

# EUROBAROMETER 2004.1

PUBLIC OPINION IN THE CANDIDATE COUNTRIES

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## NATIONAL REPORT EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

# LITHUANIA

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This document does not represent the point of view of the European Commission.  
The interpretations and opinions contained in it are solely those of the authors.

## Executive Summary

### Introduction

The Candidate Countries Eurobarometer (CC-EB) collects information from the societies that are to become members of the European Union in a way that is fully comparable with the Standard Eurobarometer. The CC-EB continuously tracks support for EU membership in each country, and records attitudes related to European issues.

This report covers the results of the wave conducted in February-March 2004, in all 13 candidate and accession countries: Bulgaria, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia and Turkey.

In Lithuania, the Eurobarometer has been conducted since 1991, all the waves were carried out by "Baltic Surveys Ltd." (UAB "Baltijos tyrimai").

### Lithuania on the threshold to the EU

After regaining the independence, Lithuanians almost for 10 years were considered to be one of the most pessimistic and sceptic European nations. Situation changed over the last three years: Lithuanians have become not only the most optimistic among the three Baltic States, but also have found themselves among the most optimistic nations in Europe. Progress in economy, diminished threats for the East and hopes for the better future stimulate not only the positive future outlook but personal responsibility as well.

The results of this survey confirm optimism of Lithuanians joining the EU. But one should not forget that a lot of expectations and opinions in the country are still based on emotions rather than rational arguments.

Last autumn, after five more or less stable years of the country's development, Lithuania was facing the political crisis – the so-called "presidential scandal". It started in November 2003 and continued in summer of 2004. The result of this scandal was the impeachment to President R.Paksas. The public as well as politicians were concentrating on the political issues for half a year, while the issues related to integration became of secondary importance. However, political battles almost did not influence the growth of economy and everyday life of the population. Therefore, public attitudes towards the most important economic, social and international issues remained almost unchanged.

Fast economic growth became one of the most important factors influencing hopes and expectations of people. A sharp rise in the prices of consumer goods in May, after Lithuania joined the EU, could have certain influence on the attitudes towards the membership in the EU. This took place after the survey was completed.

Public opinion towards Lithuanian membership in the EU developed in several stages. In 1990-1995, public opinion was mainly based on emotional assessments. The European Union was perceived as a political and security safeguard against the perceived Russian threat as well as a guarantee for social and economic stability. During this period Lithuanians were very supportive of the EU membership, but rational arguments were lacking. The main motivation used was the goal to be politically acquainted with the West.

During the second period the support for EU membership slightly declined, and the number of the "undecided" and opponents of the membership has increased. This period was also dominated by emotions: Lithuanians realized that the membership in the EU is not achieved "overnight" and that the accession process will be long and difficult. Every time when Lithuania was not invited to join the EU, public support for the membership was declining. And when the news from Brussels was positive, support was increasing.

During the third period, starting from 2001, the information as well as weighting pros and contras became more important for opinion building. During this final period, Lithuanians became the leaders in the support for membership not only among their Baltic neighbours, but also among all the New Member States (NMSs).

### Attitude towards different spheres of life

Lithuanian residents are “cautious optimists” in their future valuations. Assessments of Lithuania’s economic growth and favourable forecasts of development that are made public by the mass media over the last years provide the reason to Lithuanian residents for better future life too. Such expectations are related in the first place to the national economy growth in general, while in respect of their personal financial prospects, Lithuanian residents are more cautious in their valuations. It should be noted that expectations by Lithuanian residents in respect of both prospects of Lithuania and their personal life tend to be more optimistic than those observed in NMSs in general. The most considerable differences are observed in assessment of prospects of the national economy development: more than half of the number of residents in NMSs are pessimists in this respect and consider that the economic situation in their countries will worsen, while pessimists account for only one-fourth of the residents in Lithuania.

When expectations of Lithuanian residents are compared with those of residents in other EU Member States, one can see that in other countries people assess their personal prospects with greater optimism than progress of their country, while Lithuanians more often relate progress with advancement of their country.

