



THEMATIC NETWORK PROJECT IN THE AREA OF LANGUAGES

III

SUB-PROJECT TWO:

LANGUAGES FOR ENHANCED OPPORTUNITIES ON THE EUROPEAN LABOUR MARKET

NATIONAL REPORT / LITHUANIA

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1.Introduction

The aim of the national Report is to present an overview of the current economic situation in Lithuania, to determine the status quo in the labour market and to analyse the present-day market needs and demands related to foreign languages/skills and competences.

1.1.A brief overview of the national labour market

In accordance with the provisions of the Accession Partnership, in 2002 the Government of Lithuania together with the European Commission prepared a *Joint Assessment of Lithuania's short-term employment and labour market policy priorities (2002)*. The document states that:

After the restoration of independence in 1990, the structure of the Lithuanian economy was still dependent on the republics of the former Soviet Union. Due to its fairly well-developed infrastructure and qualified workforce, the role of Lithuania in the Soviet system of division of labour (was quite significant) was a significant one. Lithuania supplied relatively modern equipment, electrical power, specialised in the food, textile, and oil processing industries.

During the first years after the restoration of independence, import and export relations with the republics of the former Soviet Union broke down, leading to a decline of more than 40% in output between 1990 and 1994, accompanied by a clear deterioration in the standard of living.

In recent years there has been a significant transfer from trade with the CIS countries to trade with the EU. During the first half of 2001, the EU accounted for 55.9% per cent of all exports, and for 43.3% of imports. The most important export items are refined oil, textiles and machinery.

Lithuania's GDP structure has changed. The development of the services sector, which was poorly developed for historic reasons, was very fast after the restoration of independence, and services accounted for slightly more than 60% of the GDP in 2000.

The share of agriculture in GDP has decreased from 10.6% in 1994 to 7.5% in 2000. Despite this drop, this sector still plays a key role, in particular in terms of employment. The fall in agricultural output has resulted in a less than proportionate employment decline. Approximately 18–19% of the employed population are still working in the sector. In order for the sector to compete at an international level, significant restructuring will be required, which will have a big impact on employment.

Industry continues to be an important economic sector. After a fall from about one third to just over one fifth over the 1990s, its share in gross value was about 30% in 2001. Industry remains strongly export-oriented (about 60% of the output is exported). Oil refining and food processing are the main industrial branches. As prices charged for raw materials and energy approached world prices, the large energy-intensive manufacturing enterprises have been confronted with a sharp price increase of their inputs and simultaneously lost some of their traditional export markets.

There was practically no private sector until the restoration of independence. The industrial sector comprised large enterprises, and the whole agricultural sector consisted of collective farms. A programme of voucher privatisation began in 1991, and succeeded relatively rapidly in privatising a substantial part of the agricultural sector and all small and medium-sized enterprises. However, the state kept an important stake in the larger industrial enterprises, while there was no privatisation in key sectors (e.g. electricity, railways, telecommunications, oil refining). A second stage of privatisation, including cash payments and various other possibilities, started in 1996, and privatisation is now largely completed; however, the small number of industrial and service enterprises remaining in public ownership still account for a significant part of overall economic activity.

Lithuania has free trade agreements in place with the EU, EFTA, with Latvia and Estonia, and with most of the member states of CEFTA as well as with Turkey and the Ukraine. On 31 May, 2001 Lithuania officially became a member of the WTO.

The economic situation of the country has recently undergone a thorough analysis at different levels and this has been widely discussed in the mass media. In the article 'One of the Best Prepared' (Vilpišauskas, 2003) the evaluation of Lithuania's economic development is based on the documents issued by the European Commission. On 5 November 2003, the European Commission presented its *Comprehensive Monitoring Reports* on the preparedness of candidate countries to join the European Union. Lithuania stood out as the second Central European applicant, after Slovenia, in terms of the lowest number of issues which still cause serious concern. The report noted the particularly strong macroeconomic performance. According to the forecasts by the European commission, released in the autumn of 2003, the country's macroeconomic indicators are expected to be more favourable than in other acceding countries, and even some current member states.

