

European Commission  
Directorate-General for Economic and Financial Affairs  
Economic Policy Committee

**Efficiency and effectiveness of public  
expenditure  
on tertiary education in the EU**

**ANNEX : COUNTRY FICHE  
LITHUANIA**

**Joint Report by the Economic Policy Committee  
(Quality of Public Finances)  
and the Directorate-General for Economic and Financial Affairs**

## Table of contents

<b>Brief characterization of the tertiary education system .....</b>	<b>3</b>
1. <i>Main features</i> .....	3
2. <i>Structure of institutions and funding arrangements</i> .....	4
3. <i>Governance and regulatory framework</i> .....	7
4. <i>System's strengths and weaknesses</i> .....	8
<b>Explanatory factors for efficiency .....</b>	<b>9</b>
1. <i>Staff Policy</i> .....	9
1.1. <i>Hiring/Firing</i> .....	9
1.2. <i>Wages</i> .....	10
2. <i>Output flexibility</i> .....	10
2.1. <i>Course content and exams</i> .....	10
2.2. <i>Offer of short studies and other diversifies studies</i> .....	10
2.3. <i>Student choice</i> .....	10
2.4. <i>Numerus clausus</i> .....	11
2.5. <i>Regional/ European/ global mobility</i> .....	12
3. <i>Evaluation</i> .....	12
3.1. <i>Institutional evaluation</i> .....	12
4. <i>Funding rules</i> .....	13
4.1. <i>Public funding</i> .....	13
4.2. <i>Impact of quality assessments on funding</i> .....	13
4.3. <i>Private funding</i> .....	13
4.3.1. <i>Tuition fees and/or households</i> .....	13
4.3.2. <i>Business, other</i> .....	14
4.3.3. <i>Grants/loans</i> .....	14
5. <i>Impact on Employability</i> .....	14
6. <i>Recent and planned reforms of the tertiary education system</i> .....	15
6.1. <i>Description of recent reforms</i> .....	15
6.2. <i>Planned reforms (or reference to ongoing policy debate)</i> .....	15

# **Brief characterization of the tertiary education system**

## **1. Main features**

Following the Bologna Process action lines, a three-cycle degree system (BA, MA, PhD) has been established in Lithuania. It usually takes 3.5– 4 years to obtain a BA degree, 1.5 – 2 years for MA and 4 years for PhD. Some specific study programmes (Medicine, Veterinary Medicine, Pharmacy, Odontology, particular Law studies) consisting about 4% of total are delivered as integrated (continuous) studies leading to the MA qualification and takes 6 years.

The network of higher education (HE) institutions in Lithuania is widely developed: in 2009 there were 49 HE institutions in total, including 22 universities and 27 colleges, i.e. HE non-university institutions providing a qualification of professional BA. On the other hand, a substantial part of HE are relatively small, and it causes a problem of not efficient administration and lack of relevant teaching/learning facilities and human resources. Optimisation of the HE network including joining universities and scientific institutes represents one of objectives of the national HE reform which has been started in 2009.

Number of graduates from secondary education entering Lithuanian HE institutions shows a tendency HE to become mass: 75 – 80% of school leavers usually become first-year students at HE institutions. At the same time, an international PISA scores for Lithuania in 2006 was determined as 488, i.e. below an average scoring (500), thus representing the 32<sup>nd</sup> result among 57 participating countries. It is an indication that learning potential of students on admission could not be high enough. In the year 2009 the regulation of entering HE institutions was changed in order to ensure a possibility for advanced school graduates to get a financial support from the state budget which is adequate to the tuition fee ('student voucher').

The number of students per 1000 inhabitants was around 60 during the last 5 years (more detailed information is presented in the table below). It is slightly increasing by increasing of part-time students' number mainly. However, the age group of 25-64 years is weakly represented. It could be explained by different reasons (but not limited) like a 'tradition' of entering HE system just after the secondary school, limited flexibility of learning path, not sufficient correspondence of competences provided by the study programmes to the requirements of labour market, etc.