With respect to all spheres of life that were assessed from the aspect of expectations, one can observe that Lithuanian residents are greater optimists than residents in NMSs. In this respect their assessment of the situation in the country is more positive than that of their personal prospects, while residents of other NMSs are greater optimists in their assessment of their personal prospects than the future of their countries.

Over the last four years, optimism of Lithuanian residents in respect of the future increased. While four years ago most residents considered that the economic situation and their financial status would worsen, at present only one-fourth of residents holding such opinion has remained. The share of optimists was constantly increasing over the four years. It should be noted that in the current year the number of optimists has become equal to that of the “cautious” (“will not change”).

Inconsiderable decline in optimism in assessment of general prospects of life that has been observed since 2003, to my consideration, is related to the “presidential scandal” that dominated in Lithuania in the last autumn-winter period. Namely political peripeteias were the most relevant issue that that caused public concern over the last six months, while problems of any other sphere of life were seen in the context of this scandal.

The analysis of expectations among different social groups reveals that the most relevant factors for their differentiation are age, education and income. The youth view that future more optimistically in every aspect than older people. Almost half of Lithuanian residents aged under 30 believe that the next year will be better than current (while only every seventh person among residents above 50 is optimist in this respect).

Strong dependence on education is observed in assessment of prospects too: Lithuanians having the university level education view the future more brightly than residents with lower level education.

Assessment of personal prospects is also highly dependent on age and the current financial status.

The youth relate their expectations in the first place with possibilities provided by the EU membership and hope for significant improvement of their life. Middle-aged persons represent two more or less equal parts: persons with higher level education and higher income are optimists, while those with lower education and lower income are pessimists. Lithuanian residents above 50 most often do not

expect their life to improve, however, their expectations are frequently related to better future for their children and grandchildren in the European Union.

The better current financial status of a person, the brighter future assessment is observed. On the other hand, such considerable differences in assessments of future prospects also reflect a common problem in the NMSs, i.e. non-reducing sharp social differentiation and pessimism of most socially vulnerable groups.

Changes in comprehended personal situation over the last five years in Lithuania are less negative than in other new EU Member States. Lithuanians assert more often than their neighbours that their personal status has not changed. Though one-fourth of Lithuanian residents feel improvement (like in other NMSs), fewer people in Lithuania maintain that their personal status has worsened. These valuations are in line with those tendencies that are observed in the process of analysis of future expectations: Lithuanians are more optimistic than their neighbours.

When assessments of Lithuanian residents are compared with those of all the rest in the EU Member States, one can observe that the number of people who assess changes of recent years as being positive in the former EU Member States is greater than that in those countries that acceded recently.

Males and females assess changes that took place over the last five years in their personal life in the same manner. The greatest difference was observed in assessments by people of different age groups (37% of people under 30 felt improvement, 28% felt the same among those aged 30-49, while 12% did this among people aged above 50) and people with different income level (9% felt improvement and 46% felt decline in the lowest-income group, while 57% felt improvement and 12% felt decline in the highest-income group).

Differences in assessments by urban and rural residents are registered too: urban residents (in particular, residents of cities) see improvement more often than rural residents (respectively 28% and 18%). Such findings of the survey correspond to tendencies of economic and social development: the difference between the standard of life in the urban and rural areas increased over the period of regained Independence; and people can judge about it quite easily by "their purse".

The education level also affects the quality of life: Lithuanians with the university education notice improvement in their life more often than persons with low education level.

Expectations of Lithuanian residents in respect to the next five years are more similar to the common assessment by residents of the EU Member States than to moods prevailing among residents of the NMSs. Lithuanians are less pessimistic than their neighbours. Though the number of optimists in this respect in Lithuania is the same as in the neighbouring countries (one-third of the population), however, in Lithuania there are fewer pessimists, who consider that their personal life will worsen in the next five years.

Like in the assessment of experience within the last five-year period, future expectations depend in the main on age and the current financial status.

The youth see the future in bright colours, while the number of pessimists among pre-retirement and retirement age residents is greater than that of optimists. On the other hand, though middle-aged people more often assert (34%) that their status has worsened in the last five years, they are more optimistic (35%) than pessimistic (15%) about their future. The analysis of the findings of the surveys conducted among the Lithuanian population over the last years reveals that optimism in respect of the future is most often determined by the two factors: growth of the national economy (as interpreted by the mass media) and prospects that are expected to be provided by the EU membership.

