

**THE 2008 JOINT INTERIM REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE EDUCATION AND TRAINING  
2010 WORK PROGRAMME**

**NATIONAL REPORT  
2007**

**CHAPTER 1. PRESENTATION OF THE NATIONAL LIFELONG LEARNING STRATEGY**

**1.1. Current situation**

**1.1.1. Was a lifelong learning strategy established in your country by the end of 2006, and if not what is the timetable for its establishment?**

In 2003 the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania approved of the Provisions of Lithuanian Education Strategy for 2003–2012 which concentrate on three main challenges with the objective of developing a continuous, accessible, socially just educational system, assuring lifelong learning. In 2004 by the decree of the Minister of Education and Science and the Minister of Social Security and Labour *The Strategy for Ensuring Lifelong Learning*<sup>1</sup> was adopted. The vision of the strategy is to involve 90 percent of active society members in the process of learning. The plan of implementation of the strategy for ensuring lifelong learning for 2004-2012 comprises main targets of lifelong learning development. In 2005 the Government of the Republic of Lithuania adopted Implementation Programme of the Provisions of the 2003-2012 State Education Strategy<sup>2</sup>. This programme in its contents, among other issues, also integrates lifelong learning strategy provisions by emphasising the assurance of lifelong learning, based on the accessibility of education and social justice. The strategy of lifelong learning assurance was targeted towards the spheres of Lithuanian education that most required changes at that time: vocational education and training and adult education.

In 2006 the Lithuanian Higher Education Development Plan for 2006-2010 was adopted, that included the improvement of higher education system management (see 3.1.1). The development plan for higher education system is targeted at resolving topical issues of higher education system, and can be considered as part of implementation programme of the provisions of the State Education Strategy for 2003-2012.

**1.1.2. Plans for future adjustment, completion or modification of the strategy**

Currently the tendencies of the renewal of *The Strategy for Ensuring Lifelong Learning* are under discussion. Those discussions attempt to involve a variety of social partners, representatives of different social groups and interests, and above all, centres for adult education, schools, and institutions of higher education involved in adult education, non-governmental organisations, and various ministries.

The programme of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania for 2006-2008 provides for the renewal of the Strategy of Lifelong Learning in 2007, regarding changes in the sphere of education, which occurred in 2004 with a particular evaluation of the influence of projects financed from the European funds.

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<sup>1</sup> A more detailed information about The Strategy for ensuring Lifelong learning is provided in the first report by Lithuania, which was submitted in the process of preparing a joint European Commission's/Council's Report for 2006.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

Simultaneously the Ministry of Education and Science initiates the outcome evaluation of the first stage of the 2003-2012 State Education Strategy, by involving the social partners and other stakeholders. The recommendations on further implementation of this programme are due to be submitted to the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania by January 1, 2008.

### **1.1.3. Any obstacles encountered in the establishment of your strategy**

Research has shown significant obstacles to the effectiveness of the implementation of the Lifetime Learning Strategy: non-existence of unified financing system of non-formal adult education; insufficient international coordination; uneven distribution of financial resources among spheres of education; low motivation for learning among adults and early school-leavers.

## **1.2. Comprehensiveness, coherence and relevance**

### **1.2.1. Which systems and levels of education and training are covered by this strategy**

The provisions and implementation programme of the State Education Strategy for 2003-2012, the Lifelong Learning Ensuring strategy, and the Higher education system development plan provide for possibilities to comprise all levels of education system, and simultaneously to resolve specific problems of lifelong learning implementation at one or other educational level.

The renewed version of the Strategy of Ensuring Lifelong Learning will focus more on a very important area – development of services of non-formal non-vocational adult education. The latter comprises a vast variety of elements most often related to fostering common cultural competencies of individuals, democratisation of society, and public spirit. Researches have shown that the majority of adults in the country among other motives for desire to learn often state not only attempts to consolidate themselves in the labour market, but also to expand cultural horizons, and to acquire skills needed for living in a civil society. Services of education of this kind are most effective for resolving problems of the integration of vulnerable groups of population into the society.

### **1.2.2. The challenges addressed by the strategy, including improving the efficiency and equity of education and training systems, and how these have been identified (based on evidence)**

*The Implementation Programme of the Provisions of the 2003-2012 State Education Strategy* points out the following objectives: to establish an integral space for lifelong learning with the educational environment suitable for individuals of different needs; to develop a variety of educational forms; to enhance financial possibilities for lifelong learning. The goals are targeted towards developing the network of services of the continuity of general education, vocational education and training, and especially of higher education for youth and adults; overcoming the limitations on time, speed and location of education as well as strict requirements on educational level for beginning studies and training; transiting gradually to the modules of accumulative crediting in the process of learning; joining-up formal, non-formal and self-education; working out the system of formal recognition of differently acquired competences.

To ensure the accessibility of higher education, in *The 2006-2010 Development Plan of the Lithuanian System of Higher Education* an objective is set to improve provision of support for students. This would include financial credits available for all students of the state higher education establishments that would cover tuition fees as well as amendments to the existing system of scholarships and credits to cover living expenses so that it is more oriented towards social support for students.

The tasks provided for in the *Strategy for Ensuring Lifelong Learning* have been based on the analysis of the situation and cover all topical spheres in Lithuania. To enhance the influence of vocational training and continuous education to the employment of the population, the concept of creation and implementation of the programmes of continuous vocational education and training has been initiated with the main emphasis on developing general type of skills. The following objectives have been pointed out in the sphere of enhancing the accessibility of education: to establish educational programmes aimed at target and risk groups; to ensure the availability of “the

second chance” for all adults without completed basic or secondary education. In the area of the development of infrastructure an objective was set forth to draft a plan for the development of educational institutions network and renovation of the existing buildings and to develop vocational information, guidance and consultation system.

Development of the *Strategy of Ensuring Lifelong Learning*, its objectives and goals are discussed in greater detail in the first Lithuanian report of 2005.

### **1.2.3. The priorities for action and policy development according to the strategy, in the light of the above mentioned challenges**

Governmental obligations for 2006–2008 for the policy of education and higher learning in the light of continuous and lifelong learning:

- To ensure wide accessibility of continuous learning supported by the State. To create better conditions for adult education; to make sure that no less than twenty five percent of adult educational centres should cooperate with partners in foreign countries.

- To implement the *Europass*, programmes of Lifelong learning, Erasmus Mundus and Tempus; to double international exchange of students and teachers.

In addition to the above mentioned, the plan of measures for implementation of the Governmental programme of 2006–2008 provides for a number of specific measures related to adult education: plans involve initiating a model of rendering services of non-formal adult education in educational institutions of municipalities so that non-formal education could be widely accessible; making attempts to renovate the buildings and environment of institutions of adult education, and to supply centres with modern means of learning.

Through 2006 the Ministry of Education and Science have continued the implementation of the Strategy of Lifelong Learning. Based on growing needs of the society for learning, a variety of forms and methods of education have been developed; initiatives for informal adult education have received support; quality of education has been enhanced by developing social partnership.

To implement the decision No. 1720/2006/EC of the European Parliament and Council of November 15, 2006 on adopting the Lifelong learning programme, and to achieve effective implementation of the programme, the support coordination funds of the programmes ES Socrates II and Leonardo da Vinci II in Lithuania have been reorganized into Education exchange support funds from January 2, 2007. The Governmental programme of 2006-2008 provides for ensuring the work of the agency, administrating this programme, and for supporting the activities of the programme.

## **1.3. Main policy measures**

### **1.3.1. The main policy measures in the strategy of Lifelong learning and how they correlate**

Vocational training and adult education remaining on the priority list of education in Lithuania, continuous attention has been attached to the measures provided for in the Implementation Programme of the Provisions of the State Education Strategy for 2003-2012 in five main priority directions: management, infrastructure, education contents, and personnel improvement.

### **1.3.2. Concise definition of the measures designed to address progress towards the EU benchmarks, including any national targets in these areas**

In 2006 in the sphere of **Preschool education** which is seen as effective means of preventing failure in learning and self-expression, *Programme of the Development of Preschool and Pre-primary Education for 2007-2012* (see 3.2.1.) was adopted. The contents of education in the sphere of **General education** have been altered: *Strategy of Formation, Implementation, Evaluation, and*

*Renewal of the Contents of General Education for 2006–2012*<sup>2</sup> (see 3.2.2.) has been adopted. In the sphere of **Vocational training** a unified system, ensuring quality primary and continuous vocational training, is in progress: decentralising the network of institutions of vocational training; improving training programmes (establishing standards of vocational training); working out a plan of outside evaluation of the studies; defining the plan of the implementation of the strategy of Vocational guidance; establishing the Vocational Guidance Council and approving of the law on Vocational Education and Training<sup>3</sup> (see 2.2; 3.1.1; 3.1.5; 3.1.6.). The sphere of **Higher education** has received an approved plan of the development of the system of higher education for 2006-2012, and the plan of means of the implementation of its first stage for 2006-2007 (see 3.1.1.). The procedure of granting, administering and paying back State loans for students has been altered. A two-stage model of scientific practice of students has been developed. Standard contracts of studies and scientific training abroad as well as standard conditions for returning means spent from the State budget have been finalized (see 3.1.3).

### **1.3.3. Allocation of resources to main policy measures, including any national targets for more efficient use of funds and the use of EU funds to support lifelong learning (e.g. Structural Funds, European Investment Bank)**

In 2004-2006 means from European Union structural funds were assigned to support the development of Lifelong learning conditions. Before December 31, 2006 the Ministry of Education and Science signed agreements with the executors of the Project for all the means, assigned to the Ministry of Education and Science by SPD 2.4 and SPD 1.5 measures, which would have to be used by the end of 2008. From 2004 till 2006 192 agreements were signed by the SPD 2.4 measure, total value of which constitutes 214 million LTL. To receive financial support for the development of education and vocational training alone, 48 agreements for the total value of 140 million LTL were signed according to 1.5 measure in the period from 2004 to 2006.

