

ANNUAL TOURISM REPORT 2012

LITHUANIA

1. INTRODUCTION

Council Decision 86/664/EEC of 22 December 1986¹ establishing a consultation and cooperation procedure in the field of tourism foresees that “each Member State shall send the Commission, once a year, a report on the most significant measures it has taken and, as far as possible, on measures it is considering taking in the provision of services for tourists which could have consequences for travellers from the other Member States”.

With the publication of the “Agenda for a sustainable and competitive European tourism”, the Commission announced that “in order to strengthen the collaboration with and among Member States, their current annual reporting through the Tourism Advisory Committee (TAC) will be used to facilitate the exchange and the dissemination of information about how their policies and actions safeguard the sustainability of tourism”.

This Communication was welcomed by the Competitiveness Council conclusions (22nd-23rd November 2007) and by the Presidency Conclusions of the Brussels European Council of 14th December 2007.

The main aims for the reporting process are:

- to be able to monitor the level of implementation of the “Agenda for a sustainable and competitive European tourism” by Member States;
- to facilitate the exchange of experiences among member States with regard to how they tackle issues which are important for the competitiveness and sustainability of European tourism.

MS reports referring to year n shall be sent to the European Commission by the end of February of year $n+1$.

If the reports are sent in English, the deadline is shifted to the end of April.

2. ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

This section should provide an overview of the main organisational structure to illustrate how tourism is organised and managed, to identify linkages and to identify the engagement of other organisations/stakeholders.

The information required will only need to be prepared fully in year 1 as it will subsequently only be necessary to provide details of any changes.

¹ Official Journal L 384, 31/12/1986 P. 0052 – 0053.

2.1 Please identify the National Bodies responsible for tourism (Ministry and also any separate/related National Tourism Organisation), including key areas of responsibility, and their relationship to other national bodies. (maximum of 1.000 characters)

Ministry of Economy of the Republic of Lithuania, Tourism Policy Division is responsible for:

- Tourism policy-making
- Tourism planning
- International cooperation
- Planning of EU support

State Department of Tourism under the Ministry of Economy is responsible for:

- Implementation of Tourism policy
- Targeted tourism marketing
- Tourism market supervision
- Implementation of EU projects.

2.2 Please, describe what organisations/agencies are used to deliver services at the national and regional level and the services that they deliver. (maximum 800 characters)

There are 3 main tourism business organizations in Lithuania:

1. The Chamber for Tourism of the Republic of Lithuania established in 2011 represents 9 main tourism business associations:

- the Lithuanian Hotel and Restaurant Association established in 2002 represents the hospitality sector and unites more than 300 members. The association protects the rights and interests of members in discussions with government and management institutions;
- the Lithuanian Countryside Tourism Association established in 1997, unites 390 members and co-ordinates the activities of members in developing rural tourism;
- the Lithuanian Health Resorts Association established in 2007, unites 8 members, promotes health tourism in the country;
- the National Tourism Business Association established in 2011, unites 6 members and promotes inbound tourism;
- the Lithuanian Camps Association established in 2004, unites 23 members and promotes camping tourism;
- the Lithuanian Castles and Manors Association established in 2005, unites 32 members and promotes responsible tourism and national heritage;
- the Lithuanian Private Healthcare Establishment Association established in 1996, unites 100 members and promotes the services of the Private Healthcare Establishments;
- the National SPA Association established in 2007, unites 15 members and promotes SPA treatment.
- the Lithuanian Golf Federation established in 2000, unites 9 members and promotes golf tourism.

2. The Lithuanian Tourism Association (LTA) established in 1991, representing Lithuanian tour operators and agencies (53 members);

3. The Lithuanian Medical Tourism Association "Medical Lithuania" established in 2012, representing Lithuanian medical establishments (13 members).