Highest-income residents view the future with optimism: 57% of them assess the changes that took place over the last five years positively and the same share of them expects to see progress in the next five years. Middle-income Lithuanian residents tend to view the future with optimism (they tend to see improvement and not worsening), though they assess the changes of the last five years more often as negative and not positive. Even lowest-income residents are not pessimists in respect of the future: though only every tenth person within this group felt improvement over the five-year period, every fourth expected improvement in the next five years.

## The most significant problems in Lithuania

Over the entire period of Independent Lithuania since 1990, the Lithuanian people maintained that the sorest problem in the country was the low standard of living and the situation on the labour market (in respect of the high unemployment rate and uncertainty about a possibility to find a job after losing it). True, in autumn 2003 and spring 2004, political issues (the “presidential scandal” and impeachment) were prevailing in the public; however, this change was situational and short-term. Recently, though Lithuania’s economy development rate is one of the highest in the world, unemployment and the standard of living remain, as Lithuanian residents maintain, to be the predominant national problems.

The findings of this survey confirm the same tendency too: unemployment is considered to be the main problem in Lithuania. This problem predominates both in responses provided by all the residents of the European Union and, in particular, in responses provided by respondents in the NMSs. On the other hand, both in the EU as a whole and in NMSs, problems relating to the economic situation are ranking second, while among Lithuanian residents they are ranking third. Lower significance of this issue corresponds to the common assessment of the current situation and optimistic attitude of Lithuanian residents towards the future.

Lithuanian residents mention the issue of crime as ranking second – it is deemed to be more urgent than in the neighbouring countries. One cannot maintain that the actual crime rate is higher in Lithuania than in the neighbouring countries, however, to our consideration, importance of this issue in the consciousness of Lithuanian people reflects at least two factors: influence of the mass media and the need for safety and stability. Topics on crime take much of space and time in the Lithuanian mass media (both in the press and television). Results of the survey disclose that Lithuanian residents assess the situation on the national level worse than on the level of their personal experience or place of residence and they indicate the mass media as the main source of information about the criminal situation in the country. On the other hand, with less anxiety about the economic stability, greater attention is paid to personal and property safety.

It is noteworthy that taxes are considered to be a far more serious problem by Lithuanian residents than by residents of the other EU Member States. Lithuanian people rank this problem fourth by its importance, while in the NMSs it ranks seventh and in the EU as whole it ranks eighth. It should be noted that Lithuanian residents most often have in mind payment for municipal services.

The health care system and the system of education cause fewer problems to Lithuanian residents than to residents of other NMSs.

The issues of terrorism and immigration seem to be of far greater importance to residents of the EU Member States, in particular that formed the core of the EU, than to residents of the NMSs (in the EU these problems rank sixth, in Lithuania and the NMSs – tenth).

Assessment of significance of several spheres differs in different demographical groups: retirement-age people, naturally, more often than younger persons emphasize issues of pensions and health care, while the youth more often indicate issues of the system of education.

## Confidence in different institutions

The mass media and the Church retained their stably leading position of the most reliable institution over the last 14 years in Lithuania. This survey did not include the Church among the institutions under analysis, however, confidence in religious institutions, which have a broader meaning among the population, was analysed. This survey confirmed that the mass media continues to be the leader among institutions, while television retains the name of the most reliable institution. The army ranks fourth. It was entered into the list of the best assessed institutions in Lithuania several years ago. A high rate of confidence in the army relates, in particular, to Lithuania’s membership in the NATO. The list of leaders also includes the European Union and the United Nations, in which Lithuanian residents,

like residents of the other EU Member States, have more confidence than in their national Governments or Parliaments.

Lithuanian residents have more confidence than residents of other countries in the mass media and the European Union. The police takes the third place in the EU among all the institutions under analysis. The number of residents, who have confidence in it, is twice as big as the number of those, who do not, while in Lithuania, the number of residents have no confidence in it is greater than the number of those who have confidence in it.

