



SHORT COUNTRY REPORT LITHUANIA

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RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN EDUCATION, TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT POLICY IN LITHUANIA

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1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1.1 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENTS

After recovering in 2000 the Lithuanian economy continues to grow. According to statistics Lithuania's 2001 general domestic product (GDP) at current prices increased by 5.9% in comparison with 2000, and was LTL 47.96 billion. At the same time, GDP per capita in purchasing power standard was 38% of the EU average. It increased by 2% compared with the results for 2000. In 2002 GDP is estimated to grow at 5.9% according to preliminary results. The inflation rate in 2001 accounted for 1.3%¹.

In 2001 the export of goods increased by 20% and importation by around 16%. Exports to EU countries in 2001 increased by 20% and accounted for 48% of all exports. Exports to CIS countries increased by 48%.

Declining and emerging sectors

In the GDP structure, the **service sector** forms the biggest share. In this sector, trade has the largest share, though since 1996 its share in the GDP structure has slightly decreased. One of the reasons for that is the reduction in population purchasing power. The **IT sector** is one of the most rapidly expanding economic activities (since 1995 the IT sector has grown at an annual rate of 17% (14.3% in 2001). The **industry sector** is recovering. The share of industry has increased from 25.8% of the GDP in 2000 to 28.3% in 2001. The increase was caused mainly by the expansion of mining and manufacturing industries. This fact proves that Lithuanian industrial companies are gradually adjusting to the complex conditions of international economic activity. Among other growing branches of the economy are textile, manufacture of chemicals and chemical products, and manufacture of wood and wood products.

¹ Lithuanian Economy, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Statistics Lithuania. <http://www.std.lt>

Agriculture remains a traditionally important sector of the economy, though its share compared to GDP has been gradually decreasing since 1997. In 1998 the share of agriculture in the GDP structure was 10.2%, in 1999 it decreased to 8.4% and in 2001 to 7.0%. Low effectiveness of production and high employment (one of the biggest compared to other branches of the economy) have caused major social problems.

Privatisation

In Lithuania domestic and foreign investments were granted rights to privatise entities only for cash at market prices, on an equal basis. Since 1996 more attention has been paid to the privatisation of strategic assets. This has a positive influence on the development of direct foreign investment. In 2002 the privatisation of banks was ended.

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs)

According to the study of the Lithuanian Development Agency for SMEs², in 1999 the share of GDP created in the small and medium-sized business sector accounted for 34.7% of GDP and in 2000 it was 32.0% of GDP. The share of SMEs compared to the total number of active enterprises increased from 95.6% in 2000 to 95.8% in 2001. The number of employees in SMEs is also growing: at the end of 2000, 95.6% of all employees were working in SMEs, and at the end of 2001 it was 95.8%.

1.2 LABOUR MARKET

Characteristics of the labour force

According to the Labour Force Survey (LFS), the total labour force (aged 15 to 64) was 1,759,900 in 2001. During the period 1998 to 2001 the labour force participation rate of the age group 15 to 64 decreased from 72% to 69.7%. The female participation rate is lower than that of males (65.9% and 73.8% respectively).

Table 1.1: Labour force by educational attainment (percentage)

	2000	2001
Higher	18.8	17.7
Professional colleges, specialised secondary	24.5	28.3
Secondary	20.5	20.8
Secondary with vocational	18.4	16.7
Basic education	8.8	8.6
Basic with vocational	5.6	5.5
Primary, without primary	3.5	2.5

Source: Labour Force, Employment and Unemployment (survey data) 1998-2001, Statistics Lithuania

1.2.1 EMPLOYMENT

Structural changes in employment

The employment rate for 15 to 64 year-olds in 2001 was 57.7% compared to 64% in the European Union. The employment rate for males at the same time was 59% and for females 56.4%. A decrease in the employment rate can be observed; for the 15 to 64 year-olds, in 1998 it was 62.3% and in 2000 it was 59.8%. The majority of employment is in the service sector (56%). The agriculture sector employs 16%, and industry, 21%.

By occupational employment structure, in 2001 the largest occupational groups were craft and related trade workers (17.6%), professionals (15.5%), and skilled agricultural and fisheries workers (14.1%)³. The smallest groups were clerks (4.3%) and elementary occupations (8.7%).

In 2000 the biggest discrepancies between Lithuania and the European Union were as follows.

- In Lithuania there were more than half as many clerks (Lithuania – 5%, EU – 13%), and technicians and associate professionals (Lithuania – 8%, EU – 16%).

² Situation and development tendencies of small and medium-sized business in Lithuania. <http://www.svv.lt>

³ Labour Force, Employment and Unemployment (survey data) 1998-2001, Statistics Lithuania.

- Lithuania more than five times exceeded the number of skilled agricultural and fishery workers (Lithuania – 16%, EU – 3%)⁴.

1.2.2 UNEMPLOYMENT

Situation in the country, regions and sectors

The unemployment rate is rather high compared to the European Union. Based on LFS data in 2001 it was 17% compared to 7.6% in the European Union. According to the Lithuanian Labour Exchange (LLE), the average rate of registered unemployed in 2001 was 12.5%⁵. This rate increased compared to the data from 2000. According to the LFS data, in 2000 the unemployment rate was 15.4%, and based on the LLE it was 11.5%. In 2002 the unemployment rate decreased: the LLE indicates that in the second quarter of 2002 the unemployment rate was 10.7%, compared to 12.1% in the same period in 2001. Referring to LFS data, in 2001 the unemployment rate in different counties fluctuated from 14.2% to 21.9%.

The largest share of the unemployed (according to previous economic activity) comes from the industry (27.6% of total unemployed). In the agriculture, hunting, forestry and fishing sectors there are 10.7% of the unemployed. The smallest number of the unemployed comes from the financial intermediation sector (0.7%), and the electricity, gas and water supply sector (1.2%).

Unemployment by age and educational attainment

Based on LFS data, the youth unemployment rate considerably exceeds the general unemployment rate and is above the EU average. In 2001 it was 30.2% compared to 16.1% in the European Union. The majority of the unemployed people have attained only secondary

education (26.7% of total unemployed). Some 22.1% of the unemployed have professional/college, special secondary education, and 21.5% have a vocational education. Those with higher education account for the smallest part of the unemployed (6.7%)⁶.