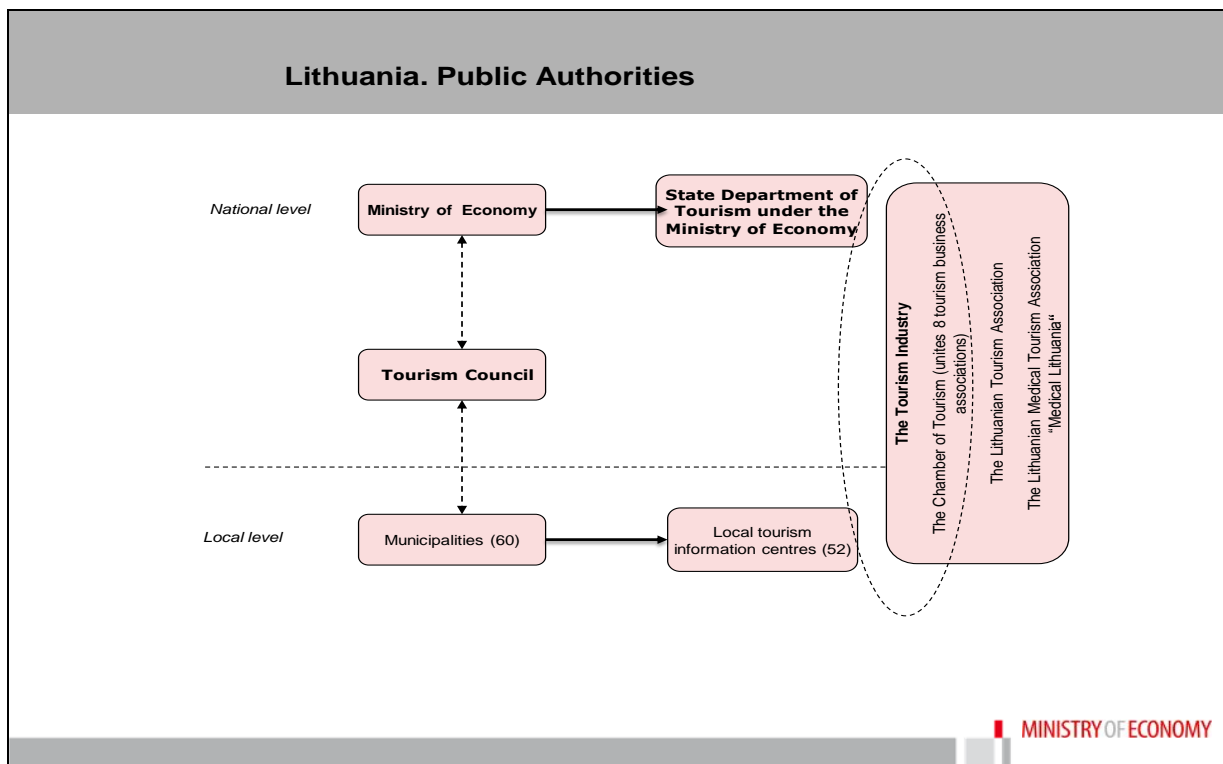
2.3 Please, describe which other bodies and organisations are involved at the national level and the process for involving them. (maximum 800 characters)

The Department of Cultural Heritage under the Ministry of Culture is the institution that performs functions of state administration of cultural heritage by organizing a preservation of the Lithuanian cultural heritage and passing it on to future generations and to create conditions necessary for public to learn about it and use it. The Department also cooperates with international cultural heritage organizations (UNESCO, ICCROM), coordinates Council of Europe programs in Lithuania, such as European Heritage Days and European Cultural Routes, organizes national and international conferences, and conducts various educational campaigns.

State Service for Protected Areas under the Ministry of Environment is responsible for creation conditions for cognitive tourism in protected areas.

Lithuanian Health Resort Science and Research Centre investigates health and its relationship to natural healing, a science-based tools and methods to strengthen and rebuild efficiency of health resorts, takes care of the health care, treatment and rehabilitation services provided by the Lithuanian resorts.

2.4 Please provide a diagram/organogram of the organisational structure for tourism identifying the relationship between national, regional and local bodies. Provide also a short description of the core responsibilities and competencies of each of the organisations. Include also information regarding the direct and indirect links between other departments, stakeholder organisations and unions. Information about mechanisms of decision making process participation from outsider organisations, e.g. forums, advisory committees is also requested. (maximum of 2.000 characters)



2.5 Please provide information about financial data, including spend/budget on tourism as a percentage of overall government spend/budget, the level of national funding support for tourism

marketing, the amount of EU funding support made available for tourism and data concerning the support to SMEs and Destinations. (500 characters)

Lithuanian State Department of Tourism estimates that in 2012 number of foreign tourist trips to Lithuania reached 2 million or 12 percent more than in 2011. According to the data of European Travel Commission, in 2012 Lithuania was second in Europe by foreign visits growth.

