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**Committee of the Regions**

# Credible, growing and open Europe

The Committee of the Regions and  
the Lithuanian Presidency of the Council of  
the European Union



ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL AUTHORITIES  
IN LITHUANIA

EUROPEAN UNION



**Committee of the Regions**

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**Ramón Luis Valcárcel Siso**  
President of the Committee of the Regions

# Committee of the Regions to support Lithuanian Presidency activities at local and regional level

Lithuania is taking over the EU presidency at a most economically challenging juncture as these are hard times for Europeans. In Europe, the key skills for generating productive growth are typically to be found at regional and local level, i.e. education, training, environmental protection, transport, innovation, research and development. So there is a need to promote measures to restore confidence and it is crucial to involve local and regional authorities.

I am truly convinced that the Lithuanian Presidency of the Council of the European Union will play a role in promoting employment and securing financial sustainability, as it seeks continuous economic growth and competitiveness for the EU. The Committee of the Regions supports progress on restructuring Europe's Economic and Monetary Union, Banking Union, and the Stability and Growth Pact, taking into account the effects of these developments on local and regional financing capacity.

Closely linked to these economic and monetary advances is the need to provide the Union with a strong multiannual budget. The Lithuanian presidency will work to finalise the Multiannual Financial Framework (2014-2020) regulations in order to spur economic growth in the EU. The Committee of the Regions will be monitoring the upcoming compromise on the legislative package for cohesion policy and we will also be keeping an eye on the planning process for the next funding period (2014 – 2020), in order to ensure that the principles of multilevel governance and partnership are upheld. In this regard, we will also be issuing local and regional authority recommendations for better spending under cohesion policy post-2013.

When it comes to regional cooperation, the Committee of the Regions welcomes the efforts of the Lithuanian presidency to implement the revised EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region and enhance regional cooperation so as to bring it more into line with the Europe 2020 strategy. I would also like to underline the importance for local and regional authorities of the external dimension. The Conference of the Local and Regional Authorities for the Eastern Partnership (CORLEAP) will contribute to the summit in autumn 2013, highlighting the importance of reinforcing local democracy by means of public participation.

The crisis has demonstrated how interlinked our economies are. One aspect our economies have in common is the crucial role of energy efficiency and security. The Committee of the Regions is convinced that by enhancing this market and consolidating the energy infrastructure, creating a common internal energy market and implementing the EU's common external energy policy, the European Union as a whole will be strengthened. For that reason, in close cooperation with the Lithuanian

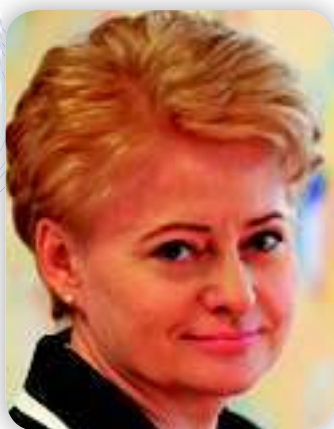


government, the Committee of the Regions is looking forward to organising an EU 2020 forum in Vilnius in September to analyse the energy efficiency flagship initiative.

Finally, I would like to say once again that I am fully confident that the Lithuanian presidency of Council of the European Union is committed to seeking solutions to the challenges facing the European Union by taking on board the political experience of the regions and cities.

**Ramón Luis Valcárcel Siso**

President of the Committee of the Regions



**Dalia Grybauskaitė**  
President of the Republic of  
Lithuania

# Strong local and regional governments for a stronger Europe

Lithuania has the task and the honour of presiding over the Council of the European Union at a very challenging time. Europe must now push on with decisive and consistent decisions to bring an end to the financial crisis and establish the guidelines for its economic growth and development for the years to come.

When striving to achieve our common goals, however, it is very important not to forget ordinary Europeans. The European Union's ultimate goal is to ensure their prosperity and, in doing so, to uphold their trust in Europe. Leaders of Europe's nations and institutions must listen to Europeans, hear their most urgent concerns, and help put their initiatives and ideas into effect. It is therefore especially meaningful that 2013 has been declared European Citizens Year.

Self-government and communities play a pivotal role in bringing Europe closer to each and every citizen. With the accession of Croatia, the European Union will bring together not only 28 Member States but also almost one hundred thousand local authorities. It is self-government that directly implements more than three quarters of the *acquis communautaire* – making it the key player in achieving common European goals.

In this context, the Committee of the Regions plays a major role as a European advisory body representing sub-national governments. Consultations with the Committee's members – elected regional and local leaders – create the conditions for improving European lawmaking, take into account the specific needs of Europe's smaller regions, and tap their potential.

Targeted work and small successful projects at local level can lead to major accomplishments. For example, renovating residential and public sector buildings will not only cut costs, but will also contribute to environmental protection and energy efficiency. Using local resources will advance energy security, while improving regional living and working conditions, strengthening cohesion and stimulating competitiveness.

The history of Lithuania's local self-government goes back more than six centuries. After the restoration of Lithuanian independence in 1990, the first independent elections held were for local municipal councils. As the key actor in building statehood, Lithuania's local self-government continues to be an active player in the European integration process and an important partner in implementing the EU's cohesion, rural development and other policies.

When I travel across Lithuania and meet with local communities, I observe the positive changes taking place in our country. What is especially important is that EU support directly affects our people's lives. Modernised infrastructure and the availability of funds for local initiatives has made local communities more dynamic and helped them to take action without waiting for specific decisions or instructions from anywhere else. These



developments clearly demonstrate that the European Union does not only improve our living standards, it also promotes a European identity.

I am glad to see that municipalities offer new opportunities for citizens and communities to put their ideas into effect, achieve their goals and improve their well-being. Self-government is the tier of governance closest to the people; it is therefore the best placed to deal with people's problems and concerns as well as to listen to their ideas and questions.

Strong and effective self-government promotes economic development in Europe as a whole – which is a top priority on the Lithuanian EU presidency's agenda. Therefore, as we seek to boost economic growth and create new jobs, we support the strongest possible cooperation with and between local and regional self-governments, as well as their inclusion in every single stage of decision-making and implementation.

The vision of Europe's future begins at local level. Only Europeans themselves, active communities as well as strong local and regional self-governments can work together to build the credible, growing and open Europe that we all want.

**Dalia Grybauskaitė**

President of the Republic of Lithuania

## 03 Understanding the Committee of the Regions



**Brussels headquarters of the Committee of the Regions**  
(Jacques Delors building)

Local and regional authorities are responsible for implementing the majority of EU policy with around two-thirds of EU legislation put into practice at sub-national level. That is why the Committee of the Regions (CoR) was set up in 1994 to give local and regional authorities an opportunity to express a view on proposed EU legislation so that it is adapted more closely to citizens' needs.

The European treaties stipulate that the Committee of the Regions must be consulted whenever proposals are likely to have an impact at local or regional level. In practice, this means that the CoR is consulted on most European legislation.

The European Commission, European Parliament and Council may also consult the CoR outside these areas if they see local or regional implications in their work. The CoR can also put its priorities onto the EU's agenda by issuing own-initiative opinions and drafting reports on subjects of interest. The CoR also has the right to question the Commission, Parliament and Council if they fail to consider its views and, in extreme cases, the right to go to the European Court of Justice if it believes it has not been correctly consulted.

### How does the Committee of the Regions work?

The Committee is made up of 353 members and the same number of alternates, who are nominated by the Member States and appointed by the European Council for a renewable five-year term.

Members must hold elected office or be politically accountable to an elected assembly, so those who lose office at home automatically lose their seat on the Committee of the Regions. Each country can choose how it selects its members and delegations often reflect a political and geographical balance and are taken from both regional and local levels where appropriate.

#### The key treaties that have helped give local and regional authorities a voice in Europe

**Maastricht Treaty (1992)** – Established the CoR and stated that it must be consulted on economic and social cohesion, trans-European networks, health, education and culture.

**Treaty of Amsterdam (1997)** – Set out a further five areas where the CoR must be consulted: employment policy, social policy, the environment, vocational training and transport.

**Lisbon Treaty (2009)** – Made it legally binding that the European Parliament, Commission and the Council must consult the Committee when making laws which may have a regional impact. Climate change and energy were added to areas where it was mandatory for the CoR to be consulted.



The CoR members elect their own president – currently Ramón Luis Valcárcel Siso who is also the President of the region of Murcia in Spain.

The Committee's work is shared between six commissions:

- Territorial and Cohesion Policy (COTER)
- Economic and Social Policy (ECOS)
- Environment, Climate Change and Energy (ENVE)
- Education, Youth, Culture and Research (EDUC)
- Citizenship, Governance, Institutional and External Affairs (CIVEX)
- Natural Resources (NAT)

The commissions are composed of CoR members who draft opinions on proposed EU legislation. The draft opinions are voted on by all the CoR members during one of the six plenary sessions that take place each year. Adopted opinions are then circulated to the other EU institutions and other relevant parties contributing to the EU's decision-making process.

Five political groups are also represented at the Committee of the Regions:

- The European People's Party (EPP)
- The Party of European Socialists (PES)
- The Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe (ALDE)
- The European Alliance (EA)
- The European Conservatives and Reformists Group (ECR)



**Committee of the Regions**  
in plenary

## Bringing the European Union closer to its citizens

Though much of the Committee's work lies in its involvement in the legislative process, its role does not stop there. The CoR's members live and work on a day-to-day basis in their regions and cities allowing them to stay in touch with the concerns of the people they represent. This puts them in a position to bring these views to the heart of the EU when they come to Brussels.

The CoR raises awareness about the regions by organising conferences, events and seminars and allowing members to promote their work, share knowledge and further engage with EU politics.

### The Committee of the Regions' three guiding principles

**Subsidiarity Principle:** Decisions should be taken at the level of government that best serves the public interest. The EU must not pursue initiatives that would be better carried out by national, regional or local authorities.

**Proximity Principle:** All levels of government must work as transparently as possible and as closely as possible with the public so that citizens know who is responsible for what and how they can make their views known.

**Partnership Principle:** European, national, regional and local authorities must work together throughout the decisionmaking process and in implementing relevant EU policy.

## 04 The Lithuanian Delegation to the Committee of the Regions

### Lithuanian Delegation – Full members

The Lithuanian members of the Committee of the Regions are nominated by the Lithuanian Government on the proposals of the Lithuanian regions and local authorities.

Nominations must take account of geographical and gender balance and also take into account representation of political parties in municipal councils. All regions are to be represented within the national delegation to the Committee of the Regions.



