as foreign funds have practically been withdrawn from Lithuania, the EU structural funds are unavailable, and governmental institutions have not yet created any practical NGO financial mechanisms. Since 2008 Ministry of Finances together with the Economical European Area Financial Mechanism (support programme launched by EEA countries) has developed an institutional support programme for NGOs. The first call for interest is on 15th May, 2008. Moreover, social, cultural and other organisations already have the possibility to provide

their services to municipalities, but their ability to participate effectively in public bids is hindered when NGOs take part in the bids together with institutions that obtain regular government funding, or with public enterprises supported by public funds.

The first legislative act concerning the **registration of not for profit organisations (enterprises)** was adopted in 1993. It was closely followed by other legislative acts to regulate the newly emergent non-profit sector.

In 1998, the Government set up a **Commission for NGO Issues**. The aim of this Commission was to advise the Prime Minister's office about legislative acts regarding NGOs and requests on behalf of NGOs. A temporary Commission for arbitration of NGO issues was set up in the Seimas - the Lithuanian Parliament, in 2000. After joining the European Union, Lithuania appointed 9 employees, employers and representatives of other civic organisation groups to the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC). The aim of this Committee is to ensure closer involvement and participation of civic society and social partners in decision-making processes (political, legislative, and public administration).

In 2001, NGOs raised the issue of officially regulating relations between NGOs and governmental institutions. A composite work group, known as the **Parliamentary Committee of Social Issues and Labour**, drafted a bill regarding the development of non-governmental organisations, which was later rejected by the Seimas, as it did not receive the Government's approval. The aim of this project was to create greater opportunities for NGOs to implement projects of government and local administrative bodies as well as to create the basis for a more transparent and effective use of public resources when financing NGO programmes.

Up to 2004, there were four specific types of NGOs - **membership-based organisations, social organisations, property-based public institutions, and charity and sponsorship funds (foundations)** - regulated by four specific laws. In December 2003, the new Charity and Sponsorship Funds Law was passed. The new Associations Law replaced two previous laws by combining the concepts of not for profit organisations and social organisations. This new

law is now applicable to 10,000-11,000 of Lithuania's 15,000 not for profit organisations. The greatest advantages created by this law are that organisations are allowed to engage in commercial activities and their obligations regarding the running of the organisation have been simplified significantly. Charity and sponsorship funds no longer have to hire paid administrators, though they are subject to greater restrictions regarding the use of their property and funds. Despite these improvements, experts insist that a single law on not for profit organisations is still the best solution.

Many voluntary organisations work at a national and even international level. The great majority, however, carry out their activities in specific regions or cities in the country. These organisations normally discharge all their activities in an informal way - providing services and mutual support, drawing attention to the needs of the community or to particular groups within it, and providing the means through which the community can make its needs known to public authorities.

NGOs in Lithuania are struggling to make authorities and the general public accept the concept that volunteering is an essential part of every contemporary society. Through volunteering, citizens significantly contribute to the social and economic development of their local communities. Volunteering is a "sign of civil society". In fact, smaller NGOs could not exist without the commitment of many volunteers. NGOs believe it is essential that the Government provides a legal basis for their activities and recognises the importance of volunteering. The amount of voluntary work carried out depends on many other factors such as the economic and political situation, the image and degree of development of the third sector, the culture of volunteering, and labour markets. Volunteering can also play a special role in combating youth and long-term unemployment, as well as employment policies.

2 IMPORTANCE AND EXTENT OF THE NOT FOR PROFIT AND VOLUNTEERING SECTOR FROM A STATISTICAL POINT OF VIEW

In the context of volunteering and development of the third sector in Lithuania's Soviet period, no research was ever conducted to

analyse the general public's participation in Soviet-run organisations, and no considerations, statistics, or surveys have been made to estimate the impact of these on society.

There are no statistics available on the extent and kind of organisations that were registered during the first years of Lithuania's independence, and the data available are incomplete. Current data show that the volunteering sector is growing steadily in Lithuania: in 1995, the number of registered NGOs was 260; while in the years that followed, growth has been extremely rapid. As can be seen in the table below, the number of NGOs in Lithuania has increased 25 times in only 12 years.

Growth trend of Lithuanian NGOs since independence	
Year	Number of registered NGOs
1995	260
1999	5,500
2000	7,000
2002	12,000
2007	17,000

Statistics show that about 3% of the total population (more than 3 million) in Lithuania are involved in voluntary work in one or more organisations. The increase in the number of volunteers is correlated to the increase in the number of registered NGOs each year.