1.3 DEMOGRAPHIC DEVELOPMENT

Lithuania's population was 3.5 million at the beginning of 2002⁷, of which 67% lived in urban areas. Some 47% of the population were male. The working age population (15 to 64) accounted for 67% and those older than 65 made up 14% of the population. Children under 14 years old accounted for 19% and youths between 15 and 24 made up 15% of the total population.

1.4 SKILL NEEDS ASSESSMENT

The sectoral analysis is one of the measures allowing analysis and forecasting of development trends and, at the same time, employment and training needs, in a particular sector of the economy. The first research of this type in Lithuania was conducted in 2000 (analysis of the retail trade sector). In 2000 and 2001 a training needs analysis was carried out in three sectors of the economy (food industry, tourism and IT) through questioning managers of relevant private companies. In 2003 the Methodological Centre for VET will start implementing the 'Framework of Qualification Standards' within the framework of the Phare 2001 Economic and Social Cohesion programme. One of components of the project is sectoral analysis in hotels and restaurants, and the mechatronics and information technologies sectors. However, the scope of work in the field is insufficient and further work is needed.

⁴ Data for 2000, Employment in Europe 2001: Recent trends and prospects, European Commission.

⁵ The level of unemployment in Lithuania is assessed using two sources of information: data from the Labour Exchange (the registered level of unemployment) and the labour force surveys.

⁶ Labour Force, Employment and Unemployment (survey data) 1998-2001, Statistics Lithuania.

⁷ This figure comes from the data from a population census carried out in April 2001.

2. RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN A LIFELONG LEARNING CONTEXT

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2.1 POLICY DEVELOPMENT

In the beginning of 2002 the government of the Republic of Lithuania, together with the Directorate General for Employment and Social Affairs of the European Commission, prepared and approved the *Joint Assessment Paper on Employment Priorities in the Republic of Lithuania*. The document presents an agreed set of employment and labour market objectives necessary to adapt the labour market system so as to be able to implement the European Employment Strategy and to prepare for EU accession. One of the priority policy areas identified in the document is directly oriented to the development of the education system:

‘sustained commitment to successful implementation of current education reforms, with a particular focus on reducing dropout in basic education, on improving access, quality and relevance in vocational education, and on

developing and implementing a national strategy for lifelong learning’.

In the same year *Education Guidelines* – strategic provisions for the development of Lithuanian education for 2003-12 – were prepared and presented for public discussion. They formulate the main general objectives for the education system and concrete targets for educational development. The document indicates the following main objectives for the development of the education system:

1. ‘to create an effective and harmonious education system, based on responsible management, accurate financing and rational usage of resources;
2. to develop a continuous, lifelong learning and socially correct education system accessible to all;
3. to ensure quality of education, corresponding to the needs of a person living in an open civil society and market economy’.

In 2002 the Lithuanian National Educational Forum⁸, while implementing its commitments, prepared and approved the guidelines for the Lithuanian national action plan and the action plan 'Education for all'. These documents should assist in bringing together and coordinating the efforts of the society and interested public institutions in further reformation of the Lithuanian education system.

While preparing for membership of the European Union, in 2002 the preparation of the *Single programming document* started. One of its priorities is human resource development⁹. The document should foresee concrete measures for the solution of the most urgent problems in the education and employment systems, while responding to the strategic goals for 2004 and 2006.

While implementing the Phare 2001 programme, in 2002 the development of strategic documents started: Strategy for Ensuring Lifelong Learning, Strategy for Vocational Guidance, and Conception of the New Edition of the Law on Vocational Education and Training.

Lithuanian education concepts are prepared in accordance with Lisbon Council conclusions, the European Employment Strategy and the Memorandum on Lifelong Learning. Lithuania has a rather good legal framework for the development of a modern education and training system and social partnership.

2.2 ADAPTATION OF THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK

In 2001 a new edition of the Law on Education was developed and passed for public discussion. The main feature of the edition is that it covers all education systems and legitimises opportunities for lifelong learning.

In 2002 a working group was formed to draft the new edition of the Law on Vocational Education and Training. The new edition of the Law on Education, other laws currently approved and recent developments in vocational education cause the need to change the Law on Vocational Education and Training adopted in 1997.

In 2001 and 2002 the first legal acts were adopted as the basis for the recognition of knowledge and skills acquired through non-formal learning and should help to make learning more attractive.

In 2002 the Law on Long-term Funding of Science and Education was abolished. This may have a negative influence on the safeguarding of allocations necessary to sustain the education system.

2.3 GOVERNANCE AND RESPONSIBLE BODIES

The Ministry of Education and Science is responsible for the management of initial vocational education and training at national level. Vocational training is led by the VET department, which consists of the vocational training, professional college studies and register divisions, and the adult education sector.

The Methodological Centre for VET provides didactical support for initial VET institutions. The main functions of the centre are: organising the preparation of VET standards and training programmes, organising the evaluation of training/study quality, and coordinating the development of training and learning resources and their preparation for publication. In addition, the centre analyses information about VET and human resource development.

The Ministry of Social Security and Labour is responsible for the management of labour market vocational training at

⁸ In 2001 the Ministry of Education and Science together with Unesco and UNDP established the National Education Forum, joining together representatives from public organisations, NGOs, education experts, politics, and employers with the common goal in mind.

⁹ In preparation for the human resource development priority, a joint working group of representatives from the Ministry of Education and Science and the Ministry of Social Security and Labour was formed.

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national level. The responsibility for the organisation and implementation of labour market vocational training falls on the Lithuanian Labour Market Training Authority under the ministry.

The Lithuanian Labour Market Training Authority implements the labour market training policy and organises VET information and counselling services. It has six territorial labour market training and counselling services and 15 labour market training centres.

Other ministries and departments, governors of counties and municipalities may also implement functions in the field of VET management (usually adult education) in the scope of their activity.

The Lithuanian VET Council is a consultative body in the solution of strategic VET issues. It consists in equal parts of members from government institutions and organisations representing the interests of employers and employees. VET councils have been established in counties as well.

Presently, both the municipalities and the counties play a limited role in initial VET and labour market training, apart from participating in the regional VET councils.

Social partners organise and participate in qualification examinations, register practical training agreements between vocational training institution, enterprise and student, and provide suggestions on VET standards and training programmes.

Funding of initial vocational education and training

In Lithuania the main source for funding of public VET institutions is the national budget. In 2001, 6.1% of the GDP was allocated to education, 0.4% less than in

1999. Some 29.4% of the budget expenditure was allocated to education, 1.7% of which was allocated to vocational schools and 1.2% to professional colleges and colleges. Public spending for one vocational student in 2001 was €1 245, and for the students of college-type schools and colleges it was €1 122.

