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Lithuanian Labour Exchange

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Author: *Lithuanian Labour Exchange*

In collaboration with GHK Limited and the Budapest Institute.

1. MAIN CHALLENGES IN RELATION TO THE LABOUR MARKET

1.1. What is the labour market situation of older workers?

After the beginning of the financial crisis in 2007-2009, in Lithuania there was an increase in the number of unemployed persons over 50 years of age. Based on data from the Lithuanian Labour Exchange, in 2007, 39 600 unemployed people over 50 years of age were registered at local labour exchange offices; in 2008 – 50 000; in 2009 – 71 900. In 2010, the number of unemployed people over 50 years of age was 56 200, a decrease of one fifth; in 2011 the number was 48 000 another 15 % less. In 2011, the labour exchange specialists helped 35 000 jobseekers over 50 years of age to find jobs (17.3 % of the total employed), 13 600 individuals over 50 years of age participated in Active Labour Market Policies (ALMPs) (25.4 % of total participants). Data on older workers by sex, age group and duration of unemployment can be found in the table below. At the end of 2011, local labour exchange offices in the country registered 227 100 unemployed, out of these 111 000 were female.

Age group	Registered older unemployed at the end of 2011			Registered older long-term unemployed (<i>had an unemployment span of 12 months or longer</i>) at the end of 2011		
	50-54	55-59	60-64	50-54	55-59	60-64
Total (thousand)	34.8 (15.3 %)	26.9 (11.8 %)	4.8 (2.1 %)	16.7 (17.9 %)	13.1 (14.0 %)	2.3 (2.5 %)
Male (thousand)	18.2 (16.6 %)	14.2 (13.0 %)	x	9.2 (19.3 %)	7.1 (14.8 %)	x
Female (thousand)	16.6 (14.1 %)	12.7 (10.8 %)	4.8 (4.0 %)	7.5 (16.4 %)	6 (13.1 %)	2.3 (5.1 %)

According to the data of the Department of Statistics (Statistics Lithuania), in 2011, unemployment among the 55 to under 64-years olds was 13.2 %; after a decade, in 2011 – 13.5 %. The unemployment rate decreased over a decade from 15.1 % to 10.8 %; the opposite situation was in rural territories – there was an increase from 9.4 % in 2001, up to 20.5 % in 2011. Male unemployment over a decade decreased from 16.7 % to 15.9 % and female unemployment increased from 8.6 % up to 11.2 %. In 2001, the male employment level formed 49.4 % and was 18.5 percentage points higher than the female employment level. In 2011, the male unemployment level was 54.5 %, female – 47.4 %.

1.2. What are the main challenges facing PES in working with older workers and which groups among older workers are the most difficult to support?

In Lithuania, like in other European countries, in recent years (and considered in the future) the main demographic trends include population decline and the aging process. Changes in the structure of the Lithuanian population are considered as highly dynamic. In the junction of the 19th – 20th centuries, just 1 of 10 (in 1897, 9.3 %) inhabitants was over 60 years of age, in the junction of the 20th – 21st centuries already one of five (in 2001, 19.3 %, in the beginning of 2006 – 20.4 %) was over 60 years of age.

The pessimistic prognosis of the United Nations in 2004 ('World Population Prospects: The 2004 Revision Population Database', 2004) stated that the Lithuanian population would decrease to 2.56 million people in 2050 (according to the data of Statistics Lithuania, in the beginning of 2011, there were 3.2 million people in Lithuania). Those processes are due to the natural population change and the increased migration. According to prognosis of Statistics Lithuania, in 2050, every third (34.6 %) citizen of Lithuania will be of senior age.

Because of the financial crisis, the competitive advantage of elder people is much diminished. In 2011, persons over 50 years of age formed 18.6 % of total registered unemployed, among employed the same age group formed 16 %. In 2007, persons over 50 years of age formed 22.4 % of all employed. Individuals without professional qualifications were at risk of long-term unemployment trap. About 41 % of unemployed over 50 years of age did not have a professional qualification.