In 2012, tourism exports represented 24% of the value of total services exports and 4% of the value of all goods and services exports.

Receipts from international tourism totalled LTL 3.852 (EUR 1.116) billion in 2012 (+12.8 %). Receipts from international and local tourism totalled LTL 5.149 (EUR 1.491) billion (+10%).

National budget in 2013 – 0.726 million EUR. (0.163 million EUR or 22,5 % of this budget is for tourism activities).

3. POLICIES AND STRATEGIES

3.1 Is there a current National Strategy for tourism? Yes + No

If yes, please, provide information in bullet point format about the key aims, objectives and priorities of the strategy highlighting those that are designed to address sustainability issues in economic, environmental and social terms in particular those related in the six aims included in the Agenda. In preparing the tourism strategy, explain how consideration has been given to the 9 principles set out in the Agenda (para2.3 p5) and given in the appendix. (maximum 1.000 characters)

The *National Tourism Development Programme 2010-2013* was developed to help achieve a competitive tourism industry. Its main goals and objectives are to create a favourable environment for the development of competitive tourism products and to ensure stable growth in tourist numbers. The *Programme* has adopted an integrated approach to sector development, and includes:

- the development of public tourism infrastructure to stimulate the development of marketable tourism products;
- increasing opportunities for resorts and resort areas and health tourism;
- supporting the development of private sector tourism services; and
- improving legal regulation and planning of the tourism sector.

The *Programme*, which was developed in close co-operation with the Tourism Council, tourism industry and tourism-related organisations, stresses the importance of using the best available knowledge, developing professional skills, sharing experiences, organising training, and monitoring the tourism sector. In order to achieve an appropriate pace of tourism development, priority areas were identified in the *Programme*; these include cultural, health, active recreation and business tourism. Using sustainable planning criteria, 7 priority regions have been identified for tourism development.

The *Programme* lays particular emphasis on sustainability issues and the need for collaboration between the tourism industry and the government. Tourism is subject to major seasonal variations, and sustainability is a key feature of industry planning. Sustainable tourism means that the development of the industry must promote sustainable local communities, good, stable jobs and economically viable tourism companies, while maintaining a firm focus on the environment. Tourism must also minimise emissions of greenhouse gases and waste, and protect the natural and cultural landscape. The government's definition of sustainable tourism also includes respect for social responsibilities.

3.2 Who was the initiator and who is responsible for its implementation? (maximum 200 characters)

The Ministry of Economy of the Republic of Lithuania was the initiator of the National Tourism Development Programme. The responsible bodies for the Programme's implementation are: Ministry of Economy, the State Department of Tourism under the Ministry of Economy, Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Transport and Communications, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Agriculture, State Service for Protected Areas under the Ministry of Environment, Lithuanian Health Resort Science and Research Centre, municipalities and private sector.

3.3 How is the strategy monitored and how often? (maximum 500 characters)

Quarterly and annually reports back to the Government of the Republic of Lithuania on the implementation of measures, the use of funds and achievement of outcomes and indicators.

3.4 What tourism specific legislation exists? (maximum 500 characters)

- Law on Tourism;
- National Tourism Development Programme 2010-2013;
- Pope John Paul II's Pilgrimage Programme 2007-2013.

4. MEASURES AND INITIATIVES

This section provides Member States with an opportunity to outline specific initiatives and policies that are or are going to be adopted to manage and develop tourism activity in ways which respond to the key challenges of the Agenda and which fall within the six main aims of the Agenda itself.

1 Economic prosperity

- a. To ensure the long term competitiveness, viability and prosperity of tourism enterprises and destinations.