### **1.3.4. Measures to change social attitudes to learning**

Measures to alter the problems of learning motivations of students: approval of new *Concept of Youth Schools*<sup>4</sup> and the plan of its implementation. Constant attention has been concentrated on the problem of the amount and intensity of learning. Three researches were made from 2003 to 2006 for the Ministry of Education and Science. Based on the results of this research, in 2006 a *Plan of Measures for Reducing Learning Intensity for 2006-2008*<sup>5</sup> was finalized. Implementation of measures for attracting back to school underage drop-outs is in progress (see 3.2.4).

In 2006 the seventh Week of Adult Education was organized by the Ministry of Education and Science, Lithuanian Association of Adult Education, and Lithuanian Centre of Adult Education and Information. The idea of these events is to promote traditions of lifelong education in our country, to encourage early drop-outs from school to continue learning. A variety of campaigns to spread information in the society are being organised at the initiative of the Ministry of Education and Science and the Centre of Adult Education and Information, when advertisements are being broadcast on National TV, and posters, pamphlets and flyers are being handed out. Two other campaigns were organized in 2006: an informational campaign with the motto “There is always time to improve, do not stay – move”; and a campaign for promoting universal computer literacy

### **1.3.5. Strengthening evidence-based policy making with the implementation of the culture of evaluation, in attempt to promote to innovations in education and training**

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<sup>2</sup> Resolution No. 1.9-13-M1-7 of the Board of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania of November 23, 2006.

<sup>3</sup> Law No. X-1065 of April 3, 2007 (Žin., 1997, Nr. 98-2478; 2007, Nr. 43-1627)

<sup>4</sup> Decree No.ISAK-2549 of Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania of December 12, 2005 (Žin., No.7-263)

<sup>5</sup> Decree No.ISAK-2224 of Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania of November 24, 2006

An Education Management Information System (ŠVIS) has been developed to perform education monitoring, which helps collect and process data by the list of the State Education monitoring indicators. A number of international researches were carried out in 2006 to conduct education monitoring: principle PISA research; principle PIRLS. In 2007 a pilot TIMSS research is in progress. Preparatory stages of TALIS and ICCES researches have been completed; data have been collected for SITES research. Information and data for monitoring is provided by international as well as local researches of student achievements (see 3.1.6.), and the research of the state of education. In the period from 2001 to 2006 at the request of the Commission, 66 studies were carried out and in 2007 – 4 studies concerning the state of education were carried out. The national research of student achievements provides data on the achievements of 4, 6, 8, and 10 grade students to the providers of the national educational contents, for the analysis of educational policy, to the education management information system and to the internal and external audit of schools.

The culture of self-assessment and assessment is being instilled on all levels of education (see 3.1.6.; 3.4.1.). In 2005 the Ministry of Science and Education established the National School Assessment Agency with the main function of assessing the quality of performance of schools of General education. The quality of vocational education and training is assessed by the Methodological Centre of Vocational Education and Training. The National Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education is responsible for quality assessment of studies in higher schools.

### **1.3.6. Measures to satisfy the needs of disadvantaged people (e.g. immigrants, ethnic minorities, the disabled)**

In 2006, a draft concept of measures for teaching the Lithuanian language and social and cultural background aimed at foreign born children in Lithuania and methodical recommendations for those who wish to study by distance learning were developed. To create conditions for quality and accessible education of the children with special needs at schools of general education, the Measure Plan for the Development of the Integration of the Children with Special Needs was adopted in 2006. To differentiate aid provided to the children with special needs, the Methodological Recommendations on Methods of Calculating the “Pupil’s Basket” for The Children With Special Needs in General Classes of Schools of General Education were approved in 2007.

In 2006 the Law on Social Aid for Pupils of the Republic of Lithuania was adopted, and the Procedure of Providing Financial Aid for Students with Special Needs in Schools of Higher Education was initiated. As of 2007 the Lithuanian Science and Studies Foundation will start granting loans according to the new version of the Procedure Inventory of Granting, Administering and Returning of State Loans to Students of Higher Education. The Procedure Inventory of Granting Allowances and Settling the Means for Foreign Born Lithuanian Students of Lithuanian Schools of Higher Education has been drafted (see 3.1.3.).

## **1.4. Development, implementation and dissemination of the strategy**

### **1.4.1. Coordination and consultation mechanisms involving all relevant stakeholders**

In 2003 a working group formed by the President of Lithuania adopted strategic provisions for the development of the Lithuanian education (Education guidelines). In the process of drafting these provisions an attempt was made to achieve consensus between politicians and the society and find possibilities for further public discussions to be held on the ways of implementing the vision of education. Various groups of stakeholders participated in the debates of this document. In the same year the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania adopted the 2003-2012 Provisions of the State Education Strategy. To develop the said provisions, representatives of various stakeholder groups have also been involved. In 2005 the Government of the Republic of Lithuania approved the *Implementation Programme of the Provisions of the 2003-2012 State Education Strategy*. Six

advisory councils operate at the Ministry of Education and Science. Part of them was composed by selecting experts in respective fields, others were based on the principle of representation. These councils conduct public debates on the documents dedicated to the Implementation Programme of the Provisions of the 2003-2012 State Education Strategy. The Education Council formed in 2004 of representatives from different stakeholders, discussed the Draft Implementation Programme of the Provisions of the 2003-2012 State Education Strategy, and in 2007 the Council discussed the results of the mid-term review. This allowed attracting various interested public groups in the evaluation of the results of mid-term review of the implementation of the aforementioned strategy. In 2007 the Ministry of Education and Science presented the results of the analysis carried out in 2005-2007 called “Public Consultations on the Implementation of the 2003-2012 State Education Strategy”. An inventory of procedures of communication and public consultations of the Ministry of Education and Science was drawn up. In 2007 a cooperation agreement between the Ministry of Education and Science, the Department of Statistics under the Government of the Republic of Lithuania, the Lithuanian Labour Market, the Lithuanian Labour Market Training Authority under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour, the Centre of Information Technologies of Education, and a joint-stock company “Sintagma” was signed for the creation and development of *Open system for information, consultation and guidance* (AIKOS).

#### **1.4.2. Implementation procedures including awareness raising and dissemination**

The measures for accomplishing the *Implementation Programme of the Provisions of the 2003-2012 State Education Strategy* adopted in 2005 by the Government of the Republic of Lithuania include five priority directions. The direction of management improvement provides for the implementation of the principles of quality management that create conditions for the transition to even distribution of responsibility and accountability based on rational and transparent planning and distribution of financial resources; the direction of infrastructure improvement involves the rationalisation of the educational service network; the direction of support improvement provides for the development of the single criteria system of individual aid; the direction of content improvement provides for enhancement of the conformity of the contents of learning and studies to the demand of the labour market of the knowledge society, and to improve universal education of social, informational, communicational and other general skills as well as to customize education according to the needs and skills of each individual; the direction of personnel improvement involves the reorganization of teacher training and qualification improvement. To ensure implementation of the Lifelong learning strategy, the *Strategy for Ensuring Lifelong Learning and Implementation Action Plan* was adopted in 2004 which provides for action targets and implementation terms for enhancing influence of vocational education and training and continuous education, and learning accessibility, as well as for promoting development of infrastructure, coordinating and financing lifelong learning.

Public Liaison Office of the Ministry of Education and Science issues press releases and articles for National and Regional mass media. Answers to questions on educational policy can be found on a website ([info@smm.lt](mailto:info@smm.lt)) based on the single contact principle; twice a week News radio station and National radio station broadcast coverage on education. Publication of the “Analysis of Education Problems” meant for politicians, education managers, teachers, and the general public has been initiated. Informational periodical about adult education (“Suaugusiųjų švietimas“) started circulating. The Ministry of Education and Science in cooperation with the Association of Heads of Lithuanian Centres of Adult Education and the Centre of Education Studies at the University of Vytautas Magnus has published a book on adult education „Suaugusiųjų švietimo praktika“. The Ministry of Education and Science adopted *the 2007 plan of informing about the support of structural funds by SPD 2.4 and SPD 2.5 measures and the rendered support*.

## CHAPTER 2: IMPLEMENTATION OF TRANSVERSAL OBJECTIVES OF THE POLICY

### 2.1. The establishment of national qualification systems and frameworks (in line with the European Qualifications Framework), and the elimination of obstacles between levels and systems

*The National Lisbon strategy implementation programme*<sup>6</sup> provides for developing in 2005-2008 a single and transparent national qualification system, as well as for training specialists of the system, responsible for creation and recognition of qualifications, and employees of enterprises, involved in educational activities. In 2005 the Lithuanian Council of Labour Market Training at the Ministry of Social Security and Labour embarked on a project of national significance, financed from the European Union's European Social Fund, "Creation of the National Qualifications System"<sup>7</sup>. The partner of the project is Methodological Centre for Vocational Education and Training at the Ministry of Education and Science. The goal of the project is to create a single transparent qualifications system, comprising all qualification levels; ensuring transition among levels; guaranteeing a variety of ways for achieving qualification; and giving possibility for more flexible response to the requirements of changing environment. With the implementation of the project a model of national qualification system will be created; codes of competences and qualification structures in given sectors of industries will be formed, and human resources will be found for installation of the national qualifications system.