In 2002 the working group for the creation of methods for calculation of the 'pupil's basket' (amount of resources needed for education for the year) in vocational schools was formed. In the general education the system of pupil's basket is already applied.

Funding of continuing vocational training

Employee training is funded by participants or employers.

Unemployed people training is funded from the Employment Fund, a part of the State Social Insurance Fund. In 2001, 14.4% of expenses from the Employment Fund were allocated for funding of vocational training programmes for the unemployed. The Employment Fund allocated €479 per person for training.

2.4 MODERNISATION OF THE EDUCATION AND TRAINING SYSTEM

2.4.1 STRUCTURE AND ORGANISATION

Entry requirements

Vocational schools offer training programmes in four stages, differing in content and duration and designed for youth of different ages and educational attainments.

Stage I vocational training programmes (ISCED 2) ¹⁰ (LŠK 2) ¹¹	Designed for pupils over 14 years of age who have not finalised lower secondary education. The programmes last for two to three years and lead to a <i>qualification certificate</i> (ISCED 2C). Those willing are given the opportunity to acquire basic general education and to obtain the <i>basic school certificate</i> .
Stage II vocational training programmes (ISCED 3) (LŠK 3)	Designed for pupils who have finished basic school (10 forms) and have the basic school certificate, and only wish to obtain a vocational qualification. The programmes last for two years and lead to a <i>vocational training diploma</i> (ISCED 3C).
Stage III vocational training programmes (ISCED 3) (LŠK 3)	Designed for pupils who have finished basic school (10 forms) and have the basic school certificate, and wish to obtain a vocational qualification and general vocational education. The duration of studies is three years and graduation leads to a vocational training diploma (ISCED 3B) together with a <i>maturity certificate</i> .
Stage IV vocational training programmes (ISCED 4) (LŠK 4)	Designed for those having a maturity certificate and wishing to obtain a vocational qualification. The duration of studies, depending on the complexity of the profession, is from one to two years. Graduation leads to a <i>vocational training diploma</i> (ISCED 4).
Professional college programmes (ISCED 5B) (LŠK 5B)	Designed for those having a maturity certificate and wishing to acquire the qualification of an associated specialism. The duration of studies is normally three to three and a half years, and graduation leads to a <i>professional college diploma</i> (ISCED 5B).

Non-university higher education programmes are provided in colleges which started their activity in 2000.

Non-university higher education programmes (ISCED 5B) (LŠK 6B)	Designed for those having a maturity certificate and wishing to obtain a non-university higher education. The duration of studies is three to four years and graduation leads to a <i>higher education diploma</i> (ISCED 5B).
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Admission to labour market vocational training

Labour market vocational training courses are designed for the unemployed over 18 years old or individuals who have received a dismissal notice. Labour market training

programmes are in two stages. The duration of the courses is between four and 43 weeks. Course graduation leads to a *qualification certificate* (ISCED 2C or ISCED 3C) but not to a *vocational training diploma*.

¹⁰ ISCED 1997 – International Standard Classification of Education.

¹¹ LŠK – Lithuanian education qualification.

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Progression routes

Stage I vocational training programmes	For those who pursue this stage of vocational education combined with basic education, progression is possible to both general and vocational upper secondary education. For those who do not complete basic education the only possibility for progression would be to complete basic education at secondary education schools.
Stage II vocational training programmes	For graduates of upper secondary vocational education without maturity, there are no further progression routes apart from completing the maturity at secondary education schools.
Stage III vocational training programmes	For graduates of upper secondary vocational education with maturity, the progression possibilities to higher education are the same as for graduates of the different directions of general upper secondary education. Admission to the different institutions of higher education is based on the grade of the maturity exam and (in some cases) on special entry exams.
Stage IV vocational training programmes	For graduates of upper secondary vocational education with maturity, the progression possibilities to higher education are the same as for graduates of the different directions of general upper secondary education. Admission to the different institutions of higher education is based on the grade of the maturity exam and (in some cases) on special entry exams.
Professional college programmes and non-university higher education programmes	For graduates from the professional colleges and other colleges (non-university higher education), there is no generally agreed possibility to progress to university and transfer credits from the college education. These graduates would have to start from the first year at university.
Labour market training programmes, CVT programmes	There are no progression routes from labour market training and continuing vocational training.

Horizontal transfer

It is possible to transfer from stage III of upper secondary vocational education to upper secondary general education, but not vice versa. It is possible to transfer between the second and third stage at upper secondary vocational education, both from the lower to the higher stage and vice versa, in case the profession is offered at both stages.

There are no transfer possibilities between studies in professional colleges and colleges. Also it is not possible to transfer from non-university higher education to university education or vice versa.

Adaptation of curricula and development of standards

From the school year 2002/03, all curricula taught in vocational schools must be competency based with clearly defined study objectives. Though the Ministry of

Education and Science has provided training to school staff, large differences remain between the individual institutions in their preparedness to follow the new ideas.

By the end of 2001, 36 standards were approved and nine were under development. The lack of financial resources to employ members of working groups has slowed down the development of new standards. However, financial support from the Phare 2001 programme should ensure the development of a further 50 standards in coming years.

Assessment and certification

Since 1998 Lithuania has been gradually moving away from a school-driven assessment, and the regional chambers are gradually taking over the full organisation of final exams including the design of tasks, the identification of relevant members of the commission and

granting of the qualification. In the school year 2001/02, three out of five regional chambers cover in total six out of ten regions in Lithuania.

Quality assurance

A quality assurance system based on self-assessment, internal monitoring and external assessment has been started and is under further development. Under this system, the Methodological Centre for VET:

- designs guidelines for the internal and external quality assurance system;
- arranges training for schools on how to organise internal quality assurance, and how to prepare for external evaluation;
- organises the external evaluation of the schools;
- trains independent experts in how to conduct on-site visits and to make assessments.

Links between initial and continuing training, formal and non-formal training

As it is observed in the country monograph¹², in Lithuania there is a lack of coordination between initial and continuing vocational training: the training programmes are not compatible, and there are no opportunities to transfer from labour market training to vocational education and training.

A positive development is that in 2001 and 2002 the first steps have been taken towards the recognition of non-formal and informal learning. The procedure foresees that every year both the Ministry of Education and Science and the Ministry of Social Security and Labour appoint VET schools and enterprises in each region to

arrange and conduct the assessment. It is not clear when formal recognition of non-formal and informal learning will actually be initiated.