<b>1/ TEACHING</b>	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Academic staff per 1000 inhabitants relative to the average	2.9	3.16	3.7	3.5	3.7	4.0	3.8	3.8	3.9	4.4	4.3
Number of students per 1000 inhabitants	26.4	29.5	39.0	42.8	48.6	53.1	57.1	58.0	59.0	61.0	63.0
Number of students (graduate and post-graduate) per 1000 inhabitants											
<i>From public institutions</i>			38.5	41.8	46.4	49.4	52.8	53.2	53.5	54.0	55.4
<i>From private government-dependent institutions</i>											
<i>From private independent institutions</i>			0.5	1.0	2.2	3.7	4.3	4.8	5.5	7.0	7.6
Ratio of students per academic staff	9.1	9.3	10.5	12.1	13.0	13.4	14.9	15.1	15.1	13.9	14.7
Number of graduates per 1000 inhabitants	5.26	6	6.93	7.58	8.2	9.48	10.34	11.24			
Ratio of graduates per 1000 academic staff	1.8	1.9	2.2		2.9	3.3	3.7	4.1			
Standardized recruiter view indicator (graduates' employability as perceived by recruiters)											n/a
Standardized peer view country indicator (quality perceptions among peers)											n/a
PISA scores									488		
Average total time spent by students in order to obtain a BA degree (years)											3.5 - 4
Average total time spent by students in order to obtain a MA degree (years)											1.5- 2
Remuneration of a tenured university professor with 10 year seniority											n/a

<b>2/ RESEARCH</b>	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Publications per 1000 inhabitants	0.05	0.06	0.07	0.08	0.1	0.12	0.16	0.19	3.04	3.27	:
	1998-2002	1999-2003	2000-2004	2001-2005	2002-2006	2003-2007					
Quality of research (position in the ISI citation index)	1.92	1.94	1.88	1.76							
% of research done in cooperation with industry											

Source: Eurostat, OECD, UOE and Member States.

## 2. Structure of institutions and funding arrangements

University traditionally provides study programmes of all three cycles. Lithuanian *General Requirements for Master Study Programmes (2005)* refer to a dual aim of the master studies. There are master studies that are oriented to develop in-depth research competences in preparing for career of a scientist and study programs oriented to enhance skills for

developing and implementing innovations in particular professional area. Provision of the third cycle studies depends on research in the corresponding fields and study programmes could be implemented by the university in cooperation with the research institute. Research institutes could be of two categories: there were 17 state institutes and 18 research institutes belonging to the universities in 2009. Approximately 70 % of research personnel in Lithuania could be attributed to the HE sector. It should be noticed that they usually combine teaching and research activities. Currently, a process of further joining institutes and universities is going on within the national HE reform.

College provides profession oriented HE leading to the professional BA degree and carry out applied research as well.

According to the *Law on Higher Education and Research* (approved by Seimas, April 30, 2009; No XI-242), HE institutions are encouraged to be more integrated into local and regional development activities and to initiate social change in a broader scale, particularly by knowledge transfer to business and local authorities and providing life-long learning.

<b>4/ EXPENDITURE</b>	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Total public expenditure on tertiary education institutions as a percentage of GDP		0.87	0.77	1.15	1.15	1.24	1.21	1.20	1.31	1.24	1.49
Total expenditure per student (€) in EUR PPS				3076	3330	3427	3708	3804	4072		
Private expenditure on tertiary education institutions as a percentage of GDP					0.32	0.33	0.39	0.39	0.35	0.34	
Total expenditure on education as a percentage of GDP	5.99	6.13	5.63	6.1	5.9	5.6	5.8	5.5	5.5	5.2	5.6
Private expenditure on education as a percentage of GDP						0.46	0.48	0.49	0.46		
Funds from non-public sources as % of total income (fees, earned income, investment, other)							69.8	72.6	69.5	73.0	71.1
Tuition fees as average of the cost of tuition											n/a
Percentage of funds received by private government-dependent institutions from public sources											n/a
Total public expenditure on grants, loans, and other programmes to cover education and/or maintenance of students (universal programmes / by categories such as merit or socio-economic status)											n/a

Source: Eurostat, OECD, UOE and Member States.

According to the *Law on Higher Education and Research*, HE institutions have autonomy in academic, administrative, economic and financial management sphere, particularly:

- choose study fields as well as research and experimental (social, cultural) development, professional artistic activity as well as provide other educational,

qualification improvement, expert services and publish study, scientific and other literature;

- define a procedure of studies; prepare and approve study programmes which meet the requirements laid down by legal acts; admit and exclude students in accordance with the procedure laid down by its Statute; admit and exclude students in accordance with the procedure laid down by its Statute;
- establish its own structure, internal working arrangements, staff number, their rights, duties and conditions of payment for work, position requirements, procedure of organization of competitions to fill positions and of performance evaluation of employees, adhering to laws and other legal acts;
- fix a tuition fee in accordance with the procedure laid down by this *Law*; award students scholarships from its own or sponsors' funds;
- manage, use and dispose of assets in the manner prescribed by this *Law* and other legal acts; pursue economic and commercial activities which are not prohibited by laws and which are inseparably connected with the objectives of activities thereof.