Though confidence in the Government, the Seimas and political parties is low in Lithuania, it is still lower in other NMSs.

Confidence in the Government has slightly increased over the last three years, while that in political parties remained the same. The “presidential scandal” resulted in the lowest rate of satisfaction about democracy in Lithuania in the last three-year period and decline in confidence in the Seimas.

## Information about the European Union

Issues of Lithuania’s EU membership used to be more actively discussed by the national mass media only before the referendum on the EU membership. With no significant opposition to membership in place, there were no serious debates either. On the other hand, absence of opposition did not encourage public discussions on advantages and threats to be brought about by the EU membership. Over the entire period of Lithuania’s Independence, support to Lithuania’s EU membership was rather based on emotional and ideological (“back to Europe”, “integration of the West”) than rational arguments. However, at present, Lithuanian residents tend to trust in politicians from Brussels than in local ones (they also have more confidence in the European law enforcement system than that of Lithuania).

Absence of a more serious discussion determined the situation, in which Lithuanian residents do not feel well informed about the EU membership, however, a great number of them do not look for such information themselves.

## Supposed and actual level of awareness

Lithuanian residents consider their awareness of the EU to be slightly lower than average (4,26 point on the 10-point scale). Younger persons are more interested in these issues and consider that they know more about the EU than older people. Better-off residents consider that they are better informed than residents with lower income. Lithuanian residents with the university level education was a sole social group that assessed their awareness as better than average.

## European Union: actual level of awareness

The actual level of awareness of the basic facts relating to the EU is lower in Lithuania than in the NMSs in general. Lithuanian residents are best aware of the EU symbols, i.e. the flag and the Europe Day. However, as the first elections of members to the European Parliament have to take place in the current year in the NMSs, Lithuanian residents were aware of the fact that Euro-parliamentarians are elected from EU citizens. Only one-third of Lithuanian residents knew that the EU has its anthem and one-fourth knew the number of the EU Member States and the way the President is elected. A low level of awareness of the EU history was registered among Lithuanian residents.

Younger Lithuanian people with higher income and higher education level are best informed.



## Awareness of accession and enlargement

More than half of Lithuanian residents considered that they were well or very well informed about the fact that Lithuania was to become a EU Member State in several months. However, Lithuanian residents considered that knew less about enlargement with new countries acceding the EU: more than half of the interviewed residents maintained that they were poorly informed or knew nothing at all about it.

People were more actively involved in a public discussion on the issues of the EU membership before the referendum (a year before the accession), however, in the process of the discussion, the necessity of Lithuania's accession was given greater emphasis than specific issues relating to membership. The EU membership was most often introduced as a terminal value (the goal) and not an instrumental one (a tool to achieve other objectives). Thus, residents did not see any more specific information about the process of accession or the future in the EU.

Only people with the university level education and better-off residents were better informed about these issues, while their age or sex had no influence on the situation relating to awareness.

Younger people and urban residents are better informed about the fact of Lithuania's accession. Education makes also critical impact on the situation: 87% Lithuanian residents with the university level education consider that they are very well or well informed about these issues. 51% of Lithuanian residents, who have incomplete secondary education, think that they are very well or well aware of Lithuania's accession to the EU.

## Sources of information about the European Union

Every fifth Lithuanian resident asserted that he/she was not interested in information about the European Union. This number is twice as big as the average in the NMSs. In Lithuania, older people, residents with the lowest income, lower level of education and more often rural residents and not urban ones were more often not interested in information about the EU.

Lithuanian residents consider the main mass media to be the most important sources of information about the EU. Television is the most acceptable source, followed by radio and the press. Lithuanian residents somewhat more often than residents of the other NMSs wish to receive information about the EU from newspapers and magazines.

Television is the most important source of information for all social-demographic groups. The greatest differences are observed in assessments of importance of the Internet. The youth, residents with the highest income and university level education prefer this source of information more often (32%, 33% and 32% respectively) than older persons, residents with lower income and lower level of education.