**Odetta Žerlauskienė**

*Council member of Skuodas District*

- Member of the CoR since 2008
- Member of the CIVEX and EDUC commissions
- ALDE group (Lithuanian Labour Party)



**Daiva Matonienė**

*Council member of Šiauliai City*

- Member of the CoR since 2012
- Member of the COTER and ENVE commissions
- Vice-President of the ECR group (Lithuanian Order and Justice Party)



**Virginijus Komskis**

*Mayor of Pagėgiai*

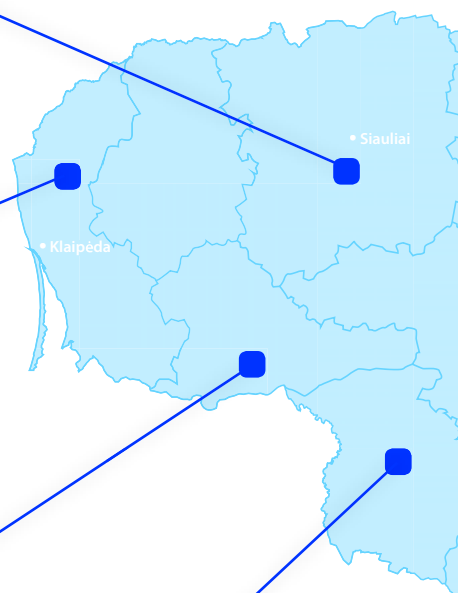
- Vice-President of the Association of Local Authorities of Lithuania
- Member of the CoR since 2004
- Member of the NAT and EDUC commissions
- EA group (Lithuanian Order and Justice Party)



**Audrius Bielskus**

*Council member of Kazlų Rūda*

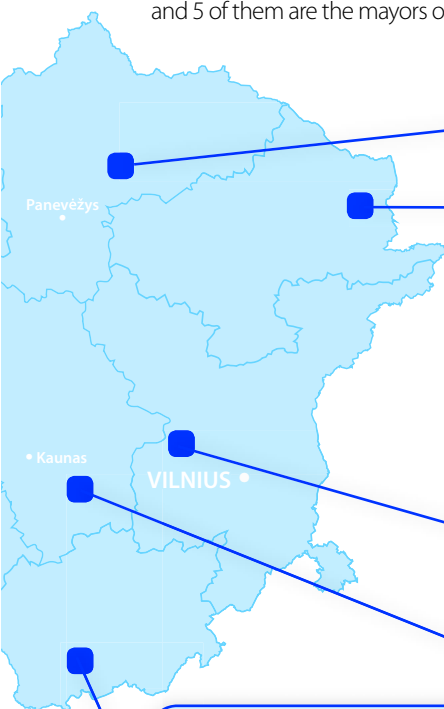
- Member of the CoR since 2012
- Member of the NAT and ENVE commissions
- ALDE group (Lithuanian Labour Party)



### Members of the Lithuanian Delegation to the Committee of the Regions

Lithuania is divided up into 60 municipalities. Members of municipal councils are elected in direct elections. Any municipal council member can become a member of the Lithuanian delegation to the Committee of the Regions. The appointment process consists of two stages: candidate full and alternate members are selected by 10 regional development councils and proposed to the Association of Local Authorities of Lithuania, which then assesses the candidates in accordance with pre-defined selection criteria and submits its list to the Lithuanian Government for approval. The selection takes account of the principles of proportional political representation, gender equality and geographical balance.

The present Lithuanian delegation for the 2010–2014 term of office consists of 9 full members and 9 alternate members. The full members of the delegation include 7 men and 2 women, and 5 of them are the mayors of municipalities.



**Povilas Žagunis**

*Mayor of Panevėžys District*

- Member of the CoR since 2004
- Member of the EDUC and NAT commissions
- EA group (Lithuanian Popular Peasant Union)



**Arnoldas Abramavičius**

*Mayor of Zarasai District*

- Member of the CoR since 2004
- President of the Lithuanian delegation
- Member of the Bureau
- Member of the CIVEX and ECOS commissions
- Member of CAFA
- EPP group (Homeland Union-Lithuanian Christian Democrats)



**Ričardas Malinauskas**

*Mayor of Druskininkai*

- President of the Association of Local Authorities of Lithuania
- Member of the CoR since 2004
- Member of the NAT and ENVE commissions
- PES group (Lithuanian Social Democratic Party)



**Andrius Kupčinskas**

*Mayor of Kaunas City*

- Member of the CoR since 2008
- Member of the Bureau (alternate)
- Member of the COTER and ECOS commissions
- EPP group (Homeland Union-Lithuanian Christian Democrats)



**Gediminas Paviržis**

*Council member of Vilnius District*

- Member of the CoR since 2004
- Member of the COTER and CIVEX commissions
- Vice-President of the Lithuanian Delegation, Bureau member
- PES group (Lithuanian Social Democratic Party)

### Lithuanian delegation – alternate members

Alternate members must hold an electoral mandate in a municipal council. They are appointed for a five-year term and act as substitutes for full members of the Delegation when the latter are unable to attend CoR meetings.



#### **Vincas Kapočius**

*Council member of Trakai District*

- Member of the CoR since 2012
- Member of the CIVEX and ECOS commissions
- ALDE group (Lithuanian Liberal and Centre Union)



#### **Stasė Skutulienė**

*Council member of Šilutė District*

- Member of the CoR since 2006
- Member of the CIVEX and EDUC commissions
- PES group (Lithuanian Social Democratic Party)



#### **Donatas Kaubrys**

*Telšiai District Council (resigned on 5 April 2013)*

- Member of the CoR since 2004 (resigned 5 April 2013)
- Member of the COTER and ENVE commissions
- ALDE group (Lithuanian Order and Justice Party)



#### **Viktoras Trofimovas**

*Council member of Panevėžys City*

- Member of the CoR since 2008
- Member of the EDUC and ENVE commissions
- EPP group (Homeland Union-Lithuanian Christian Democrats)



#### **Algirdas Bagušinskas**

*Council member of Vilkaviškis District*

- Member of the CoR since 2008
- Member of the NAT and EDUC commissions
- PES group (Lithuanian Social Democratic Party)



#### **Vytautas Vigelis**

*Mayor of Švenčionys District*

- Member of the CoR since 2004
- Member of the CIVEX and COTER commissions
- ECR group (Lithuanian Labour Party)



#### **Robertas Piečia**

*Council member of Tauragė District*

- Member of the CoR since 2008
- Member of the ENVE and NAT commissions
- ALDE group (Lithuanian Liberal and Centre Union)



#### **Algirdas Vrubliauskas**

*Mayor of Alytus District*

- Member of the CoR since 2004
- Member of the NAT and ECOS commissions
- EPP group (Homeland Union-Lithuanian Christian Democrats)



#### **Bronislovas Liutkus**

*Council member of Jonava District*

- Member of the CoR since 2008
- Member of the COTER and ECOS commissions
- ECR group (Lithuanian Popular Peasant Union)

The main funding for sub-national authorities across the EU will primarily come from Cohesion Policy and the funds under the recently created Common Strategic Framework (CSF). The CSF seeks to ensure a more strategic application of the five funds in each Member State. The funds are: the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF); the European Social Fund (ESF); Cohesion Fund; the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD); and European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF). These funds are implemented through a shared management approach, essentially a partnership arrangement between the European Commission, the Member States and the regions.

The Commissioner for Regional Policy, Mr Johannes Hahn met the Lithuanian Minister for Finance, Mr Rimantas Šadžius, to exchange views on the ongoing negotiations about the Cohesion policy in the next funding period 2014-2020. The Commissioner congratulated Lithuania for being the Member State absorbing EU regional funds best in the current period. Minister Šadžius and Commissioner Hahn also discussed the state of play of the European Strategy for the Baltic Sea region, half of EU funds for Lithuania contributing to the implementation of the strategy.

EU cohesion policy has been a force for change over the last ten years, making a genuine contribution to convergence and growth in the EU and directly creating over one million jobs, investing in training to improve the employability of over ten million people, co-financing the construction of over 2 000km of motorway and 4 000km of railway and setting up at least 800 000 Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs). To continue this work in the future and strengthen the focus on European economic priorities the EU adopted a legislative package for cohesion policy for the period from 2014 until 2020. It is designed to boost growth and jobs across Europe by targeting EU investment on Europe's Growth and Jobs Agenda ("Europe 2020").

The focus on fewer investment priorities in line with these objectives will be at the heart of the new Partnership Contracts, which Member States will agree with the European Commission. They will set clear targets and set aside a financial performance reserve to reward regions who do best in reaching their goals. To ensure that the impact on growth and jobs of EU investments is not undermined by unsound macro-economic policies or by weak administrative capacity Commission can ask for a review of programmes or suspend funding if remedial action is not taken.

**Johannes Hahn**, Commissioner for Regional Policy

**“Cohesion policy has already contributed a lot to building prosperity in the EU. But given the economic crisis, it must now become a motor for growth and competitiveness. We are modernising the policy with conditions to ensure performance and results, incentives for those who deliver most effectively, and simplified procedures”**



**Rimantas Šadžius**  
Minister of Finance of the  
Republic of Lithuania



**Johannes Hahn**  
Commissioner for Regional Policy





**Arnoldas Abramavičius**  
Mayor of Zarasai District  
Municipality  
Head of Lithuanian delegation to  
the CoR

## First time that a Baltic State holds the EU presidency

The second half of 2013, when Lithuania assumes the EU presidency for the first time in its history, will be a highly challenging time. With less than a year remaining until the European Parliament elections, and with legislative work to be wrapped up as the European Commission finishes its term, the presidency will face the challenge of leading the search for the best way out of the economic crisis and, most likely, finishing the negotiations on the new financial framework. The Lithuanian presidency is thus aiming to act as an honest broker, contributing to the overall good of European integration.

This presidency will have to deal with over 520 EU legislative initiatives, 115 of which are already flagged as being of higher priority. The Lithuanian presidency will strive to make progress on priority legislative issues such as economic governance and financial stability as well as finalising the regulations implementing the multi-annual EU budget for 2014-2020.

However, we shall keep in mind that life does not begin or end with the financial framework. The continuation of ongoing initiatives, and the hard and sometimes little seen daily work of implementing decisions, often taken a long time ago, is of no less importance. This is especially true for local and regional authorities, as the tier of governance closest to the citizen and vested with the task of looking after the small details that make our daily life easier.

The Lithuanian presidency is following a similar principle of continuing – and more importantly – completing initiatives already underway and driving progress forward on issues that have previously received less attention. Focusing on an incremental approach, Lithuania will seek to promote continuous economic growth and competitiveness through fostering employment, financial sustainability and energy security as the top priorities of the European Union.