The main **sectors of activity** of Lithuanian NGOs are listed below with the approximate percentage of NGOs in each field - out of the total number of Lithuanian NGOs:

- Social services and health care 55%
- Child care and youth affairs 8%
- Culture 5%
- Sport 13%
- Environment 3%
- Education and science 6%
- Equal opportunities 1%
- Civil rights and consumer affairs 2%
- Local communities 7%

In 2005, only 17% of the Lithuanian population participated in NGO activities, and of this percentage, only 3% participated actively while the remaining 14% were simply involved in supporting NGOs economically. Participation in organisations and other organised groups depends on the age and the level of education of individuals. The 18-25 age bracket (24%) is the most actively involved in volunteering, while the over 66 age bracket (7%) is the least active. People with a university education tend to participate more in volunteering activities (29%) than those without tertiary education (*Baltic Surveys Ltd.* carried out a survey on the Values of the Lithuanian Population; the research was commissioned by the *Civil Society Institute*).

There are no official statistics on volunteering in Lithuania. The first survey on the third sector and volunteering in Lithuania was carried out in 1998 by the Non-Governmental Organisations' Information and Support Centre (*NIISC*): only 9% of Lithuanians have volunteered to do work for an NGO (with the exception of religious organisations); while 73% of the general public has never volunteered with an NGO nor donated money. In all the various age brackets, people who do not volunteer in NGOs or donate money, principally indicate lack of funds (61%) or lack of NGO solicitation (70%) as the reason for their non-participation. 33% of the general public and 57% of entrepreneurs would volunteer some of their time to help an organisation working to improve governmental policies that address social problems. They (48% and 55%) expressed a willingness to volunteer more than an hour but less than a full day's work per week.

A study was undertaken in 1999 by *NIISC* to describe social work, volunteering and volunteer activities in Lithuania. The research consisted in assessing 141 volunteers and received a 100% response rate. 99% of volunteers surveyed were under the age of 27, while almost half were between the ages of 18 and 21. As in other former communist countries, young people tend to be active as volunteers in Lithuania. One of the aspects examined in the study was what motivated young people to volunteer. Among the various types of responses there was the need to help others, self-improvement, the need to gain experience, the need to relate to others, to make friends,

the need to spend free-time with a purpose and to live Christian values. An analysis of the data indicates that the reason that motivates most young people to volunteer is to satisfy their need for personal development followed by the need for self-improvement and to gain experience (37%) followed by the desire to help others (25%). The study also sought to determine what type of work was carried out by Lithuanian volunteers. The most popular type of voluntary work among young people is working with children and the least popular is working with the elderly. One of the aims of the survey was to assess the level of preparation of volunteers. Results indicated that the majority (31%) of volunteers had no prior experience and that most obtained specific skills from specially organised courses and seminars (52%) with some training acquired at college (17%).

Another research was carried out in 2002 by *NISC* on the status and role of Lithuanian NGOs. About 10% of the population believe that civil society does not approve of voluntary work and hence people are reluctant to volunteer. Less than 20% cannot afford to volunteer, as they have to work hard to make a living. However, about 50% of the population does not participate in voluntary activities because nobody has ever offered them an opportunity nor have they been invited to join any voluntary activities. This shows that people are passive when it comes to finding volunteering opportunities.

In 2005, *NISC* carried out a study called "The Third Sector Institutions in Lithuania: Overview of the Situation". The study contains limited data on volunteering. Data concerning volunteering only appears where the capacity of organisations to attract volunteers is mentioned. Lithuanian religious communities (1.9% of surveyed NGOs) were the ones that attracted the highest numbers of volunteers and organised most of the volunteer activities, while charity and support foundations (10.5%) came second. Organisations of public utility (31.4%) and not for profit organisations (56.2%) had the greatest difficulty in attracting volunteers and using voluntary work to achieve their aims and carry out their tasks.

A further two research projects were conducted in 2006 by *NISC*: "Governmental and local authorities' financial support for NGOs" and

"Co-operation between Lithuanian NGOs and institutions of central and local government bodies".

The first research, regarding funding - which forms the basis of the financial relations between NGOs and governing institutions, highlighted the fact that after the decrease of foreign support (which had been the main source of funding for non-governmental organisations over ten years), no alternative sources of funding have been made available. Most Ministries provide funds for projects utilising more passive information channels, such as placing the calls for proposals on their websites or sending the information to several organisations, chosen by the Ministries themselves. In fact, numerous NGOs denounce the scarce efforts of Ministries to inform potential bidders about the possibility of public funding. During such bids for proposals, NGOs claim that funding is excessively regulated (with such funding, it is not possible to cover wages, administration expenses, or purchase equipment). NGOs usually co-operate with local authorities; they co-operate in implementing projects, providing services in the sectors of social security, education, culture, health care, and environmental protection. Financial possibilities for NGOs in other sectors are less common.