The National Qualifications System is legalized in the *Law on Vocational Education and Training* which states that the qualifications system comprises creating and managing of qualifications; assessing acquired competence of an individual and granting appropriate qualifications.

Main provisions of the qualifications system: each qualification is based on competence; competence requirements for attaining qualification are defined by professional standard; qualifications are managed following the National Qualifications Framework established by the Government; qualification is granted to a person who has attained competences, stated by the corresponding standard (the assessment of achieved competences is organized by a competence assessment institution following the competence evaluation procedure established by the Minister of Social Security and Labour and approved by the Minister of Education and Science): qualification is granted by the Qualification Council on the basis of the result of competence assessment.

The "*Lithuanian Concept of Qualifications Draft Framework*"<sup>8</sup> provides for the harmonization of national qualifications framework with the European qualifications framework. The definition of the levels of qualifications in the Lithuanian qualifications framework is based on comparing the European qualifications framework with current levels of Lithuanian vocational education. In this process of defining professional qualifications it is essential that qualifications, achieved in Lithuania, are not reduced in the respect of the European qualifications framework.

Qualification levels are listed in hierarchy comprising the entire range of qualifications from the qualifications, attained in high schools, institutions of vocational education and training, and labour market training to the qualifications of higher education. Qualifications levels comprise those, achieved by non-formal and informal education, and by using other opportunities of lifelong learning.

Accomplishments of 2006 of the implementation of the project "Creation of the National Qualifications Framework": formation of the concept of national qualifications system; compilation of a study "Analysis of Current Qualifications Situation in Lithuania" based on researches; initiation of qualifications registry in the process of creating the model of national qualification system; completion of preparations to creation of "Methodology on National

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<sup>6</sup> Resolution No. 1270 of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania of November 22, 2005 (Žin., 2005, No. 139-5019).

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.lnks.lt>

<sup>8</sup> [http://www.lnks.lt/index.php?option=com\\_remository&Itemid=22&func=fileinfo&filecatid=7&parent=category](http://www.lnks.lt/index.php?option=com_remository&Itemid=22&func=fileinfo&filecatid=7&parent=category)

Professional Standards”; initiation of the analysis of the results of professional activities in the construction and hotel/restaurant sectors; initiation of information management system of the data base to process the results of professional activity analysis; and search for human resources for the implementation of the national qualifications system.

In 2007–2013 the implementation of the national qualifications system will be carried on, especially in the preparation of qualifications frameworks and formation of qualification structures for other sectors of industry. The *Draft Action Programme of the Development of Human Resources of 2007–2013*<sup>9</sup> states that by 2008 the model of the national qualifications system will be completed and its implementation started; competence frameworks will be compiled and qualifications structures for two industrial sectors will be formed; the standard system for vocational education and training will be completed and 100 standards of vocational education and training will be formed; a single model of ensuring quality of the sector of vocational education and training and the quality standard will be finalized and implemented; other provisions for the functioning of the system of internal and external quality guarantee will be prepared. Vocational education and training standards will be gradually renewed and replaced with new standards; hundreds of programmes will be adjusted to the new standards, while tens of new programmes will be created. Ensuring the functioning of the national qualifications system, skills of administering institutions, administration and experts will be properly invested in the system.

To remove obstacles among different levels of education system a decree was passed in 2006 on the *Inventory of the Procedures of Involving the Module of Vocational Education and Training Programme into the General Education Programme, and Including it in the Continuation of Education by the Programme of Vocational Education and Training*<sup>10</sup>, the goal of which is to draw together two educational tendencies: academic and vocational education; to form provisions for partial acquisition of skills, necessary for attaining professional qualification, in schools of general education. Students, having completed the programme of general education with the integrated module of the vocational education and training programme of their choice, will further study in a vocational school by the corresponding vocational education programme.

Starting with 2007 bachelor qualification degree will be granted to individuals, who have completed consecutive non-university programmes in schools of higher education. Currently, possibilities for college graduates to continue master studies in universities without having to complete the university bachelor programme are being discussed.

## **2.2. Identification and validation on non-formal and informal learning**

The process of developing the system and methods of recognition of informal and non-formal learning is accelerating in Lithuania. The National qualifications system (for more details see 2.1) will comprise the assessment, acknowledgement, and improved credit system of the competences, acquired by non-formal, informal, and self-education. This will help eliminate obstacles for those who wish for lifelong learning; create conditions to better understand personal achievements, and opportunities to continue improving or changing qualifications. The present situation, when only qualifications achieved through formal education are recognized and those achieved in the process of professional activities or through self-education are not recognized and credited, will be changed. In the framework of the project of European social fund “Creation of the National Qualifications System” the “Project (Concept) of the Inventory of the National Qualifications System” has been worked out, one of the main principle of which is the assessment of individual professional competence regardless of the way by which it has been attained.

The new edition of the Law on Vocational Education and Training provides for a new procedure of recognizing individual competences attained in the process of non-formal vocational

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<sup>9</sup>[http://www.lrv.lt/ES\\_parama/Istekliu\\_pletr\\_programa.pdf](http://www.lrv.lt/ES_parama/Istekliu_pletr_programa.pdf)

<sup>10</sup> Decree Nr. ISAK-2474 of Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania of December 29, 2006 (Žin., 2007, Nr. 3-133).

education and training as part of the formal vocational education and training system, or its corresponding level.

To improve recognition of competences, the project of “Creation and Development of the System of Vocational Education and Training Knowledge and Competence Assessment” (supported by the EUF) is in progress, the main objective of which being the creation of a centralized external system of vocational education and training final qualification examinations, using the network of the Lithuanian Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Crafts and the Lithuanian Chamber of Agriculture.

Projects, financed by the EU structural funds and carried out by Lithuanian universities should be mentioned separately.

The Mykolas Romeris University is executing a project “Assessment and Recognition of Non-formal and Informal Education in the University Studies” with an attempt to expand the sector of university studies and create a system of recognizing knowledge, achieved through non-formal and informal education in university studies. The project of the Vytautas Magnus University the “Competence Centre: Preparation for the Process of Assessment and Recognition of Competences Achieved Through Non-formal and Informal Education by Creating the Assessment Centre for Non-formal and Informal Competences in the University ” is targeted towards the enhancement of openness and flexibility of this university in the context of lifelong learning.

### **2.3. Policy and systems for widely accessible lifelong vocational education and consultation**

In 2007 the “Standard of Vocational Information”<sup>11</sup>, was adopted which is the principle document regulating the services of vocational information and their contents, defining main principles, and qualification and ethic requirements for informing counsellors. The Standard defines spheres of vocational information activities, functions and competences of vocational counsellors, which, taking the needs of target groups into consideration, are the basis for organising and implementing vocational information training and improving programmes; establishing the assessment criteria for learning achievements of vocational information counsellors; acknowledging the acquired competences of vocational information; planning vocational information demands and assuring the quality of vocational information services. The Standard provides for the development of vocational guidance system in the National and European qualifications framework, taking into account the objectives of the European Union documents.

In 2005 the Ministry of Education and Science initiated projects of national importance, supported by the structural funds of the European Union which are currently in progress: “Creation and Implementation of the Vocational Guidance System”, and “Creation and Development of the Open Information, Counselling and Guidance System” (AIKOS). The Centre of Quality Assessment in Higher Education is implementing a project of the “Creation and Development of the Data Base for the Assessment of Scientific and Educational Institutions Activities and Foreign Qualifications”<sup>12</sup>, which is partly supported by the European Union. At present the main target of the project is to create a data base, which would help young people find information on the quality of studies and the qualifications achieved, which is important in choosing training services and studies, corresponding to skills and expectations of each individual.

In December 21, 2006 the Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania and the Minister of Social Security and Labour of the Republic of Lithuania signed a decree on the establishment of the Vocational Guidance Council and approved of its provisions.

### **2.4. Measures to reinforce transnational mobility in all sectors, including removal of administrative and legal obstacles in implementing the Europass, or by providing financial or other type of support.**

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<sup>11</sup>Decree No ISAK- 362 of Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania of March 13, 2007 (Žin., 2007, Nr. 32-1169).

<sup>12</sup>[http://www.skvc.lt/content.asp?id=119&pth=projektai/esf24085#F\\_top](http://www.skvc.lt/content.asp?id=119&pth=projektai/esf24085#F_top)

In the process of implementation of *Europass* before 2007 an internet webpage [www.europass.lt](http://www.europass.lt) in Lithuanian and English was designed. *Database of mobility* was created. The *Europass* mobility is so far owned by 1100 participants of international education programmes. The webpage [www.europass.lt](http://www.europass.lt) contains a link to AIKOS database where one can access and print the *Europass* certificate supplement for all formal vocational education and training schools. Completed publications: *Europass* CV, *Europass* Language passport, *Europass* mobility, and *Europass* certificate supplement, which contain information on the issuance of each document and its sample.

In cooperation with *Euroguidance* Lithuania training seminars on vocational informing for local vocational counsellors have been organized, as well as for the counsellors of Lithuanian Labour Exchange Youth Labour Centres; counsellors of territorial labour exchange training and counselling centres; for other practitioners of vocational information and counselling. Employment agencies, such as CV Market and CV.lt, also cooperate in this field: visitors of the websites of these agencies alongside their original CV's will have possibilities to fill out the *Europass* CV form and print it out. Cooperation with the Eures website is in progress.