We are adding four additional priorities, largely complementing existing policies and aiming to close the gaps between legislation and actual policies. The priority of energy security aims not only to contribute to resolving the current situation in all three Baltic states, which are de facto energy islands, almost entirely disconnected from the rest of the EU, but also to complete the internal energy market and strengthen the EU's external energy policy. Pushing for effective implementation of the European Union strategy for the Baltic Sea region will not only further contribute to improving living, working and studying conditions, and infrastructure and communications around the Baltic Sea, but will also better showcase this already highly successful initiative as a good practice example for the rest of the EU. The priority of bringing the countries of the Eastern Partnership closer to the EU represents a long-term goal of building a safer and better neighbourhood in the east, and this is complemented by the priority of assuring physical security along the external borders through their effective management,

including closer cooperation between border protection institutions while intensifying efforts to combat smuggling and fraud.

Some of those priorities will be reflected in two documents requested from the CoR by the Lithuanian presidency – an opinion on the role of local and regional authorities in promoting energy efficiency measures in public and private housing as well as on the position of local and regional authorities on better planning and spending in the new financial perspective.

At the same time, we, the members of the European Union's assembly of local and regional elected representatives, shall do our best to promote the issues on our agenda, corresponding to the presidency's priorities. One of the primary issues here is promoting growth and employment in our regions, assuring fully-fledged and prosperous living and working conditions. The presidency's priority of energy security is one of the fields in which this can be achieved – promoting local sources of energy and biofuels, boosting research and development in this sector, creating new employment and producing higher added value are perfect examples of where synergy can be created between different sectors. At the same time, the size and flexibility of such projects makes local and regional authorities the best leaders of such initiatives.

While on the subject of our day-to-day agenda, we are very conscious that local and regional authorities can also become key contributors to the EU's external policies. This is particularly important in building partnerships with our closest neighbours, where cross-border cooperation between local and regional authorities has proved to be a highly powerful tool, bringing people into stable formats of long-term cooperation. Here the European Union has already developed a series of tools, which are yet to be further developed and promoted, such as the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument's cross-border cooperation (ENPI CBC) programmes, significantly contributing to bringing cross-border areas closer both literally (through improved infrastructure) and indirectly (with enhanced human contacts). Here Lithuania has a lot to offer from the best practices employed in the highly successful management of the Lithuania-Latvia-Belarus ENPI CBC and the previous period's Interreg IIIA Lithuania-Poland-Kaliningrad programme by the Vilnius-based joint technical secretariat, to the success stories of our municipalities (all but 7 Lithuanian local authorities are located in the border regions) in respect of external and internal EU cross-border cooperation programmes.

At a higher and more visible political level, we, within the Committee of the Regions have developed discussion formats such as the Conference of the Local and Regional Authorities for the Eastern Partnership (CORLEAP), in parallel with a similar format for the Mediterranean region (ARLEM) providing unique arenas for local and regional level best practice exchanges and policy initiative development for both sides of the EU external border.

In this context, Lithuania has added the EU Eastern Partnership among its priorities, while stating that good borders make good friends. And with good reason – in many cases it is within the Eastern Partnership that so much has been achieved in building mutual trust and long-term partnerships. We are willing to share our best experiences and discuss the reasons behind the less successful cases. And we consider the

Committee of the Regions to be among the top forums for such debates, leading the drive to disseminate the success stories as widely as possible.

Out of over 200 events to be hosted in Lithuania during the short presidency period, seven will be directly linked to CoR activities. This includes the traditional external Bureau meeting, to take place in Vilnius on 3 September, followed by the CORLEAP meeting, which will also gather representatives of the EU Eastern Partnership states. For its part, the NAT commission will discuss its regular agenda as well as the need to improve rural policies in Kaunas on 18-19 July, while the ENVE commission will focus on one of the Lithuanian presidency priorities during its meeting on 2 September. This topic will be further explored in the Europe 2020 strategy conference on a "Resource-efficient Europe". In addition, the European People's Party will meet in Kaunas on 18 and 19 October, while the European Alliance will meet in Panevėžys on 30 September.

Looking ahead to the busy six months awaiting Lithuania and the whole EU, I am sure that the Lithuanian presidency and all 60 municipalities will do their best to push forward the European agenda in pursuit of Europe's common goals, while at the same time bringing Europe closer to its people.

**Arnoldas Abramavičius**

Head of the Lithuanian delegation to the Committee of Regions



**“First of all you need dreams and ideas, then you need money, and then you can hope for success. But if you don’t have dreams or ideas, you can’t expect anything.”**

## **Ričardas Malinauskas**

Mayor of Druskininkai,  
President of the Association of Local Authorities in Lithuania



**Ričardas Malinauskas**  
Mayor of Druskininkai,  
President of the Association of  
Local Authorities in Lithuania

**Mr Malinauskas, can you quantify how much the EU has supported the Lithuanian economy? How useful was this support, and how do the public in the cities see it?**

By the end of 2015, around LTL 29 billion (approx. EUR 8.4 billion) of EU aid will have flowed into the Lithuanian economy. 79% of all subsidies go to supporting the general economic infrastructure, and 19% to developing human resources.

Since Lithuania joined the EU and started receiving assistance from the EU Structural Funds, GDP has grown by around 1.5% more per year than it would have without those funds. The unemployment rate also shows the impact of EU support: in the period 2004-2015, unemployment was on average 4.6% lower than it would have been without support.

Opinion polls show that the EU’s support is most visible in transport, education, environmental protection and healthcare. Two thirds of Lithuanians think that the EU Structural Funds help to safeguard the country’s economic stability and retain jobs, and improve conditions for trade and tourism.

Three projects implemented in Lithuania have received the “RegioStars” prize awarded by the European Commission and the Committee of the Regions for the most innovative and original projects funded by EU resources.

**How are Lithuanian local authorities involved in EU funding for 2014-2020, and what do the plans look like? What are local authorities’ priorities?**

The Lithuanian Local Authority Association was involved in drafting the national progress report 2014-2020, which sets out the key overarching national priorities: regional development, culture and health for all.

There are still a number of fundamental issues to be discussed with the national government. For example, local authorities have suggested increasing funding for areas that are particularly important for self-government: more efficient heat energy supply, promoting energy savings, more efficient heat production, better access to tourist infrastructure, efficient use of local authorities’ resources and comprehensive development of public infrastructure. We have also suggested that the national government should

establish a new instrument to promote the construction and modernisation of combined heat and power plants. Environmental protection and urban infrastructure development and renovation projects are undoubtedly the highest priorities.

### **What needs to change compared to the 2007-2013 Financial Perspective?**

In the last financial programming period, there were a lot of investment projects that, unfortunately, in many cases were unable to fully meet the needs of all cities.

That is normal: the need is greater than the possibilities available. Even so, we need to start rethinking things. We need to focus investment where the expected benefit is greatest and the most jobs can be created. We need to focus much more on return on investment, in both the public and private sectors. A large proportion of investment in physical infrastructure entails very high ongoing maintenance costs. A good investor should therefore first consider what impact their investment will have in terms of amortisation, ongoing costs and job creation. If such counter-productive investments are to be avoided, as much cooperation as possible between the public and private sectors is necessary and unavoidable.

### **Where do you think the most important investment opportunities can be found in Lithuania's cities?**

I would say that one of the most important areas is exploiting the potential of Lithuania's recreational tourism and making them more competitive at international level. There are so many opportunities; we just need to take them! I therefore think that health-related tourism is one of the most promising areas for investment. Lithuania's target is 300 000 health tourists by 2022. There are eight recognised spa towns in Lithuania. Two are known for their mineral springs, the others for their beautiful lakes, beaches and dunes. Each spa town has its own targets and specific range of services, and we need to make the most of that.

### **In recent years, you have implemented some impressive projects and been responsible for the very attractive new infrastructure in the spa town of Druskininkai, to which tourists are now flocking from all over the world. That makes you the most successful Lithuanian mayor in the last ten years. How did you manage it?**

A mayor is always more than just the head of a local authority; he is responsible for the whole town. He needs to have a vision and goals, and to love his town. In 2000, Druskininkai was a very economically backward region with one of the highest unemployment rates in the country. When I became mayor, my job was to turn it into a flourishing spa town. The most important thing was to break the vicious cycle whereby nobody visited the resort because there was nothing interesting there, there was nothing interesting because there was no investment, and there was no investment because there were no tourists. And last year we welcomed a record 1 million tourists.

In the last ten years, almost LTL 1 billion (approx. EUR 290 million) has been invested in developing the resort – in renovating the spas and constructing the first water park in Lithuania, which now attracts 400 000 visitors a year. And the other tourist attractions in

Druskininkai also include the successful “Snow Arena” winter sports centre, which opened a year and a half ago and is the only such facility in the Baltic and neighbouring countries.

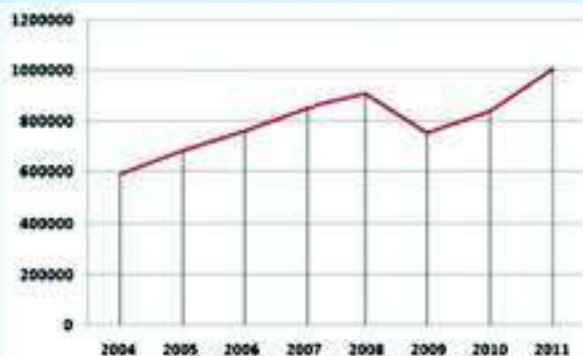
**This project implemented in your town is one of the most impressive regional investment projects in eastern Europe. Tell us more!**

Our innovative idea was a ski complex. For this project, Druskininkai was one of the first local authorities in Lithuania to use the public-private partnership model and award concessions. The total value of the contracts was more than LTL 100 million (approx. EUR 29 million), LTL 40 million (approx. EUR 11.6 million) of which came from the Structural Funds. Now it has been fully fitted out, the Snow Arena has room for around 1 000 visitors, and is one of the five best winter sports halls in the world.

Another unique project is also now underway in Druskininkai: a 45 m high rollercoaster that will connect the town's two largest leisure facilities, the water park and the Snow Arena, on opposite sites of the Nemunas river. One of the biggest projects planned for the future is the extension to the water park and the covered bathing beach.

**What is your recipe for success?**

To have ideas, and to work hard every day to make them come true.



**Number of foreign tourists in Lithuania**

Source: Lithuanian Office of Statistics

**Number of tourists to four Lithuanian spa towns from 2007-2012**

Source: Lithuanian Office of Statistics (y-axis: in thousands)





**Gediminas Paviržis**  
Member of Vilnius District Council  
Deputy Head of Lithuanian  
delegation at the Committee  
of Regions

## Eastern Partnership – key component of a safe, secure and prosperous Europe

The world does not end at the EU's eastern border, nor does Europe. This is very clear for a country like Lithuania, which, despite being at the geographical centre of Europe, is at the same time an EU border state.