There are no official statistics on the number of NGOs in Lithuania (there may be more than 20,000). In 2006, the Lithuanian Department of Statistics provided the following figures: the number of not for profit organisations and public utility organisations (9,223 not for profit organisations; 6,099 public utility organisations), various communities - 5,500. There were no figures regarding charity and support foundations.

3 JURIDICAL AND ORGANISATIONAL FORMS OF VOLUNTEERING

Freedom of association is guaranteed by **Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania** ("*Citizens shall be given the right to freely form companies, political parties, and associations.*"), provided that their aims and activities are constitutional and lawful. These rights are

expanded upon and clarified in the laws governing specific forms of NGOs in Lithuania.

The status of non-governmental organisations in Lithuania is given to organisations established according to the **Law of Association, Law of Charity and Support Foundations**, and the **Law of Public Institutions of the Republic of Lithuania**. All these principal forms of NGOs in Lithuania are legal persons, having the right to carry out activities in a legal context, own property, and enter into contractual relations. They typically have the following features:

- legal entity;
- independence from the government and governmental institutions;
- the principle of no profit allocation (profit is invested into the main activities, provided for in the statutes and not divided among the founders, employees or members);
- self-governance and volunteering (free membership).
- Governance and participation in elections are not among the aims.

However, it is still not clear if the status of non-governmental organisation may be given to other not for profit organisations such as trade unions, religious communities, etc., as the establishment and activities of such organisations are provided for not only in specific laws, but also in the Constitution of the Lithuanian Republic. However, it is certain that political parties and organisations are not NGOs because their aim is governance.

The main condition for an organisation to call itself non-governmental is that no governmental institution can be member of a non-governmental organisation. All other organisations (trade unions, religious communities, political parties, etc.) including NGOs are considered social organisations.

Donations to NGOs are regulated, and under certain circumstances limited, by the Law on Charity and Sponsorship. Lithuanian NGOs may raise funds both within the country and abroad, but most groups lack permanent sources of income and sufficient fundraising capabilities. NGOs also may make bids for government con-

tracts, including social, economic, and environmental services.

NGOs have special treatment with regard to taxation. They are exempt from corporate profits tax, even if the profit derives from their activities. However, a proposal has been put forward which indicates that if their annual income exceeds 1 million Lt (approx. 290,000,00 Euro), they will be treated as a business entity and hence, will have to pay tax. Not for profit organisations and charity/support funds are exempt from the real estate tax, provided that the property in question is used for their activities in the public interest and not for business. NGOs can also benefit from VAT exemptions in that cultural, educational, social, health care, and other similar activities in which NGOs are mainly engaged, are exempt from VAT.

In the year 2000, the Lithuanian Government decided to regulate voluntary work, commencing with an amendment to the Law on Employment in Lithuania. Article 17 of the Law defines the concept of illegal work. After the amendment, Article 17.2 makes any '*voluntary work organised in the manner prescribed by the government*' legal. This article was incorporated into the **Labour Code** (it was revoked in 2006).

In 2001, the Ministry for Social Security and Labour enacted a resolution related to volunteering. **Resolution No. 1511** of 13th December 2001 regulates the terms and procedures for voluntary work. In addition, **Resolution No. 732** approved on 24th May 2002 provides for the reimbursement of expenses to volunteers.

Expenses are reimbursed by the voluntary organisation. Travel costs, food and accommodation are reimbursed according to **Resolution No. 469** of 26th April 2000 which establishes the 'procedures of monetary compensation'. Other expenses need to be documented in order to reimburse the volunteer.

Resolution No. 732 together with **Resolution No. 1511** enforce general provisions for procedures to reimburse expenses for individuals performing voluntary work - travelling, meals and accommodation expenses, mail and telephone costs, voluntary work accident insurance and health insurance that fall within a voluntary work contract, expenses related to training and development of skills.

In January 2007, these resolutions were annulled and so voluntary work is currently regulated by the Civil Code as a freewill settle-

ment between organisations and volunteers. Therefore, Lithuania currently has no specific law regulating voluntary work, in that the voluntary work cannot be regulated by the Labour Code. Its regulation depends on an agreement between the organisation itself and the individual who intends to work as a volunteer. All transactions are simply regulated by the Civil Code.

As regards public health, the Lithuanian social security scheme does not provide health assistance to volunteers. Consequently, volunteers from abroad who do not have private health insurance need to pay for any medical treatment and medication. Volunteers with insurance must pay in advance and will be reimbursed by the insurance company afterwards.

