European Commission

Education and Training Monitor 2013

Lithuania

Education and Training

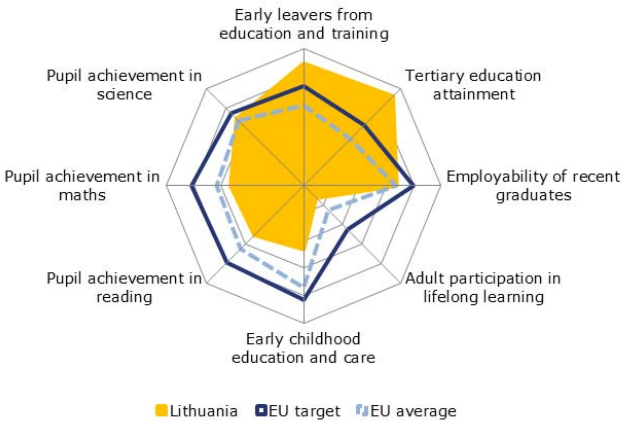
1. Key indicators and benchmarks

Europe 2020 headline targets			Lithuania 2009	Lithuania 2012	EU average 2009	EU average 2012	Europe 2020 target / Benchmark
1. Early leavers from education and training (age 18-24)			8.7%	6.5%	14.2% EU28	12.7% EU28	**EU target: 10%** National target: <9%
2. Tertiary educational attainment (age 30-34)			40.6%	48.7%	32.1% EU28	35.7% EU28	**EU target: 40%** National target: 40%
ET 2020 Benchmarks							
3. Early childhood education and care (4 years old - year before start of compulsory primary)			79.6%	84.2% 11	91.7%	93.2% 11	**95%**
4. Basic skills Low achievers (15 year-olds; Level 1 or lower in PISA study)	Reading		24.3%	:	19.6%	:	**15%**
	Mathematics		26.2%	:	22.2%	:	**15%**
	Science		17.0%	:	17.7%	:	**15%**
5. Learning mobility	Initial vocational training (IVET)	**a.** Students participating in Leonardo da Vinci programs as a share of vocational students at ISCED 3	3.3%	5.0% 11	0.6%	0.7% 11	
	Higher Education	**b.** Erasmus inbound students as % of student population in host country		0.8% 11		1.1% 11	
		c. Inbound degree mobile students as % of student population in the host country		1.6% 11		7.0% 11	
6. Employment rate of graduates (age 20-34) having left education 1-3 years before reference year			72.9%	76.0%	78.3%	75.7%	**82%**
7. Adult participation in lifelong learning (age 25-64)			4.5%	5.2%	9.3%	9.0%	**15%**
Proposed ET 2020 benchmark							
8. Foreign languages skills	**a.** ISCED 2 students at proficiency level B1 or higher in first foreign language[1]		:	:	:	43.5% 11	
	b. ISCED 2 students learning two or more foreign languages		79.6%	79.6% 11	58.6%	60.8% 10	
Other ET 2020 Indicators							
9. Investment in education and training	**a.** General government expenditure on education (% of GDP)		6.8%	5.8% 11	5.5%	5.3% 11	
	b. Annual expenditure on public and private educational institutions per pupil/student in € PPS	ISCED 1-2	€ 3,164 08	€ 3,295 10	€ 5,732 08	€ 6,021 10	
		ISCED 3-4	€ 3,537 08	€ 3,291 10	€ 6,964 08	€ 7,123 10	
		ISCED 5-6	€ 4,741 08	€ 5,066 10	€ 9,309 08	€ 9,168 10	
10. Digital competences	**a.** Pupils in grade 4 (ISCED 1) using computers at school		21.9% 07	37.9% 11	60.7% 07	64.7% 11	
	b. Individuals aged 16-74 with high computer skills[2]		27.0%	29.0%	25.0%	26.0%	
11. Entrepreneurial competences	Individuals aged 18-64 who believe to have the required skills and knowledge to start a business		:	40.0%	42.3% a	42.0% a	
12. Vocational education and training	Share of vocational students at ISCED 3		26.4%	28.4% 11	49.6%	50.3% 11	
13. Skills for future labour markets Projected change in employment 2010-2020 in %	High qualification		:	-8.8%	:	19.1% EU28	
	Medium qualification		:	17.8%	:	4.6% EU28	
	Low qualification		:	5.2%	:	-20.2% EU28	
14. Low-skilled adults	Literacy		:	:	:	19.9% EU17	
	Numeracy		:	:	:	23.6% EU17	
	Problem solving in technology rich environments[3]		:	:	:	26.9% EU13	