According to the European Travel Commission, Lithuania was second in Europe by international tourist's arrivals growth. International tourist arrivals in 2011 reached 1.8 million, marginally higher than in 2010. The number of foreign tourists in Lithuanian accommodation establishments for the first time has reached over 1 million in 2011. Receipts from international tourism totalled LTL 3.494 (EUR 1.013) billion in 2011 (+21.2 %). Receipts from international and local tourism totalled LTL 4.763 (EUR 1.4) billion (+16.2 %).

The Health tourism is among the 4 priorities of the tourism development in Lithuania (along with cultural, active leisure and conference tourism) as determined in the National Tourism Development Programme for 2010-2013.

In order to stimulate and develop the health and medical tourism, the Ministry of Economy of the Republic of Lithuania organized in Lithuania an international conference "Medical tourism – the future of tourism services".

With the participation of 6 municipalities (biggest cities and the resorts) the Lithuanian Conference Bureau was established in 2012.

- b. To provide quality employment opportunities, offering fair pay and conditions for all employees and avoiding all forms of discrimination.

2 Social equity and cohesion

- a. To enhance the quality of life of local communities through tourism, and engage them in its planning and management
- b. To provide a safe, satisfying and fulfilling experience for visitors, available to all without discrimination by gender, race, religion, disability or in other ways.

3 Environmental and cultural protection

- a. To minimise pollution and degradation of the global and local environment and the use of scarce resources by tourism activities.
- b. To maintain and strengthen cultural richness and biodiversity and contribute to their appreciation and conservation.

4.1 Please set out, briefly, the steps which have been or will be taken, if any, to address the 7 key challenges for the delivery of sustainable and competitive tourism, covered in the TSG report and referred to in the 'Agenda'.

Attention is giving for sustainable conservation and management of natural and cultural resources. Ministry of Economy in co-operation with Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Environment does planning of EU financial support for renovation of cultural heritage, for conservation and adaptation the cultural heritage for tourism.

Special initiative for organization of cultural events was suggested for reducing the seasonality, especially in the resorts.

Tourism experiences are available to all without discrimination as there is special regulations for accommodation establishments (special entrance, etc.), national and regional parks (pathways for disable people).

4.1.1 Reducing the seasonality of demand. (maximum 200 characters)

The most important tourism branches reducing the seasonality are:

- Health tourism (SPA and beauty services, healthy diet and lifestyle training, natural factors (mineral water, mud, air), medical tests and surgery, dental, care and rehabilitation services).
- Business (Conference) Tourism.

The National Tourism Development Programme 2010-2013 includes a measure „Support of cultural events in Resorts in order to reduce seasonality effect“.

There are 4 health resorts In Lithuania. The picture below illustrates difference among beach resorts (Palanga and Neringa) and the health resorts (Birštonas and Druskininkai).

In the resort Neringa during high season period tourist flows rise up to 31 times, in the resort Palanga - over 4 times. An exception if the resort Druskininkai, which offers variety of services and has no seasonality problem.

4.1.2 Addressing the impact of tourism transport. (maximum 200 characters)

Ministry of Economy of the Republic of Lithuania co-operates with the Transport Ministry of the Republic of Lithuania implementing of Flight Promotion Programme. There are 3 international airports in Lithuania (Vilnius, Kaunas, Palanga). Vilnius Airport is the biggest and the most important.

4.1.3 Improving the quality of tourism jobs. (maximum 200 characters)

Seminars, training and qualification of tourism industry specialists are organized annually by the State Department of Tourism at the Ministry of Economy.

In 2012 the UN World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), the UNWTO.Themis Foundation and the Ministry of Economy of the Republic of Lithuania held a capacity building course on Tourism Destination: Policy and Management (110 hours, 70 tourism specialists)

In 2012 the Ministry of Economy of the Republic of Lithuania, the UNWTO and the United Nations Development Programme in Lithuania signed an agreement on participation in international internships' platform. According to the agreement, Kaunas College, Mykolas Romeris University, Vilnius Gediminas Technical University, Vilnius University and Vilnius College/University of Applied Sciences have the possibility to send their students and lecturers for internships/stages to the international organizations.