## The European Union in the national mass media

As it was mentioned above, Lithuanian residents do not look actively for information, though they do not feel well informed about the EU. Thus, most of them hold the opinion that the Lithuanian mass media provides sufficient information about the EU (in other words, the volume of information provided suffices them). The number of residents, who feel the lack of information, is twice as big as the number of those, who think that they receive information in excess. However, the number of residents, who lack information, makes up only 28%. Lithuanians with higher level income and university level education feel the lack of information more often.

Lithuanians have different opinions with respect to whether the Lithuanian mass media informs about the EU impartially. Two of five Lithuanians hold opinion that information is being presented impartially, while other two consider that its presentation bears the character of propaganda and is provided as too positive.

Males more often than females think that information about the EU is made too positive. Older residents stick to the same opinion, while the youth trust in the provided information. Rural residents have more confidence in the provided information than urban residents, while the latter notice propaganda in this information provided by the mass media.

## Institutions of the European Union

Lithuania residents are best aware of the following two institutions of the European Union: the European Parliament (85%) and the European Commission (71%). Also Lithuanians are rather well familiar with the European Court of Justice, the European Central Bank and the Council of Ministers of the European Union (more than half of Lithuanian residents have heard about them). The European Ombudsman and the Committee of the Regions are least familiar institutions to Lithuanians.

Younger, better-off and Lithuanian residents with higher level education are better informed about the European institutions. This tendency corresponds to the common tendency of awareness about the EU.

Those institutions that are better known to Lithuanian residents are more often considered to be more influential. Lithuanian residents have more confidence in them than in less familiar institutions (with reference to the latter, the predominant answer was “Don’t know”).

Though the European Court of Justice is less familiar than the European Commission to Lithuanians, the share of residents, who have confidence in these institutions, is equal. The European Court of Justice is mentioned by the smallest percentage of residents, who have no confidence in the analysed institutions (8,5%). This percentage is even smaller than that recorded with respect to confidence in the least familiar institution of the European Ombudsman. The surveys conducted over the last years confirm that Lithuania residents do not have confidence in the Lithuanian law enforcement system and courts, while relate their considerable expectations with institutions of the European law enforcement system.

## Attitude towards the EU membership

At the time of the survey, Lithuania had the largest number of the EU supporters among all the ten NMSs (52% of respondents see the EU membership being positive). Malta is ranking second in this respect (50%). The most sceptical are residents of Estonia (31%) and Latvia (33%). The average number in the NMSs accounts for 43%.

Residents of Slovenia, Hungary and Lithuania have greatest expectations of advantages to be brought about by the EU membership (64% in Slovenia, 58% both in Lithuania and Hungary). 52% of residents hold this opinion on the average in the NMSs.

## Dynamics of the support for the EU membership

Support for the EU membership in Lithuania increased during the last four years. Despite the fact that in 1999 the share of the population demonstrating positive attitude towards the EU membership was proportionate to those perceiving the membership disadvantages, the number of the membership supporters exceeded the number of the euro-sceptics at the proportion of 1,7:1 this spring.

The highest level of the support for the EU membership was reached immediately before the Euro-referendum and slightly decreased afterwards. Nevertheless, since 2003 the number of the EU membership supporters in Lithuania roughly constituted the larger share of the population than in other new NMSs.

The Lithuania’s population was among those who demonstrated the best EU membership-related results; nevertheless, opposite to other EU acceding countries, there were practically no subsequent EU membership-related debates in late 2003 or early 2004 due to the “presidential scandal”, and the



attitude towards the EU membership were mainly influenced by the internal national policy peripeteias and not by new or more comprehensive information about the EU.

The young people, high-income residents and those with university education are more likely to treat the EU membership as a positive development compared against other social demographic groups. The number of the oldest population groups considering this as positive development equals to those supporting the “neither positive nor negative” attitude. It is noteworthy that no social demographic group of the Lithuanian residents considers the EU membership negative.

### Expectations towards the advantages of the EU membership

In assessing the potential advantages of the EU membership the Lithuanian residents are more optimistic than the other NMS residents on the average.

Same as the attitude towards support for the EU membership in Lithuania, the opinion towards the benefit gained from the EU membership kept optimistically changing during the recent four years. The peak of positive EU membership-related assessments was reached before the Euro-referendum (seven of ten residents considered the EU membership as useful). This peak slightly decreased with the start of the “presidential scandal”, nevertheless, in terms of optimistic attitudes Lithuania ranks higher than the other neighbouring countries.