Ultimately, finding suitable job opportunities, job-to-job mobility and employer attitudes are among the main challenges facing the PES in working with older workers. The unskilled, long-term unemployed are the most challenging groups of elder unemployed. Also, it is difficult to adapt employees who have been given redundancy notes to the requirements of employers, especially if they are unskilled.

The Lithuanian PES works only with unemployed people, services for working older people are not offered, unless they register in labour exchanges as seeking a job (without unemployed status).

2. SERVICES FOR OLDER WORKERS: OVERALL STRATEGY AND APPROACH

2.1. What is the main strategic approach of the PES in dealing with the issue of demographic change and unemployment among older workers?

The mission of the PES (the Lithuanian Labour Exchange) is to help employers avail themselves of the necessary labour force, to align labour supply and demand and to

seek to maintain balance in the labour market. The Lithuanian Labour Exchange aims to ensure the provision of high quality, easily accessible services for employers, to enhance recruitment activities directed at the alignment of labour supply and demand, and to support employers seeking suitable employees at local labour exchange offices.

The strategic objectives are to develop the labour market in the served area in order to improve the supply – demand balance at a local level, to create new forms of co-operation based on an effective partnership approach, to increase the number of registered vacancies filled, and to ensure the availability and quality of services.

According to the Law on Support for Employment, the persons additionally supported in the labour market include: disabled people with a different percentage of capacity for work; persons who have completed vocational rehabilitation programmes; persons taking up their first employment according to the acquired speciality or occupation; the long-term unemployed; **persons over 50 years of age who are capable of work**; young people under 29 years of age and others.

The main services of the PES are the provision of information which helps jobseekers to find a job or acquire professional knowledge; counselling which contributes to increasing the motivation of jobseekers; employment intermediation which helps jobseekers to find a suitable job and the employers – to find suitable employees; and planning of individual activities with a view of supporting for employment.

PES clients, depending on their labour market needs and ability to absorb the information, are informed and consulted individually or in groups. Although there are no strategies for specific target groups, counsellors are trained to identify and respond to people's individual interests and therefore the client gets full and accurate information about the current situation in labour market, job vacancies, and advice for job-search procedures, etc.

2.2. Are there specific counsellors for older workers and/or specific employer counsellors to deal with the challenge of demographic change, and if so, what training do they receive?

Services for older clients are of a general order. In 2012, a specialist for persons of retirement age was assigned in each department. But there are no specific counsellors for people over 50 years of age. There is no specialised training so far either.

2.3. What types of special measures does the PES offer to (unemployed and employed) older workers and how effective are they?

Type of measure	Offered ? (yes/no)	Brief operational description of measure	Year introduced	Year abolished	Effectiveness of measure (scale: 1 = not very effective, 5 = very effective)	Reasons for effectiveness or ineffectiveness
Legal regulations e.g. exemption from activation	no					
Benefits e.g. longer duration	yes	Unemployment insurance benefits are available for persons who prior to the registration at the local labour exchange office have had a length of service of no less than 18 months over the past 36 months (for persons with an unemployment insurance record of less than 25 years; with a record of more than 25 years, the duration of receiving benefits can be longer). This measure is for all persons who have been registered in labour exchanges and have been granted unemployed status.	1991		?	Open question. The employment duration of older workers is longer than the total, therefore is it fair that there is also a longer duration for receiving unemployment benefits. But there are no formal surveys on the topic.
Subsidies e.g. wage subsidies, social contribution subsidies	yes	Employers receive a 50 % subsidy to partly compensate salary up to 6 months, but may not exceed 2 minimum monthly wages approved by the Government. There is no universal obligation for employers to employ the person after the subsidy ends, but	1991		4	In 2011, monitoring of ALMPs for older workers indicates that 6 months after their participation in a subsidised employment measure is brought to the end, the share of

		afterwards if a job is available, employers could be at risk of not receiving further subsidies; this decision is made on a case by case basis. This measure is for all persons who have been registered in labour exchanges and are additionally supported in the labour market.				employment of all participants is 70 %.
Other activities or measures e.g. training or coaching of placed older unemployed, upskilling of older employees, other preventative actions	yes	Persons over 50 years of age who are capable of work qualify for additional support in the labour market in Lithuania. See Section 4.1. This measure is for all persons who have been registered in labour exchanges and are additionally supported in the labour market.	1991		?	It is especially hard to talk about effectiveness over a long time period.