Source: Cedefop: 13 / EAC: 10a,b / European Survey on Language Competences (ESLC): 8a / Eurostat (Government finance statistics): 9a / Eurostat (LFS): 1, 2, 6, 7 / Eurostat (ISS): 10b / Eurostat (UOE): 3, 8b, 9b, 10c, 12 / IEA TIMSS: 10a / Global Entrepreneurship Monitor: 11 / OECD (PIAAC): 14 / OECD (PISA): 4

Notes: 07 =2007, 08 =2008, 09 =2009, 10 =2010, 11 =2011, e= estimate, a= unweighted average b= break, p= provisional
Number of countries included in EU average: PISA=25, Entrepreneurship=18, Language skills=13, ICT/Computers at school=13, others: EU27
[1]= average of skills tested in reading, listening, writing, [2]= having carried out 5-6 specific computer related activities, [3]= Results cover people with scores below level 1 as well as people who have no computer experience or failed the ICT test

Figure 1. Position in relation to highest (outer ring) and lowest performers (centre)



Source: DG EAC calculations on the basis of data from Eurostat (LFS 2012 and UOE 2011) and OECD (PISA 2009). *Note:* all scores are set between a maximum (the highest performers visualised by the outer ring) and a minimum (the lowest performers visualised by the centre of the chart).

2. Main challenges

The main education challenge in Lithuania is the skills mismatch and unemployment of initial vocational education and training (VET) graduates and, to a smaller extent, higher education graduates. VET career is still perceived as a second choice by parents and pupils, who tend to choose upper secondary general education instead. The high unemployment rate among graduates, especially VET ones, is due to the low quality of teaching and lack of good practical training. Although Lithuania is one of the EU leaders regarding tertiary attainment rate, having already achieved the EU 2020 target, graduates of law, social science and business and administration have more difficulties in finding a job than graduates of engineering and science studies, because of lower quality teaching and lack of soft skills and practical training. In addition, as participation of adults in lifelong learning is one of the lowest in Europe, there is a challenge to provide low-skilled and older workers the possibility to up-skill or re-skill to respond better to labour market needs.

Therefore the 2013 European Semester country-specific recommendation (CSR) on education focused on two topics: enhancing the implementation and effectiveness of apprenticeship schemes, and addressing persistent skill mismatches.

3. Investing in skills and qualifications

Investing in education and training in a context of economic crisis

General government expenditure on education as a share of GDP in Lithuania is slightly above the EU average (5.8% vs. 5.3% in 2011), although it decreased by one percentage point since 2009. In 2011, the Programme for Target Funding of Study Programmes was approved to support study programmes which are not popular among applicants but key to the Lithuanian economy. The budget estimated for this purpose amounts to LTL 1.1 million (approximately EUR 0.32 million). In 2012, the amount paid as reimbursement of the tuition fee for the best performing students who studied in places not funded by the state totalled LTL 11.6 million (approx. 3.35 million euro). More than 1,700 students were recipients of those reimbursements. Higher education spending in Lithuania remains very low. Data from 2010 show that spending per student in HE in Lithuania was around half the EU average (EUR 4500 per student in PPS). This level is among the lowest in the EU.