In 2005, a study called the "Third Sector Institutions in Lithuania: Overview of the Situation" was carried out by *NISC* and the *Klaipeda NGO Information Centre*. From data concerning volunteering only emerges where the capacity of organisations to attract volunteers is mentioned. It appears that the capacity to attract volunteers depends on the status of an NGO as well as on the sector in which it operates. Lithuanian religious communities are the ones that attract the highest numbers of volunteers and organised most of volunteer activities followed by charity and support foundations. Public-utility organisations and associations have the greatest difficulty in attracting volunteers and using voluntary work to achieve their aims. NGOs that work in the sectors of education and infancy are the ones with the highest number of volunteers. The NGOs working in the human rights field seemed to be the strongest in terms of number of paid staff, but they did not have a single volunteer working for them.

4 RELATIONS WITH PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS, COLLABORATION AND COMMON PROJECTS

A research concerning co-operation with government institutions showed that NGOs mainly co-operate with local administration institutions and sector-specific ministries. Moreover, they often participate in the deliberation and co-ordination of legal and administrative acts.

NGO representatives indicated that they considered their co-operation with governmental institutions as satisfactory. Governmental institutions are rather satisfied with NGO co-operation, but are in favour of establishing an organisation which specifically deals with this aspect. Their satisfaction also derives from the help provided to them by NGOs in their relations with civil society.

NGOs in Lithuania have very little possibility of participating in decision-making processes. There are only a few legal acts which regulate NGO involvement in decision making. However, these acts do not indicate clear co-operation principles, nor a structured system on which to base relations, or a common system of accountability.

Although most local authorities and NGOs believe that centralised representation is in contradiction with the advantages provided by a range of participation, the NGOs themselves recognise that a single co-ordinating body would give them more power in influencing the decisions regarding their field. Such federations or umbrella associations are usually organised according to the sectors of activity or specific issues, such as women, youth, environmental protection, social issues, culture, sports, education, equal opportunities, etc.

5 FORMS OF FUNDING

NGO funding depends on revenue from many different sources:

- membership fees;
- grants from public institutions;
- fees for services;
- profits from the sales of goods or merchandise;
- international and European funding,
- funding and donations from private foundations, corporate bodies or individuals;
- 2 percent of taxpayers' income tax in favour of NGOs.

As of 2003, Lithuanian taxpayers may allocate **up to 2 percent of their income tax** to private or public not for profit organisations; however this "two percent option" has caused some controversy.

Although this amendment allows taxpayers to support civic initiatives of their own choice, some say that it threatens to distort philanthropic relationships and damage the reputation of NGOs. According to some observers, philanthropy may come to be associated with coercive tax collection, and voluntary giving may be discouraged. Moreover, there is some room for individuals or group interests to abuse of the new provision, which in turn may prompt tighter regulations on NGOs. Public opinion polls show that 60 percent of taxpayers would be in favour of the 2 percent option to support NGOs, specifically for educational, social, and health care initiatives. In September 2003, Parliament began debating a proposal to reinstate tax deductions for individual charity donations. Legal entities can

donate up to 40 percent of their annual taxable profits. In March 2003, the Parliament adopted a controversial amendment to the Law on Charity and Sponsorship allowing state-owned companies to donate money to charity as well. The Parliamentary Anticorruption Commission and the opposition say this provision will encourage corruption. The 2 percent deduction, originally meant to boost civil society, has mostly gone to under-funded state-run institutions which reflects the weak public relations and fund-raising capacities of many NGOs. Statistics show that the average amount donated per person is 100 Lt (approximately 30 Euro) and that the minimum amount is 12 Lt (approximately 5 Euro). Even though relatively small sums are involved, the idea of this scheme is considered positive.

Support bodies

1 REPRESENTATION AND COORDINATION BODIES

An overview of the most important representation and coordination bodies at national and regional level, together with most significant umbrella associations providing a voice for sector instances, offers a picture of most important issues and networks functional to the development of the voluntary sector.

Lithuania Government Commission on NGOs

It is a legally unregistered body, made up of fourteen members from different sectors of activity (seven are from NGOs, while the remaining seven are representatives of government institutions). The aim of this Commission is to advise the Prime Minister's office about important legal acts concerning NGOs and requests made by NGOs, as well as create a policy framework of the NGO sector in Lithuania in order to develop ties between NGOs and government authorities.

Lithuanian NGO Centres Network - TINKLAS

Its mission is to encourage co-operation among non-governmental organisation information centres in Vilnius, Kaunas, Klaipeda, Siauliai, Alytus, Marijampole, and Utena in order to develop civil society involvement.