2.4.2 DELIVERY

Institutional network

In Lithuania initial vocational education and training is provided by vocational schools, professional colleges and colleges. The founder of public vocational schools, professional colleges and colleges is the Ministry of Education and Science.

Vocational schools are education and training institutions providing professional qualifications and general education. While optimising the network of vocational schools, the establishment of regional vocational training centres was started, based on mergers of several vocational schools in the region. In the beginning of the school year 2002/03 there were seven regional vocational training centres¹³.

Professional colleges are institutions providing professional qualifications and post-secondary vocational education. With a view to harmonising the system of existing qualifications with the qualification system applied in the European Union, a reform of the post-secondary studies sector was initiated in 2000: with the gradual elimination of professional college education, non-university education is being formed. The reform is planned to end in the school year 2003/04.

Colleges are training institutions providing a certain professional qualification and higher non-university education. In August 2002 it was decided to establish eight new state colleges.

¹² *Monographs Candidate Countries, Vocational Education and Training and Employment Services in Lithuania*, ETF, 2002.

¹³ It was foreseen that the labour market training centres should also be included into regional vocational training centres. However due to legislation issues this did not happen.

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Table 2.1: Number of initial VET institutions

Institutions	1999/2000	2000/01	2001/02	Beginning of school year 2002/03*	
				Total	Of which private
Vocational schools	104	84	81	82	1
Professional colleges	69	57	41	27	8
Colleges	-	7	16	24	9

Source: *Education, Statistics Lithuania, Vilnius, 2002*

* Statistics Lithuania, Education and Culture Statistics, Culture and Education Statistics Unit (provisional data)

CVT programmes are provided by initial VET institutions, higher education institutions and labour market training centres established specially for labour market vocational training. It can also be provided by other institutions and organisations which have been licensed to do so. In the beginning of the school year 2002/03 the Ministry of Education and Science issued around 300 licences for the provision of labour market vocational training programmes.

Teachers

According to data from the Centre of Information Technologies of Education, at the beginning of the school year 2001/02 there were 4 696 teachers in vocational schools. In professional colleges there were 2 638 lecturers.

Official statistics do not provide the information about teachers in continuing vocational training. According to the Lithuanian Labour Market Training Authority, in the labour market training system there were 144 vocational teachers.

Initial and in-service training. Currently, systematic initial training of vocational teachers is not carried out. In practice teachers usually firstly acquire a specialist (subject, vocational) education and only afterwards a pedagogical qualification within the continuing in-service training system. From 2002 initial educational of vocational teachers started in Vytautas Magnus University. It is important to note that in 2002 the following documents were prepared for the development of vocational

teacher training system: Conception for Vocational Teacher/Lecturer Education and Training in Lithuania, and Professional Standard for Vocational Teacher/Lecturer.

Salaries. The salaries of teachers are dependent upon the qualification category obtained, pedagogical work experience and educational background. According to the Ministry of Education and Science Unit of Education Economy, in 2001 the monthly statutory teacher's salary in the public institutions was between €172.25 and €312.50. Bonuses could be added to this amount. The salaries of the pedagogical staff are lower than the average salary of employees in the national economy. The survey data on wages indicate that in the second quarter of 2001 the monthly gross earnings in the state sector reached €309. Meanwhile, the average salary of employees in the education sector was €280.61. Official statistics do not provide data on the salaries of teachers in initial and labour market training institutions separately.

Modernisation of training infrastructure and equipment

According to the Ministry of Education and Science Unit of Education Economy, in 2001 the biggest share of the resources allocated for vocational schools was spent on staff salaries and contributions for social security. Institutions have no possibility to invest into their development: spending for construction/renovation and for acquisition of basic means accounts for 0.08% and 0.35% of expenses respectively. There are no possibilities for renovation of training material: only 0.16% of expenditure in

vocational schools goes towards books and manuals, and in professional colleges and colleges this figure is 0.33%.

Unemployed people training

As mentioned, training of the unemployed can be provided at initial VET institutions, higher education institutions and labour market training centres specially established for labour market vocational training. Since 2001 the LLE has organised training for the unemployed and those employees who have received a dismissal notice following an open call (public tendering) for provision of training. In the open call, public and private training institutions are now free to compete for the delivery of training. In 2001, 98 training providers participated in the open call and in 2002, 187 training providers did. With the introduction of the public tendering for training, a much larger group of organisations are involved in the implementation of training. In addition, the cost of training has reduced allowing more unemployed to become involved in vocational training. However, it should be noted that following legislation the training providers who offer the lowest price win. Therefore, a criticism of the existing system has been that due to the low price of the training courses, the quality of training may suffer.

Management training and business education

In 2001 a compulsory entrepreneurship module became part of the curricula in vocational education, and 100 to 120 hours were allocated to this subject.

Business and administration training remains one of the most popular fields in initial and continuing vocational training. Table 2.2 illustrates the growth in the number of students in this field.

The number of adults who participated in business and administration training decreased in 2001 to 3 769 from 3 934 in 2000. At the same time a bigger share of participants received a professional qualification (1 996 in 2000, and 3 041 in 2001).

Training in enterprise

According to the CVTS 2, some 43% of Lithuanian companies organise personnel training; the most active training enterprises are in the financial intermediation and electricity, gas and water supply sectors. Only a minority of businesses have a training plan (26% according to the CVTS 2) and a budget for training (15% according to the CVTS 2). The data shows that employers are passive in organisation and support of personnel training.

Table 2.2: Pupils and students in the field of business and administration

Institutions	Number of pupils, students and specialists trained			
	2000/01		2001/02	
	Students	Specialists	Students	Specialists
Vocational schools	7 514	1 619	8 799	2 080
Professional colleges	10 917	2 284	8 794	2 681
Colleges	2 168	32	5 583	-
Universities	11 912	1 692	14 971	1 971

Source: *Education 2001, Statistics Lithuania, 2002*

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Training to promote labour market and social inclusion of disadvantaged groups

At present in Lithuania there are three vocational schools providing vocational education and training only for handicapped people: the Lithuanian Training Centre for the Blind and Visually Impaired, the Vilnius Rehabilitation Vocational Training Centre for the Deaf, and the Lithuanian Rehabilitation Vocational Training Centre. Several specialised general education schools have vocational training groups. During 2001 and 2002 there were over 900 individuals attending these schools which offer training under 18 programmes leading to a vocational qualification. In addition, according to their opportunities the handicapped may acquire professional qualifications in vocational schools.