3. PREVENTATIVE PES SERVICES AND MEASURES FOR OLDER WORKERS

3.1. Based on your experience (ideally backed up by performance measurement), what works best in relation to preventative measures?

3.1.1. What is the PES' role and which measures have been taken to raise awareness of the importance of recruiting/retaining older workers? What has been the impact of such measures?

The topic of older workers' employment is discussed in the Tripartite Council. According to the Law on Support for Employment, institutions shall implement the active labour market policy in consultation with social partners. Social partners represent their interests by participating in the activities of the Tripartite Council of the Republic of Lithuania. The Tripartite Councils are active in all the institutions implementing active labour market policy, namely, the Lithuania labour Exchange and its 10 local labour exchanges. They make proposals on the setting of the priorities of the institutions, consider the expediency of preparing active labour market policy programmes, discuss the implementation of employment support measures and provision of labour market services, and give advice on increasing operational efficiency.

To sum up, the topic is very important, but to tell the truth, recently more attention was given to other groups of persons additionally supported in the labour market (e.g. youth).

3.1.2. Does the PES provide HR counselling to employers in relation to the demographic challenges facing them? If so, what is the nature of this service; is this provided in-house or externally; if in-house, is it provided by specialist counsellors? Which types of employers have been the target of such services and what has been the result?

Counselling to employers is provided in general order. There are specific departments to work with employers in labour exchanges, but there are no specialist counsellors to work only on the subject of older workers.

3.1.3. What specific measures are available to help retain older workers and enhance their HR potential (e.g. in work training)? What has been the take-up of such measures and their results on the long-term sustainability of older workers' employment?

The only official proposed measure for enhancing the HR potential is vocational training. Of course clients can go to different events organised in labour exchanges and youth job centres (subjects of events: situation in the labour market, career planning, basics of entrepreneurship, active job search, CV and resume preparation, preparation for job interview, CV Europass, EURES, etc.).

The vocational training is not financed for persons of retirement age. These people are only provided with information and counselling services: and usually for persons over 50 years of age, the vocational training is suggested only after they are given redundancy notes. Before that, they can receive information about job vacancies and retraining opportunities.

3.1.4. Are there specific measures to support the retention of older workers in restructuring situations? What types of services are offered and how successful have these been?

When a notice about planned layoffs is received, the specialists of local labour exchange office prepare a targeted preventive program for mitigating the consequences of group layoffs. Usually a mobile labour exchange goes to the enterprise and provides information, counselling and the planning of individual activities services. To prevent the disconnection from the labour market individuals participate in ALMPs. Individuals also are employed in job vacancies or begin operating their own business by obtaining a business license.

3.1.5. Which partnerships with external organisations are in place and have proved to be effective and why?

Partnerships. This year, the Lithuanian Labour Exchange signed a cooperation agreement with the Lithuanian Association of the Elderly. The aim is to help older workers to maintain their jobs, to allow them to use labour exchange information technologies, consulting services and the labour market measures. In conjunction with the Association, there are plans to prepare proposals for the public administration on the normative documents regulating the employment, in order to create favourable conditions for elderly people to solve their unemployment problems and to organise joint workshops and conferences on older people's unemployment reduction issues. There are no other forms of partnerships with external organisations.

3.2. What do you see as the main challenges in relation to delivering preventative services for older workers, including the specific PES services offered, as well as aspects of the broader policy framework?

Psychological stress occurs in society after delaying the retirement age. In Lithuania a pension is granted when a person meets the following conditions: is a permanent resident of the Republic of Lithuania; reaches the statutory retirement age; and has a minimum of 15 years social pension insurance record. Currently, old men retire at 62.5 years of age and women – at 60. In 2012, a decision was determined to increase the retirement age by annually adding four months to the female term and two months to male term. This way the term of 65 years could be reached for both sexes in 2026.