4.1.4 Maintaining and enhancing community prosperity and the quality of life, in the face of change. (maximum 200 characters)

Many municipalities of Lithuania established Tourism Information Centre. Special training courses (tourism quality, new technologies in tourism, sustainable tourism, ect.) are organized by State Department of Tourism, by Lithuanian Hotels and Restaurants Association, Lithuanian Tourism Association, Lithuanian Rural Tourism Association, etc.

4.1.5 Minimising resource use and the production of waste. (maximum 200 characters)

Lithuania is a member of *The Green Key* programme that raises the awareness of owners and managers of tourism and leisure establishments of the necessity to run responsible tourism businesses. In addition to environmental issues, the programme deals with staff training, monitoring energy use, washing and cleaning, food and beverages, the indoor environment, parks and parking areas and education.

4.1.6 Conserving and giving value to natural and cultural heritage. (maximum 200 characters)

The State Service for Protected Areas under the Ministry of Environment organizes the protection and management of protected areas. The Service coordinates the activities of 5 National Parks, 5 State Strict Nature Reserves as well as the work of the administration of 30 Regional Parks and one Biosphere Reserve. Protected areas occupy 15 percent of the total area of Lithuania.

There are 3 State Strict Nature Reserves (Cepkeliai, Kamanos, Viesvile), 2 State Cultural Reserves (Kernave and Vilnius Castles), 5 National Parks (Aukstaitija, Dzukija, the Curonian Spit, Zemaitija, and

Trakai Historic National Park), 30 Regional Parks, Zuvintas Biosphere Reserve, and other protected areas. The Curonian Spit, Vilnius Old Town and Kernave vicinities have been included in the UNESCO World heritage list. The protected areas of international importance (Zuvintas Biosphere Reserve, the Nemunas Delta Regional Park, Cepkeliai, Kamanos and Viesvile State Strict Nature Reserves) have been included in Ramsar Territories' List.

The Lithuanian forests association has equipped more than 2000 objects for recreation such as: 1096 places of respite, 541 staging-posts, 143 different kinds of ways: educational, cognitive, recreational, and specialized, 79 review places.

The Ministry of Economy closely co-operates with organizations responsible for the Lithuanian cultural heritage in order to achieve both objectives: conservation of cultural heritage and preservation of natural heritage as well as presenting it to a wide public.

4.1.7 Making holidays available to all. (maximum 200 characters)

Lithuania has some regulations that make favorable conditions for disabled travelers. According to the special requirements all 4-5 stars hotels and other 4 stars accommodation establishments are obliged to have at least 1 room tailored to the needs of disabled people. For all new built restaurants and accommodation establishments it is obligatory to have special entrance (a ramp) for disabled people. All new constructed pavements are tailored to disabled people needs.

4.2 As key challenges may change over time, please identify any other areas that are becoming a new challenge. (maximum 600 characters)

- Reducing the seasonality
- Solving visa issues
- Strengthen marketing activities
- Creating new touristic routes
- Promoting city breaks in Lithuania
- Promotion of health and medical tourism
- Improving Lithuanian accessibility (direct flights/transfer)
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4.3 Please identify and describe a specific initiative, which is related to the 7 key challenges, that is innovative/ successful and which would be of interest to or of help to other Member States. (maximum 2.000 characters)

- The International annual project "Great Baltic Travel" is a travel project that takes place in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. This project is targeted for family tourism. The project "Great Baltic travel" invites the families to take part in the game during the summer period. Travellers are invited to travel through 12 different routes (4 routes in each Baltic country) visiting family orientated objects and places.
- Joint marketing activities with Latvia and Estonia are implemented in long-haul destinations

(USA, China, Japan) with the goal to promote the region as an attractive tourism destination.

- On June 26th 2012 the Lithuanian State department of Tourism under the Ministry of Economy of Lithuania organized international conference “Past – Present – and Future: Cooperation along the Historical Amber Road” with the aim along with number of States to initiate creation of the international amber road. The initiative was supported by the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO).
- The regulation of the health tourism services.

5. MECHANISMS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Three mechanisms for implementing the Agenda were identified in the “Agenda”: sustainable destinations, sustainable businesses and responsible tourists.