According to the Lithuanian Labour Exchange, in 2001, 79% of disabled people who registered at the labour exchange were involved in active labour market measures and 6% of them were in training.

In addition, the Lithuanian Labour Market Training Authority develops specific training programmes for the handicapped.

In 2001, 18 training programmes were adapted for their needs¹⁴.

2.4.3 PARTICIPATION

Initial VET institutions

In the last years the number of students in vocational schools has decreased. It is partly due to the reform and transition to 10-year basic education. In colleges and professional colleges the overall number of students is increasing.

With regard to the popularity of VET stages, the majority of students (62% in 2001) in vocational schools opt for stage III programmes which confer a vocational qualification and provide a general secondary education.

Adult education

According to statistics in 2001, 80 000 adults participated in adult education – half as much as in 1998 (Table 2.4).

The majority of participants in adult education came from the health field (26%), security services, transport and engineering and engineering trades.

Table 2.3: Students in VET institutions

Institutions	1998	1999	2000	2001
Vocational schools	56 000	52 000	47 000	45 000
Professional colleges	34 000	39 000	37 000	32 000
Colleges	-	-	3 000	10 000
Total	90 000	91 000	87 000	87 000

Source: *Education 2001, Statistics Lithuania, 2002*

Table 2.4: Participation in adult education¹⁵

	1998	2000	2001
Number of students	171 000	111 000	80 000
Percentage of total working age population	8	5	

Source: *Education 2001, Statistics Lithuania, 2002*

¹⁴ Activity of Lithuanian Labour Market Training Authority in 2001, Lithuanian Labour Market Training Authority, Vilnius, 2002.

¹⁵ Courses in enterprises which have been licenced by the Ministry of Education and Science.

Almost one third of trainees in adult education (32 000) took part in adult education and training in institutions of the formal education system (vocational schools, professional colleges, universities). Compared to 2000, in 2001 the number of participants decreased, however a bigger share of participants received a professional qualification (82.7% in 2001 and 62% only in 2000).

The comparison of data concerning adults in education with the number of working age population shows that only a small percentage of adults participate in continuing vocational training (Table 2.4). This is proved by the Labour Force Survey, according to which in 2001 only 3.7% of the population aged 25 to 64 participated in continuing training (whereas the EU indicator was 8.7%).

Unemployed vocational training

According to the LLE the share of the unemployed referred to vocational training compared to the number of registered unemployed has increased from 5.7% in 2000 to 7.6% in 2001 (Table 2.5). However, the share of the unemployed referred to vocational training is too low, bearing in mind that 38.8% of registered unemployed are without vocational training¹⁶.

Employee training

Official statistics do not distinguish how many employees participate in qualification upgrading/requalification courses.

According to CHTS 2 the participation of employees in continuing vocational training is low, with only 20% of all employees participating (among the candidate countries the Czech Republic is leading with a participation rate of 49%; the EU analogous indicator is 40%).

Participation in formal and non-formal education

Official statistics do not define the share of pupils/students participating in non-formal education.

2.5 GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING

The main providers of vocational guidance and counselling in 2001 were as follows.

- Six territorial labour market training and counselling services. They counselled 57 800 people (13 800 pupils; 40 900 unemployed; 1 700 employed; and 1 400 parents and teachers). They employ 35 psychologists.
- Forty information and counselling centres, five job centres and three youth job centres established under the territorial labour exchanges. They provide counselling on job search and vocational guidance issues, including self-serve Internet-based databases on job vacancies and training opportunities.
- A vocational guidance centre established under the supplementary education institution known as the Lithuanian Youth Technical Creativity

Table 2.5: Involvement of the unemployed into vocational training

	1998	1999	2000	2001
Registered unemployed – Total	113 688	148 655	204 908	223 480
Unemployed involved in active labour market policy measures	71 379	76 145	86 260	106 582
• of which, involved in vocational training	16 146	12 569	11 659	17 000
Unemployed involved in VET programmes compared to all registered unemployed (%)	14.2	8.5	5.7	7.6

Source: *Activity of Lithuanian Labour Exchange in 2001*, Lithuanian Labour Exchange, Vilnius, 2002

¹⁶ Activity of Lithuanian Labour Exchange in 2001, Lithuanian Labour Exchange, Vilnius, 2002.

2. RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN A LIFELONG LEARNING CONTEXT

Palace. Two psychologists at the vocational guidance division work with pupils individually and, whenever invited, organise lectures for students in lower and upper secondary schools.

- The Youth Career Centre in Kaunas founded in 1999 in collaboration between Vytautas Magnus University and the Open Society Fund. The centre provides information and counselling on studying abroad.
- The Lithuanian National Resource Centre for Vocational Guidance (or the Lithuanian Euroguidance Centre) established in 1998 together with the National Agency for Leonardo da Vinci. The main purpose of this centre is the production and dissemination of guidance material, as well as supporting mobility across Europe.

Finally, information on education institutions, training programmes, enrolment conditions and so on, can be obtained via the Internet, for example from the Lithuanian Education Information System homepage¹⁷, the Lithuanian Labour Market Training Authority homepage and the Leonardo da Vinci NCU Vocational Guidance Resource and Information Centre homepage¹⁸.

The guidance and counselling system remains underdeveloped with only 10 to 15% of students receiving some form of guidance in secondary schools¹⁹. Present capacities of guidance and counselling institutions are limited. In addition, vocational guidance and counselling specialists are not specially trained for this activity. It is important to note that a working group was formed to prepare a strategy for vocational guidance that should improve the situation in the field.

2.6 PREPAREDNESS OF THE EDUCATION AND TRAINING SYSTEM TO COMPLY WITH THE PRINCIPLES OF THE EUROPEAN EMPLOYMENT STRATEGY

The following positive developments should be underlined while speaking about the preparedness of the education and training system for the European Employment Strategy.

- In Lithuania a legal framework and strategic documents for the development of the education system are in accordance with the European Employment Strategy and the Memorandum on Lifelong Learning. The development of a number of important strategic documents has already started.
- The first steps have been undertaken towards the recognition of knowledge and skills acquired through non-formal learning.
- The establishment of multifunctional regional vocational training centres is on-going.
- The development of a number of documents has started: Strategy for Ensuring Lifelong Learning; Strategy for Vocational Guidance; and Conception of New Edition of Law on Vocational Education and Training.
- The chambers are gradually taking over the responsibility for the full organisation of final exams which should improve the relevance of VET to labour market needs and the quality of VET.