Delaying the retirement age is a necessary tool to help address the financial sustainability of the pension system in the long-term. The deterioration of the demographic situation enforces such measures being taken, because the growing gap between the number of social security contributors and beneficiaries does not allow enough contributions to the social security budget. The economic effect of delaying the retirement age will result in collecting more taxes from people working longer and in saving costs after delaying the payment of pensions.

According to the data of Statistics Lithuania, in Lithuania the further average expected life duration of people aged 65 was 13.38 years for males and 18.25 years for females in 2009. According to the EUROSTAT demographic prognoses in 2008, the average expected life duration is going to increase in 2020. It would reach 14.9 years for males and 19 years for females. In 2050, the expected duration would reach 19 years for males and 22.6 years for females.

The number of working-age people (aged 15-64 years) will decrease from 69 % to 53 % and the number of older citizens (aged over 65 years) will increase more than two times from 16 % up to 35 %. This means that the ratio of the current working-age population and people aged over 65 years of age would be reduced from 4.4 to 1.5. The highest ratio decline is expected in 2015-2027, when the persons of the so-called demographic 'explosion' generation will gain the right to a pension and the low birth rate generation will come to the labour market. The increasing costs of pensions would crush the smaller working-age population, and this would result in lower pensions for recipients.

Pensions for working pensioners were reduced twice in Lithuania. This trend formed a negative image on people's expectations and therefore incentives for pensioners to work decreased. People of retirement age tend to sign only fixed-term contracts; there is a lack of part-time employment opportunities.

Due to economic difficulties the legislature has reduced old-age pensions since January 2010. However, since 1 January 2012, they were returned to their level of 2009. Allowances for working pensioners were reduced from 2.5 to 70 %.

The Constitutional Court (CC) announced that the Government did not break the law with the temporary reduction of retirement pensions, but admitted that the reduction of pensions for working pensioners was against the law. The CC decision stated that

it damaged the possibility for each person to freely choose a job or business, which is provided by the Basic Law.

The CC noted that in special cases when there is no possibility to accumulate as much money as needed to pay pensions, retirement pensions can be reduced, but doing so cannot discriminate against one particular group of people. Reduced pensions may be paid on a temporary basis, providing the compensation mechanism.

Pension restoration to pre-crisis level will affect about 447 000 old age pensioners.

In 2002, the CC already identified that the Law which was passed in 2000, consolidating the idea that working pensioners receive only part of their accrued pension, was unconstitutional. Citizens who worked during 1995-2000, received only a part of their old age or disability pensions because of the mentioned Law. The state still owes working pensioners about 78 million euros. The compensation will be provided in 2012.

4. PES SERVICES AND MEASURES FOR UNEMPLOYED OLDER WORKERS

4.1. Based on your experience (ideally backed up by performance measurement), what works best in relation to measures and services for unemployed older workers?

4.1.1. In the context of the overall approach of PES services for unemployed older workers (individualised or targeted), what specific supports are available to this target group that have proved successful regarding outcomes?

Although there are no services for specific target groups, counsellors are trained to identify and respond to people's individual interests and therefore the client gets full and accurate information about the current situation in labour market, job vacancies, and advice for job-search procedures, etc.

4.1.2. Are any Active Labour Market Policies (ALMP) measures specifically targeted at unemployed older workers and which ALMPs have proved most effective for older workers and why (key factors affecting their success/failure)?

Participation in ALMPs. Persons over 50 years of age who are capable of work qualify for additional support in the labour market in Lithuania. Active labour market support measures include vocational training, supported employment, subsidised employment, support for the acquisition of professional skills (orientated to youth), public works, support for job creation, job rotation, subsidies for job creation,

implementation of projects of local initiatives for employment, support for self-employment, and employment support programmes. These measures are linked to the individual integration obstacles – everyone who experiences difficulties in the labour market can take part in them.

In 2011, the monitoring of ALMPs for older workers indicates that 6 months after the measures are brought to the end, the share of employment of all participants is as follows: 70 % are employed after participation in subsidised employment, 47 % after vocational training, 20 % after public jobs.