There are HE institutions of two types depending on their establishment conditions (type of founder), i.e. public (state) HE institutions – there are 30 such kind of institutions in total, and private independent (non-state) ones – 19 institutions in total.

Overall income of HE institutions is governed by the *Law on Higher Education and Research* and consists of:

- resources of the basic funding of the state budget for state HE and research institutions;
- funds of state investment programmes and state investment projects to state HE and research institutions;
- state budgetary funds appropriated for studies in accordance with the procedure laid down by this *Law* to higher education and research institutions;
- funds received as programme- and competition-based funding of research;
- income received as payment for studies, as well as income received from economic, research activities and rendered services;
- funds of the state, international and foreign foundations and organizations as well as charity under the *Law on Charity and Sponsorship*, other funds received in legal ways.

Starting from the year 2009, all HE institutions are organizing studies according to the common financial regulations, i.e. students on admission can bring their 'student voucher' to a selected HE institution not depending if it is public (state) or private (non-state) one. The amounts of 'student vouchers' established by the Government differ for different study areas (humanitarian, social, physical, biomedical, technology sciences and arts), and are adequate to the estimated average expenses for corresponding studies. If one's marks on admission according to the secondary education exams (including specific scientific, artist and sport achievements, if appropriate) are not high enough to receive a 'student voucher', there is a

possibility to cover a tuition fee by the student himself/herself. A tuition fee is determined by the particular HE institution and could be both lower and higher in comparison with the amount of 'student voucher'.

### **3. Governance and regulatory framework**

- HE and research system in Lithuania is regulated by the *Law on Higher Education and Research* and supportive regulatory frameworks. The *Law on Higher Education and Research* covers:
  - institutional system as well as defining spheres of their autonomy and the State regulation;
  - principles of quality assurance in HE and research;
  - legal basis of establishment, termination and restructuring of HE and research institutions;
  - awarding and recognition of HE qualifications and scientific degrees;
  - management of HE and research institutions, organization and supervision of their activities;
  - rights and duties of the academic staff, research staff and students of HE and research institutions;
  - funding of HE and research;
  - principles of management, use and disposal of the assets of state HE institutions.

According to the *Law on Higher Education and Research*, HE and research policy is implemented by the Government, the Ministry of Education and Science, other ministries, the Research Council of Lithuania, the Lithuanian Studies Foundation, the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education, the supervisor of academic ethics and procedures, institutions authorised by the Government and the Ministry of Education and Science, as well as other institutions. The Council of Higher Education represents an advisory body for the Ministry of Education and Science on strategic issues of HE development.

HE regulatory framework, in general, is common for both public (state) and private (non-state) institutions. However, the provisions of the *Law on Higher Education and Research* shall apply to the General Jonas Zemaitis Military Academy of Lithuania in so far as they are not in contradiction of the laws on the organization of the national defence system and military service; to seminaries in so far as they are not in contradiction of the provisions of the Agreement between the Holy See and the Republic of Lithuania on Cooperation in Education and Culture.

The main difference in the governance of public (state) and private (non-state) HE institutions by the *Law on Higher Education and Research* is that public institutions must have a Council

and Senate (Academic Council, in a case of college), and governing structure of the private HE institution is defined by the establishment regulations.

The Council is the highest governing body responsible for strategic decisions. It is composed by the members of academic community as well as representatives of social partners who proposed by the National HE Council and appointed by the Minister of education and science. The Senate (Academic Council, in a case of college) represents the highest body for academic matters, responsible, *inter alia*, for internal expertise and approval of study programmes and assurance of academic standards.

The Rector (Director, in a case of college) is the highest administrative body elected by the Council.

#### **4. System's strengths and weaknesses**

HE system in Lithuania could be characterised by somewhat controversial features. As it was mentioned earlier, there is an extensive network of HE institutions leading to the permanently increasing number of students; however, there is a problem of not efficient administration as well as lack of relevant teaching/learning facilities and human resources. Teachers are working in two or even three HE institutions; the nominal number of teachers seems to be increasing, but not really. On the other hand, competences of teaching staff, both related with research in particular field and HE didactics, should be further developed.