Macroeconomic indicators from the year 2002 manifest signs of stable growth. The highest rise was observed in economic activities related to production and consumption, i.e., manufacturing industry, generation of electricity, gas and water supply, construction and wholesale and retail trade.

Table 1. MAIN ECONOMIC INDICATORS IN LITHUANIA

	2001 2 nd half	2002 1 st half	2002 2 nd half	2003 1 st half	Yearly change, %
Population, thousands	3475.6	3468.7	3462.5	3454.2	-0.4
Employment, thousands	1330.7	1425.6	1398.9	1478.8	-7.7
Average monthly earnings,LTL	1077.4	1101.2	1136.3	1144.6	3.9
Unemployment rate,%	12.5	11.2	10.7	10.1	-9.0
GDP at current prices, mln LTL	25030	23990	26768	25723	7.2
Change of GDP, %	7.4	6.1	7.3	8.0	
National budget revenue, mln. LTL	3214.7	4437.6	4462.7	4394.8	-1.0
National budget expenditure, mlnLTL	3527.0	4610.3	5401.5	5146.3	11.6
Budget deficit (compared to GDP),%	-1.2	-0.7	-3.5	-2.9	
Inflation, %	0.2	-0.7	-0.3	-0.1	
Industrial production sold, mln LTL	13465	12743	13591	14407	13.1
Export, million LTL	9301	9699	10323	10323	6.4
Import, million LTL	13394	13537	15025	13852	2.3
Direct foreign investment, mln LTL	10662	12049	13184	13852	6.3
State debt, million LTL	9856	10437	9178	8977	- 14.0

Department of Statistics, 2003

As may be seen from the above table, the country's GDP continued to grow and in the first half of 2003 totaled LTL 25.7 billion. As against the first half of 2002, the 1st half of the year 2003 witnessed the most vigorous rise in electricity, gas and water supply, construction, mining and quarrying, manufacturing, wholesale and retail trade as well as in transport, storage and communications. The specific role of agriculture, hunting and forestry was shrinking. A reduction in the specific part played by agriculture is an on-going feature and is justified in terms of restructurisation of the entire country's economy.

Both capital domestic investment and foreign direct investment are important factors in economic development. Capital investment compared with the first half of 2002 over the 1st half of 2003 augmented by 4.8 per cent. The highest increases were observed in such economic activities as hotels and restaurants (as much as 2.3 times), transport and storage (40%), manufacturing (18%).

Foreign investment

Lithuania's market has been attracting numerous foreign investors in different spheres of the national economy. The share of foreign capital in banking has demonstrated impressive growth: in 1996 foreigners controlled only 16% of capital in Lithuania's banks, while in April 2002 their share reached 89%.

At the very beginning of the privatization period foreign investors had the possibility of participating in the privatisation process for cash. Some well-known international companies came to Lithuania during the first stage of privatization, such as Phillip Morris S. A., Kraft General Foods International, Inc., etc. It was important to transfer from potential investors the know-how into the companies as well as to attract the contribution of investors to the Lithuanian economy.

Information about the privatization process and new foreign investments is regularly updated on the website of the State Property Fund (www.vtf.lt).

At the beginning of 2003 foreign direct investment (FDI) in Lithuania amounted to LTL 14,017.8 mln, showing a half-annual rise of 6.3 per cent in volume. Within the FDI structure the bulk of investment is divided as follows: manufacturing industry (28.8 %), financial intermediation (19.9%) and trade (16.7%) as well as post and communications (14%). Most of the investment within the manufacturing industry is found in the food industry (38.2%), the oil industry (20.2%) and the textile industry (8.2%).

At the end of 2003 the key investor countries were Denmark (16.5% of all FDI), Sweden (14.9%), Estonia (12.5%), Germany (9.5%), the USA (8.3%) and Finland (7.1%).

Population and labour force

Lithuania's population has been essentially static in recent years, with a decline of 0.3% between 1990 and 2000. In the early part of the decade, a small excess of births over deaths was offset by net emigration, mainly to the former USSR republics. More recently, deaths have exceeded births by a small margin, but net migration has also fallen to very low levels. The number of children aged under 15 in the population has fallen by about 100,000 over the last decade, while the number of persons aged 65 and over has risen by a similar amount. The working-age population (aged 15-64) has been static, at just under 2.5 million. The demographic outlook is for continued stability of the working-age population over the next decade.