Individual studies or scientific training abroad in the framework of academic exchange programmes coordinated by the Department of Higher Education of the Ministry of Education and Science are provided with scholarships for studies abroad as well as possible financing of travel costs, insurance, lodging, and other. Students, willing to leave for studies on contracts or exchange programmes, can receive financial credit from the State. Definite procedure of financing higher education abroad and the quotas of exchange students, teachers, and scientists are determined by international contracts and agreements. Each year the Government assigns approximately 12 million. Lt from the Budget for the participation of Lithuanian schools of higher education in the EU programmes of higher education.

In 2005 the Government of the Republic of Lithuania passed a resolution on the "*Provisions of Qualification Assessments and Academic Recognition for the Qualifications, Achieved abroad, and giving Right to Higher Education*"<sup>13</sup>. According to those Provisions the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education has been appointed as the institution executing the assessment of foreign qualifications which give right to higher education, and higher education qualifications, as well as a member of the European network of National information centres of academic mobility and recognition (ENIC). The Ministry of Education and Science will implement academic recognition of qualifications, achieved in foreign countries. The functions of the National Academic Recognition Information Centre (NARIC) have been prescribed to the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education.

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<sup>13</sup>Resolution No. 60 of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania of January 21, 2005 (Žin., 2005, Nr. 12-369).

## **CHAPTER 3: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE POLICY OBJECTIVES IN SCHOOLS, HIGHER EDUCATION, VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING, AND ADULT EDUCATION**

### **3.1. Elements to be reported on for all levels (schools, higher education, vocational education and training, adult learning)**

#### **3.1.1. Governance and administration of education and training institutions (e.g. organisational and administrative reforms, autonomy and accountability measures, public/private initiatives)**

**Schools.** In 2006 the Minister of Education and Science approved of the „*Programme of Improving the Structure of Schools*“<sup>14</sup> with the main objective of enhancing independence, openness and democratic management of the school. After completing its implementation, functions and authorizations of higher levels of management will be tackled. The *Time of Leaders Project* will be dedicated to instil the principle of subsidiarity as a condition for autonomy, decentralized initiative, and civil responsibilities.

**Higher education.** In 2006 the *Plan of the Higher Education System Development for 2006-2010*<sup>15</sup> was approved, which provides for the improvement of the higher education system management on the state, and scientific and higher education institution level, and the target of which is to create a harmonized acting system of higher education, based on responsible management. Through the first stage of the plan (2006-2007), possibilities to reorganize schools from budget institutions into public institutions will be analyzed and assessed, as well as the possibilities to enhance responsibility and accountability to the society of schools of higher education, so that the majority of state university councils would be constituted of social partners. Currently a variety of proposals on higher education system and the model of internal management of institutions are being discussed.

**Vocational education and training.** The *General Plan of Reorganization of the Network of State Vocational Schools for 2005-2012*, adopted in 2005, provides for the main objective of the reorganization, i.e. to optimize the network of state vocational schools, and to decentralize its management. The process of school management decentralization attempts to transfer the duties of founders or share-holders onto county administrations, municipalities, enterprises, institutions, and organizations.

From 2000 through 2007 67 vocational schools were united; the Ministry of Education and Science together with municipalities became founders of 3 schools; 13 schools were reorganized into public vocational education institutions. The Ministry of Education and Science, county administrations, municipalities, enterprises, organisations representing employers, the Chamber of Trade, Industry, and Crafts and the Chamber of Agriculture, among other organisations, participate in the management of those public institutions on the rights of share-holders.

In the beginning of 2007 there were 75 vocational schools in the country, 13 of which were public institutions.

Through the implementation of the 2005 PHARE programme “Preparation for the Optimal Vocational Education and Training Infrastructure Development”, a number of proposals were forwarded on investing into infrastructure of vocational education institutions and colleges, aiming at enhancing the correspondence of vocational education services to the demand of industry, and

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<sup>14</sup> Decree No.ISAK-2301 of Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania of December 5, 2006 (Žin., 2006, Nr. 135-5109).

<sup>15</sup> Resolution No.335 of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania of April 5, 2006 (Žin., 2006, Nr. 39-1394).

reducing the differences in territorial accessibility of vocational education and training. In 2006 the project “Preparation for the Programme of Sectional Practical Training Centres Development, and Other Related Documents” was initiated to improve practical vocational education and training, and to properly get ready for the implementation of the 2007-2013 programmes of European structural Funds: “Human Resource Development”, and “Cohesion Development Action Programme”.

**Adult learning.** A number of centres and councils operate at the Ministry of Education and Science: Lithuanian Adult Learning and Information Centre; Methodological Centre for Vocational Education and Training, Teacher Professional Development Centre, Teacher Competence Centre, Non-formal Adult Education Council, Vocational Education and Training Council; the University of Vytautas Magnus has the Centre for Vocational Education and Research; the Ministry of Social Security and Labour has founded the Lithuanian Labour Market Training Authority; the Ministry of Agriculture has established Farmers Education Methodological Centre and the „Leader“ programme.

In the end of 2005 in the framework of structural reorganisation of the Ministry, the Adult Education Division was transformed in the Continuing Education Division, with the targets of developing state education policy in the sphere of lifetime learning and adult continuing education; and coordinating the implementation of the Lifelong learning ensuring strategy. In 2004 the State Language Division of the Teacher Professional Development Centre was reorganized into Adult Education Division. In 2005 after Lithuanian Distance Education Centre within the Ministry of Education and Science was reformed, Lithuanian Adult Education and Information Centre started to operate.

### **3.1.2. Stimulating private investments from enterprises, households and individuals**

**Vocational education and training.** On April 3, 2007 the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania adopted the *Draft Law on the Amendments to Article 21 of the Law on Personal Income Tax*<sup>16</sup>, the main target of which is to encourage individuals to take care of their qualifications. The Draft Law stipulates that any person who completed a vocational training programme on his/her own means will be partly reimbursed.

**Adult education** (see Articles 2.2, 2.3.)<sup>17</sup>.

### **3.1.3. Widening access, and improving equity of participation, treatment and outcomes, especially for disadvantaged learners (e.g. migrants, ethnic minorities, the disabled)**

**Schools.** Within the implementation of education plan for migrating families, a Draft Concept of measures of Lithuanian language training and social and cultural education for foreign children in Lithuania and Lithuanian children abroad was developed in 2006. In the framework of the implementation of the *Strategy of Lithuanian Language Training in Schools of General Education*<sup>18</sup> a set of measures was developed: a draft programme of Lithuanian language distance learning, and recommendations to foreign Lithuanians, who wish to learn by correspondence; a draft of recommendations how to teach children of non-Lithuanian background the Lithuanian language.

To differentiate the aid provided for children with special needs, Methodological Recommendations on the Methodology of Calculating the „Pupil’s Basket“ for the Pupils with Special Needs in General Classes of General Schools<sup>19</sup> were developed in 2007. Starting with January, 2007 the special need pupil’s basket by 33 percent exceeds the pupil’s basket without

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<sup>16</sup> Law No. X-1067 of April 3, 2007 (Žin., 2007, No. 43-1629)

<sup>17</sup> Modernization of Education and Training System. – Vilnius., 2005. – p. 17–18.

<sup>18</sup> Strategy of Lithuanian Language Learning in General Education Schools for 2004–2009 . Vilnius. Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania, 2003.

<sup>19</sup> Decree No.ISAK-615 of Minister of Education and Science of March 31, 2006.

special needs. To create favourable conditions for accessible quality education of children with special needs in schools of general education, in 2006 a Plan of Development Measures for Integration of Pupils with Special Needs<sup>20</sup> was adopted, while in 2007 the Inventory of the Procedures of Adjusting Implementation and Assessment Instructions of Assessing Basic Education Achievements, Language Credit, and the Assignment Form of Maturity Examination of a Subject for the Pupils with Special Needs, Former Pupils, and Extern Students<sup>21</sup> was compiled.

In 2006 the *Law on Pupils Social Aid of the Republic of Lithuania* was adopted which legitimized social aid for the children of school age from low-income families: free meals for pupils and free school supplies.

For the implementation of the strategy a number of documents on ethnic minority children education were adopted: the *Development Strategy of the Polish National Minority Education*<sup>22</sup> in 2005; the *Inventory of Recommendations of National Minority Language Education in General Education Schools*<sup>23</sup> in 2006. In 2005 the *Programme of National Minority Integration in the Lithuanian Society 2005-2010*<sup>24</sup> was adopted and currently is in progress.

**Higher Education.** The Implementation Programme of the Provisions of the State Education Strategy for 2003–2012<sup>25</sup> provides for the increase of evening and distance studies up to 40 percent in 2007, and up to 45 percent by 2012. In 2005 half of the college students and 40 percent of the university students were involved in evening or distance studies.

Starting with 2007 the Lithuanian State Education and University Studies fund will grant financial loans in accordance with the *Inventory of Procedures of State Loan Granting, Administering and Returning for Higher School Students*<sup>26</sup>. This will increase flexibility of means and will better ensure their realisation.

From 2006 the *Procedure of Rendering Means of Financial Aid to the Disabled Students of Higher Education Institutions*<sup>27</sup> has been in progress, according to which a monthly targeted allowance, an equivalent of 50 percent of a basic state social security pension, has been assigned to students with special needs; a targeted allowance equal to 3,2 minimum living standards, approved of by the Government of the Republic of Lithuania, has been assigned to reimburse part of the expenses of the studies in schools of higher education, partly financed by the state or not financed studies, for each semester.

The *Inventory of Procedures of Payment and Accountability for the Assigned Means to the Foreigners of Lithuanian Origin, Studying in Lithuanian Schools of Higher Education*<sup>28</sup> was developed to assist foreign Lithuanians wishing to study in Lithuania, according to which social benefits and study allowances to foreigners of Lithuanian origin are paid. To organize aid for emigrant children the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania on July 18, 2006 amended Article 47 of the Law on Higher Education, the provision of which states that “to help encourage children of emigrants and economical emigrants to return to Motherland, the Ministry of Education and Science can offer favourable conditions for entering schools of higher education”.