National Youth Council - LIJOT

Its mission focuses on representing the interests of numerous Lithuanian youth organisations. *LIJOT* works in the fields of voluntary service, active citizenship, social responsibility, co-operation, developing democracy, and social initiatives. The aims of the *LIJOT* are to increase awareness of young people regarding the importance of volunteering, youth organisations and the representation of their interests in order to strengthen the impact of youth organisations, to enhance the social competence of young people, and to alleviate social isolation. It is the biggest non-governmental, non for profit

umbrella association for Lithuanian national youth organisations and regional unions of youth organisations. *LIJOT* was founded on 19th September 1992. At present, *LIJOT* has 55 members (non-governmental youth organisations), which amounts to more than 200,000 young people throughout the country.

Agency of International Youth Co-operation of Lithuania - JTBA

The primary task of this national agency is to ensure implementation of the EU YOUTH (since 2007 YOUTH IN ACTION) programme in Lithuania. The Agency provides information, advice and methodical assistance to young people, youth groups and organisations, as well as arranges training courses and study visits for youth leaders and workers.

Spiritual Guidance Centre for Youth - DPJC

Its mission is to develop the spiritual growth of the young through various voluntary activities, to help the young to help themselves and then others, and to provide psychological, social and moral support to young people in Klaipeda, Lithuania.

Youth Organisation for Voluntary Activities AUSTEJOS DRAUGAI (AUSTEJA FRIENDS)

It is a non-government, not for profit organisation run by volunteers. It promotes, organises and co-ordinates voluntary, educational and practical activities for young people in social, environmental and other fields. The principal objective is to promote the concept of voluntary service in Lithuania. To this end, it organises voluntary work-camps in Lithuania and sends volunteers abroad to similar work-camps.

Youth Psychological Aid Centre - YPAC

This centre provides psychological and social support for young people, teenagers, and children. One of the main activities of this centre is to provide the necessary information to anyone who calls or visits *YPAC*. It is involved in the selection of volunteers (Youth Line in

Vilnius, Kaunas, Klaipeda - free national number); it offers training seminars for volunteers; holds regular qualification courses for volunteers; and collects and updates a databank on psychological and social assistance organisations.

Kaunas County Union of Social NGOs - SNOS

This is an umbrella association that unites non-governmental organisations in Kaunas which provide social services for different target groups. In 2007, it set up a project providing volunteers in the Kaunas region, and it has created an online database to place volunteers in the most appropriate NGOs.

Youth for Voluntary activities DEINETA CENTRE

This is a non-governmental organisation which offers activities for young people as well as information about summer camps in Lithuania and abroad.

Lithuanian National Anti-Poverty Network

The main objectives are to strengthen the institutional capacities of Lithuanian NGOs and to develop co-operation between NGOs and national and local government institutions in order to reduce poverty and enhance social inclusion in Lithuania, to contribute to the implementation of initiatives against poverty and for social inclusion funded by the Lithuanian Government and the European Union.

Other umbrella associations worth of note are **Association of the environment organisations, Platform of the non-governmental development organisations, National consumer confederation - NCC and Association of women's organisations.**

2 NISC – NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATION INFORMATION AND SUPPORT CENTRE

The main strategic aim of *NISC* is to extend laws regulating volunteering, create better conditions ensuring a system of voluntary

work compensation, and raise public awareness regarding voluntary work. Its mission is to develop the Lithuanian non-governmental sector through the provision of information, technical assistance, consultation and training.

The situation in Lithuania was very different when *NISC* was first set up. There were no sources of information for the NGO sector, no organisation represented the sector nor promoted its collective interests, and foreigners had no place to turn to if they wanted to collaborate with the Lithuanian NGOs. Before the UNDP published the first Directory of Lithuanian NGOs in 1994-95, it was not easy to either find or get in touch with the major NGOs operating in the country. *NISC* has served as a catalyst for a major transformation of the NGO sector. It was the first organisation to provide a networking and information-sharing service through its daily work and special initiatives such as the annual NGO Forums and the fortnightly bulletin "Third Sector". These have helped the sector to develop its identity, discover common issues and analyse how they can be addressed more effectively. Without greater co-operation and more sector-wide initiatives, NGOs will remain alone and isolated, thus failing to receive the official support and public attention that they deserve for their fine work.

Financing is one of the main challenges that Lithuanian NGOs have to face. Before *NISC*, there were neither sources of information with regard to opportunities to obtain foreign support nor the correct procedures to be followed. Not only this, but NGOs needed assistance in formulating their projects and filling out the applications. With the greater use of the Internet, and more opportunities for direct communication, NGOs are now more capable of taking care of these matters on their own. However, it was *NISC* which first provided the NGO sector with this kind of assistance, and set the example.