The residents having better access to information (those with higher level of education, higher income and younger residents) more frequently expect for the EU membership advantages than those with restricted access to the EU-related information.

Those residents of Lithuania, who consider the EU membership as advantageous, usually treat the EU membership as a positive development for Lithuania as well (84% in this group). Those, who expect no advantages, treat the EU membership as a negative development (56%) or are indifferent with reference to this issue (39 % consider the EU membership as “neither positive nor negative”).

### Attitude towards the European Union policy

As the main supporters of Lithuania’s membership in the EU, the Lithuanian residents also support the policy implemented by the European Union.

During the last two years the support towards every major EU policy initiative demonstrated by the Lithuanian residents has remained stable. Common defence and security policy among the EU Member States is one of the best supported concepts by the Lithuania’s residents (7 of 10 Lithuanians support this idea).

Residents of Lithuania constantly support the idea of the common European currency – the Euro – as well as the common foreign policy. It is noteworthy that the share of those opposing the common foreign, defence and security policy as well as the EU enlargement account for 10% at the most, except for the Euro currency zone that is opposed by a larger number of residents (one-fourth of the Lithuanian population is opposing this idea).

With reference to the EU policy evaluation the situation is similar: the EU initiatives are mostly supported by the population having better access to the EU-related information (those with higher level of education, higher-income and younger residents).

## The concept of Europe

Accession to the European Union is treated by the mass media and policy makers of Lithuania as restoration of the historic justice, as well as the security and progress guarantee. This results in mostly positive Europe-related associations.

Surveys of recent years have revealed that the Lithuanian residents relate their future with the West, both including Europe and the United States (the “Euro-Atlantic integration”). The historic experience that brings associations to threat coming from the East is the basic argument that makes influence on the Lithuanians’ orientation towards the West. On the other hand, in comparison of values possessed by the Lithuanians and the residents of other countries of Europe it is clear that the Lithuanian value system has more features similar to the value system possessed by the former European Union and Central Europe countries than to those nations that are situated eastwards from Lithuania (despite the differences in the living standards).

## Image of the European Union

With improved access to the EU-related information by the Lithuanian population and with emerging travelling possibilities, the image of the European Union keeps changing. Notwithstanding this fact, access to information is not sufficient and the assessments of the Lithuanian residents mainly have purely emotional motivations, thus resulting in higher evaluation of the majority of the EU attributes by Lithuania’s residents compared against those of the EU and the other NMSs.

Such EU characteristic features as freedom to travel, work and study, as well as the common European currency (euro) are of especially significant importance to the Lithuanian residents. The negative associations more frequently indicated by the Lithuanian residents (compared against those of the other NMSs) cover the increased level of the crime rate, loss of national cultural identity and money squandering. Notwithstanding, the negative EU-related associations by the Lithuania’s residents are fewer than the positive ones.

## Information relating to the European Union and its membership advantages

First and foremost, Lithuanian residents relate the EU membership with national economic and social security. This aspect continued to be underlined during the entire period of the Independence with the main emphasis laid on the necessity of joining the EU. On the other hand, the Lithuania’s residents do not expect their opinion to be of importance in the European Union or their personal lives to undergo significant changes upon accession to the European Union.

The expectations of younger residents as well as those with higher level of education are more ambitious than those of the elderly and those with restricted access to information.

## The role of the European Union

Lithuania’s residents most frequently consider the impact by the European Union as positive first of all towards common issues regulated on the international scale, covering foreign policy, defence and fight against terrorism. On the other hand, opposite to residents of some other NMSs, the Lithuanians expect for positive EU-based impact on the economic development and fight against unemployment, the issues of major interest to ordinary people. The said expectations served as the explanation for this significant number of those supporting the EU enlargement and Lithuania’s accession to the EU: the EU-related expectations associated to the Lithuanians not only with the international policy development but also with resolving of social problems.

Lithuania's residents consider that the issues of internal policy, covering provision with dwellings, pensions, health care or education will experience no impact of the European Union enlargement, since these are the national issues of internal policy.