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<sup>20</sup> Resolution No. 1.9-13-M1-6 of the Board of the Ministry of Education and Science of Republic of Lithuania of June 22, 2006.

<sup>21</sup> Decree No.ISAK-189 of Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania of February 7, 2007 (Žin., 2007, No.19-741).

<sup>22</sup> Decree No.ISAK-814 of Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania of May 10, 2005 (Žin., 2005, No.63-2252).

<sup>23</sup> Decree No.ISAK-1630 of Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania of August 1, 2006 (Žin., 2006, No. 87-3420).

<sup>24</sup> Resolution No.703 of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania of June 8, 2004 (Žin., 2004, No. 93-3403).

<sup>25</sup> Resolution No.82 of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania of January 24, 2005 (Žin., 2005, No. 12-391).

<sup>26</sup> Resolution No.942 of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania of September 25, 2006 (Žin., 2006, Nr. 104-3977).

<sup>27</sup> Resolution No.831 of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania of August 29, 2006 (Žin., 2006, No. 93-3655).

<sup>28</sup> Decree No.ISAK-376 of Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania of March 3, 2006 (Žin., 2006, No. 30-1055).

**Vocational Education and Training.** Vocational rehabilitation services to individuals with special needs are offered in accordance to the *Law on the Social Integration of Disabled*<sup>29</sup>.

*The Law on Vocational Education and Training of the Republic of Lithuania* provides for the possibility of individuals with special needs to follow vocational education programmes and attain qualification. Individuals who have completed special education programmes can join other students in the framework of vocational training programmes, tailored to their needs.

Pupils with special needs, who want to acquire a profession, have favourable opportunities to study in vocational education and training schools. From 2005 to 2006 disabled people were offered the choice of 28 primary vocational training programmes.

*The Law on Vocational Education and Training of the Republic of Lithuania* provides for the conditions, approved by the Government or its authorised institutions, for individuals with personal freedom restriction or deprivation to learn in places of correction or imprisonment. The vocational education and training of such individuals is coordinated with social integration measures.

**Adult education.** In distributing the support of European Union structural funds main emphasis is laid on the projects, targeted at the accessibility of learning, by removing existing obstacles for adult individuals to acquire professions, demanded for on the labour market, and to improve qualification level, as well as by encouraging education institutions to develop different programmes for risk groups. Financial assistance is assigned to the projects, directed towards the following risk groups: sentenced adults and sentenced underage individuals; older women; mentally or physically disabled; former convicts; and drug addicts.

Yearly competitions of non-formal adult education projects are targeted at meeting a variety of needs of local community adult education.

Legal documents have been compiled in Lithuania pertaining to the integration of socially vulnerable groups of population into the society: *the 2004-2007 Social Adaptation Programme for Convicts and Individuals, Released from Imprisonment; the 2004-2006 National Action Plan of Fighting Poverty and Marginalisation; National Strategy of Overcoming Ageing Consequences; the 2003-2012 National Programme of Social Integration of the Disabled*<sup>30</sup>; *the Social Integration Procedure of Foreigners with Granted Asylum; the 2004-2006 Social Service Infrastructure Development Programme*<sup>31</sup>.

Since 2005 Lithuanian Labour Market Training Service in association with the Lithuanian Prison Fellowship and a number of correction houses have been developing the project “Fostering Social and Vocational Skills of the Convicts in the Process of Their Integration in the Labour Market”. The Prison Department is implementing the following convict education related projects: “*The Chosen Ones*”; “*Preparation of Convicts for Independent Life by Strengthening Motivation to Integrate into the Society and Labour Market*”.

In 2006 the Statistics Department held a “*Statistical Survey of Adult Education*” and in 2007 published the preliminary results.

### **3.1.4. Measures to address gender aspects in education and training**

**Schools, higher education and vocational education and training.** As of January 1, 2005 the *Law on Equal Treatment*<sup>32</sup> has come to power, the objective of which is to abolish any discrimination arising from gender, race, disability or other social and cultural differences; to enhance equal treatment in education, science and participation in labour market.

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<sup>29</sup> Law No.I-2044 of November 28, 1991 (Žin., 1991, No.36-969; 2004, No. 83-2983)

<sup>30</sup> Resolution No.850 of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania of June 7, 2002 (Žin., 2002, No. 57-2335).

<sup>31</sup> Decree No.A1-335 of Minister of Social Security and Labour of December 18.

<sup>32</sup> Law No IX-1826 of November 18, 2003 (Žin., 2003, No. 114-5115).

The *2005-2009 State Programme of Equal Opportunities for Women and Men*<sup>33</sup> was developed to ensure equal opportunities for men and women. In the framework of the *Measure Plan of the 2005-2009 State Programme of Equal Opportunities for Women and Men*<sup>34</sup> in 2007 the Ministry of Education and Science is planning to include issues on gender equality into the programmes of formal and non-formal education; to organize qualification training courses for teachers and social teachers; to compile educational materials for teachers and social teachers; to develop the “Women and Science” strategy.

**Adult education.** The “*EQUAL HIGHWAY: Development Community Klaipėda - Vilnius*” project, implemented by the EQUAL programme, helps women who have lost contacts with the labour market, reintegrate into active life. Women and long-term unemployed individuals are supported by the “Individual Professional Career Planning Profile.”

In the framework of the Socrates Grundtvig 2 project „Guidance, Motivation and Education of Young Women”, individual consultations are offered to young mothers from ages 16 to 25.

### **3.1.5. The implementation of learning outcome based approaches in defining and developing education and training objectives, standards and curricula, and their relevance to the needs of the society and the economy**

**Schools.** The principles of education contents management have been systemized in the *2006-2012 Strategy of Education Contents Formation, Implementation, Assessment, and Renewal*<sup>35</sup>. The provision of the strategy is that municipalities on the state level make resolutions on the coordination of the state level education contents with the demands of local communities; the responsibility of schools is to adapt the education contents to the needs of pupils and school communities; and of teachers to decide on adjusting them to the needs of classes and individual pupils. The strategy does not suggest decentralizing general education contents; it just defines more precisely the principle of their interpretation and adaptation, and the rights of education providers to do so.

**Higher education.** The *2006-2010 Development Plan of the Lithuanian Higher Education System*<sup>36</sup> provides for coordination of the Lithuanian higher education qualification system with the qualification framework, comprising European higher education space (for more details refer to 2.1).

**Vocational education and training.** Vocational education and training quality is enhanced through developing vocational education standards, which include qualifications, needed for a profession, which correspond to the labour market. The Methodological Centre for Vocational Education and Training organizes development of vocational education and training standards. Vocational education and training standards are the guidelines for developing vocational education and training programmes, and assessing achievements of pupils and students. National project of European Social fund the “Development of National Vocational Education and Training System of Standards” is in progress.

Expert groups of branches of industry ensure the correspondence between the standard and labour market demands. In equal parts (three in each) they represent social partners participating in vocational education and training: employers, trade unions, and educational institutions. Expert groups of 14 branches of industry have been founded at the Methodological Centre for Vocational

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<sup>33</sup> Resolution No.1042 of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania of September 26, 2005 (Žin., 2005, No. 116-4202).

<sup>34</sup> Resolution No.337 of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania of March 30, 2005 (Žin., 2005, No. 44-1412).

<sup>35</sup> Resolution No. 1.9-13-M1-7 of the Board of Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania of November 23, 2006.

<sup>36</sup> Resolution No.1.9-13-M1-7 of the Board of Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania of November 23, 2006.

Education and Training. Finalized standards are obligatory to all related vocational education and study programmes, and are used for developing those programmes and assessing achievements of pupils and students.

**Adult education.** Adult education monitoring is performed by the Ministry of Education and Science through the researches on the state of education. From 2004 through 2006 the following researches were performed: *“The Development of Continuous Education Opportunities in the Context of Lifelong Learning Strategy Implementation”*; *Adult Education Demands in Villages and Towns with the Population up to 30 000*; *“The State of Non-formal Adult Education and the Attitude of the Population and Employers Towards Non-formal Adult Education”*; *“The State of Adult Education Organising in Municipalities”*; *“Non-formal Adult Education Development in Lithuania: Analysis of Financing Alternatives”*.

### 3.1.6. Quality assurance systems

**Schools.** Preschool education quality is ensured by *internal* auditing. In 2005 the *“Methodological Recommendations for Audit of Preschool Education Schools”*<sup>37</sup> were adopted.

The quality of general education schools is ensured by *internal* and *external* auditing. Internal audit was initialized in 2002. Starting with 2004 obligatory auditing of all general education schools was introduced. In 2007 the new *Methodology of Internal Audit of General Education Schools*<sup>38</sup> was published.

In 2005 the National School Assessment Agency was founded by the Ministry of Education and Science, with the responsibility of assessing the quality of general education schools activities (external audit). In 2007 the *Inventory of Procedures of the Internal Audit of the Quality of General Education Schools Activities*<sup>39</sup> was compiled.

In the process of implementing the *School Improvement Programme* education monitoring system has been developed by the *Procedure Inventory*<sup>40</sup> and the *Listing of Indices*<sup>41</sup> of the State Education Monitoring, approved in 2005. To perform education monitoring the *Information System of Education Management* (ŠVIS) has been developed with the main principle of targeted and effective data collecting for substantiating management decisions. This system has been used since 2006 to collect and provide data according to the *Listing of the State Education Monitoring Indices*. Information for monitoring is also provided by international and national researches of pupil achievements and the state of education.