Skills

School education produces relatively weak results in terms of basic skills: 15-year olds' performance on PISA tests remains below the EU average in reading (the share of low-achievers is 24.3% vs. the EU average of 19.6% in 2009) and maths (the share of low-achievers is 26.2% vs. the EU average of 22.2% in 2009). So far, there have been no concrete government initiatives to address either the relatively poor performance in basic skills or gender differences in educational performance: boys perform worse than girls in reading (PISA results 2009) In Lithuania 62% of teachers worked in schools, where the school principal reported that the instruction was hindered to some extent by shortage or inadequacy of instructional material[1].

Lithuania is seeking to enhance innovation and creativity aspects of the education system: the General Curriculum Frameworks for Primary, Basic and Secondary Education were updated in 2004. The general curricula focus on the development of key competences and promotion of creative thinking and entrepreneurship.

[1] Source : TALIS Creating Effective Teaching and Learning Environments First Result s from TALIS', 2009

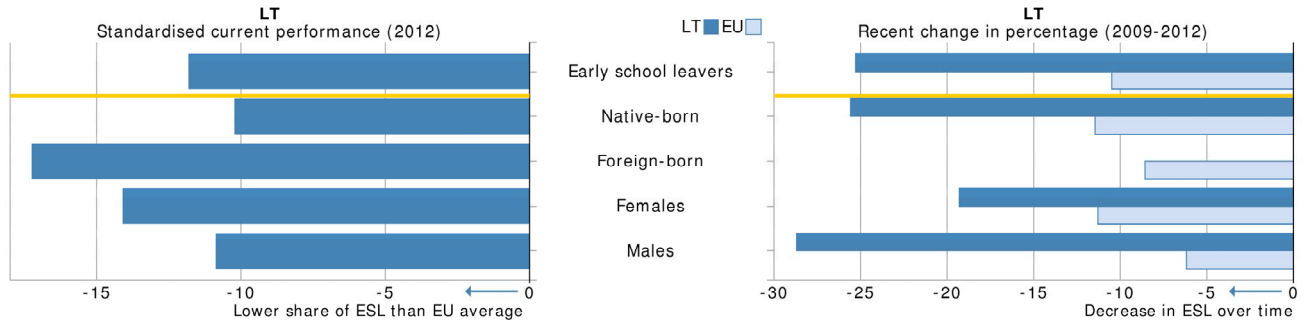
ICT skills of the population are slightly above the EU average, although a lower share of pupils used computers at school in 2007 (21.9% of 4th grade pupils in Lithuania, 60.7% in EU). The Lithuanian Government is currently investing into the expansion of the broadband network in order to improve high-speed internet access in rural areas. As regards entrepreneurship, the share of the population believing to have the required skills and knowledge to start a business (40% in 2012) increased by 5 percentage points since 2011 and is now close to the EU average (42%).

Lithuania has national qualifications frameworks in force and presented their national referencing report to the EQF Advisory Group in 2011. In Lithuania, the Law on Education (2011) states that an individual is free to pursue non-formal education programmes and self-education. No admission requirements are imposed on participants of non-formal adult education.

4. Tackling early school leaving and raising the bar in school education

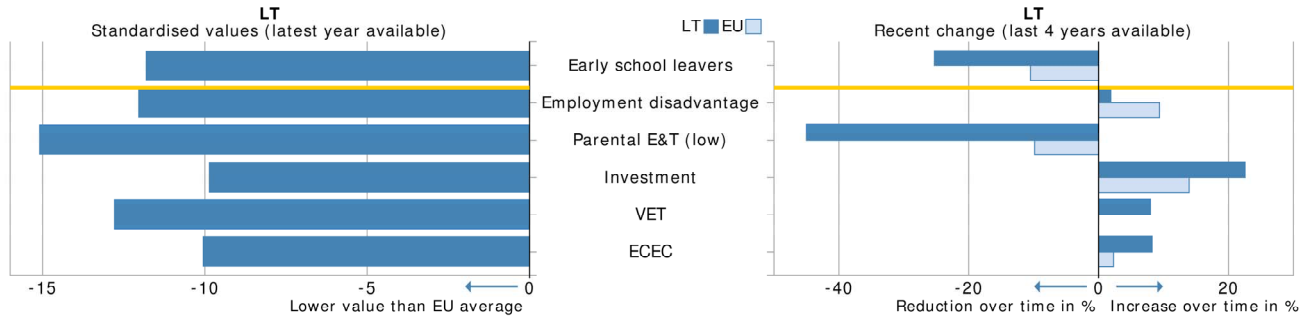
Concerning the Europe 2020 target on early school leaving (ESL), Lithuania performs better than the EU average (6.5% v. 12.8% in 2012) and has achieved the national target (9%), after having witnessed a significant decrease in the share of early school leavers over the past decade (from 13.4% in 2002). However, more boys (8.2%) than girls (4.6%) leave school early.[2]