It is one thing to have a good idea, but something else to turn it into a successful project. One of the keys to success is managing an NGO effectively, and attracting personnel. *NISC* has played a major role in organising and providing training for the sector over the past five years. Among the most important issues for NGOs are organisational management, financial management, member services, fundraising, advocacy, and public relations/outreach.

It is safe to say that the level of skills that Lithuanian NGOs currently possess has improved significantly over the past decade. Much of this is due to foreign assistance programmes specifically designed for this purpose. But much of it is also due to NGOs like *NISC* that either facilitate this foreign assistance, or directly provide training as part of it.

One of the major problems faced by all Lithuanian NGOs is the legal framework which complicates economic activities, volunteering, and the payment of taxes. *NISC* has helped instruct NGOs about these issues, and has provided legal counselling. It has also engaged in regular advocacy with government officials, in order to improve both the laws and their implementation. Numerous channels of communication have been opened, as confirmed by the creation of various commissions, and the attendance of officials at seminars dealing with specific legal topics.

NISC has also played an important role as regards international liaising, which has yet to be fully appreciated by many NGOs. However, the fact remains that it is very important for foreign patrons and donors to have contacts that can provide accurate and credible information concerning what is going on in a country, and who is doing what. Without such contacts foreigners could very easily conclude that it is preferable to focus their activities elsewhere, where the risks are not as great. Multilateral benefactors, bilateral donors, western NGOs, and officials from other countries have asked *NISC* on numerous occasions for information concerning the status of the sector in Lithuania and whom they should contact in the country. Maintaining foreign interest in the Lithuanian NGO sector is an important service and one that *NISC* has been providing better than any other party in the country.

3 THE NATIONAL VOLUNTEER CENTRE - SAVANORIŲ CENTRAS

The primary task of this independent non-governmental institution of public utility is to promote volunteering in Lithuania in all sec-

tors. The centre carries out training programmes for not for profit organisations, operates as a go-between between NGOs and people of all age groups who wish to work for them, provides an advisory service on various issues and publishes self-training material. One of the major tasks of the centre is to consolidate the legal status of volunteer work. The mission of the National Volunteer Centre is to promote volunteering in all sectors (NGOs, business, government and individuals) of Lithuania's emerging civil society.

“Greater development of the volunteer sector is necessary because of the ever-increasing demand for services by the community, and the newly-formed non-governmental sector. NGOs in Lithuania simply cannot respond to all the requests for services. On the other hand, in Lithuania, there are resourceful and talented individuals who can contribute to solving community problems successfully. Our task is to prepare organisations to receive volunteers on an on-going basis, to recruit and train new volunteers, and to educate society about the potential value and rewards of volunteering.”

We believe that volunteer work culture needs to be promoted in Lithuania. Active and unselfish citizens reflect harmonious society, which is our main aim. In our work we follow the principle of a volunteer - to be responsible for another person.”

Public institution *Savanorių Centras - The National Volunteer Centre* was established in 1998, February 10, by *NISC* - Information and Support Centre of Non-governmental Organizations. In 2006, one of the constitutors became the Municipality of the capital city Vilnius. *Savanorių National Volunteer Centre* implements a wide range of activities: coordinative, social, cultural, civil. It works with people of different age groups, regardless their sex, nationality, religious beliefs, health, political beliefs or else. Its aim is to work on national level and to have partner organisations in the whole Lithuania. It cooperates with organisations involved in volunteering from other European countries: Latvia, Belarus, Ukraine, Spain, Italy, Greece, Germany, Romania, Denmark, Czech Republic, the Netherlands.

Savanorių National Volunteer Centre is a member of CEV - European Volunteer Centre.

The mission of *Savanorių National Volunteer Centre* is the promotion of voluntary ideas and coordination of volunteer work in Lithuania.

The aims and objectives are the following:

Spread and promote volunteer activity in Lithuania.

- Encourage and fully legalise volunteer work.
- Help individual volunteers and organisations find each other.
- Encourage discussions about volunteer activity and keep it in the forefront of attention.
- Promote the spirit of public utility, work in a European dimension, provide opportunities for friendship and connections.
- Create a volunteers' network in the whole Lithuania and seek close cooperation with volunteer organisations from the European Union countries.
- Provide education and training opportunities for young and seniors.

The main areas of activities are:

- Consultations, trainings, preparation of methodological material, organisation of conferences, forums and civic actions.
- Volunteer data base development; administration and update of the internet site www.savanoris.lt.
- Dissemination of information on volunteer work and development of volunteering traditions.
- Actions aimed at increasing public awareness and positive image of volunteering in society.
- Positive actions towards the establishment of the volunteer law and of an enabling legal framework for volunteer work in Lithuania.
- Awards of honour for best volunteers on the International Day of Volunteers.
- Volunteering projects and non-formal education involving young and senior age citizens.