Available data suggest that average educational levels in the labour force are relatively high in Lithuania. The 2000 Labour Force Survey indicates that 40.7% have post-secondary education, 38% have secondary education, and 21% have basic education. However, qualification levels are lower among the younger age-groups in the labour force.

During the transitional period to market economy, rapid changes took place in the economic structure, which in turn impacted on employment trends. The employed population decreased a little over 11%, during the first half of the 1990s, whereas GDP fell by 40%. Employment started to rise again from the middle of the decade, with another sharp fall in 2000. Starting with the year 2001, the situation has been steadily improving (see Table 1).

The ongoing restructuring of business activities meant that the structural unemployment problem became acute, however, the unemployment rate showed a steady reduction in the course of the year 2003.. According to the Labour Force Survey (LFS) data (2003), the size of the labour force increased by 3.6 per cent, while the number of the employed grew by 3.7 per cent. According to the Labour Exchange data, at the end of 2003 the number of unemployed was 17.7% lower than in the same period in the previous year, and the number of unemployed females was relatively lower than that of males.

The employment structure by employment status showed almost no changes over the year, i.e., employers and employees made up about 17 per cent, while hired employees accounted for 79 percent. Other employees were family members helping in activities.

TABLE 2. Employment by sector according to Census 2001 (updated 11.08.2003)

	Employed	%
Total	1,273,820	100
Agriculture, hunting, forestry	156,608	12.3
Fishery	1,535	0.1
Mining and Quarrying	2,939	0.2
Processing industry	23,0563	18.1
Power, gas and water supply	31,298	2.5
Construction	60,447	4.7
Wholesale and retail trade, vehicle and appliance repairs	172,800	13.6
Hotels and restaurants	20,625	1.6
Transport, storage and communication	78,777	6.2
Financial intermediation	14,060	1.1
Real estate, leasing and other business activities	45,882	3.6
Public management and protection, social security	82,606	6.5
Education	135,730	10.7
Health care and social work	89,713	7.0
Other municipal, social and personal services	47,005	3.7
Self-employed, with hired workers	759	0.1
International organisations and their branches	339	0.0
Not defined	102,134	8.0

Department of Statistics, 2003

Major changes in the sectoral composition of employment took place in the early years of the transition. Between 1991 and 1994, agriculture's share of total employment rose, while the share of industry (including construction) fell from 40% to 28%, and the services share rose from 43% to 48%. Agricultural employment grew in absolute terms in 1992–1993 as some of those displaced from other sectors, unable to find alternative employment in the cities, moved to rural areas and became engaged in farming.

In the middle of the decade, approximately in 1995, changes in the sectoral structure of employment slowed down, and employment in agriculture started falling. As a result of these changes, in 2000 18% of the employed were engaged in agriculture, 27% in industry, and 55% in the services sector. As compared to the EU, the biggest difference relates to agriculture, whose employment share is four times higher than the EU level. Employment in the services sector remains relatively low as compared to the EU average.

Employment by occupation

In 2000, 22% of those in employment were working in professional and technical occupations, and 8% held managerial jobs. Skilled and semi-skilled manual jobs accounted for 26% of the employed, with a further 16% being skilled workers in agriculture. Unqualified workers accounted for 10%. Only one-sixth of workers were engaged in the clerical, sales and service occupations. There has been little change in this broad occupational pattern in recent years. Clerical and service jobs still account for a much lower proportion of overall employment than is typical in EU countries.

Employment in the private sector

Substantial changes took place in the employment structure by type of ownership during the 1990s. Initially, although overall employment was falling, the opposite was happening in the private sector – where employment rose approximately 2.5 times from 1990 to 1995. Thereafter, jobs growth in the private sector slowed. However, rapid changes continued in the employment structure due to the ongoing decrease in the number of public sector employees. Overall, the private sector's share in total employment rose from 22% in 1990 to 68% in 1999.

Of those who are unemployed, the majority are to be found among unskilled workers and persons with vocational training. However, higher education does not automatically ensure success in the labour market. The surveys conducted by the Labour Exchange show that as the general unemployment rate changes, the number of unemployed with higher education also changes in the same direction.