**Higher education.** In 2004 the institutional college activity assessment was initiated, the implementation of which is being regulated by the following legal acts: *the Law on Higher Education of the Republic of Lithuania*<sup>42</sup>; *Inventory of the Assessment Procedure of College Activities*<sup>43</sup>; *the Methodology of External Assessment of College Activity*<sup>44</sup>; *the Summaries of College Activity Self-analysis by Methodological Recommendations*.

Since 2006 students have been included in expert groups, formed by the Centre of Quality Assessment in Higher Education, which evaluate higher education programmes. Student

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<sup>37</sup> Methodology of Internal Audit for Preschool Education Schools. (2005). Vilnius: ŠAC.

<sup>38</sup> Methodology of Internal Audit for General Education Schools. (2007). Part 4. Vilnius: National School Assessment Agency.

<sup>39</sup> Decree No.ISAK-587 of Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania of April 2, 2007 (Žin., 2007, No. 41-1550).

<sup>40</sup> Decree No.ISAK-2240 of Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania of November 10, 2005 (Žin., 2005, No. 141-5082).

<sup>41</sup> Decree No.ISAK-2692 of Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania of December 30, 2005 (Žin., 2006, No. 3-80).

<sup>42</sup> Law No.VIII-1586 of March 21, 2000 (Žin., 2000, No. 27-715).

<sup>43</sup> Decree No.ISAK-2013 of Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania of October 20, 2006 (Žin., 2006, No. 116-4419).

<sup>44</sup> Decree No.1-193 of Director of Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education of November 2, 2006 ([http://www.skvc.lt/files/metodika\\_instituc\\_vertin/metodika\\_ekspertams.doc](http://www.skvc.lt/files/metodika_instituc_vertin/metodika_ekspertams.doc))

participation in quality ensuring processes is formalized in the *Provisions of the Expert Council for the Quality of Studies and its Committees*.

**Vocational Education and Training.** The preparation of vocational education and training programmes is delegated to the providers of vocational education and training. A newly developed programme has to be coordinated with a competent, employer representing institution. At present a national project of the European Social fund “*Development and Implementation of a Single System for Quality Assurance in Vocational Education and Training*” is in progress, which will create a single quality assurance system for both primary and continuous vocational education and training, encouraging constant quality improvement in vocational education and training, which will comprise self-analysis and external assessment components.

**Adult education.** One of the major quality assuring instruments implemented by the State is the audit (assessment, self-assessment) of education centres and schools. The outcome of auditing serves as grounds for the development of a three year school strategy plan. For an external audit independent experts can be summoned.

First time in 2006 the Department of Statistics completed a research on general adult education: formal, informal and non-formal, and published information on the state of adult education in the country.

### **3.1.7. Developing learning partnerships with stakeholders (policy-makers at national, regional and local levels, social partners, learners and representatives of civil society).**

**Schools.** In 2006 the Ministry of Education and Science extended the cooperation agreement with the public institution “Lithuanian Junior Achievement” (LJA), which contributes to the implementation of the economic literacy and entrepreneurship education strategy, taking account of the European Committee communiqué, dealing with teaching entrepreneurship in schools. The Ministry of Education and Science cooperates with a number of non-governmental organisations: *Lithuanian Association of Subject Teachers; Association of Lithuanian Municipalities (LSA); Lithuanian Association of Social teachers; Lithuanian Association of Adult Education; Lithuanian College of Democracy; Lithuanian Council of Youth Organisations; Lithuanian Schoolchildren Union; National Union of Student Representations in Lithuania; non-profit organisation the House of Europe*, and others.

**Higher education.** According to the *Law on Higher Education of the Republic of Lithuania* schools of higher education in Lithuania have autonomy, and because of that the initiation of agreements with other concerned parts is left to their initiative. Usually this process is performed through higher education school councils, which are formed, based on article 24 of the above mentioned law, “of three parts: one third of the council members is appointed by the Senate (Academic Council) in the established order; another third of council members (not school employees), representing fields of science, culture, arts, industry, local municipality or governmental institutions, is appointed by the minister; the remaining third of council members is appointed by joint decision of the rector (college director) and the minister.

**Vocational education and training.** The Ministry of Social security and Labour of the Republic of Lithuania has founded the Lithuanian Labour Market Training Authority which participates in forming vocational education and training policy, corresponding to the demands of the labour market; contributes to the human resources development programmes; in active cooperation with social partners executes resolutions of state policy in the sphere of labour market vocational training, consulting and guidance.

To improve action coordination, to attract social partners for decision-making on topical labour market issues, the Council of Directors, Board, Publishing Committee, Expert Committee,

and Expert Council permanently operate at the Lithuanian Labour Market Training Authority, formed on the basis of tri-lateral partnership: representatives of trade unions, employers, and governmental institutions.

**Adult education.** The major non-governmental adult education organisation in the country is the Lithuanian Association of Adult Education (LSŠA), founded in 1992. The Ministry of Education and Science in 2004 signed an agreement on cooperation in the sphere of lifelong learning and continuous adult education.

To attract more social partners into the implementation process of the lifelong learning assurance strategy, the Ministry of Education and Science together with the Lithuanian Association of the Heads of Adult Education Centres in 2006 signed a cooperation agreement.

A number of non-governmental organisations, sponsors of non-formal non-vocational adult education, above all attempt to strengthen the civil, democratic society by ways of education. The Civil Society Institute has founded the so-called Civitas clubs around the country; Open Society Fund Lithuania sponsors a variety of educational events which target to strengthening democracy and community initiatives. Non-formal non-vocational adult education is also supported by the Baltic American Fund, the British Council, the French Cultural Centre, the Goethe Institute, and other organisations.

## **3.2. Schools**

### **3.2.1. Increasing investments in and strengthening of the preschool education**

In 2005 the “*Procedure Inventory of Assessing Child’s Maturity for Mastering Preschool and Primary Education Programmes*”<sup>45</sup> was approved, which determines cases of child’s maturity assessment, their procedures, and usage of assessment outcomes.

The following strategic documents for developing preschool education and enhancing investments into the field have been prepared: the *2007-2012 Draft Programme of Preschool and Primary Education Development* (currently in the process of coordination with other ministries). The objective of the programme is to enhance accessibility, quality and effectiveness of education services provided for preschool and pre-primary children, and their families, regarding social, cultural and economic factors. The *Implementation Measure of the 2006-2008 Programme of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania*<sup>46</sup> has been fulfilled, the purpose of which is establishing preschool and pre-primary groups with the priority of rural areas. In 2006 the *Draft Methodological Recommendations for the Application of the Principle of Pre-school Education Means Assigning to Single Child* was developed. The purpose of the recommendations is to unify calculations of pre-school education means by applying the principle of assigning pre-school education means to a single child; by encouraging municipalities to effectively consume pre-school education means, and to develop a rational network of pre-school education service providers.

### **3.2.2. Modernisation of school curricula and assessment arrangements (inter alia to address learning outcomes and the attainment of key competences**

*The 2006-2012 Strategy of Developing, Implementing, Assessing and Renewing General Education Contents* provides for the possibilities to base principle lifelong learning competences on the European Parliament and Council Recommendation, and to adapt education programmes to contemporary individual competences. Within the strategy, the education contents in the sphere of general education are being altered: *the Draft Standards of Preschool, Primary, Basic and*

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<sup>45</sup> Decree No. ISAK-2173 of Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania of October 29, 2005 (Žin., 2005, No. 131-4747).

<sup>46</sup> Resolution No.1020 of Government of the Republic of Lithuania of October 17, 2006 (Žin., 2006, No. 112-4273).

*Secondary Education Programmes and Education Levels* have been developed. The new education contents are targeted at educating the society of basic competences and knowledge. They are more adaptable to individual skills of a pupil, style of learning and expectations. The Ministry of education and Science currently implements nine projects in renewing education contents. To resolve issues of learning outcomes and acquisition of basic competences the following programmes have been approved and are now in progress: since 2006, the *2007-2011 National Youth Entrepreneurship Education Programme*; the *Obligatory Early Foreign Languages Learning Programme Since 2008*<sup>47</sup>, *Long-term Programme of Civil and National Education*.

### **3.2.3. Addressing the specific learning / training needs of teachers (including preschool) to enable them to adjust to their changing roles in the knowledge-based society**

To adjust the teacher training and qualification improvement system to the needs of education and the society in Lithuania, the following significant documents have been developed: *in 2006 the State Teacher Training and Qualification Improvement Reorganisation Programme*<sup>48</sup> was approved. To implement this programme, in 2007 the *Inventory of the Teacher Profession Competencies*<sup>49</sup> was compiled. Since 2006 the *Teacher Certification Draft Provisions* and the *Qualification Improvement for Teachers and Leaders Draft Provisions* have been developed, as well as the guidelines for *Teacher Vocational Training Standards*<sup>50</sup>. In 2006 the Rules of Evaluation of the Activities and Accreditation of the Institutions Responsible for the Qualification Improvement of Teachers and Educational Service Providers were adopted by which two institutions were accredited in the same year. The following projects of the Teacher Development Centre have been implemented: one of the priority goals of creating the network of the “Schools under Training” is to foster teacher improvement; the “Breakthrough in the Process of Applying Information and Communication Technologies in the Education of 7-8<sup>th</sup> Grades” encourages teachers to use information and communication technologies in subject teaching; in the process of developing the project “New Systems of Evaluating and Self-Evaluating Language Skills In the Instillation of the Portfolio of European Languages in the National School” the new methodology on how to use the Language Portfolio has been worked out and a group of teacher consultants has been formed.