There are 1807 study programmes (1461 at the universities, 346 at the colleges) registered to date in Lithuania, but not all of them are of sufficient quality and provide competences relevant to the requirements of changing labour market. Nearly 80% of school graduates intend to study at the HE institutions, however, a proportion between number of students at different types of HE institutions (about 60% at universities and 40% at colleges) is not adequate to the demands of labour market. Lack of flexible learning paths at the HE level, as well as not effective connections between vocational education, HE and life-long learning arrangements should be mentioned among the issues for HE quality improvement.

Number of ISI publications has increased significantly during the last years, but it was achieved mainly by the change in categories of national scientific journals, but not in efficiency of research itself. The level of scientific publications, particularly, citation index, is low in comparison with other EU countries, even among the new member-states.

These problems is going to be solved within the national HE reform due to curriculum innovation as well as changing governance and funding principles in HE and research. Many of related activities are planned or already initiated within different state programmes supported by the EU Structural Funds.

Lithuanian HE system to some extent faces the same challenges of the European Higher Education Area (the Bologna Process-2020) in implementing student-centred learning



approaches, helping students to develop competences they need in changing labour market and to become responsible citizens, integration between education, research and innovation, enhancing mobility, and using multidimensional transparency tools. In this context, the main provision for the future is to continuously assess and analyze the implementation of the corresponding measures and to find ways for achieving relevant quality of the results.

## **Explanatory factors for efficiency**

According to the *Law on Higher Education and Research*, HE institutions could have a status of public (state) or private (non-state) institution depending on a type of founder, i.e. the Government or private entity. Private (non-state) HE institutions should be considered as private independent.

### **1. Staff Policy**

#### **1.1. Hiring/Firing**

According to the *Law on Higher Education and Research*, teaching and research staff should be recruited through an open competition for a five-year term of tenure. An employment contract of unlimited duration should be established if the person won an open competition for the same position for the second time. However, a performance evaluation of the staff members shall be carried out every five years. A person who fails the performance evaluation shall be dismissed from the position.

A HE institution should define: qualification requirements for teaching staff positions, which must be not lower than minimum requirements established by the *Law on Higher Education and Research*; the procedure of competition to hire teaching staff; the procedure for performance evaluation of teaching staff members.

The Research Council of Lithuania defines the minimum qualification requirements for positions of research staff members, with the exception of the position of a post-doctoral grant holder. HE institution should define: qualification requirements for researchers which must be not lower than minimum requirements; the procedure of competition to hire research staff. The qualification requirements for the position of a post-doctoral grant holder as well as the procedure for appointing to this position is defined by the Government.

According to the *Law on Higher Education and Research*, HE institution have a right to establish its internal working arrangements, the number of staff, their rights, duties and payment conditions.

## **1.2. Wages**

The HE staff salary is divided into categories according to the qualification or level of administrative position and connected with the “basic monthly salary” by the Resolution of the Government as well as possible conditions of the bonuses and other extra payments related with particular achievements. HE institution may decide within the limits of these conditions.

## **2. Output flexibility**

### **2.1. Course content and exams**

According to the *Law on Higher Education and Research*, HE institutions may renew and develop new study programmes which should be evaluated and accredited by the authorised institution. HE institution may decide about the learning outcomes, subject contents, study /evaluation methods and quality management schemes of the programme; however, in order to pass the accreditation procedure it should fulfil general and special requirements for the study programmes and requirements of the corresponding study field, if any.

### **2.2. Offer of short studies and other diversified studies**

At the majority of universities there are divisions of continuing studies providing short/continuing studies. However, a diversity of such kind of studies is not large enough. A serious barrier in this field is not established system of recognition of the competences acquired through non-formal and informal learning. Many of universities have the distance learning centres and offer particular modules targeted to various professional groups; however, implementation of distance studies is also related with recognition of the learning outcomes.

### **2.3. Student choice**

According to the *Law on Higher Education and Research*, students may select a study form (full-time or part-time) as well as optional courses (both alternative and free-choice) if they are fixed in the time schedule of the study programme. It is more common for the first cycle studies. However, there is still lack of flexibility in organisation of studies in terms of individualisation of learning path, particularly related with implementing of the ECTS credits and (or) modular structure of study programmes. There is a special set of projects which are being implemented within the National study programme to fill this gap.

Until the year 2009, there was an option of evening and extramural (distance) studies which are close to a part-time form. Since 2009 a part-time study form was established; among the first-year students, the part-time students cover around 20 % of total enrolments. A transition

from evening and extramural studies towards the part-time form is not clear enough and could be considered as developing one.