Tertiary Education Graduates among Lithuanian Unemployed

According to the study “*Evaluation of the Lithuanian Unemployed Tertiary Education Graduates*”(Okuneviciute-Neveauskiene, Pocius, 2003), the percentage of young people with higher education who are unemployed is likely to increase as with the spread of higher education the number of graduates is rising .

Under market economy conditions, the importance of a qualified labour force with higher education has been increasing. However, due to insufficient wages and salaries and appropriate job vacancies , a lot of university graduates emigrate to other countries.

Judging by the results of the *2002 Survey on unemployed with higher education* conducted by the Labour and Social Surveys Institute, among the unemployed with higher education in 2002, a quite considerable majority were those graduating in the years 2001 and 2002 – as high as 27 per cent. Analysis of the survey results shows that respondents without experience in employment indicated more frequently that the reason for non-employment ‘was not looking for a job’ than persons who had previously been employed. Thus, it can be said that persons not previously employed are trapped in unemployment: they have no work experience and are more passive than previously employed graduates.

With regard to different fields of study, the answers of the survey respondents showed that the highest unemployment rates among 2002 graduates were to be found in engineering (18.9%), teacher training (16%), humanities (12.1%), business and administration (11.5%), social and behavioural sciences (9.2%), while the lowest were among journalists, information and health care specialists (0.8%).

The authors of the survey draw the conclusion from their work that a ‘tertiary education diploma does not automatically ensure employment, it is just a prerequisite for finding an appropriate job. It is of importance to develop skills linking higher education and actual work, diligence and dutifulness.’(2003)

The position of tertiary education graduates is clearly outlined in the article “*Lithuanian Higher Education in the Context of the European Union*”(Šemeta, 2003):

“Lithuania by part of population aged 25-64 with higher education, complies with the average of the EU, that is 22 per cent of the population in this age group both in Lithuania and in the EU have attained higher education. In addition, Lithuania substantially overtakes the EU by the number of population with secondary education and, respectively, it has a lesser population with basic education. Thus, the general education level of potential labour market participants is higher than the average in the EU.” However, later the same author notes that “In Lithuania the unemployment rate of persons with higher education is the highest among all the European countries for which data is available. (...) When analyzing data of the most recent years, it becomes apparent that the situation calls for certain concern and anxiety. An ever increasing number of young persons add to the number of the unemployed. It is evident that the qualifications of young people with higher education, their structure by profession do not match the present needs of the labour market. Consequently, more young people become unemployed.”

2. New linguistic demands in the private and public sectors resulting from European integration and globalisation: languages and skills /competences

The European integration and globalisation processes of recent years have set new requirements and demands in the area of languages. More foreign language specialists are needed in different branches of the country’s economy, and in

many cases specialists with good knowledge of foreign languages are at a premium.

Commissioned by the Ministry of Education and Science, the Labour and Social Research Institute carried out a survey among 600 enterprises/institutions (employers) and 480 employees- tertiary education graduates, aimed at determining the needs and expectations of the Lithuanian labour market on the one hand, and university graduates on the other. The findings of the survey are summarised in the study "Competitiveness of University Graduates in the Labour Market in the Context of Labour Supply and Demand." (Gruzevskis et al.,2003)

This study shows that a large number of employers (135) are not satisfied with the level of the graduates' practical training. According to them, the following aspects of tertiary education need to be improved:

- application of theoretical knowledge in practice;
- adjustment of professional qualifications to the needs of the labour market and the economy;
- updating the curricula and teaching methods;
- in addition to professional qualifications, more attention should be given to **foreign languages**, psychology and professional ethics, the basics of communication and team work.

Judging by the graduate-employees' answers, most graduates of the humanities (72%) think they have received sufficient training at University, while only 52.1% engineering graduates are of the view that that the university curriculum provided sufficient professional training.

In general, the greatest drawbacks in university training pointed out by the 1996-2002 graduate-respondents are that they lack **foreign language proficiency (61.7%)**, the basics of law (50%) and professional-technical knowledge (41.7%).