Focus on support bodies (QUESTIONNAIRES)

1 LEGAL STATUS, ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE AND FINANCIAL RESOURCES OF THE ORGANISATIONS

During the research work, eight organisations have been interviewed (see complete list below): all these organisations provide services and support to voluntary organisations and generally to Lithuanian NGOs. Most of the organisations interviewed were established between 1996 and 2000. Seven have the **legal status** of “Public institution/organisation”. According to the legal acts of the Lithuanian Republic, this type of organisation is a public legal entity (see the paragraph on the juridical and organisational forms of volunteering), the aim of which is to meet the needs of the public through implementing initiatives of society benefit. One out of the eight organisations interviewed has the status of “association”. Its name is Kaunas County Union of Social NGOs - *SNOS*, and it is an umbrella organisation that unites non-governmental organisations in Kaunas providing social services for different target groups.

Public institutions/organisations are not membership-based organisations; as they have founder members.

The main aims of these organisations are to assist independent volunteers, organisations, and institutions to become acquainted with one another, provide advisory services for non-governmental organisations and volunteers, improve conditions for volunteer work in Lithuania, provide training for future volunteers and for non-governmental organisations who work with volunteers, provide support to community initiatives, raise public awareness, and promote co-operation among NGOs and business institutions.

Many of these organisations also work in specific areas (such as the Psychological Help Centre for the Young or the Student Exchange Service).

As regards to the **organisational structure** of these organisations, they generally consist of a general assembly of all volunteers; all of the eight organisations interviewed have a Board of Directors made

up of five to twelve all-male members with a chairman, aged 24 to 50; and they all have a treasurer and internal auditors.

All the organisations have head-offices, five in public premises given to them rent free, while the remaining three in private rented premises. They work all year round, five days a week, eight hours a day. Four of these head-offices have access for the disabled while the remaining four do not.

As far as funding channels are concerned, these are mainly public in nature and are income-generated by projects submitted by the organisations to public bodies (from 55% to 90 %, depending on the organisation); a significant percentage of funds comes from local government funds for contracts or services (from 46% to 68%, depending on the organisation); membership-fee income generates from 5 to 10% of the organisations’ budget, private donations from 1 to 25% (these data reflect the great difference among the interviewed organisations of their fund-raising skills); paid services can make up anything from 5 to 98%. The organisation with 98% is called *YFU Lithuania*; it is a not for profit organisation, based on volunteer work that operates in the area of student exchange services.

The annual average budget of the eight organisations interviewed is about 100,000 Euro.

2 TERRITORIAL RANGE, HUMAN RESOURCES AND RELATIONS WITH OTHER BODIES

In four cases, the territorial range in which the organisations operate is national (two of them also have international activities), one provincial, three municipal, and one is limited to a very small area.

As regards to the involvement of volunteers in the interviewed organisations, six of them have volunteers in running the organisation, and all of them use volunteers for everyday activities.

The four categories of paid positions are directors/chairs of the organisations, project coordinators, project managers, and accountants. 47% of permanent staff are female, and 53% are male, while 33% of permanent staff (all female) receive a salary. The average weekly working hours varies from 2 to 40. The age of permanent staff also varies from 21 to 50. 93% of permanent staff are university graduates, while 7 % have high school certificates (still studying).

Project-based activity positions mainly include: project coordinators/ managers, assistants, accountants, administrators, event coordinators, technical assistants. 37% of them are male workers, 63% - female. 12% of them get paid for their work; of which are 20% male, 80% female. The average working hours vary from 5 to 40 hours a week. The age of project-based staff varies from 14 to 40. 88% are university graduates, 12% have high school certificates (mainly students).

At the moment, a new model of co-operation between local authorities and non-governmental organisations is being introduced, which is mainly thanks to the initiative of *NISC* and the Network of the Lithuanian NGO Information Centres. Co-operation with universities is also quite extensive.

Nowadays, central government institutions show the greatest interest in co-operation with NGOs (not only volunteer organisations). Representatives from various NGOs and networks participate in many of the Ministries work-groups and they are now consulted in the social policy-making processes.

3 AREAS OF ACTIVITY, GOALS AND TYPOLOGY OF BENEFICIARIES

As co-ordinator and umbrella organisations, the eight NGOs interviewed all have the main goal of developing volunteering in the country in order to promote and strengthen their activities and to enhance public awareness and the participation of the general public in volunteering initiatives (continuously informing the public, attracting volunteers and developing skills in voluntary work).