However a number of challenges still need to be addressed.

- Lithuanian legislation does not motivate employers to invest in personnel training.

¹⁷ <http://www.mokykla.smm.lt>

¹⁸ <http://www.nrcg.lt>

¹⁹ *Monographs Candidate Countries, Vocational Education and Training and Employment Services in Lithuania*, ETF, 2002.

- Instruments for the reduction of the number of early dropouts are not developed.
- The system of vocational guidance and counselling is underdeveloped.
- The variety of training measures (for example, 'second chance' apprenticeships) needs to be developed.
- The links between the separate parts of the education system are insufficient to ensure favourable conditions for lifelong learning.
- A comprehensive qualification system linking all educational sectors has not been created.
- The capacity of the education system (human and material resources) is insufficient to ensure qualitative conditions for lifelong learning and to respond adequately to structural changes of the economy.

3. RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN EMPLOYMENT POLICY AND IMPLEMENTATION

3.1 STATE OF PREPARATION FOR THE EUROPEAN EMPLOYMENT STRATEGY

As is the case for education policy strategic documents, employment policy strategic documents also correspond with the four pillars of the European Employment Strategy: development of employment capabilities, promotion of job creation and entrepreneurship, promotion of business and employee adaptation to change, strengthening of equal opportunities for men and women.

In 2001, while implementing the Governmental Programme, the main strategy document on employment policy, the National Programme for Promotion of Employment during 2001-04 was adopted. In its content and form, the programme is a response to the European Employment Strategy.

The Joint Assessment Paper on Employment Priorities in the Republic of

Lithuania sets out the following priority policy areas where progress is still needed:

- developing a detailed action plan for the reform of the public employment service, including a necessary increase in the service's resources so that it can play a more active role in the reintegration of unemployed people;
- ensuring effective regional management and consultation structures for labour market services in the context of a coherent national strategy for broader regional planning across all areas of economic and social development;
- finalising arrangements for the use of ESF funds in support of employment policies, with particular attention to strengthening administrative capacity in the areas of financial management, monitoring and evaluation.

The Joint Assessment Paper represents an important step in Lithuania's preparations for participation in the European Employment Policy's coordination process.

On the other hand, it also identified those employment and human resource policy priorities which will be implemented through the ESF investments.

In 2001 a Phare twinning programme, Preparation for Participation in European Employment Strategy, started. The project has been implemented by the Ministry of Social Security and Labour together with the Denmark National Labour Market Authority, the Danish Labour Ministry and the Swedish National Labour Market Administration. The project aims to provide recommendations on the administration of the employment and labour market system in the way that it would be able to implement requirements raised by European Employment Strategy.

While preparing for usage of assistance of EU structural funds to Lithuania, structures for the administration of the assistance are being created. The functions of implementing agency will be carried out by the Human Resource Development Programmes Support Foundation established by the Ministry of Education and Science and the Ministry of Social Security and Labour in June 2002. The aim of the Fund is to support those implementing Phare social and economical cohesion programme projects and to prepare for ESF assistance.

3.2 GENERAL OUTLINE OF EMPLOYMENT POLICY OBJECTIVES AND MEASURES

One of the main objectives of the government of the Republic of Lithuania as stated in its programme for 2000-04 is to increase employment. To attain this objective the government intends to devote more attention to unemployment reduction and prevention; to promote investments; to increase support for business in the regions; to address labour qualifications and local-market orientation issues; and to pursue proactive labour market policies, among others.

The strategic objectives of the National Programme for Promotion of Employment during 2001-04 are:

- to eliminate the negative effects of the structural economic reform and external factors upon employment and the labour market;
- to increase employment, reduce unemployment and achieve a balance in the labour market;
- to prepare for participation in the EU Employment Strategy coordination process.

The long-term objective of the programme is to further increase employment up to the EU Member States' average, the aim being to achieve full employment.

The pillars of the programme include: development of the job system (promotion of entrepreneurship), improvement of support for employment, enhancement of the ability to adapt to change, increase of equal opportunities in the labour market, and integration of employment policy.

3.3 ADAPTATION OF THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK

In 2002 the following legal acts were adopted.

- *The Procedure of Support of Employment of Persons Additionally Supported in the Labour Market.* This document established the organisation of employment to working places for additionally supported unemployed.
- *The Procedure of Employment into Supported Works.* The procedure established the organisation of supported works (from the Employment Fund) to the unemployed. The objective of supported works is to create a possibility to obtain working skills or to improve them in the place of work, to identify the lack of knowledge and to then acquire that knowledge in training courses.
- *The Procedure of Organisation and Implementation of Renewal of Knowledge and Practical Skills of Long-Term Unemployed.* It defined measures for the renewal of knowledge and skills, the organisation, implementation and funding of measures. According to the procedure,

3. RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN EMPLOYMENT POLICY AND IMPLEMENTATION

measures of knowledge renewal and skills are organised for long-term unemployed when employing them into supported works, job places created through local employment initiative projects, public works and work clubs.

In 2002 legal regulations were improved for the employment of the handicapped and the identification of quotas for new work places. The amendment of the Law on Support of the Unemployed increased the interest of employers to employ the handicapped. The maximum size of quota was increased from 2% to 5% of the total number of staff, in companies employing no less than 50 employees.

The New Procedure of Implementation of Local Employment Initiative Projects was approved. It defined guidelines for local initiative projects²⁰.

3.4 GOVERNANCE AND RESPONSIBLE BODIES

The Ministry of Social Security and Labour is playing a key role in the development of employment and labour market policies.

The main implementing bodies for labour market policies and programmes are the Lithuanian Labour Exchange and the Lithuanian Labour Market Training Authority.

- The LLE implements passive and active labour market policy measures. It consists of the National Labour Exchange and 46 other labour exchanges.
- The Lithuanian Labour Market Training Authority implements labour market training policy and organises provision of vocational guidance and counselling services. It is responsible for the content of labour market training, and also supervises the activity of institutions that are licensed for labour market training.

Cooperation at national, regional and local levels

The closest cooperation links are with municipalities. Cooperation is implemented through the organisation of public works, local initiative projects, the implementation of the Programme for Assigning of Loans to the Unemployed for Organisation of their Business, the provision of preventive measures to support employees facing collective dismissal, among others.