According to the survey findings, over a half of the responding employees would like to improve their qualifications by attending qualification/requalification courses. The greatest demand expressed by the respondents was improving skills in:

Foreign languages – 28.9%

Management and business administration – 22.6%

Professional qualifications – 15.6%

Psychology – 5.6%

Employers were of a similar opinion. According to them, their employees needed additional training in :

Management and business administration – 34.3%

Professional qualifications – 24.5%

Foreign languages – 23.8%

Information technologies – 21.7%

Psychology, ethics – 16.8%

Consequently, the need to improve foreign language skills is considered as vital by a substantial proportion of respondents on both the employer and the employee sides and the significance of foreign languages is highly appreciated in the Lithuanian labour market, even though there is no specific study on what concrete qualifications or competences are needed.

3. In regard to non-language graduates, what formal or informal linguistic and intercultural qualifications – languages/skills and competences – are sought after on the national labour market?

Since the first privatization stage, different foreign businesses have been investing their capital in Lithuania by setting up branches of their companies or starting joint ventures. The majority of the staff in such companies are local specialists, therefore naturally the question of the language competences of the personnel arises.

In order to find out about the language policies in international companies operating in Lithuania, representatives of TELECOM (T), OMNITEL (O) and KRAFT FOODS LITHUANIA (K), CASTROL (C) and DEGUSSA (D) were interviewed. The respondents were asked the following questions:

1. Is foreign language proficiency a compulsory prerequisite for getting a job in your company?
2. Is foreign language proficiency an important factor in promotion?
3. Are certificates for language tests/examinations required?
4. Are foreign language courses organised for the company employees?
5. What language skills are most necessary in your job – oral communication, reading, writing?

The answers show that in all the companies mentioned above proficiency in a foreign language (mainly English) is required for administrative jobs, either formally (O, K, C, D) or informally (T). In most cases the interview takes place in English.

Fluency in English is a decisive factor in promotion, in selecting candidates for training sessions abroad, which would lead to higher posts. And naturally, the higher the position, the more contacts with foreigners, so if you do not know the language you cannot communicate with them. However, when there is a sufficient number of staff fluent in English, competition in other spheres of professionalism starts.

The respondents say there are no formal requirements for a language certificate, because it is not the certificate but practical skills that matter most.

The companies invest in training their employees, different in-service language courses are organised, and valuable specialists can even be sent to extensive language courses abroad.

When asked about the needed language skills, the respondents stress the importance of all the language skills, and communication skills above all.

Summing up the interviews, it may be said that the companies expect the applicants to be fluent in at least one foreign language (usually English) and appreciate the significance of language skills when promoting employees, even though there are no formal requirements or standards for testing the level of language proficiency. Foreign language courses are usually organized on a regular basis at the company's expense.

Obviously, an organised system of staff training of this type is available and affordable only in large and prosperous companies, while smaller and not so successful businesses often seek external translation/interpretation services, which in many cases have been traditionally provided by philologists/foreign language teachers.

Responding to the increased need for qualified translators and interpreters of technical language, a one-year programme of professional studies in technical translation was introduced in Kaunas University of Technology in 1998 and in the year 2000 a Bachelor degree programme of technical translation was started. The new programme provides an integrated study of philology and technology. The aim of the programme is to train skilled translators/interpreters of technical literature possessing both engineering education and translation/ interpretation skills.

4. In regard to language graduates (Bachelor and Master) outside language-related industries and professions, what formal or informal linguistic and intercultural qualifications – languages/skills and competences – are known to enhance career prospects?

So far, there seems to be no research done in this area in Lithuania and no registration of the former graduates' jobs has been carried out by the higher educational institutions, therefore it is difficult to trace the language graduates' careers. However, in order to get an answer to the question above, 12 language graduates (graduation years 1971-1996) working in non language-related spheres were asked to reflect upon the useful skills and competences acquired during their studies.

The most frequently quoted skills were:

- International communication skills, understanding of cultural differences (11 answers)
- Writing skills (10 answers)
- Constructive criticism, ability to edit and assess others' writing (9 answers)
- Ability to interpret, compare facts and make conclusions (6 answers)
- Public speaking skills (5 answers)

Three respondents stressed the fact, however, that in the present situation employers prefer a specialist with good foreign language proficiency level to a

language specialist who has to be trained in a certain area to become a qualified worker (e.g., administrative work, tour guiding, trade).