On the other hand, disregarding the expected positive impact on the economic development in relation to the EU enlargement, other economics-related issues, such as taxes or inflation, received sort of evaluation with no associations. Lithuania's residents consider that the European Union enlargement will make an impact rather negative than positive with reference to addressing the said issues. Two other fields with positively negative associations relating to the EU enlargement cover immigration and fight against crime. With reference to the EU enlargement-related fears Lithuania's residents also indicate the potentially increasing number of problems in these fields upon accession to the EU (though immigration does not seem to be a problem of prioritised importance to Lithuania by now, the crime rate is considered as one of the most significant problems to be addressed).

### Uncertainty with reference to the EU membership

Despite the expectations of the Lithuanian residents for economic benefit from the membership in the EU, the concerns in terms of the EU membership still mostly relate to economic and social issues. Half of the population consider that the EU membership will bring certain difficulties to the farmers; nearly half of the population consider that the membership charges will be high. Therefore, in comparison of the EU membership advantages and disadvantages the Lithuania's residents did not succeed in avoiding uncertainty; the expectations were rather high, nevertheless, they seemed to be "wishes" rather than confidence about improvement.

However, the utmost concern to Lithuanian residents is caused not by economic issues but by the spread of organised crime. As you might see from the answers to other questions, the Lithuanian residents do not consider that the EU could make significant influence on resolving the problem of utmost importance to Lithuania's population: reducing the level of unemployment. On the other hand, in Europe without frontiers, a significant number of the Lithuanians expect to find jobs in other EU Member States and consider the freedom to travel, work and study as the main advantage of the EU membership. Therefore, in the fields like this, Lithuanians are better confident about their personal abilities to employ the emerging possibilities and have lower expectations with reference to both local and central level of the European governance. Whereas, crime is the area with low influence made by individual attempts and it gets even more difficult to control this problem upon eliminating of the frontiers.

Some euro-sceptics (despite of their scarcely popular position in Lithuania so far) especially emphasized the threat of the EU integration to the national culture and identity. However, the Lithuanian residents do not lay emphasis on this issue. I do not consider this issue of low importance to them - it is most probably due to the historic experience of several centuries when, even despite of the occupation, the Lithuanian nation managed to preserve its language and culture.

It is noteworthy, that compared against the other NMSs the Lithuanians have less fears relating to the EU enlargement. The presented graph demonstrates that the Lithuanian residents indicate all the issues that can possible cause concern less frequently in average compared against the other NMS residents (except the threat to loose the national identity, culture and the Lithuanian language).

Comparison of answers by the Lithuanian and the other NMS residents also indicated that the Lithuanians were less concerned than some other neighbours (especially the Polish) about the negative consequences to the agricultural sector. In general, the Lithuanians assessed the concern causing problems in a way similar to that of the other NMSs residents (practically in the same succession order). Whereas, the analysis of residents' answers of all the EU Member States demonstrated that the former Member States much more that the NMSs were concerned about jobs relocation to other States with lower production costs, the lost of social guarantees, the economic crisis and the membership costs upon accession by the NMSs.

## The European Union budget

The Lithuanian residents consider that the major share of the European Union budget is allocated to three principal areas: employment and social needs (this area was indicated by 19% of the respondents), agriculture (17%) and foreign policy development, as well as support to other countries (15%). In terms of this evaluation, Lithuanian residents indicated a slightly different attitude compared against other NMS residents who considered that the EU budget was first of all allocated to the agriculture and administrative expenditure (indicated by 19% of the NMS residents, while in Lithuania the administrative expenditure was only indicated by 9% of the residents). Lithuanians put more emphasis on the EU budget allocations to the employment and social needs compared against the other NMS residents.

In comparison of the opinion on the EU budget by the Lithuanian and the other NMS residents it is clearly seen that the attitude towards administration of expenditure is even more different: residents of the former EU Member States much more frequently than residents of the NMSs consider that this area is given the major share of the EU budget. On the other hand, residents of the former EU Member States put less emphasis on the budget allocations for employment, social needs and agriculture.