Social partnership

Social partners participate in employment policy formation through tripartite commissions. The National Tripartite Commission advises the LLE on the identification and funding of priority labour market policy measures, the improvement of social support to the unemployed, the allocation of the Employment Fund to local labour exchanges, the preparation of population employment programmes, among others. At every territorial labour exchange a tripartite commission is established. The decisions of the tripartite commissions are advisory.

While assessing the management of the labour market system, experts note that the network of public employment agencies ensures that access and structures for social dialogue are in place all over the country. However, some problems remain. Firstly, legal documents regulating the activity of labour market institutions, the functions of the LLE and of the Lithuanian Labour Market Training Authority are not clearly separated. In practice this results in some duplication of activity. Secondly, the activity of the tripartite commissions remains more formal than effective, and its development receives insufficient attention. And thirdly, over-centralised management of the LLE does not allow flexibly and the urgent resolution of employment problems at local level²¹.

²⁰ The Local Employment Initiative aims at stimulating efforts in the community to create jobs in order to jointly solve social problems related to high unemployment. Entrepreneurs having business ideas and ability to deliver entirely new products or services can apply for financing and receive a job-creation grant, while undertaking their obligation to employ socially vulnerable individuals.

²¹ *Monographs Candidate Countries, Vocational Education and Training and Employment Services in Lithuania*, ETF, 2002.

Funding

In 2001, nearly LTL 37 million were allocated for staff, administration and overhead expenses of the LLE, just over LTL 59 million for active labour market programmes, and about LTL 72 million for passive programmes. By comparison, in 2000, over LTL 39 million were allocated for active labour market programmes and over LTL 80 million for passive programmes. It is planned for 2002 that for the first time funding for active measures will exceed funding for passive measures (LTL 75 million are planned for active labour market programmes and LTL 71 million for passive programmes).

3.5 SERVICES OF THE LITHUANIAN LABOUR EXCHANGE

3.5.1 STRUCTURE AND ORGANISATION

As previously mentioned, the LLE consists of the National Labour Exchange (NLE) together with 46 dependent territorial labour exchanges (TLE). The areas served by the TLEs vary in size and population. Therefore, in order to ensure convenience to the population, some TLEs have sub-district offices in addition to the main territorial office. At present, 28 TLEs have 46 additional sub-district offices, out of which two are specialised.

The NLE is responsible for analysing the labour supply and demand at national level and forecasting possible changes in the labour market. It also organises and finances research on employment issues, and prepares reports and reviews on the labour market situation (both national and territorial). It manages the funds of the Employment Fund in accordance with the settled manner. The NLE manages the activity of the TLEs and allocates the funds necessary to finance their activities. The NLE is organised into a number of separate divisions – Labour Market Policy Implementation, Labour Supply and

Demand, Information Systems, Employment Fund Accounting, and Foreign Relations.

The TLEs implement the functions of the Lithuanian Labour Exchange at the local level. They are subordinate to the NLE. Usually TLEs are organised into a number of divisions, dealing with Information Systems and Statistics, Employment Fund Accounting, Personnel and Administration, and Client Services and Labour Market Programmes.

3.5.2 DELIVERY OF SERVICES

Personnel

Currently the LLE has an overall staff of 1 312 of whom 54% are frontline staff. Women make up 82% of personnel. In the TLE the number of personnel varies from 13 to 181. The ratio of frontline staff in the structure of personnel in territorial labour exchanges varies from 38% to 67%. According to Labour Exchange data, the average age of employees is 41. The biggest portion of employees (72%) is between 30 and 50 years old. Most employees (79% of total employees, excluding technical personnel such as cleaners and drivers) have higher education diplomas. The ratio of unemployed registered in the TLE to frontline employees in different territories ranges from 76 to 641²². The differences between TLEs are likely to produce wide variations in the quality of services provided.

Client groups

Client groups of the LLE cover jobseekers and employees. According to the LLE report on activity for 2001, at the end of the year 224 000 unemployed were registered in the TLEs, 1 900 less than at the beginning of the year. Males accounted for 52.5% and young people for 12.8% of registered unemployed. The share of young unemployed decreased by 2.4%. Unqualified unemployed accounted for 30% and long-term unemployed for 33.3%

²² Stock data on registered unemployed at the end of May 2002 from reports of TLE were used for this estimation.

of registered unemployed. The share of registered unemployed increased by 5.7%.

In 2001 services were provided to 30 000 employers (27 600 employers in 2000).

Scope and balance of activities

The services provided by the LLE are primarily oriented to jobseekers. They include guidance and vocational counselling, information on vacancies, mediation of employment in Lithuania and abroad, assignment and payment of unemployment benefits, preparation of employment plans, issuing of certificates, organisation of public works and works supported from the employment fund, issuing of recommendations for employment and public works, organisation of vocational training and job clubs, and counselling and financial support in setting up own business. In addition, the LLE checks conditions and readiness of businesses to employ the unemployed before sending them to the supported works, it concludes contracts with employers and controls their implementation, and administrates subsidies for employment support.

In addition to general programmes, the LLE organises and implements targeted labour market programmes. For example, in 2001 programmes were implemented for young people up to the age of 25, for recent graduates, and for the long-term unemployed. Another important activity is the administration and funding of local employment initiatives.

Specific measures for disadvantaged groups

In 2001, 3 400 handicapped and 3 100 ex-prisoners were employed or involved into active labour market policy measures. For the first time a vocational training programme for ex-prisoners was implemented and funded from the state budget. Through funding of local employment initiatives, more than every second person employed in newly established locations is a socially vulnerable person.

Career guidance and counselling

In 2001, five new information and counselling centres were established at TLEs, and in 2002 already all clients of the TLEs could use information and counselling services. For guidance and counselling, descriptions of occupations are prepared. In addition, the LLE is expanding the open labour market information system. The Self Information Service is integrated with the vocational guidance system. Both employers searching for employees and persons searching for a job can place the information on this system.

Cooperation with employers

In 2001, 6 300 agreements of cooperation were signed. The cooperation with employers includes their participation in tripartite commissions, as well as participation in projects and surveys. Research shows that 90% of employers served highly estimate the services of the LLE.

Share of active and passive measures

The share of funds allocated for the implementation of active labour market policy measures has increased. In 2001, for these objectives LTL 59.5 million from the Employment Fund was used, and in 2000 it was LTL 39.1 million. As already mentioned, in 2002 for the first time it is planned to allocate more funds to active measures than to passive ones (LTL 75 million and LTL 71 million, respectively)²³. The increase in funding for active measures allowed the involvement of more unemployed in active labour market policy programmes. In 2001, 106 600 (42.6% of unemployed registered at TLEs) participated in active measures, which was 20% more than in 2000. Also in 2001 less unemployment benefits were assigned to the unemployed.