The border can be perceived in two ways: as a dividing line or as a uniting element. And the European Union has to decide how it wishes to see its eastern border. So far the EU has invested more in the first direction – we have seen the Schengen system getting stronger, improving the management of the external EU border, although this is not curbing illegal immigration or diminishing other soft security threats. On the other hand, any doctor would agree that it is better to deal with the cause of the problem rather than with its consequences.

This is particularly true in the case of EU external action. Almost a decade ago, the EU set the priority of building a ring of friends from the Arctic to the Sahara, focusing more on investing in genuine friendship with the people on the ground and helping to resolve the day-to-day and sometimes small-scale challenges they are facing. And this is where local and regional authorities – the tier of governance closest to each and every citizen – start to matter the most. Pursuing the aim of a stable neighbourhood, the local level, usually highly trusted by local people, cannot be ignored. Despite not-so-rare accusations that they are not always purely democratic in nature, such institutions provide a stable and viable platform for cooperation and are often run by people who are highly committed to building strong and friendly relations.

In this context, the CoR-initiated Conference of the Local and Regional Authorities for the Eastern Partnership (CORLEAP) is a unique platform for dialogue between the EU and Armenian, Azerbaijani, Belarusian, Georgian, Moldovan and Ukrainian local and regional elected officials. Over the last few years it has been actively developing two out of its four thematic platforms – democracy, good governance and stability; and contacts between people. The recent CORLEAP meeting in Chisinau began to focus more on one of the remaining fields – economic integration and convergence with EU sectoral policies. For its part, Lithuania, facing serious foreign policy challenges in the field of energy is likely to step up the importance of the remaining issue – energy security and efficiency. Taking practical steps in this direction, if given due attention, could make a huge contribution to meeting some of the EU's goals – from global warming (reduced emissions due to increased energy efficiency), to improvements in foreign trade balances (use of local biofuels instead of expensive imported fossil fuels) and boosting research and innovation in the field of energy.



Lithuania has declared the Eastern Partnership to be its presidency priority. This is a natural decision given its geographical location and immense experience in building up relations with the EU's eastern neighbours. We expect a considerable number of practical decisions to be taken at the CORLEAP annual forum scheduled to take place in Vilnius on 3 September as well as during the Eastern Partnership Summit, taking place in Vilnius at the end of November.

An ancient Lithuanian proverb says that even the longest road starts from the first step, and so the major EU goals shall start to be addressed from practical steps at local and regional levels. The enhanced cooperation, transfer of good governance and stability promoted by CORLEAP are the key elements here, contributing to the Lithuanian ambition of shifting from the border of the European Union into the geographical centre of a free, safe and prosperous Europe.

**Gediminas Paviržis**

Member of the Council of Vilnius District municipality

Member of Conference of the Local and Regional Authorities for the Eastern Partnership

Deputy Head of Lithuanian delegation at the Committee of Regions

## Lithuania's ambitious housing renovation strategy



**Daiva Matonienė**  
Council member of Šiauliai City  
Vice-Minister of Environment of  
the Republic of Lithuania

### Interview with

#### **Daiva Matonienė**

Vice-Minister of Environment of the Republic of Lithuania

Approximately one third of the world's energy is used inside buildings. This has earned the building sector the dubious honour of being the Earth's biggest contributor to greenhouse gas emissions. Clearly, any attempt to improve resource efficiency must take buildings into account. Although today's building sector has an oversized ecological footprint, there is considerable hope for reducing it in the near future. Improving energy efficiency in buildings through greener construction methods and retrofitting existing structures can make an enormous difference when it comes to reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

#### **Why has Lithuania given housing insulation such high priority for the years ahead?**

There is a strong correlation between economic growth and increased CO2 emissions. Energy efficiency is potentially the most effective way to reduce carbon emissions in the short to medium term. However, while currently the focus is on developing countries and new builds, Lithuania has its work cut out with renovating buildings that are over 50 years old, where energy efficiency is virtually zero. Of course, this is only one of a number of climate change package measures. Our new model is combined with parallel measures such as teaching people to change their habits and save energy, and encouraging them to replace appliances with energy-saving ones and install solar panels for water heating.

#### **How big is the problem?**

In Lithuania, 66% of the population live in multi-family buildings built before 1993 (there are over 38 000 multi-apartment buildings and over 800 000 apartments) and 65% of buildings are supplied by the district heating system. Despite some advantages provided by such mode of energy supply, the main challenge in the field is that most of such houses were built to poor Soviet construction standards and frequently have received inadequate maintenance over the years. Private ownership of such houses began only after Lithuanian independence (1990). Before that, all buildings were state-owned. These buildings usually have poor quality windows, roofs, seals between panels and no insulation. All this causes huge energy losses and consequently social problems owing to enormous heating bills; it also leads to high GHG emission levels.

#### **How do you plan to solve this problem?**

Case studies and pilot projects conducted in Lithuania in recent years have shown satisfactory results. Just by replacing windows and external doors, insulating external surfaces: roofs and walls, modernising heating substations and balancing heat distribution around buildings energy consumption can be reduced by approximately 50%. On that basis we are now finalising a model that combines technical, financial and administrative measures.

### **Can you outline this model? How will it work?**

We will start from scratch. Fifty-six municipalities (out of 60 in Lithuania) have identified 839 pilot buildings for which we are preparing investment programmes. The preparation of the programmes is financed by the EU. All these houses have signed the partnership agreements. The plan is that the contracting procedure will be launched by autumn of this year and actual work will begin next spring.

At the same time, the municipalities are preparing detailed energy efficiency programmes. In these programmes they will select inefficient multi-family buildings, starting with those that consume the most energy (kWh/m<sup>2</sup>/year). On the basis of these programmes we will start implementing investment projects that, again, will be prepared by the municipalities.

The major shortcoming of renovation programmes in past years was the financing mechanism, which was rejected wholesale by the public. Multi-family buildings usually have 50+ families of various sizes, living on different incomes and in varying social situations. Therefore, people were unwilling to take direct loans from banks for the renovation of entire buildings. If they did, it was vague and on a small scale. As a rule, people were more likely to invest in their apartments than in the common areas.

Our new model will solve this problem! We have proposed that each municipality appoint a programme administrator and that the programme administrator take out the loan. He or she will organise the procurement procedure and take responsibility for overall implementation and financial management of the programme. This model is based on the assumption that with 40% of the grant the project should be economically viable within 10 to 11 years.

### **What will be the responsibility of house owners? What are their concerns?**

The most important aspect is securing owners' agreement to participate in the programme. This will happen at owners' meetings and must be given by at least 50% of owners.

Following this model, inhabitants do not take any direct financial responsibility and repayment of the loan will be collected from savings on energy costs and included in a monthly charges system. So the answer to the question that is frequently asked as to whether one owner has to pay the loan for another neighbour if he refuses to pay can be answered simply as no. Each owner pays their own bill on the basis of an initial calculation.

The greatest concern is of course the financial arrangement. Under the new model people feel more relaxed and I feel they trust the model more. In addition, the first round of investments in 839 buildings will demonstrate in practice how the system works.

### **Do you believe that this model will be successful?**

I believe in this model more and more because I see the need for it. People in Lithuania are suffering from wasted energy in their houses and electricity and heating bills have rocketed in recent years. The process needs time and is costly; but there simply is no other solution. And no time either.





**Andrius Kupčinskas**  
Mayor of Kaunas City Municipality

## “Kaunas has enormous potential”

### **Andrius Kupčinskas:**

Mayor of Kaunas City Municipality

Young, innovative and open – this is how Andrius Kupčinskas, being himself a mayor of Kaunas City and one of the youngest mayors in the country as well as the member of the European Union’s Committee of the Regions, describes Lithuania’s second largest city in a few words.

**Kaunas is the second largest city in the country. In many European countries, most attention is focused on the capital city, which leaves the country’s other cities in the shadows. What is the situation in Lithuania?**

As Number Two among Lithuanian cities, things are not easy for Kaunas. In view of the attention given by central government to the capital Vilnius and other cities in the country, we not rarely feel like we are left in second place. However we like to see this as challenge and an opportunity to develop our own potential.

**What advantages does Kaunas offer in comparison with Vilnius or other cities in Lithuania? How can Kaunas attract foreign investment?**

Geographically, Kaunas lies at the intersection of three regions: Northern Europe, Central Europe and Eastern Europe. In addition to the favourable geographical position, the city has highly developed and versatile transport infrastructure. Vilnius-Kaunas and Kaunas-Klaipėda rail links, being part of trans-European rail corridors, run via Kaunas, as does the Via Baltica road transport corridor, which provides good transport links to Western and Eastern Europe and to Scandinavia.

Kaunas has an international airport, while a major upgrade of North-South rail connection to European gauge (also known as Rail Baltica, a line to stretch from Warsaw to Tallinn) is planned that will run through the city. Moreover, both of Lithuania’s largest navigable rivers flow through Kaunas. All of these elements make Kaunas a fully developed transport and logistics centre of Lithuania.

The scientific potential of the city should also be mentioned. Kaunas is home to the largest concentration of institutions of higher education, which each year provide the labour market with highly trained professionals in a number of different disciplines. The activities of Kaunas’s science and technology parks are also highly renowned internationally.

**To what extent can Kaunas attract people who are still unsure about where they would like to settle?**

Kaunas is first and foremost a city where one can live well. There is an excellent transport system that prevents the build-up of any traffic congestion. Kaunas is home to the most extensive network of cycle paths in the country. According to various surveys, every second resident of Kaunas owns a bicycle. Compared with the rest of the country, that is a striking figure.



Moreover, Kaunas is a green city surrounded by nature. Kaunas has Europe's largest urban oak forest. Kaunas is also campaigning for the title of European Green Capital in 2015.

In the interwar years, Kaunas was the provisional capital of Lithuania. During this period, the city experienced a strong cultural revival, earning it the nickname "little Paris". The influence of this period can still be felt. This is why Kaunas is the cradle of Lithuanian theatre, opera and museums, as well as the setting for the first song festivals.

### **What major infrastructure projects has Kaunas recently carried out?**

Kaunas is the sports capital of Lithuania, which is why the biggest infrastructure projects in recent years have been directly related to sport. A few years ago, as the entire world plunged into economic crisis, we managed to build the biggest covered sports and entertainment arena in the Baltic region, with a capacity of 15 000 spectators. More than 100 events take place in this arena each year – various sporting competitions; concerts by world-renowned performers.

This year we will complete renovation work on the most modern swimming pool in the country. This pool complex, which also contains a leisure area, should soon be home to the Kaunas swimming centre and the training centre for Lithuania's elite swimmers.