In general, life-long learning is not well developed and popular area within the HE system. Only small part of students use and entrance path different from entry from secondary school directly, however, recognition of formal qualifications is necessary. The first-year students of the first cycle, who are over 25 years old, represent a few percents of total.

Within the system of formal education, recognition of study periods is provided according to the order of the Minister of Education and Science *On the Procedures of Recognition of Study Periods* (2003). It determines procedures for recognition of study periods and access to studies (except to the first-year studies) in two cases: in the case of studies abroad and at another Lithuanian HE institution; in the case to another study programme at the same HE institution. Some departments in HE institutions provide bridging courses in order to remove barriers in entering the second cycle programmes.

Supplementary bridging courses may be organised for the persons seeking academic recognition of foreign qualifications giving access to studies in Lithuania. They are regulated by the *Regulations on the Assessment and Academic Recognition of Foreign Qualifications Giving Access to Higher Education and Higher Education Qualifications* (2005). Supplementary bridging courses are being organised and conducted by four universities (Vilnius University, Vytautas Magnus University, Klaipeda University and Siauliai University).

Procedures for recognition of non-formal or in-formal prior learning are not established yet.

## **2.4. Numerus clausus**

The *Law on Higher Education and Research* and the corresponding regulatory framework is applicable to the military and religion studies in so far as they are not in contradiction of the laws on the organization of the national defence system and military service and on provisions of the Agreement between the Holy See and the Republic of Lithuania on Cooperation in Education and Culture, respectively.

Until the year 2009, quotas of state-funded students according to study fields each HE institution were determined by the Ministry of Education and Science every year. The distribution of state-funded students in different study programmes within the particular study field was left up to HE institution. Admission of students paying tuition fees themselves was not limited.

In 2009, the total quotas for study areas (separate for universities and colleges) were determined in terms of number of 'student vouchers'. Students on admission can receive

'student voucher' according to their results of secondary education exams and bring to a selected HE institution. There were no quotas for students who pay tuition fees themselves, and HE institutions were free to decide about the numbers.

## **2.5. Regional/ European/ global mobility**

As Lithuania is considered as a single region within EU, it is possible to define only students who received secondary education outside of the country. Usually it is a very small part of students. For example, in 2009 they consist only 0.21% of total first-year enrolments.

Students from the EU member states have equal opportunities with Lithuanian inhabitants. The procedure for recognition of diplomas is free of charge and lasts up to two months.

There are no barriers for teachers and researchers from abroad to continue their carrier in Lithuania according to the same regulations as Lithuanian citizens. The procedure for recognition of qualifications is free of charge and lasts up to two months.

There is also a possibility of joint-degree study programmes involving HE institutions from other member states.

## **3. Evaluation**

### **3.1. Institutional evaluation**

There are different procedures for the evaluation of research (artistic) productivity and institutional evaluation.

Research (artistic) productivity including scientific publications and research projects as well as artistic work is being evaluated by independent national expert panel on annual basis. Currently, the Research Council of Lithuania is responsible for the evaluation. A new methodology for evaluation was introduced in June, 2009. The main changes have been made in qualitative evaluation of the achievements in humanities, social sciences and arts including additional qualitative evaluation by independent experts. The requirements in physical, biomedical and technology sciences became higher as well. The pilot evaluation according to the new methodology has been carried out, and 30% of overall public funding for research is being distributed for the public (state) HE and research institutions according to results of this evaluation. Results of the evaluation are publicly available.

According to the *Law on Higher Education and Research*, external evaluation of the HE and public (state) research institutions should be initiated by the Ministry of Education and Science every 6 years involving foreign experts. External evaluation of activities of private

(non-state) research institutes should be carried out on the initiative and with the funds of these institutes.

External evaluation of HE institutions comprise all fields of activities indicated in their statutes and should be organized by an institution authorised by the Ministry of Education and Science. It includes the development of the self-assessment report, external review, publication of the results and follow-up procedures. Students and social partners are a part of the entire evaluation process. Currently, a new regulatory framework for the institutional evaluation of HE institutions is under development. External evaluation of public (state) research institutes should be organized by the Research Council of Lithuania.

## **4. Funding rules**

### **4.1. Public funding**

Public funding for HE teaching and research activities could be divided into several categories.