5. Validation of learning, assessment, certification – what does the labour market recognise and value?

In the context of Lithuania's integration into the European Union and globalisation of social processes, the importance of foreign language proficiency is steadily growing and tertiary studies are oriented towards training high-quality specialists with an adequate level of competence for international communication.

The institutions of higher education in Lithuania are granted considerable autonomy and each of them designs its own curriculum. However, foreign language courses are part of the core curriculum in all institutions of tertiary education for all the specialities. 1st and 2nd year students of any Bachelor studies programme continue studying the first foreign language they studied at school and have to attain a certain level of language proficiency set by each institution (upper intermediate to advanced). After they have reached the required level for the first foreign language, students may usually choose a second foreign language or a more specialized first foreign language course as an optional subject.

Language courses provided in tertiary education are oriented towards academic and professional communication competence. An average of 8 credits for compulsory foreign language modules in non-language studies is offered at different universities (Agricultural University of Lithuania, Kaunas University of Technology, Vilnius Gediminas Technical University, Vilnius University, Vytautas Magnus University, etc.)

Since the goal of secondary education in Lithuania is to reach a standard in the school leaving examination in foreign languages corresponding to the European Framework levels B1-B2, the aim of teaching languages in tertiary education is to attain language proficiency corresponding the European Framework levels B2-C1, although each university has different terms for the evaluation of the language proficiency level.

At present attempts are being made to unify the system of foreign language proficiency assessment in tertiary education. In 2003 a group of experienced university language teachers from the three Baltic states (10 institutions of higher education) started a Leonardo da Vinci project QUALSPELL (Quality Assurance in Language for Specific Purposes). The project aims to establish unified skills-based tertiary level Language for Specific Purposes examination requirements and assessment criteria recognized by the ministries of Education in line with the recommendations of the European Ministers of Education.

So far, the diploma of tertiary education has also served as an indication that the person has completed the course in foreign language required by the tertiary institution in question (and has been accepted by the market as such).

Students planning studies abroad have an opportunity to take an internationally recognised test in one of the authorized testing centres in Vilnius (TOEFL, IELTS, CPE, etc.).

6. Communication and co-operation between higher education institutions/public authorities and the world of work (private and public employers, the social partners, professional associations, etc.) – aims and structures

Lithuania's tertiary education has been open to innovations since the first years of independence. Lithuanian universities were among the first in Europe to introduce a three-stage studies system: programmes for Bachelor's, Master's and Doctor's degrees.

Communication and co-operation between higher educational institutions and the labour market has been an important issue discussed at different meetings and conferences.

In September 2002 the conference "What specialists does the Lithuanian business and economy need?" organized by the Lithuanian Industrialists' Confederation, Students' Union, Knowledge Economy Forum and Lithuanian Rectors' Conference, summed up their discussions in the following recommendations to the Ministry of Education and Science:

- The Ministry of Education and Science should take appropriate measures to implement competitiveness among higher education institutions by applying financial levers and considering the final result (employability); it should assure that all the decisions in the area of education and science are based on thorough analysis of the current state and the world experience.
- The enterprises providing placement for students' practical work should be guaranteed tax deductions. The university faculty involved in teaching special subjects should get practical training in industry, business or services.
- All the curricula should be revised together with employers and adjusted to the needs of the market. Social partners should get more widely involved in the university management and specialist certification.
- All the links present in training and educating future specialists (secondary schools, tertiary education institutions, employers, students, Ministry of Education and Science as well as other government bodies) should coordinate their views and base them on reliable analytical studies and the world experience. (Konferencijos 'Kokio specialisto reikia Lietuvos verslui ir ūkiui?' išvados ministerijoms, 2002)

On 20 April, 2004, the Rectors of the Lithuanian Universities and the Lithuanian Industrialists' Confederation signed a declaration which states that:

- Representatives of industrial enterprises should be active participants in university management and members of university councils. Universities should invite CEOs and field specialists to deliver lectures or cycles of lectures, to participate in the Master's thesis defence or the design of new programmes.
- Industrial enterprises ought to provide placement for students and training for the faculty; university laboratories have to be supplied with samples of manufactured equipment. Industrialists' associations should establish scholarships for students and enterprises should sign contracts with universities as well as with students – their future employees.
- Universities and industrial enterprises ought to co-operate in national and international projects and jointly implement the project outcomes in Lithuania's economy. Universities and industrial enterprises should form common data banks where the universities would present their suggestions for industry and enterprises would define their needs. Bachelor's and Master's theses ought to analyse relevant economic and manufacturing issues. The Rectors' Conference and the industrialists' Confederation ought to initiate laws stimulating integration of industry and research. (Lietuvos universitetų rektorių konferencijos ir Lietuvos pramonininkų konfederacijos deklaracija, 2004)

Following the recommendations, the Universities of Lithuania are enhancing co-operation with the world of labour. An increasing number of social partners participate in University decision making (at least 50% of all the University Senate members are social partners), universities sign agreements of co-operation with the leading companies of the country.

In the year 2002 the strategy of establishing Research and Technology Parks (RTP) was worked out at the state level. These parks develop their activities by integrating university studies, research, innovation and business. The most successful among them are operating in Vilnius and Kaunas. (Švietimo ir mokslo ministerija, 2003)

One of the largest universities – Kaunas University of Technology (KTU) - is an initiator of a research-intensive enterprise environment. In 1998, KTU Business Incubator was established, the first project of such type in Lithuania. Performance results have revealed effectiveness and capacity of the project. At present 85 % of the Business Incubator's premises are filled with recently established technology-oriented companies contributing significantly to a favorable business environment in the region.

KTU also participates in management of Kaunas High-Tech and IT Science Park, Recreation, Tourism and Sport Science Park, creation of an industrial zone "Technopol" in Kaunas, development of a project "Youth Valley" in Elektrėnai town. Together with partners from abroad a virtual business incubator is being established (following the tentative project of Leonardo da Vinci), which will provide consultations for those who start their business, especially in the area of high technologies, and will be useful to the University while developing the

intercourses with innovative firms of Kaunas region and the whole country. The University intensifies cooperation with business institutions by participation in the project SINO — “Support for the Innovation Structure in Lithuania”.

7. Institutional, regional and national career services

No information has been found.

8. Process recommendations: measures to be taken to bring about improved consultation and co-operation between higher education and the world of work

Measures to be taken at the State level:

The resolutions adopted at the top-level conferences should be implemented in life.

Innovative projects initiated by universities and social partners should receive appropriate financial support.

Measures to be taken at European level

Examples of good practice should be shared among the European states.

Co-operation among European universities and labour markets should be further developed.

9. Process recommendations: measures to be taken to survey higher education graduates and to provide careers advice in regard to linguistic and intercultural requirements.

Measures to be taken at the institutional and State level

Universities should maintain closer contacts with their graduates. Graduates should be provided consultations by the university.

Regular surveys should be conducted to record the graduates' feedback on their studies as well as the employers' evaluation of the graduates' skills and competences.

Recommendations for improving the quality of studies should be based on these surveys.

Measures to be taken at the European level

Information should be exchanged between different states

Common problems should be discussed at an international level

10. Initial overarching recommendations regarding learning outcomes and academic profiles

The curricula for both language and non-language graduates should be adjusted to the requirements of the labour market.

The standards regarding learning outcomes should be discussed at the national and the European level.

Recommendations for adjusting the curricula to the needs of the labour market should be worked out on the basis of thorough market analysis.

11. Initial recommendations regarding validation of learning, assessment and certification of linguistic and intercultural skills and competences

A unified system of assessment of linguistic skills and competences based on the European Language Portfolio should be developed and implemented at the State and European level.

A diploma supplement indicating the graduate's linguistic competences should be introduced.

12. Needs for future projects, studies and research

A thorough analysis of the status quo of language studies in Lithuanian tertiary education as well as the linguistic competences of university graduates should be conducted on a wider scale.

Projects oriented towards developing self-study and life-long learning skills.

Projects on integration of language studies and other subjects.

Common university projects with social partners and market representatives.

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