### **Could you tell us something about Kaunas's image of itself as a city?**

Kaunas – university town in the Baltic region; science-based business incubator; research-intensive business; innovation and cutting-edge technology; multimodal transport and logistics centre along a transport corridor linking West and East; hometown of Lithuanian culture; sports capital and centre of river shipping.

Kaunas is home to a creative, active, lively, healthy and safe community with an enjoyable atmosphere. It is a city in which everyone can realise their full potential.

### **All over Central and Eastern Europe, there is increasing talk of government decentralisation. What is happening on this front in Lithuania?**

Decentralisation is the most efficient way to bring decision-making closer to the people and strengthen the regions. The first tentative steps in this direction can already be seen in Lithuania. However, the powers transferred to local authorities are not reflected in their budgets, which means we face considerable difficulties. Kaunas is not alone in facing this problem.

I would like to take this opportunity to call for more distribution of EU Structural Funds through regional development councils. This year, only 11 per cent is going through the regions. In neighbouring countries, however, such percentage is much higher. This is an important step on the path to decentralisation.

There was recently a discussion about possibly moving the Ministry of Agriculture and some other institutions under it from Vilnius to Kaunas. I would welcome such a decision, not least because of the close proximity to Kaunas of Aleksandras Stulginskis University, which trains professionals in this field. Because it is located in the middle of the country, Kaunas is easier to reach than Vilnius for two-thirds of Lithuanians. One reason to move some branches of central government to Kaunas is that it would bring them physically closer to the majority of the population.

## Lithuania in European territorial cooperation

Being one of few countries having external European Union borders both in the East and in the West, Lithuania is currently covered by seven out of over 140 European territorial cooperation programmes. Its three “external” cooperation programmes are Lithuania-Poland-Russian Federation (Kaliningrad region), Latvia-Lithuania-Belarus and Baltic Sea Region. The four internal CBC programmes are Lithuania-Latvia, Lithuania-Poland, South Baltic and Interreg IVC.

The Latvia-Lithuania Cross-border Cooperation Programme, aiming to promote sustainable and equal socio-economic development in border regions, thus helping them to become competitive and attractive for residents and visitors, has financed 58 projects from Lithuania and 58 from Latvia since 2007. Its rather small budget of 60 million euros was shared among 597 project partners, aiming to facilitate business conditions, improve the internal and external accessibility of regions, enhance joint management of public services and natural resources, enhance the attractiveness of border regions, and develop active and sustainable communities (via the small project facility).

➤ **More information is available at** <http://www.latlit.eu/>

The Lithuania-Poland cross-border cooperation programme aims to build a cross-border region geared to competition in a global economy and to achieve sustainable development in a region which is forward-looking and attractive in terms of its quality of life, social equity, environment and communication links. Administered by a Vilnius-based Joint Technical Secretariat, since 2007 it has provided financing for over 50 projects, involving over 200 partners and funding of 71 million euros from the European Regional Development Fund.

### 7 cross-border cooperation programmes:

- Lithuania-Poland Cross-Border cooperation programme 2007-2013: [www.lietuva-polska.eu](http://www.lietuva-polska.eu)
- Latvia-Lithuania-Belarus Cross-Border cooperation programme 2007-2013: [www.enpi-cbc.eu](http://www.enpi-cbc.eu)
- Lithuania-Latvia Cross-Border cooperation programme 2007-2013: [www.latlit.eu](http://www.latlit.eu)
- Lithuania-Poland-Russia Cross-Border cooperation programme 2007-2013: [www.lt-pl-ru.eu](http://www.lt-pl-ru.eu)
- South Baltic programme 2007-2013: [www.southbaltic.eu](http://www.southbaltic.eu)
- Baltic Sea region programme 2007-2013: [www.eu.baltic.net](http://www.eu.baltic.net)
- Interreg 4 c programme 2007-2013: [www.interreg4c.eu](http://www.interreg4c.eu)

The highly successful trilateral Latvia-Lithuania-Belarus cross-border cooperation programme, financed under the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument, is a practical testing ground for the viability of EU external cooperation structures. The programme, which aims to build good cross-border relations with this neighbouring country, often criticised for its lack of freedom and democratic institutions, has shown that good relations between neighbouring local authorities, communities and NGOs transcend political disagreements. During the current financial perspective this programme, managed by its Vilnius-based Joint Technical Secretariat, has financed over 50 projects promoting socio-economic development, encouraging entrepreneurship on both sides of the border, developing strategic planning, improving accessibility, preserving the cultural heritage, promoting networking, supporting the sustainable usage of natural resources, developing the social sector and improving border-crossing facilities.

➤ [www.enpi-cbc.eu](http://www.enpi-cbc.eu)

The trilateral Lithuanian-Polish-Russian Federation (Kaliningrad region) cooperation programme boasts an innovative feature – it is one of the first cross-border cooperation programmes to have a real financial contribution from the EU's Eastern neighbour. Although facing some management challenges, this programme has financed nearly 50 projects from one call, including 10 large-scale projects.

➤ [www.lt-pl-ru.eu](http://www.lt-pl-ru.eu)

Introduced by the 2007-2013 financial perspective, the South Baltic territorial cooperation programme covers six countries and provides a unique opportunity to bring together the communities united by the Baltic Sea, but historically divided by wars or the Iron Curtain. Its budget of over 60 million euros was distributed among over 50 projects, bringing together over 200 partners from the Baltic coastal regions of Denmark, Germany, Lithuania, Poland and Sweden.

➤ [www.southbaltic.eu](http://www.southbaltic.eu)

So far the largest EU territorial cooperation programme, Interreg IV C covers the whole of the European Union, providing an excellent platform for cooperation between applicants from all over Europe.

➤ [www.interregivc.eu](http://www.interregivc.eu)



**Area map of Lithuania-Poland cross-border cooperation programme**



**Area map of Latvia-Lithuania cross-border cooperation programme.**

# 05 Investing in the regions: EU funding in Lithuania

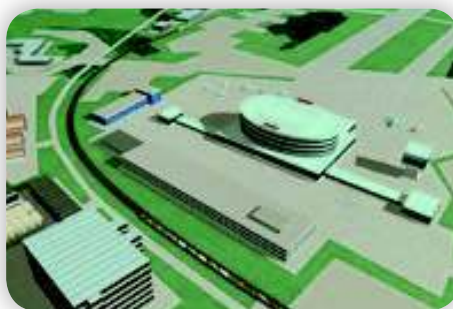
## • PROMOTING COMPETITIVENESS AND SUSTAINABILITY

1.

### DEVELOPMENT OF A COMMERCIAL ZONE



Three strategic projects are being carried out in Šiauliai: construction of a business park; creation of a public logistics centre; and expansion of the international airport. All these projects will help to create a key industrial and logistics zone for the country's economy as a whole, and ensure additional jobs and economic growth for residents of the city and the region. The projects are being financed with European Union funds.



#### ŠIAULIAI BUSINESS PARK

Infrastructure to be constructed on 218 ha of land, 53 ha of which has already been fitted with all the infrastructure needed for business and industry. Šiauliai Business Park offers investors fully developed premises of different sizes. The total value of investments is LTL 40 million (EUR 11.5 million).

#### CONSTRUCTION OF THE ŠIAULIAI PUBLIC LOGISTICS CENTRE

The primary objective of the Šiauliai public logistics centre is to serve businesses in the Šiauliai business park and the city and region of Šiauliai, and process freight arriving along the East-West Transport Corridor (EWTC).

Access roads, internal roads, rail sidings, a gantry crane and other necessary infrastructure will be created as part of the project. Once all project work has been completed, it will be possible to both unload containers from trains to trucks and the other way round, and to deposit containers at a specially designated site.

2.

### CONSTRUCTION OF A NEW WOOD-FUELED BOILER – RENEWABLE ENERGY



Lithuania's national energy strategy includes plans to develop the district heating system, i.e. achieve efficiency in heat production, transmission and use with minimum use of energy by making increased use of biomass to produce heat. This boiler in Jonava is one of many of its kind, producing heat from renewable sources of energy. In summer, water will be heated using energy from biofuels.

LTL 10.6 million (EUR 3 million) is being invested in this project. A biofuel-powered hot-water boiler with a power rating of 10 MW, a fuel value-economiser with a capacity of around 5 MW, facilities for storing and transporting biofuel, hot water piping and other equipment are installed in the boiler room. With the introduction of this boiler, the need for expensive imported fossil fuels will fall to 49%.

• PRESERVING CULTURAL HERITAGE



Biržai Castle is the only Lithuanian fortress in the form of a bastion, and one of the best-preserved fortresses in North-Eastern Europe. Construction of the castle by Krzysztof Mikołaj "the Thunderbolt" Radziwiłł began in 1586. The castle is surrounded by water-filled defensive moats fed by a 400 ha pond (now Lake Širvėna) formed by the confluence of the Apaščia and Agluona rivers. The castle complex covers 14.7 ha. The castle was a strategic defence point for Lithuania during the wars with Sweden.

The entire castle complex was renovated with LTL 5.8 million (approximately EUR 1.7 million) from the European Regional Development Fund. More information about the Biržai Castle complex is available online at [www.birzumuziejus.lt](http://www.birzumuziejus.lt).



3.

**ADAPTING BIRŽAI CASTLE TO MEET TOURISM AND OTHER PUBLIC NEEDS**



Pažaislis' 17th century Camaldolese monastery is considered one of the finest examples of late baroque in Northern Europe. The monastery is one of Lithuania's most valuable cultural monuments and one of the most-visited cultural attractions in Kaunas. Visitors are not only introduced to the spiritual and cultural heritage, but also the traditional Pažaislis music festival annually takes place here. The total cost of the project is LTL 9.6 million (EUR 2.9 million). The guesthouse, which will be restored and modified during the project, will be able to host a range of cultural and tourism activities: accommodation for pilgrims and other monastery guests, annually takes place here.



4.

**RESTORATION AND RECONSTRUCTION OF THE GUESTHOUSE OF THE PAŽAISLIS CAMALDOLESE MONASTERY FOR TOURISM PURPOSES**



Rokiškis manor is a unique set of buildings from the 19th century that belonged to three wealthy families with deep roots across Europe: the Kroszinski, Tyzenhaus und Pšezdzieckiai families. The ancestors of the Tyzenhaus family founded the city of Riga, for example, while the Pšezdzieckiai family built part of Warsaw and created the city's first hospitals. To restore manor's former glory LTL 4.3 million from the Structural funds are budgeted.



5.

**THE RENOVATED ROKIŠKIS MANOR IS A TOURIST ATTRACTION**



The renewed palace already serves as local museum with more than 77 000 exhibits, including UNESCO world heritage list entry from Lithuania - the wooden cross carving and the heritage of Lionginas Šepka - the best know carver of the 20th century.