Answers provided by six out of the eight NGOs interviewed clearly show that they perform several social activities of direct assistance to citizens, in the following fields:

- HEALTH
 - Donation and/or collection of blood
 - First aid and transportation of the sick
 - Health care
 - Psychological assistance
- CULTURE AND CULTURAL HERITAGE
 - Protection of art works in public places
 - Cultural promotion
- SPORTS
 - Promotion of sports
 - Amateur sports
- SOCIAL ASSISTANCE
 - Research, studies, documentation
 - Re-education/reintegration
 - Social work secretariat
 - Providing meals
 - Support for learning
- CITIZENS RIGHTS AND PROTECTION
 - Protection of citizens and participation
 - Legal advice
 - Civil rights
- CIVIL PROTECTION
 - Training

The typology of subjects who had access to the services in 2006 is shown in the following table (the numbers are those given by the NGOs interviewed).

Type of subjects	Number of subjects users of services	Number of services provided
Individuals	From 100 to 1500	
Volunteer organisations	12 to 20	40 to 120
Other type of third sector organisations	44 to 1500	(including co-operation with other organisations, daily trainings for new volunteers, qualification seminars).
Associations of organisations	1 to 5	
Networks	Approximately 20	
Foundations	N/A	
Co-operatives	N/A	
Public bodies	Approximately 90	

The volume of activities and services provided by the eight NGOs interviewed in the years 2004-2006 has increased considerably in three of them, a steady increase was declared for one, while four remained more or less at the same level. The services that showed the largest increase in demand were: information, dissemination, promotion, events, consultation, social-counselling programmes, anonymous psychological support, social services.

As regards to modalities and procedures of providing services, all NGO activities must be carried out according to the laws and regulations of the Lithuanian Republic. But, as no funds for services are

made available by the central or local authorities, most of the NGOs interviewed provide them for free, while two ask for a fee to be paid by those who receive the services.

In order to improve the quality of the services provided, four of the NGOs interviewed conduct research to analyse the needs and problems of potential beneficiaries; while the means used to promote the services are mainly leaflets, meetings with beneficiaries, thematic publications. Seven of the NGOs have a charter of services, and carry out periodical studies about the quantity and quality of the work done by the operators.

LIST OF ORGANISATIONS WHO COLLABORATED TO THE RESEARCH

AUSTEJOS DRAUGAI

Youth Organisation for Voluntary Activities, Vilnius

DEINETA CENTRE

Youth for Voluntary Activities, Kaunas

DPIC - Youth Spiritual Guidance Centre, Klaipeda

JTBA

Agency of International Youth Co-operation of Lithuania, Vilnius

LIJOT - National Youth Council, Vilnius

SNOS - Kaunas County Union of Social NGOs, Kaunas

TINKLAS - Lithuanian NGOs Centres Network

YPAC - Youth Psychological Aid Centre, Vilnius

LIST OF LAWS AND REGULATIONS**Framework laws**

Law on Associations (1996)

Law on Public Organisations (1998)

Law on Public Institutions (1996, amended 1997)

Law on Charity and Sponsorship (1993, as amended 2005)

Important regulations

Resolution No. 469 of 26th April 2000

Resolution No. 1511 of 13th December 2001

Resolution No. 732 of 24th May 2002

Procedure for Transferring up to 2 per cent of Income Tax Amount to Lithuanian Entities Entitled to Sponsorship under the Law on Charity and Sponsorship (2002)

Other laws of interest

Law on Lobbying Activities (2000, amended 2001) (excerpt)

Law on Religious Communities and Associations (1995)

Law on the Associations of Multi-family Apartment House Owners (1995)

Law on Income Tax of Individuals (2002) (excerpt)

Law on Taxes on Profits of Legal Persons (1990, amended 2000) (excerpt)

Law on Value Added Tax (2002) (excerpt)

Law on the Tax on the Immovable Property of Enterprises and Organisations (1994) (excerpt)

Law on Central Credit Union (2000, amended 2001) (excerpt)

Law on Firm Names (1999, amended 2002)

Law on International Treaties of the Republic of Lithuania (1991) (excerpt)

Law on the Legal Status of Foreigners (1991) (excerpt)

Law on the Legal Status of Aliens (1998, amended 2001) (excerpt), 2003

Law on Refugee Status (1995, amended 2002) (excerpt)

Law on Provision of Information to the Public (1996, amended 2002) (excerpt)

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http://www.cev.be/data/File/Lithuania_legalstatus.pdf

INTERNET SOURCES

NGO Directory: Lithuania - Overview
<http://www.rec.org/REC/Publications/NGODirIntros/Lithuania.html>

Legislation report for NGOs
<http://www.legislationline.org/?tid=2&jid=32&ijid=0&less=true>

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