²³ Report on the Implementation of the National Programme for Promotion of Employment during 2001-04.

3.5.3 MONITORING AND EVALUATION ACTIVITIES

The activity of the LLE is based on management by objectives. Some 24 indicators were set for the TLEs, on the basis of which their activity is evaluated monthly, quarterly and at the end of the year. The activity assessment methods are approved. This allows the assessment and amendment of the TLEs activity, in order to improve the quality of services provided and measures implemented²⁴.

As noted in the country monograph, according to the experts the process of management by objectives in the LLE has been well established and the system of labour market indicators is in line with those used in European countries, but the system of performance indicators needs some improvement.

3.6 PREPAREDNESS OF EMPLOYMENT SERVICES TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE EUROPEAN EMPLOYMENT STRATEGY

Public employment agencies should become the most important tool for the implementation of the European Employment Strategy. The preparation for implementation of the general strategy has already started: the action plan and investment project for joining EURES (the network of European employment services and their partners) are under preparation. However, in order to prepare for coordination of the European Employment Strategy, it is necessary to continue the rationalisation and decentralisation of the labour market institutions' management, to modernise the TLEs, to extend their responsibility in order to better react to the labour market situation, to identify possibilities of using funds in a more flexible way in order to solve local employment problems, and to apply new principles to the organisation of work with clients. These measures are foreseen in the National Programme for Promotion of Employment during 2001-04.

²⁴ Report on the Implementation of the National Programme for Promotion of Employment during 2001-04.

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4. CONCLUSIONS

During 2001 and the first half of 2002 progress towards the implementation of lifelong learning and preparation for the European Employment Strategy was achieved in the following areas.

- **Development of a legal framework and strategic documents.** New legal and strategic documents for the development of the educational and employment system are being prepared in accordance with the European Employment Strategy and the Memorandum on Lifelong Learning. In 2001 a new edition of the Law on Education was developed and passed for public discussion. The same happened with the *Education Guidelines – Strategic provisions for the development of Lithuanian education for 2003-12. The Joint Assessment Paper on Employment Priorities in the Republic of Lithuania* was prepared and approved by the Lithuanian government and the European Commission at the beginning of 2002.
- **Correspondence of training to labour market needs.** Training content has

been renovated based on competences and objectives.

- **Optimisation of VET institution network.** The establishment of multifunctional regional vocational training centres is ongoing.
- **Involvement of social partners in the examination process.** Seeking to improve the relevance of VET to the labour market, the responsibility for the full organisation and implementation of final exams is gradually being passed to the chambers. It is foreseen that the process will be completed in the upcoming year.
- **Recognition of knowledge and skills acquired through non-formal learning.** First acts establishing the procedure of recognition were adopted.
- **Balance between passive and active labour market measures.** The share of funds allocated to active labour market policy measures has been increased. This allowed the greater involvement of the unemployed in active labour market policy programmes.
- **Unemployed training.** The introduction of the open call procedure into the organisation of the unemployed training

allowed providers of training to diversify. It also decreased training costs which allowed greater involvement of the unemployed in vocational training.

■ **Open labour market information**

system. The LLE is expanding the open labour market information system through the introduction of new information technologies. In addition, the establishment of information and counselling centres at TLEs is ongoing and already all clients of TLEs can use the information and counselling services.

■ **Preparation of the employment services to participate in the**

European Employment Strategy. In 2001 the Phare twinning programme Preparation for Participation in European Employment Strategy started. The project aims to provide recommendations on the administration of the employment and labour market system in such a way that it would be able to implement requirements raised by the European Employment Strategy.

However a number of issues remain which Lithuania has to address.

- Lithuania experiences a high number of dropouts with over 20% of young people leaving the education system without finalising their basic education.
- The links between initial and continuing vocational training are insufficient to ensure favourable conditions for lifelong learning. Though both labour market training and initial vocational education programmes are modularised, the modules are not integrated and thus do not facilitate the continued development of a comprehensive qualification system. There are no possibilities for horizontal transfers from labour market training to vocational education and eventually to progress to some form of higher education.
- A mismatch exists between vocational training and the requirements of the economy.
- Continuing education and training is underdeveloped in Lithuania with only

20% of all employees participating in continuing vocational training (according to CVTS 2). It is half the EU average.

- The capacity of the education system (human and material resources) is insufficient to ensure qualitative conditions for lifelong learning and to respond adequately to structural changes in the economy.
- The system of vocational guidance and counselling is underdeveloped.
- There are great differences in workload between various territorial labour exchanges. This is likely to produce wide variations in the quality of services provided.
- The share of the unemployed referred to vocational training is too small (7.6% of all registered unemployed in 2001) bearing in mind that 38.8% of registered unemployed are without vocational training.
- Following the open call regulations for training provision, the provider offering the lowest price gets contracted. Due to the low price of the training courses, the quality of training may suffer.

Further reform steps should include the following measures.

- Instruments for the prevention of early dropout as well as instruments for the reduction of the number of dropouts (alternative training measures, 'second chance', apprenticeships) need to be developed.
- Guidance and counselling system needs to be developed.
- In order to assure a better correspondence between VET and economic needs, a quality assurance system needs to be developed. Investment in education infrastructure should increase.
- A comprehensive qualification system linking all educational sectors has to be created.
- Studies and research, comparative and prognostic surveys on qualification and employment requirements need to be promoted.

4. CONCLUSIONS

- The system for the recognition of vocational competencies acquired through formal, non-formal and informal learning remains to be developed and implemented.
- A reduction of differences between the territorial labour exchanges is needed in both the quantitative and qualitative service levels.
- The involvement of the unemployed in vocational training should be increased.
- The public tendering procedure should be further developed to better assure correspondence of training to the defined quality criteria.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
CVT	Continuing vocational training
CVTS	Continuing Vocational Training Survey
ESF	European Social Fund
EU	European Union
GDP	Gross domestic product
IT	Information technology
LFS	Labour Force Survey
LLE	Lithuanian Labour Exchange
LTL	Lithuanian currency (litas)
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NLE	National Labour Exchange
SME	Small and medium-sized enterprise
TLE	Territorial labour exchange
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
VET	Vocational education and training