In September 2011, Rokiškis was among 21 European destinations to receive the coveted EDEN distinction for excellent renovation and promotion work for a tourist attraction – a major achievement.



• FOSTERING CLEAN ENVIRONMENT

6.

PROJECT TO CLEAN  
UP LAKE TALKŠA AND  
ITS SURROUNDINGS



Lake Talkša is located close to Šiauliai city centre. A lake of this size in a city centre is unique in Lithuania. The lake covers an area of 56.2 ha.

Lake Talkša was long polluted by unprocessed effluent from the leather-processing industry, which contaminated the silt on the lake bed and made the lake practically inaccessible for tourism and recreation. As part of the project, the access point to Lake Talkša was cleaned up and fitted with Boccia courts, benches, bicycle stands and extensive lighting. Different events and competitions now take place at Lake Talkša. Various national competitions were held at the 5th TAFISA athletic games.

The total value of the project is LTL 10 million (EUR 2.9 million) and includes EU co-financing.

7.

NERIS RIVER BASIN  
INVESTMENT PROJECT



VILNIUS DISTRICT

In Lithuania, water investment projects are carried out according to the river basin principle. The territory of Lithuania is divided into five river basin areas. Water is managed by the state in Lithuania, and the companies controlling the assets are run by the municipalities. Investments have been carried out since 2000 and include building and redeveloping wastewater treatment plants and renovating and installing sewage and drinking water networks. **The Neris River Basin Investment Project** is an excellent example of investments being made in the Vilnius area. Since 2000, a total of **over LTL 47 million** has been invested in developing water management in the Vilnius area. Of this, 80% has been co-financed with contributions from the European Union's Cohesion Fund. The project has seen 150 km of sewage and drinking water networks laid, and two wastewater treatment plants and two water-processing units built in the district towns Maišiagala, Sudervė and others.

• FOSTERING CLEAN ENVIRONMENT



The strategic decision to manage household waste in Lithuania on a regional basis was made in 2000. Since then, around 800 existing landfills and scrap heaps have been safely closed in Lithuania, and composting sites, bulk rubbish collection points and 10 safe, modern regional landfill and sorting sites were created. These systems were financed with the help of Cohesion Fund. All municipalities of each region are taking part in this changeover.

The Vilnius region is one example. Five new waste sorting points have been set up in Vilnius as part of the project, accepting not just bulk rubbish from local residents (furniture, textiles, household appliances, car tyres), but also recyclable products (glass, plastic, metals, paper), construction and demolition waste and hazardous household waste free of charge for local residents. Bulk rubbish collection points are an important part of the overall waste management system and necessary for proper waste separation in the interests of nature conservation and energy-efficiency.



**8.**  
**CLOSURE OF THE  
OLD LANDFILLS OF  
VILNIUS DISTRICT,  
CREATION OF  
COMPOSTING SITES  
AND COLLECTION  
POINTS FOR  
BULK RUBBISH**



Within 2012, the City of Vilnius launched 20 different environmental education projects. They are meant to educate the public about the rules, science and experience of sustainable development, make them more aware of their natural environment, motivate individuals to take action, and encourage teachers, young people, children and society to make environmental protection a priority, sort waste, save resources, protect the environment and the animal and plant world, care for the Vilnius landscape and live in an environmentally efficient way. The measures taken in the programme are being financed with money set aside for environmental protection by the Vilnius City council. As part of this project, 120 birdhouses painted different colours will be installed in different places in Vilnius. A separate birdhouse in a specific colour has been planned for each bird species.



**9.**  
**SUPPORT  
PROGRAMME FOR  
A SOCIAL PROJECT  
FOR ENVIRONMENTAL  
EDUCATION**

• INVESTING INTO SOCIAL CARE AND PUBLIC WELL-BEING

10.

ŠVENČIONĖLIAI  
ORPHANAGE



EU funding has helped to expand a little-used Švenčionėliai orphanage into a social day care centre for the disabled and for disadvantaged families. A LTL 3 million (EUR 0.9 million) project has not only improved living conditions for the 50 residents, but also provided the local community with valuable social services and care for those who need it. Other additional services are expected as a new project gets under way.

11.

SKUODAS FAMILY  
SOCIAL SERVICES  
CENTRE AND  
SOCIAL HOUSING



Innovative social project in Skuodas financed with EU Structural Funds. Unused buildings have been renovated and 16 dwellings have been built for disadvantaged families as part of the project. Unused hospital rooms now serve as a social services centre for families. It offers high-quality services for at-risk families and people in difficult circumstances. LTL 2.8 million (approximately EUR 0.8 million) was made available for the project.

12.

POETRY PARK –  
AN OASIS IN  
THE CITY CENTRE



The EU is making LTL 10 million (EUR 2.8 million) available for the city of Marijampolė and its guests to create a Poetry Park in the city centre. Paths have been repaired, modern and economical lighting installed, original park architecture elements reintroduced, and a single green space management system, an amphitheatre, cascading fountains and recreation areas created. An oasis in the city centre that invites people for brief visits and longer, relaxing stays with friends.



• MAKING REGIONS EVEN MORE ATTRACTIVE PLACE TO LIVE AND TO VISIT



Kaunas is known as the sports capital of Lithuania. The Kaunas Cultural and Sports Arena on an island in the Nemunas River (Žalgiris Arena) has 15 000 seats and makes it possible to organised sporting and cultural events at the highest level in Kaunas, supporting the local economy, creating additional jobs, improving the image of the city and the area around the Nemunas Island, and helping to further develop Lithuanian traditions in basketball and other sports. The meeting of the Committee of the Regions' NAT commission will also take place in the arena on 18 and 19 July. EU aid amounts to LTL 1.77 billion (EUR 51 million).



13.

**KAUNAS CULTURAL  
AND SPORTS ARENA  
ON NEMUNAS ISLAND**



The Ferris wheel on Lake Zarasai is architecturally unusual. It is 17 metres high and 37 metres wide, and there is nothing else like it in Lithuania. It offers a striking view of Zarasai Lake and the periphery of the city.



14.

**ZARASAI  
FERRIS WHEEL**

The Ferris wheel was erected as part of the Lithuania-Latvia cross-border cooperation programme at a total cost of LTL 2 million (EUR 0.6 million). More than LTL 10 million of EU funding was invested into on tourism and related infrastructure between 2010 and 2011.



Plateliai is one of the most beautiful lakes in Lithuania and is visited by thousands of tourists each year. A project is being carried out to develop ecotourism, which will involve creating complex infrastructure for public tourism. The walking and cycling trails around Lake Plateliai are to be developed so as to open up the natural and recreational potential of Žemaitija National Park. LTL 7.2 million (EUR 2.1 million) has been made available for this EU co-financed project. A 21 420 km circular path will be laid around the lake, including: recreation spots, swimming jetties or just beautiful resting locations..



15.

**PLUNGĖ CYCLE PATH**

• MAKING REGIONS EVEN MORE ATTRACTIVE PLACE TO LIVE AND TO VISIT

16.

RENOVATION OF THE  
GIRSTUTIS CULTURAL  
AND SPORTS CENTRE



At the last Olympic Games, Lithuania was recognised as a country of not just basketball but also swimming. That is why young people are given opportunities to develop their athletic skills through investment in sports facilities. A multifunctional sports, entertainment and fitness complex has been created by renovating the Girstutis Cultural and Sports Centre. International and regional water sports competitions and training camps are organised here. The complex, which is also fitted with modern fun baths and attractions, complements the services aimed at tourists in the Kaunas region. This LTL 17 mln (EUR 5 mln.) project was funded as PPP initiative by Kaunas City, ERDF (5 mln. euro) and private sources.

17.

DRUSKININKAI  
SNOW ARENA



Last year the city of Druskininkai, which is known for its mineral spa and its unique projects, saw a record number of more than one million visitors. Since late August 2011 there has been a set of ski trails – the only winter sports arena in the Baltic region and its neighbouring countries. The municipality Druskininkai was one of the first in Lithuania to implement such a project by way of a public-private partnership under a concession contract. The total value of the building is LTL 100 million (EUR 29 million), LTL 40 million of which comes from the EU structural funds. In terms of its technical specifications, the snow arena is among the top five indoor ski trails in the world, and has no real competition within at least a thousand kilometres. On an eight-hectare site there are three downhill ski and snowboarding trails, a 460-metre long and 50-metre wide trail for adults, a 150-metre long trail for beginners and children, and an open, 640-metre long and 40-metre wide trail that is open in temperatures of less than 5 degrees Celsius. As many as 1 000 people can enjoy themselves and engage in recreation in the snow arena at any one time.

### Centuries old and yet new Lithuanian local self-government

Lithuania has a long history of political authority sharing between national and subnational levels. The first municipalities in Western understanding of this concept started appearing in the XIII and XIV centuries, along the baptism of the country. Local and regional self-government was also highly promoted all three Lithuanian Statutes – the masterpieces of XVIth century legal thought, thus contributing to the development and promotion of principles of contemporary governance far eastwards from the current EU external borders.

Having restored independence in 1990, Lithuania audaciously implemented reform of sub-national government in 1994-95. Its result became one of the largest municipalities in Europe, thus assuring sufficient financial and administrative capacities for the provision of daily services and drafting local policies as well as providing as example of sub-national reforms for multiple similar-sized countries.

### Municipalities and regions

Current Lithuania, covering an area of 65,200 km<sup>2</sup> is administratively divided into 10 regions and 60 municipalities. 1526 directly elected municipal councillors serve four year representing local population, while the regional tier provides a platform for coordination of national and local approaches.

Municipalities are responsible for the provision of daily services and implementation of local and national policies in such fields like culture, education, environment, local economy promotion, spatial planning, social care.

The joint municipal policies on the regional level are coordinated by the Regional development councils, consisting of representatives, nominated by the municipalities and assisted by the Ministry of Interior.

For the simplicity of management one of the largest territories and comparatively one of the highest average number of municipal residents, Lithuanian local authorities can set up territorial sub-municipal unit, called seniūnija. Such territorial executive bodies, nationwide counted up to 526, are run by civil servant and advised by the consultative assembly of local residents, are occupied with variety of daily services from street cleaning up to payments of social benefits.

### Representation of municipal interests nationwide and abroad

With the reform of 1995 the single municipal representative structure was established. The Association of local authorities in Lithuania, although being voluntary membership-based NGO, is a key player in national legislation in budgeting process. It also acts as international voice of Lithuanian local authorities, also acting as the secretariat of national delegation to the EU Committee of the Regions.

October 10 is celebrated as Lithuanian local self-government day, commemorating first contemporary Act of Municipalities, adopted that day back in 1918.