Public funding for research (arts) is distributed via institutional and programme-based funding channels. At present, institutional funding encompasses the major part of public funding. It consists of core funding and performance-based competitive funding according to the scientific publications and funding for research (art) projects attracted both from private and international (foreign) sources. The performance-based component is gradually increasing; it consists of 30% in 2009 and is expected to be 40% in 2010 and 50% in 2011. Programme-based funding consists mainly of funding for governmental and national research programmes distributed on a competitive basis as well as grants for individual research projects, post-doctoral grants, and scholarships for doctoral students and distinguished researchers.

### **4.2. Impact of quality assessments on funding**

Referring on evaluation of the results of research in respective field and artistic work, the Ministry of Education and Science decides about the number of the third cycle students in particular university to be funded by the state budget. The corresponding distribution of the second cycle students and participants of the programmes not leading to the degree depends both upon the results of the research/art and (or) the number of first cycle students.

### **4.3. Private funding**

#### **4.3.1. Tuition fees and/or households**

During the last 5 years a part of students who pay tuition fees was slightly increasing up to 55.8% for universities and 59.1% for colleges in 2008. Due to the HE reform the financial

regulations and as well as tuition fees were changed significantly since 2009. Anyway, a comprehensive data on the funding of this category is not available.

#### **4.3.2. Business, other**

No reliable data available.

#### **4.3.3. Grants/loans**

There are 2 types of student support, i.e. scholarships and loans.

Scholarships of 2 categories have been established:

- scholarship for academic achievements (since 2008 the amount for this kind of scholarship is being decided by the particular HE institution);
- social scholarship for students from families with lower socio-economic status which are distributed according to the criteria based on family income as well as for disable students and orphans. This type of scholarship and amount in money is regulated by the state.

There is also an additional mechanism envisioned for compensation of tuition fees after successful completion of studies for the advanced students who didn't get 'student vouchers'.

The student loan system in Lithuania was introduced in 2000. Loans have been provided by the Lithuanian State Science and Studies Foundation. Students have had a possibility to land a fixed amount of money to cover their living expenses or part-time studies abroad under international agreements, but not tuition fees, if any.

The loan system for students has been transformed and expanded in 2009. Students can get loans with the guarantee by the state from selected banks to cover their study costs, living expenses and part time studies abroad. It should be noticed that opportunity to provide students with loans has increased 6 times in 2009 comparing with the previous years. During the studies the government will compensate interest rate exceeding 5% for loans taken to cover their tuition fees. Repayment of the loans related with student's real income will follow an "income contingent" mechanism.

## **5. Impact on Employability**

According to the data by the Labour Exchange Office, there is a substantial difference in unemployment rates among people with HE and upper secondary education. The corresponding figures as the percentage of total number of unemployed inhabitants in the period of 2006–2008 were the following:

	Secondary education	HE
2006	24.0 %	9.6 %
2007	19.7 %	7.9 %
2008	24.5%	13.3 %

Unemployment data for the year 2009 is strongly influenced by the economic crisis; however, recent investigation (2010) by the Institute of Public Policy and Management clearly shows that HE graduates are more successful in finding working place even in the conditions of economic decline in Lithuania.

To enhance employability of bachelors various measures are important such as involvement of employers into Committees of Study Programmes, establishing agreements with enterprises/institutions for professional practices, establishing Career Centres at the universities where information and consultations on career planning are available, organizing Career Days, Fairs, etc. Involvement of students into applied research requested by various enterprises also provides opportunities for future career paths.

## **6. Recent and planned reforms of the tertiary education system**

### **6.1. Description of recent reforms**

### **6.2. Planned reforms (or reference to ongoing policy debate)**

The reform of HE and research has been started in Lithuania in 2009. The *Law on Higher Education and Research*, approved by Seimas (the Parliament) in April 30, 2009 provides a legal basis for systemic changes including principles of HE funding and governance as well as curriculum innovation and quality assurance. ECTS will be fully introduced in HE until September, 2011. The main aspects of ongoing HE reform are reflected in the corresponding parts of the fiche.

It should be noticed that not all components of the HE system are changed yet; however, it is important to mention some positive developments already:

- state funding is allocated to each study field and is distributed on a competitive basis via ‘student voucher’ system to the most advanced students, not depending if they choose public (state) or private (non-state) HE institution,
- since 2009 state funding is available for par-time students as well;
- state supported student loans are available for all students upon request;
- a share of college students has been increased and became more adequate to the demand of labour market;
- a process of the optimisation of the HE and research institution network has been started.

The results of the first stage of the reform are going to be analysed in a systemic way in 2011. On this basis the necessary measures for HE improvement both at policy and implementation level will be decided.