With the help of the means from the European Structural Fund a number of projects are in progress: “Development of the Infrastructure of Education Centres” with the objective of renewing the infrastructure of 34 regional institutions of teacher qualification improvement; “Reorganisation of Teacher Qualification Improvement” targeted at initiating the process of reorganisation of the system of teacher qualification improvement with the attempt of ensuring high quality of regional teacher qualification improvement institutions, and guaranteeing equal opportunities for all Lithuanian teachers in acquiring new competences required by the new social and professional life. Structural changes in teacher qualification improvement system have created possibilities for the teachers to acquire qualification training close to their dwelling place; due to the changes the variety of qualification improvement programmes has been expanded which to a greater extent reflect the needs of regional teachers. The following 2 researches were carried out in 2006: the “Analysis of the Teacher Training Study Programmes” and the “Preparation of Teacher Training Institutions for Change”. Lithuania participates in the international comparative research on teachers “Teachers, Teaching and Learning” (TALIS) that is being carried out by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) at the request of the European Commission.

In 2006 700 thousand LTL were allocated for partial funding of teacher retraining. Other retraining studies have also been financed according to target programmes.

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<sup>47</sup> Decree No.ISAK-1519 of Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania of July 17, 2006 (Žin., 2006, No. 81-3214)

<sup>48</sup> Resolution No.468 of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania of May 25, 2006 (Žin., 2006, No. 60-2139).

<sup>49</sup> Decree No.ISAK-54 of Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania of January 15, 2007 (Žin., 2007, No. 12-511).

<sup>50</sup> Report on Teacher Training Standard Draft Guideline Research . (2006). Kaunas: Aušra.

### **3.2.4. Measures to reduce early school leaving, to increase the rates of completion of upper secondary education, to reduce low-literacy rates of 15 year olds, and to increase the take-up of mathematics, science and technology subjects (EU benchmarks).**

To ensure that various concerned institutions receive reliable information on pupils, the *Draft Registration Procedure of Children Residing on the Territory of the Municipality* and the *Draft Provisions of the Pupil Register* have been developed. To decrease the number of children not involved in obligatory education programmes, and to create the system of attracting children back to school, the *Guidelines for Bringing Children Back to School*<sup>51</sup> were adopted in 2005. Children and youth who have been unable to integrate into basic and secondary schools, and those lacking motivation, are given the chance to get back to consecutive system of education on the basis of the *Youth School Concept*<sup>52</sup>. The renewal of general programmes and education standards involve balancing the volume of contents and reducing the intensity of learning. The content of general programmes is being adapted to the differentiation and individualization of learning; the main focus is concentrated on educational results, and the relationship between educational contents and life. Three vocational orientation programmes have been developed for the drop-outs from general education schools. The project “Enhancement of the Possibilities for 14-19 Year Old Pupils to Choose the Direction of the Studies” (SPD 2.4 measure “Development of the Lifelong Learning Conditions”) has been in progress with the main objective of creating a mechanism that would prevent 14-19 year olds from dropping out of school, i.e. more possibilities will be offered at an earlier stage of learning for the children to choose the direction of the studies; more attractive conditions will become available for the pupils interested in practical activities; assistance will be offered to foster general skills that are required to successfully complete the general education programme and to continue learning. To enhance the interest of pupils in mathematics, natural sciences, and especially in technologies, the project of *Increasing Possibilities for 14-19 Year Olds to Choose the Profile of Studies* has been implemented since 2005. In 2006 the *Inventory of the Procedures of Involving the Module of Vocational Education and Training Programme into the General Education Programme, and Including it in the Continuation of Education by the Programme of Vocational Education and Training* was adopted (for more details see 2.1).

## **3.3. Higher education**

### **3.3.1. Measures to reinforce the knowledge triangle between education, research and innovation**

In 2006 the 2007-2013 High Technology Development Programme<sup>53</sup> was adopted with the target of helping develop the already existing high technology production tendencies in Lithuania, which are perspective in the world context and have scientific potential for producing competitive products for the world market. This programme is expected to encourage cooperation between science and industry and to bring effectiveness of their joint efforts.

In 2005 the Science Council of Lithuania and the Ministry of Education and Science of Lithuania initiated the *Student Scientific Practice Project*<sup>54</sup>, sponsored by the EU structural funds, the target of which is to encourage the academic youth of Lithuania to take interest in scientific research, to unfold professional and career perspectives of a scientist. In 2006 the majority of students underwent traineeship in the fields of physical, biomedical and humanitarian sciences, while in 2005 student of physics, biomedicine and technologies were most active.

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<sup>51</sup> Decree No.ISAK-2571 of Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania of December 14, 2005 (Žin., 2005, No. 149-5454).

<sup>52</sup> Decree No.ISAK-2549 of Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania of December 12, 2005 (Žin., 2006, No. 7-263).

<sup>53</sup> Resolution No.1048 of Government of the Republic of Lithuania of October 24, 2006 (Žin., 2006, No. 114-4356).

<sup>54</sup> Student Scientific Practice <http://www.smpraktika.lt>

### **3.3.2. Targets of the participation in higher education and measures to achieve those targets**

*The Implementation Programme of the Provisions of the State Education Strategy of 2003–2012* provides for attempts to reach the number of higher education 30-34 year old graduates to 50 percent in 2007, and to 60 percent in 2012. The number of high education graduates of this age group in 2005 was 37.8 percent. To achieve those objectives the Measure Plan of the Implementation of the First 2006-2007 Stage of the 2006-2010 Plan of the Development of the Higher Education System provides for the initiation and implementation of the Methodology of the Analysis of Specialist Demand, and the completion of trial research in the sphere of high technologies; the development and approval of the Research Methodology for the Consolidation of Graduates in the Labour Market; the creation of the national module of higher education qualifications corresponding to the network of European higher education qualifications and the Lithuanian system of qualifications; and the preparation of a study on the possibilities of improving financial aid to the students.

### **3.3.3. Measures to increase excellence**

The enhancement of higher education quality is ensured by performing external assessment of university study programmes and institutional college activities, and by giving recommendations to schools of higher education on how to improve excellence. The objective of the *2006-2008 Programme of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania*<sup>55</sup> is to have at least half of the higher education study programmes assessed by international experts. In 2005–2006 the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education organised 347 study programme assessments, 193 of which were evaluated by national expert groups, and 154 of them were assessed by international expert groups. During the same period the quality of 17 colleges (9 state colleges and 8 non-state colleges) was being institutionally assessed.

Improvement of higher education quality is related to passing new legal acts which regulate higher education development and implementation (e.g. regulations on high education tendencies).

In 2006 the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education signed three agreement on assignation of the EU Structural fund support for the following projects: “*Classification of Master Degree Studies*” (amendments in the methodology of higher education programme assessment; preparation of new methodology for master degree programmes; training of 40 master degree programme assessment experts); “*Development of Distance Higher Education Quality Assessment Methodology and the Procedure of Its Application*” (development of the methodology of distance higher education quality evaluation, methodological recommendations for organisers of self-analysis and learning material assessment experts); and “*Institutional Assessment of Science and High Education Institutions*” (developing institutional assessment methodology for science and higher education institutions, and the procedure of its application; training institutional assessment experts; initiating institutional evaluation of science and higher education institutions).

### **3.3.4. Measures to increase the number of graduates in mathematics, science and technology (EU benchmark)**

To ensure correlation between the society and institutions and organisations, involved in scientific research and experimentation, and to bring them close together, the *Strategy of Science and Technology Popularization in Lithuania*<sup>56</sup> was adopted. This programme is expected to help young people get interested in science and technologies, as well as to encourage the realisation of new possibilities and benefits.

The Government attempts to increase the number of graduates in exact and natural sciences and technologies by regulating student admission. The Government of the Republic of Lithuania on

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<sup>55</sup> Resolution No.X-767 of Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania of July 18, 2006 (Žin., 2006, No. 80-3143).

<sup>56</sup> Decree No.ISAK-797 of Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania of May 9, 2005 (Žin., 2005, No. 61-2170).

the basis of Section 4 of Article 47 of the *Law on Higher Education of the Republic of Lithuania*<sup>57</sup> has fixed the maximum general number of students for state higher education schools by higher education stages, forms, and the mode of financing.

### **3.4. Vocational education and training, and adult learning**

#### **3.4.1. Measures to improve the quality and attractiveness of vocational education and training, and of adult education**

**Vocational education and training.** To implement the *Vocational Education and Training Strategy* the “pupil’s basket” as of 2007 will include means for vocational guidance. To create optimal conditions for the vocational education and training that would correspond to the demands of the labour market the *Law on Vocational Education and Training of the Republic of Lithuania* has expanded the circle of social partners and strengthened their mandate in the formation of vocational education and training policies and in the participation of its management. The law defines primary vocational education and training. Individuals over 14 years with different skills and needs are offered opportunities to acquire primary qualification; the concept of the vocational training of the labour market has been expanded, and continuous education has been legalized. Individual competences acquired in the process of non-formal vocational education and training are recognised in the established order, as part of formal vocational education and training programme or corresponding level of qualification.

The *Europass Certificate supplement* has been introduced in Lithuania, which is a single document for all individuals who have acquired some respective profession, which interprets a diploma or a certificate, acquired through vocational education and training.

To foster practical skills in schools of vocational education and training business firms for practical training have been initiated. Currently in Lithuania such firms have been founded and operate at 15 schools of vocational education and training, two of which have acquired international EUROPEAN association quality certificates.