**Lithuania's 60 municipalities and 10 regions**

## The EU's plan for growth and jobs: Europe 2020

### The EU's plan for growth and jobs: Europe 2020

In response to the crisis, in 2010 the EU launched its **"Europe 2020" strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth**. The strategy encourages growth based on education and innovation, using resources efficiently, not harming the environment and involving all members of society. To achieve this it has set five headline targets for Europe to be reached by the year 2020. The five main targets are:

1. Ensuring that 75% of all 20-64 year olds are in **employment**
2. 3% of the EU's GDP to be invested in research & development / innovation
3. **Green house gas emissions** to be 20% lower (or even 30% if possible) than 1990 levels, 20% of energy to come from **renewables** and 20% increase in **energy efficiency**
4. Reducing school drop-out rates below 10% and ensuring that at least 40% of 30-34 year olds complete tertiary **education**
5. Reducing the number of people at risk of **poverty and social exclusion** by 20 million

Member States must set out national programmes which contribute to delivering these targets. These are complemented by seven EU flagship initiatives which will aid meeting these ambitious goals.

Given the high level of public investment and number of EU programmes implemented at local level, **the Committee of the Regions is convinced that the success of the Europe 2020 strategy depends on fully engaging regional and local authorities**. A number of regions and cities have even recently made the strategy their point of reference for their economic and social development plans. However, more needs to be done to give them a voice in the political debate, strengthen the role of '2020' regions and cities in national government plans and ensure that they fully contribute to the possible mid-term assessment of the strategy expected in 2014.

Regions and Cities supporting  
**Europe2020**  
Europe's growth strategy

### How the Committee is helping support Europe 2020

The Europe 2020 strategy is among the political priorities of the Committee of the Regions.

The Committee is contributing to delivering Europe 2020 by: **Adopting opinions on relevant EU legislation**

In line with its institutional role, the CoR puts forward local and regional points of view on EU legislation. It does so by adopting opinions on European Commission proposals related to Europe 2020. The CoR also issues political statements prior to each key development in the Europe 2020 policy cycle.

### **The CoR Monitoring Report on Europe 2020 and the Monitoring Platform**

The CoR has established a Europe 2020 Monitoring Platform which gathers information on the ground through surveys, studies and meetings covering the local and regional contribution to designing and implementing Europe 2020 strategies in the Member States. Any EU local and regional authority can join the Platform. In December 2012, the Platform launched the first of seven surveys reviewing the implementation of each Flagship Initiative with the results being published during a series of events (see below). Additionally, once a year the CoR publishes a Monitoring Report on Europe 2020 based on the Platform's findings.

### **Conferences and surveys: assessing the seven Flagship Initiatives**

The CoR is organising a series of seven conferences – one per flagship initiative – under the heading 'CoR Europe 2020 Conference - Regions and cities delivering Europe's growth strategy'. The events target representatives of regional and local authorities with the indicative schedule during the Lithuanian Presidency as follows:

- Digital Agenda: 2 July 2013, Brussels
- Resource Efficient Europe: 6 September 2013, Vilnius
- Innovation Union: 26 November 2013, Brussels

For more information or to get involved in the CoR's work around Europe 2020:

📌 [www.cor.europa.eu/europe2020](http://www.cor.europa.eu/europe2020)



## 06 Lithuanian timeless traditions



### ■ JONAVA ➤ ST JOHN'S EVE

St John's (or Jonas in Lithuanian) eve (June 23/24) is obviously an universal festivity in a town bearing his name – Jonava. For that night, Jonava becomes a republic of Jonas (and Janina, and, of course, anyone called John, Jean, Juanes, Ivan, Jan, Janis, loanes, Janette, Jana and so on), with its own borders, customs, passports, president and – of course – a wild festival spirit, culminating in night-time hunt for the blossom of the forest fern (in pairs, of course). When: night of 23-24 June, 2013. More information: <http://www.jonava.info>



### ➤ KAZIUKAS ANNUAL FAIR (KAZIUKO MUGĖ)

An unique part of the culture of Vilnius region is the Kaziukas (or St Casimir – the patron saint of Lithuania) fair, held around the day of his death – March 4. Developing from the religious festival in the late Middle Ages, the fair soon became so popular that even the Soviet authorities preferred not to ban it. Since 2010 the Kaziukas fair has been followed by the days of Lithuanian regions. When: first week of March. More information: [www.kaziukomuge2013.lt](http://www.kaziukomuge2013.lt)



### ■ DŽŪKIJA ➤ MUSHROOM FESTIVAL

"Without mushrooms and berries, Dzukian girls would be naked" – these lines from a traditional Lithuanian folk song, "Dainos", characterise the region of Dzūkija in southern Lithuania, which is renowned for its woods and mushrooms. It is a traditional destination for people who like to gather and eat mushrooms. An early-morning competition is held in the woods around Marcinkonys in which mushroom pickers try to fill their baskets as quickly as possible.

The park in Varėna is filled with the noise of the town fair all day, with demonstrations and sales of folk art, performances of folk music, and traditional Dzukian delicacies such as "Grikinė babka" (buckwheat cake), cheese, homemade bread and other treats. The festival is held every September. For more information, see [www.varena.lt](http://www.varena.lt)



### ➤ TRADITIONAL CRAFT FESTIVAL IN NERINGA

This unique festival of traditional handicrafts harks back to traditions and roots. The event includes demonstrations of old craft skills from prehistory, the Middle Ages, the Renaissance and the 19th and 20th centuries by employees of Lithuanian museums, and guests from Latvia, Russia and Poland who still practise these traditional occupations, in a craft village set up at the port of Nida. Visitors have a chance to immerse themselves in mediaeval life and learn how to braid and weave belts, stonebake bread, make pails from linden bast fibres, throw pots and weave fish traps. They can also try fish soup, go out on the lagoon in a punt and take a tour to observe the crows on the Curonian Spit. This year, visitors from Lithuania and abroad will be able to see the types of clothes worn by Curonians in the 1st to 14th centuries, learn about food, customs and traditions from the past of Lithuania and Lithuania Minor (Prussian Lithuania), and take part in a workshop on making weather vanes.

The festival takes place from 15 to 17 August 2013. For more information, see [www.neringa.lt](http://www.neringa.lt)

Each year Kupiškis hosts the Beekeepers' (or Honey) festival. A century-old tradition of honey markets has recently developed into a festival lasting several days, attracting thousands of visitors and providing them with a practical insight into the past and present of this sweet ancient Lithuanian business and the unique qualities the honey has. When: first week of August. More information: [www.info.kupiskis.lt](http://www.info.kupiskis.lt)

#### ■ KUPIŠKIS

##### ☛ KUPIŠKIS BEEKEEPERS' FESTIVAL



The district of Vilnius has been welcoming locals and visitors to its delightful harvest festival. Beautifully decorated stands are set up all around the Pikeliškės estate, and each local settlement presents the richness of their harvest in as interesting and imaginative a way as possible, with the basket with the most attractive produce winning a prize. Municipal representatives and farmers run stands where people can taste home-made delicacies like cakes, cheeses, honey, bread, sausages and more, while folk groups entertain the crowds with songs and dances and encourage everyone to celebrate the rich harvest. The festival takes place on the last Saturday in September, around the Pikeliškės estate. For more information, see [www.vilniaus-r.lt](http://www.vilniaus-r.lt)

##### ☛ HARVEST FESTIVAL NEAR VILNIUS



The Festival of the Sea takes place annually in the Lithuanian port city of Klaipėda, and involves a variety of cultural, sporting and other events such as concerts, exhibitions and theatre performances. The Festival of the Sea (Day of the Sea) was held for the first time on 12 August 1934, at the initiative of the West Lithuanian association "Lietuvos vakarų sąjunga". 60 000 Lithuanian and foreign visitors took part in that first festival. Until the war, the event was used to spread information about the sea, shipping and seafaring professions. It now attracts around 500 000 tourists. The now traditional tall ships festival "Baltic Sail" also takes place during the event.

#### ■ KLAIPĖDA

##### ☛ FESTIVAL OF THE SEA



The festival takes place at the end of July each year. For more information, see [www.jurossvente.lt](http://www.jurossvente.lt)

The "Culture Night" is a cultural festival for all, presenting around 150 contemporary art projects from various genres. The event is inspired by the unique concept of the "nuit blanche" and the positive experiences of other cities that have had success with this concept. At nightfall on the "Culture Night", the doors are opened to the city's theatres, museums, galleries and churches. The city is filled with music, film showings, dance and art installations, even in the most unexpected places like parks, public squares and green areas, courtyards and streets in the old town. Every year, around 500 professional artists working with different media take part in this nocturnal festival. The number of events in the "Culture Night" rises every year – over the last few years, artists have shown more than 100 projects in various media.

#### ■ VILNIUS

##### ☛ CULTURE NIGHT – "Sleepless Night"



**The "Culture Night" takes place on the night of 5-6 June (from 6 p.m. to 4 a.m.), and sets a key cultural tone in connection with Lithuania taking over the presidency of the Council.** For more information, see [www.kulturosnaktis.lt](http://www.kulturosnaktis.lt)

## 06 Lithuanian timeless traditions



### ➤ KAUNAS CITY FESTIVAL

On 20 May 1463, Casimir IV Jagiellon renewed and extended Kaunas's city rights. The oldest extant original of Kaunas's charter is currently stored in the archives of Saint Petersburg. The now-traditional Kaunas city festival is a highly anticipated spring festival that attracts people from all over Lithuania, domestic and international traders, actors and performers. For more information, see [www.kaunodienos.lt](http://www.kaunodienos.lt)



### ➤ NATIONAL DOLL MUSEUM

This museum houses an exhibition of dolls from all over the world displaying a huge range of traditional costume, varying according to climate, lifestyle, tradition and custom. Visitors will find more than 800 dolls displaying national costumes from 70 countries, historical dress and literary figures, as well as puppets. For more information, see [tic.siauliai.lt](http://tic.siauliai.lt)



### ➤ HILL OF CROSSES

In the countryside around 12 kilometres north of Šiauliai, there is a – not particularly large – hill entirely covered with crosses. This is the famous Hill of Crosses, bearing witness to people's faith. There have been crosses here well before mid-19th century, raised as a sign of gratitude for divine help, though the origins of the tradition are unknown. During Soviet times, several attempts were made to destroy the site – the hill was razed with bulldozers, the wooden crosses were burned, the metal ones scrapped, and the stone and concrete ones buried. Four times this happened, but every time the hill of crosses was rebuilt.