It is noteworthy that every fourth resident of Lithuania and the other NMSs has no idea about the EU budget structure (as well as every fifth resident in the entire EU).

Same as on other issues, the elderly, lowest-income and lowest-education residents were least informed about this issue.

The female respondents equally often indicated employment and agriculture, whereas, the male respondents indicated employment more frequently as the principal EU budget line. Young people more frequently than older residents singled out foreign policy and support to other countries (21% of those Lithuanian residents who indicated this area were under 30 years old). The rural residents indicated agriculture more frequently than the urban population, while the urban residents indicated foreign policy more frequently.

## The euro-sceptical identity

The Lithuanians consider themselves a part of Europe since old; therefore, accession to the European Union is considered as restoration of justice. On the other hand, based on the survey results, the national identity is of special importance to the Lithuanians; more than half of Lithuania's residents boast of being the Lithuanians. The striving to preserve the identity of a small country is also reflected in answering the question about the national and European identity.

It is important to indicate that the concept "the Lithuanian" first of all means the ethnic group and the nationality but not being a resident of a particular country to Lithuanian residents. The Lithuanians do not use the expression "a Lithuanian of the non-Lithuanian nationality" (i.e., no distinction between the two concepts of "nationality" and "ethnicity" is made). Therefore, based to the Lithuanian mentality it is impossible to be an individual of the European nationality. The one who lives in Europe is a European but the nationality (the ethos) is the main characteristic feature that determines the identity.

The language and cultural characteristic features provide explanation on why the absolute majority of the Lithuanian residents perceive themselves as the Lithuanians. 86% of the Lithuanian residents indicate that first of all they are the Lithuanians (55% - only the Lithuanians and 31% - both the Lithuanians and the Europeans). The ethnic Lithuanians in Lithuania include approximately 85% of the residents. The Russian or Polish of Lithuanian origin does not consider himself a Lithuanian; he is just the resident of Lithuania. While "the European" is not considered a definition of identity by the Lithuanians, since "the European" is treated as a geographic, while "the Lithuanian" as a national concept. Therefore, in comparison of attitudes towards identity by the residents of a number of countries it is very important to take into consideration the linguistic and semantic differences.

The definition of identity depends on age (young people more frequently consider themselves both the Lithuanians and the Europeans than the Lithuanians only) and the level of education (residents of Lithuania with higher level of education also indicate Europe more frequently).

## The institutional reform in the European Union

With support to the European Union policy the Lithuanian residents also support the very idea of the EU Constitution. Practically no changes have been observed in terms of demonstrating this support within the period of one year. To our standpoint, a certain decline in the number of those who support better relates to certain internal political problems of Lithuania (the “presidential scandal”) in general leading to lower confidence in public authorities but not in serious debates and analysis relating to the EU Constitution.

The Lithuanian residents, same as the residents of the EU (and especially the NMSs) are sceptical with reference to some reforms by certain EU initiative authorities. The Lithuanian residents consider that the veto right should be maintained in order to preserve the principal national interests. The attitude of Lithuanian residents towards this issue corresponds to the general attitude of residents in the EU Member States. It is important to indicate that in Lithuania much more residents have no opinion on this issue in general compared against residents of the EU or the NMSs. This indicates that Lithuanian residents were little interested and received very restricted information on the proposed reforms.

With reference to the voting system reform inside the Council of Ministers of the European Union the Lithuanian residents in general have less information than the residents of the other NMSs. This fact again testifies about the absence of public discussion on the main issues of the EU in Lithuania, and without existence of strong EU membership opposition issues like this do not become a part of the public discourse, even in the event of preparation for the European Parliamentary elections. On the other hand, Lithuanian residents, same as the residents of the other NMSs, consider that each Member State should have one vote disregarding the number of the population. Even with no sufficient access to information about the purpose of the reform the Lithuanian residents assess this reforms from the position of a small country aiming at protection from the potential dictate by larger states.

In the assessment of the proposal to expand the Presidency in the European Council the Lithuanian residents are likely to increasingly support it. Within one-year period, the number of those having no opinion or opposing to this issue decreased, whereas, the number of those supporting the proposal kept increasing.