**Adult education.** At present the model of information base for non-formal adult education programmes has been initiated at the Lithuanian Centre for Adult Education and Information. In the framework of the project “Development of Adult Education Institutions Providing Modern Competences in the Regions” financed by the European Social fund, a website with methodological news of adult education will be created for andragogues, learning adults.

#### **3.4.2. What measures are planned for reinforcing the link between VET and the needs of labour market including early identification of skill needs and the relationship between the content of curriculum and qualifications?**

**Vocational education and training.** One of the main goals of the new version of the Law on Vocational Education and Training that was adopted on April 3, 2007 and that will come into power on January 1, 2008 provides for strengthening links between vocational education and training and the demands of the labour market. The law defines the concept of vocational education and training provider that includes vocational education and training establishments, free-lancer teachers and other providers of vocational education and training (general education schools, enterprises, organisations, and offices not directly involved in vocational education and training) that have the right in the legally established procedure to implement vocational education and training programmes.

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<sup>57</sup> Law No.VIII-1586 of March 21, 2000 (Žin., 2000, No. 27-715).

The law stipulates the structure of the vocational education and training system, vocational orientation is defined as a constituent part of vocational education and training; it also gives the definition of primary vocational education and training; provides the conditions for individual over 14 years to attain primary qualification and to complete general education, whereas children under 16 are given the possibility to join the basic education programme. The competences of the formal vocational education and training programme graduates will be assessed and qualifications granted in an established procedure. The law also enhances the concept of vocational training of the labour market, and legalizes continuous education that will include individuals with discharge notices and those wishing to retrain or improve their qualifications, as well as training of the unemployed. Individual competences acquired in the process of non-formal education will be recognized in an established order as part of formal vocational education programme or the corresponding level of qualification. This will help ensure the implementation of lifelong learning provisions.

The law stipulated the designation and structure of the qualification system; the compilation and management of qualifications; competence evaluation and conferring of qualifications. The competences required for achieving qualifications are determined by the vocational standards. This provision guarantees the conformity of qualifications to the needs of Lithuanian economy, because the competences necessary for achieving qualifications will be determined by the vocational standards that will be developed by sectional professional committees consisting of representatives from employer and employee organisations. Qualifications will be managed according to the National Qualification Network that is due to be approved of by the Government of the Republic of Lithuania by January 1, 2008. This will create necessary prerequisites for the Lithuanian qualifications to be recognized in the European Union and other countries, and will guarantee vocational and territorial mobility as well as the continuation of learning. Qualifications will be granted to individuals with the competences of the corresponding vocational standards, and the evaluation of the individually acquired competences will be organised by an institution performing competence evaluation. The legalisation of these provisions guarantees the objectiveness and reliability of the evaluation of individually achieved qualifications, ensures that qualifications are granted only to the individuals who are ready for professional practice, and separates learning from competence evaluation.

The law also stipulated the provisions related to organising vocational education and training and quality assurance. The procedure of arrangement and legalization of formal vocational education and training programmes is determined by the Minister of Education and Science in cooperation with the Minister of Social Security and Labour. This provision guarantees the conformity of vocational education and training to the labour market. A new form of organising vocational education and training – an apprenticeship – has been defined. This makes vocational education and training more flexible, attractive, and accessible to individuals of different needs and skills. The Ministry of Education and Science, the Ministry of Social Security and Labour, and Qualifications Council are responsible for the assurance of learning quality according to the authorizations in the sphere of vocational education and training, granted to those institutions by the aforementioned law. The law defines the documents of qualifications and learning achievements as well as the recognition of qualifications attained abroad.

The law divides the responsibilities between the two ministries: the Ministry of Education and Science is responsible for vocational education and training, whereas the Ministry of Social Security and Labour bears the responsibility for the qualification system.

**Adult education.** The Ministry of Social Security and Labour implements the project “*Development of the Possibilities of Integration into Labour Market*”, financed from the European Social fund, the target of which is to encourage unemployed individuals to take active part in the labour market, by creating possibilities to acquire qualifications, corresponding to the demands of the labour market; by training in the field of business, and by developing sponsored employment.

### 3.4.3. Opening opportunities to further and higher education than the already achieved

**Vocational education and training** The *Law on Education of the Republic of Lithuania*<sup>58</sup> legalises the possibility to recognise competences, acquired through non-formal and informal education. The development of the knowledge and competence (including non-formal) assessment system is provided for in the single programming document of 2004-2006. Since 2007 the vocational bachelor qualification degree has been provided to individuals, having completed programmes of consecutive non-university studies. (For more details see 2.1). In 2006 the *Inventory of the Procedures of Involving the Module of Vocational Education and Training Programme into the General Education Programme, and Including it in the Continuation of Education by the Programme of Vocational Education and Training* has been approved.

### 3.4.4. Defining the specific learning / teaching needs for vocational and adult teachers (instructors)

**Vocational education and training.** Qualification improvement for vocational teachers and continuous education are regulated by *The Law on Education of the Republic of Lithuania*, the *Law on Vocation Education and Training*, and the decrees of Minister of Education and Science.

**Adult education.** The Ministry of Education and Science in cooperation with the Lithuanian Association of Adult Education and the Teacher Professional Development Centre implements the project “*Development of the Possibilities for Adult Education: Portfolio of Andragogue Literature*”, financed from the EU structural funds.

In 2006 the Lithuanian Centre for Adult Education and Information in association with the University of Vytautas Magnus and the Ministry of Education and Science initiated the project „*Development of Adult Education Institutions Providing Modern Competences in the Regions*”, financed from the EU structural funds.

The Lithuanian Association of Adult Education implements the project, sponsored by the EU structural funds, „*Creation and Implementation of the Model of Continuous Improvement of Andragogue Practitioner Qualification*“.

### 3.4.5. What measures reinforce the involvement of social partners in training, and bring a particular sector close to the necessary skills and qualifications

**Vocational education and training.** The Law on Vocational Education and Training provides for the national qualification system to be based on the cooperation among social partners, the state and education institutions. Qualification is based on competences. The competence requirements for attaining qualification are determined by the vocational standard. Qualifications are managed by the Qualifications Council on the basis of the National Qualification Network approved by the Government. The Central Vocational Committee, including representatives from governmental and municipal institutions and social partners, has been formed to coordinate strategic issues of the formation of the qualification system, while sectional vocational committees bear the responsibility of creating vocational standards.

The Law also defines broad authorisations of social partners in other spheres of the organization and management of vocational education and training. Those authorisations include the participation of social partners in the vocational education and training policy making; initiation of new qualifications, vocational standards, and vocational education and training programmes as well as participation in compiling their contents; assessing vocational education and training

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<sup>58</sup> Law No.I-1489 of June 25, 1991, (Žin., 1991, No. 23-593; 2003, No. 63-2853).

programmes according to their conformity to the requirements of the economy; planning the admission of students to vocational education and training programmes financed by the state; performing vocational orientation; assessing the achieved competences of an individual; performing external assessment of the management and teaching activities of vocational education and training institutions. *The Law on the Amendment to the Law on Vocational Education and Training of the Republic of Lithuania* provides for the national qualification system to be based on cooperation among social partners, the state, and educational institutions. To coordinate the strategic issues of quality system formation the central vocational committee, comprising municipality institutions and social partners, has been founded; while to develop vocational standards, sectional vocational committees have been established.

**Adult education.** Social partners are involved in improving the final qualification testing system, and in drafting corresponding legal acts. In 2005 the *Draft General Requirements for Final Qualification Examination Assignments* was developed in cooperation with the Association of the Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Crafts.

#### **3.4.6. What measures are resorted to in enhancing the accessibility and opportunities for learning among the disadvantaged, including the early school drop-outs.**

Vocational information and consulting services, that have been rendered in Lithuania since April, 2005, is based on the *Inventory of the Requirements for Providing Vocational Information and Consulting*<sup>59</sup>. Vocational information and consulting services are offered to those individuals, who have not yet started a professional career; working and unemployed individuals, as well as the employers.

In 2005 the *Procedure Inventory for Granting Scholarships and Financial Support to Pupils, Involved in the Primary Vocational Training Programmes, and to Non-University Students*<sup>60</sup> was approved, which provides for scholarships to students of vocational education and training programmes, based on their academic credits, in the amount of 0.27-0.76 of minimum living standard which is 115 LTL.

#### **3.4.7. What measures increase the rate of adult participation in lifelong learning, and reinforce key competences among adult learners and older people regardless of their employment (EU benchmark).**

The development of distance learning contributes to the enhancement of accessibility to the labour market vocational education and training. The project “Distance Learning Development and Its Integration into Traditional Learning in the System of Labour Market Education” has been initiated to enhance the accessibility of the services offered by the Lithuanian labour market education system to the representatives of different social groups; to create proper conditions to lifelong learning; as well as to improve vocational teacher qualifications and the quality of training courses, provided by those teachers.

The Lithuanian Labour Market Training Authority participates in the project “*Second Chance*” in order to remove obstacles for individual without basic education to integrate into the labour market.

A particularly important sphere is the integration of young people into the labour market, and vocational orientation of general education school children. With the means of the European Social fund project “*Vocational Orientation System Development and Implementation*”, the vocational orientation programme (non-formal education programme) has been developed for 14-29 year old individuals, drop-outs from the education system, and those without basic education.

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<sup>59</sup> Decree No.ISAK-739/A1-116 of Minister of Education and Science and Minister of Social Security and Labour of the Republic of Lithuania of April 29, 2005 (Žin., 2005 05 12, No. 60-2132).

<sup>60</sup> Resolution No.876 of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania of August 10, 2005 (Žin., 2005, No. 98-3708).