For more information, see [www.kryziukalnas.lt](http://www.kryziukalnas.lt)



### ➤ CHOCOLATE MUSEUM

The chocolate museum offers a glimpse of the history of chocolate, going back almost four thousand years, and reveals the secrets of Mayan and Aztec chocolate production and the changing traditions surrounding its use over the centuries. The oldest Lithuanian chocolate factory, Rūta, offers tours of its workshops, where visitors can try out their chocolate-making skills!

For more information, see [www.sokoladomuziejus.lt](http://www.sokoladomuziejus.lt)



### ■ KAUNAS

### ➤ 80<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF THE TRANS-ATLANTIC FLIGHT BY STEPONAS DARIUS AND STASYS GIRĖNAS

This year Kaunas and all Lithuania will commemorate the 80th anniversary of the first Lithuanian trans-Atlantic flight. Steponas Darius and Stasys Girėnas, having tragically crashed before completing the second longest flight at that time, had their love for their homeland and were commemorated everywhere – not only in street and school names but also by becoming the only pilots depicted on a currency (10 Litas note). When: throughout 2013. More information: [www.kaunas.lt](http://www.kaunas.lt)



The traditional international Gediminas ski marathon has been held in Vilnius county every February for many years, with the municipality of Bezdonys creating picturesque ski pistes through woodland for the occasion. Participants have to complete a course of between one and 34 kilometres, depending on their age. The competition has become increasingly mainstream over the years, and is more and more popular among keen skiers. The marathon attracts skiers from all over Lithuania, as well as from Poland, Latvia, Russia and Belarus. After the race, participants and spectators can warm up by a campfire and get a hot meal from the field kitchen. The race takes place in February each year. For more information, see [www.skigo.lt](http://www.skigo.lt)

#### ■ VILNIUS DISTRICT

##### ☛ GEDIMINAS SKI MARATHON



For centuries, Zarasai has hosted a unique horse race each winter, held on the ice of the legendary Sartai lake. The race, usually held in freezing and sunny February, brings together hundreds of horses and racers watched by tens of thousands of spectators.

##### ☛ HORSE RACING ON SNOW AT SARTAI



For more information, see <http://www.sartulenktynes.lt>

Zarasai has established itself as a key venue for motorsports, and is proud to present, for the third year in a row, the international "300 Lakes Rally". This event attracts large numbers of motorsports fans each year, and the spectacular surroundings around Zarasai, the 300 lakes, the route and the variety of surfaces on the course give the rally a very special mood and atmosphere.

##### ☛ INTERNATIONAL "300 LAKES RALLY"



The race takes place on 9 and 10 August 2013. For more information, see [www.300lakesrally.lt/en/news.php](http://www.300lakesrally.lt/en/news.php)

**Kaunas Jazz** – a member of the Europe Jazz Network – is an annual international jazz festival that has been held in Kaunas and other towns in Lithuania at different times of year since 1991. The festival is known for the variety of styles of jazz performed, and follows in a rich tradition of jazz in Lithuania.

##### ☛ KAUNAS JAZZ FESTIVAL



Every year, Kaunas Jazz provides a broad and multi-faceted programme of modern jazz, performed by world-renowned professional jazz musicians from Lithuania and abroad. The public awards the "Jazz Eaters Award" (Džiazo valgytojas) to the musician whose performance they liked best.

This year, Kaunas Jazz is on from 24 to 29 April. Three times a year. For more information, see [www.kaunasjazz.lt](http://www.kaunasjazz.lt).

## 06 Lithuanian timeless traditions



### ➤ MUSIC FESTIVAL IN PAŽAISLIS

Taking place over three months, the Pažaislis music festival is one of the top Lithuanian classical music events. Held each year in the stunning old Camaldulian monastery and in other locations around Kaunas County, it brings together dozens of world renowned performers, like Yehudi Menuhin, Justus Frantz, Yuri Bashmet, Eric Ericson, Roy Goodman and Krzysztof Penderecki, to name but a few. When: 2 June - 25 August, more information at: <http://www.pazaislis.lt/>



### ■ ZARASAI ➤ MĖNUO JUODARAGIS

Held on the last weekend of the summer, "Mėnuo Juodaragis" is an enchanting festival of music and culture on the fairytale island of Zarasas in Zarasai, which now feels like a home away from home. This annual event brings together highly original artists from all over the world in a colourful festival that provides a window into the richness of Baltic culture. Over three days and nights, the wooded valleys of the island are filled with the sounds of celebration, against a backdrop of moonlight reflected in the cool water of the lake. The festival takes place over the penultimate weekend in August. More information can be found at [www.zarasai.lt](http://www.zarasai.lt)



### ➤ GALAPAGOS FESTIVAL

The Galapagos festival is the largest international music and entertainment festival in Lithuania. It is held in the open air every summer, and is famous for the quality of the concerts and the wide range of other performances. The festival started in 2002, under the name of "Rock Nights", and has been getting bigger every year, attracting people not only from Lithuania but also from Belarus, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Latvia, Poland, Sweden and other countries. It takes place in Zarasai, on a 44-hectare site in stunning surroundings on the island in Zarasas lake. Each year, four stages are set up for performances by musicians in a wide variety of genres, so that every attendee can find something to their taste. Galapagos is the brightest star in the Lithuanian festival calendar, and has the longest tradition. The festival takes place on 2 and 3 August 2013. More information can be found at [www.galapagai.lt](http://www.galapagai.lt)

■ JULY-DECEMBER 2013 BRUSSELS/GHENT

*The CULTURE programme will showcase Lithuanian culture, illustrating not just its distinctive features, but also the parallels and points in common with the wider European culture.*

✎ Cultural programme  
in celebration of the  
Lithuanian Presidency  
of the Council of the  
European Union

GALA CONCERT IN CONNECTION WITH THE KLARA  
FESTIVAL INTERNATIONAL MUSIC FESTIVAL

12 SEPTEMBER 2013, 8 P.M.

■ BOZAR CENTRE FOR FINE ARTS, HENRY LE BOEUF HALL, BRUSSELS

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[www.bozar.be](http://www.bozar.be)

*Performers: Violeta Urmana (soprano), the Lithuanian National Symphony Orchestra,  
Modestas Pitrenas (director)*

**PROGRAMME:**

M. K. Čiurlionis. Symphonic poem "In the Forest"

R. Wagner. "Five poems by Mathilde Wesendonk" for soprano and orchestra

R. Strauss. Symphonic poem "Death and Transfiguration"

R. Wagner. Isolde's Liebestod from Tristan and Isolde



# 07 Lithuanian Presidency meetings and events

## JULY

**2 JULY:**  
Europe 2020 conference: A Digital Agenda for Europe: the role of regions and cities  
■ BRUSSELS

**2 JULY**  
CoR Bureau Meeting  
■ BRUSSELS

**2-3 JULY**  
Seminar on Eastern Partnership  
■ VILNIUS

**3-4 JULY**  
CoR Plenary Session  
■ BRUSSELS

**4 JULY**  
PRESIDENCY OPENING RECEPTION  
■ BRUSSELS

**4-5 JULY**  
International conference on the issues involved in evaluating the EU Structural Funds' "Cohesion policy 2014-2020"  
■ VILNIUS

**18-19 JULY**  
NAT Commission meeting and seminar  
■ KAUNAS

## SEPTEMBER

**2 SEPTEMBER**  
ENVE Commission meeting  
■ VILNIUS

**2-3 SEPTEMBER**  
Europe 2020 conference on resource efficiency  
■ VILNIUS

**3 SEPTEMBER**  
CoR Bureau meeting  
■ VILNIUS

**3 SEPTEMBER**  
CORLEAP annual conference and Bureau meeting  
■ VILNIUS

**9-12 SEPTEMBER**  
EU Youth conference  
■ VILNIUS

**12-13 SEPTEMBER**  
Seminar on EU energy security-future prospects  
■ VILNIUS

**12 SEPTEMBER**  
Conference on the role of civil society in safeguarding four main EU freedoms  
■ VILNIUS

**16 SEPTEMBER**  
European Mobility week  
■ BRUSSELS

**25-26 SEPTEMBER**  
European Competition Day  
■ VILNIUS

**25-27 SEPTEMBER**  
Conference of Peripheral and Maritime Regions- General Assembly and 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary, Saint-Malo  
■ FRANCE

**30 SEPTEMBER**  
CoR European Alliance political group meeting, PANEVĖŽYS  
■ LITHUANIA

**30 SEPTEMBER- 1 OCTOBER**  
Conference on European and Eastern Partnership countries co-operation in innovation, research and experimental development areas  
■ VILNIUS



## OCTOBER

### 1-2 OCTOBER

Conference on cultural policy:  
Access to Culture  
■ VILNIUS

### 7 OCTOBER

CoR Bureau Meeting  
■ BRUSSELS

### 7-10 OCTOBER

11<sup>th</sup> European Regions and  
Cities Week - OPEN DAYS  
■ BRUSSELS

### 8-9 OCTOBER

CoR Plenary Session  
■ BRUSSELS

### 15-16 OCTOBER

EU Development days  
■ BRUSSELS

### 16-17 OCTOBER

4<sup>th</sup> European Conference on Public  
Communication (EuroPCom), CoR  
and other EU institutions  
■ BRUSSELS

### 16-18 OCTOBER

Annual conference of the European Platform  
Against Poverty and Social Exclusion  
■ BRUSSELS

### 17-18 OCTOBER

12<sup>th</sup> European Tourism Forum  
■ VILNIUS

### 17-18 OCTOBER

CoR European People's party  
(EPP) political group seminar  
■ KAUNAS

### 22-25 OCTOBER

Eastern Partnership Youth Forum  
■ VILNIUS

## NOVEMBER

### 4-6 NOVEMBER

2013 European Culture Forum  
■ BRUSSELS

### 11-12 NOVEMBER

Annual Baltic Sea Forum  
■ VILNIUS

### 14-15 NOVEMBER

7<sup>th</sup> high level conference on  
e-government issues  
■ VILNIUS

### 26 NOVEMBER

Informal meeting of European  
Regional policy ministers  
■ VILNIUS

### 27 NOVEMBER

Europe 2020 conference: The Innovation  
Union: the role of regions and cities  
■ BRUSSELS

### 27 NOVEMBER

CoR Bureau Meeting  
■ BRUSSELS

### 27-29 NOVEMBER

Eurocities' annual conference: Smart citizens  
■ BRUSSELS

### 27-28 NOVEMBER

Eastern Partnership business forum  
■ VILNIUS

### 28-29 NOVEMBER

Eastern Partnership Summit  
■ VILNIUS

## DECEMBER

### (TBC) DECEMBER

European Citizens' Year closing event

Follow us on:



<http://www.eu2013.lt/en>



## 08 Contact details

### COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

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EUROPEAN UNION



## Committee of the Regions

Edited by the Directorate of Communication, Press and Events

July 2013

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