5.1 Sustainable destinations: What support is given to strengthen destination management at the regional/ destination level (supportive policy environment, knowledge networks, training programmes, establishment of measures/indicators for benchmarking, etc.)? (maximum 600 characters)

The National Tourism Development Programme stimulates creating sustainable destinations, market researches, planning and implementation of Tourism Marketing Plan. Marketing Working Group was established to strengthen destination management, to create the Marketing plan.

The Ministry of Economy is committed to promoting and supporting the development of sustainable tourism. We do this by encouraging tourism community to seek out, list and promote those travel service providers undertaking initiatives which support the objectives of the sustainable tourism.

5.2 Sustainable businesses: What support is given to strengthen the sustainability and competitiveness of businesses (supportive policy environment, orientation of business support services to sustainability, training, financial incentives, etc.)? (maximum 600 characters)

EU structural assistance for 2007-2013 is EUR 240 million provided in order to develop projects of tourism infrastructure and marketing:

- Establishment and development of eco, active, cognitive and wellness tourism infrastructure, EUR 45 million
- Preservation of cultural heritage and readjustment for tourism development, EUR 70 million
- Tourism projects of national interest, EUR 36 million
- Tourism information and marketing, EUR 7 million
- Regional public infrastructure, EUR 21 million
- Development of tourism services (products) and quality improvement of tourism services, EUR 61 million

Seminars and training of tourism industry businessmen are organized every year.

Information about SME's accommodation providers is collecting. It is a positive step towards improving sustainable outcomes for the destination. None of the initiatives are "certifiable" to existing standards, but they are good, they are meaningful to the SME's involved and address specific local needs.

5.3 Responsible tourists: What support is given to promote responsible choices by tourists (e.g. sustainability in education, national marketing and media campaigns, promotion of certification schemes)? (maximum 600 characters)

The State Department of Tourism in co-operation with Universities organizes a special campaign to promote responsible tourism using national media. The brochure "Responsible tourism" is under preparation and will be published in 2013.

6. DATA AND INDICATORS

Eurostat will provide, as an annex, the key statistical data required to support the reporting process covering around 20 indicators². These are mainly related to the aim of 'economic prosperity'.

Please, identify indicators that are being used or developed which could add to the range of information being provided by Eurostat, particularly in relation to social and environmental issues (other indicators from the TSG report, visitors/ residents satisfaction, etc.). (maximum 500 characters)

The Lithuanian Statistics Department collects and process the data on tourism in Lithuania.

7. COMPLEMENTARY ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

If necessary use the following box to provide additional complementary information that has not already been covered.

² These indicators have been selected from the 50 TSG indicators on the basis of the possibility to calculate them at the European level.

APPENDIX

Principles of sustainable tourism:

- **Taking a holistic and integrated approach**

All the various impacts of tourism should be taken into account in its planning and development. Furthermore, tourism should be well balanced and integrated with a whole range of activities that affect society and the environment.

- **Planning for the long term**

Sustainable development is about taking care of the needs of future generations as well as our own. Long term planning requires the ability to sustain actions over time.

- **Achieving an appropriate pace and rhythm of development**

The level, pace and shape of development should reflect and respect the character, resources and needs of host communities and destinations.

- **Involving all stakeholders**

A sustainable approach requires widespread and committed participation in decision making and practical implementation by all those implicated in the outcome.

- **Using best available knowledge**

Policies and actions should be informed by the latest and best knowledge available. Information on tourism trends and impacts, and skills and experience, should be shared across Europe.

- **Minimising and managing risk – the precautionary principle**

Where there is uncertainty about outcomes, there should be full evaluation and preventative action should be taken to avoid damage to the environment or society.

- **Reflecting impacts in costs – user and polluter pays**

Prices should reflect the real costs to society of consumption and production activities. This has implications not simply for pollution but for charging for the use of facilities that have significant management costs attached to them.

- **Setting and respecting limits, where appropriate**

The carrying capacity of individual sites and wider areas should be recognised, with a readiness and ability to limit, where and when appropriate, the amount of tourism development and volume of tourist flows.

- **Undertaking continuous monitoring**

Sustainability is all about understanding impacts and being alert to them all the time, so that the necessary changes and improvements can be made.