Participation in ALM's (persons over 50 years of age)	2010 (thousand)	2011 (thousand)
Total sent to ALMs	12.7	13.6
Vocational training	0.5	0.6
Subsidised placement	3.5	2.8
Supported obtainment of working skills	0.4	0.15
Job rotation	0.05	0.06
Public works	8.1	10.3
Activity by business certificate	7	NA

Promotion of entrepreneurship. According to the Law on Support for Employment, unemployed persons may receive the subsidy to partially compensate the acquisition costs of a business license and social insurance payments. The grant amount for each month cannot exceed 0.25 minimum wage. The subsidy may be granted for a period of 12 months. Registration in the labour exchange will be terminated, if an unemployed person obtains a business licence valid for more than six months. This scheme is available for all unemployed regardless of age.

4.1.3. What are the best ways of encouraging employers to offer employment opportunities to older workers? And what is the relation of services to financial incentives/subsidies?

Database 'Senior Bank'. To encourage older people to actively participate and remain in the labour market, the 'Senior Bank' program was implemented. In 2007, the Lithuanian PES created the database 'Senior Bank', which was intended to collect and provide information on employees who want to work in retirement. On the PES website (<http://www.ldb.lt>) jobseekers of retirement age can directly register as 'Senior Bank' participants. Labour exchange specialists also help to fill

in the 'Senior Bank' entry form and provide advice on all aspects of labour market issues. Employers have direct access to the database.

Within five years, about 3 000 pensioners were registered in the 'Senior Bank'. The average registration time in the 'Senior Bank' is about six months. During 2007-2011, labour exchange specialists assisted into employment a quarter of the 'Senior Bank' participants.

4.1.4. Which partnerships are in place and have proved to be effective with external organisations and why?

There are no partnerships in place.

4.2. What do you see as the main challenges in relation to delivering services and measures for unemployed older workers, including the specific PES services offered, as well as aspects of the broader policy framework?

The increasing need for highly qualified professionals, lifelong learning and vocational training. In Lithuania, the need for highly qualified professionals is well understood. This is understandable not only because of Europe 2020 targets – at least 40 % of 30-34-year-olds completing third level education: or because the data of the European Commission research, which states that in 2020, 35 % of new job vacancies will require high and 50 % – medium-skilled qualification. In 2008, a strategy of ensuring lifelong learning was adopted in Lithuania. The strategy provides and defines the development of lifelong learning policies and measures with an emphasis on vocational training and continuing adult education. One of the activities of the Lithuanian Labour Exchange is adult education – organisation of vocational training.

In 2012, the system of vocational training in Lithuania has changed. From now on, the labour exchange organises vocational training based on the tripartite training and employment contract. The agreement is made between the local labour exchange, an employer who employs an employee, and the unemployed person who will be employed. The employer has the right to accept or reject the person's chosen training provider; to have an access to a description of the training program; to review the implementation of training; and to organise practical training by himself after the tripartite agreement is made between the provider of vocational training and unemployed person. The employer agrees to employ the unemployed person for at least 12 months. The unemployed person agrees to work in a job position for at least six months.

Computer literacy knowledge is fundamental in the modern world. For eight years, the Lithuanian Labour Exchange, in collaboration with the Association 'Window to the Future', has been expanding the number of adult Internet users, including unemployed people, for whom the acquisition of new skills increases

employment opportunities. It is expected that unemployed people, who gained new skills in the use of electronic services in free computer literacy courses, will rapidly integrate into the labour market. Implementing a two-year European Social Fund project 'Lithuanian e. citizen – on-line services' the Association 'Window to the Future' called the most vulnerable groups to learn computer literacy and access to electronic services: job seekers, rural residents and people with disabilities. More than 16 000 residents of Lithuania have learned computer literacy and access to government and e-business services; 2 600 of them were job seekers. The Association cooperated with the social partners in involving people in training including: the Lithuanian Labour Exchange, Lithuanian Association of Disabled Persons, and public libraries. This scheme is available for all unemployed people regardless of age.

5. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The effectiveness is evaluated by monitoring if the certified indicators are fulfilled. The Lithuanian labour exchange monitors the employment, how much time it took to employ, if the client remained employed, etc. In 2011, monitoring of ALMPs for older workers indicates that 6 months after the measures are brought to the end, the share of employment of all participants is as follows: 70 % are employed after participation in subsidised employment, 47 % after vocational training, and 20 % after public jobs. Because of the low effectiveness of vocational training, the system has been changed in 2012 (see 4.2).

In order to ensure the effectiveness of labour market programs and provided services, the Lithuanian Labour Exchange completes surveys on opinions of jobseekers and employers. In 2011, there were 15 000 customers, who took part in the service evaluation studies (more than 11 000 unemployed and nearly 4 000 thousand employers).

The unemployed indicated that labour exchange services are of good quality (79 % of respondents). There was less than 1 % who were unsatisfied with the services provided. Employers are also satisfied with the services offered and the range (there are less than 1 % of unsatisfied with the quality, 4 % do not have an opinion). Respondents rated highest: the information provided by the labour offices and mediation services. Respondents also appreciated the work centres/ information-counselling centre services, and the Lithuanian Labour Exchange website.

6 CONCLUSIONS

In summary, it can be concluded that in order to ensure the employment of older workers, it is important (not necessarily relating to PES activities):

- To establish assumptions and conditions to work for and earn a living for everyone who wants and can, despite of old age. To ensure that as a whole, in society and among employers, the image of the elderly would improve.
- To facilitate and encourage older workers to engage in active economic activities in regard to the changes of labour market requirements, improving existing qualifications or to retrain and learn new skills.
- To encourage employers to pay more attention and investment for the training and retraining of older workers.
- Society must be better acquainted with the benefits of elderly people's inclusion in the labour market. This requires media campaigns, as well as targeted incentives to employers, local communities and other members of society. Government in conjunction with municipalities and non-governmental organisations should promote dialogue at the community level and strengthen mutual understanding between the generations.
- To develop a variety of public works covering higher-skilled activities.
- To develop local employment initiatives and projects emphasising more older people's employment.
- To develop flexible forms of work organisation and make them accessible for elderly people, also ensuring adequate social and labour protection.
- To promote conditions for part-time work, to provide the opportunity to work at home.
- To increase older people's entrepreneurship and provide them with positive conditions for obtaining the necessary information required to develop a business, to ensure adequate vocational training and to encourage them to do business.
- To create partial/ gradual schemes of retirement and encourage older people to use them; to provide an awards system for a longer stay in the labour market.

The good experiences of other countries is very important and valuable for the Lithuanian Labour Exchange. Older people's counselling and services are not fully developed in Lithuania. There are cases, when the individual counselling approach is not effective enough, and a counsellor needs specialised knowledge. There is also a lack of focused work with employers. Demographic trends show that this targeted group of older workers should be given more attention. It is important to create a stable system, traditions and values, to build trust and bridges among generations; and we have less and less time for that.

Topics	Importance of the topic (scale: 1 very unimportant, 5 = very important)	What would you most like to learn from others in the topic(s) you are most interested in? (maximum three bullet points)
PES services for older workers: overall strategy and approach	5	<i>What is the difference in services for older people in comparison to other client's groups?</i>
Preventative PES services and measures for older workers	5	<i>What is common practise, the most popular and effective measures?</i>
PES services and measures for unemployed older workers	5	<i>What is common practise, the most popular and effective measures?</i>
Monitoring and evaluation	5	<i>Is there a unique older people's employment assessment instrument?</i>

ANNEX

Description of effective/proven practice

Title
Database 'Senior Bank'
Introduction
The 'Senior Bank' program encourages older people to actively participate and remain in the labour market. It is intended to collect and provide information on employees who want to work in retirement. It was introduced in 2007.
Main description
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• In the PES website (http://www.ldb.it), jobseekers of retirement age can directly register as 'Senior Bank' participants. Labour exchange specialists also help to fill in the 'Senior Bank' entry form and provide advice on all aspects of labour market issues. Employers have direct access to the database.
Main results and success factors
Within five years, there were registered about 3 000 pensioners in the 'Senior Bank'. The average registration time in the 'Senior Bank' is about six months. During 2007-2011, labour exchange specialists assisted in helping a quarter of 'Senior Bank' participants into employment.