Figure 2. Early school leavers of specific population sub-groups



Source: JRC-CRELL. *Note:* ESL = early school leaving. See Annex 2 for further information.

Figure 3. Early school leavers and sub-indicators



Source: JRC-CRELL. *Note:* see Annex 2 for an explanation of the sub-indicators.

Lithuania performs clearly below the EU average on participation in early childhood education and care (ECEC), due to the insufficient places in pre-school and early childcare facilities (84.2% as against 93.2% in 2011). In 2011, participation in ECEC amounted to 54.6 per cent of all children in the age group of 1–6 year-olds and older children across the country. The percentage of rural 1–6 year-old and older children participating in pre-school and pre-primary education is three times lower than that of urban children of the same age group.

Although the Lithuanian government already initiated some measures to increase the number and type of ECEC facilities, e.g. by implementing the Pre-school and Pre-primary education development programme for the 2011–2013 period approved by a minister of education and science, where the programme is meant to become a measure providing a better access to Pre-school and Pre-primary education, by opening of so called multi-functional centres in rural areas and increasing the access and variety of pre-school providers, especially in rural areas within the EU funded project, there is scope for improving the accessibility of the ECEC facilities, which is still below the EU average.

Since 2012, Lithuania has started the third stage in the development of the school network (the network of general education schools has been under reconstruction since 1998). The network of schools reconstruction has been determined by both implementing the reform of general education, including transfer from a 9-year to a

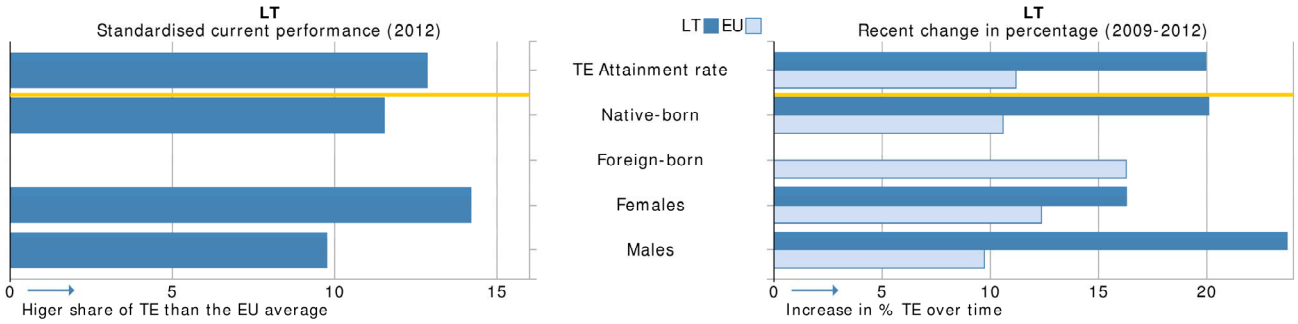
[2] Source: Eurostat (LFS)

10-year basic school and establishment of gymnasium and pre-gymnasium type schools, and significantly decreasing number of school children. It is up to the municipalities to prepare and approve plans for the reform of the network of schools of general education in their constituencies for 2012-2015.

5. Encouraging participation in tertiary education and modernising higher education

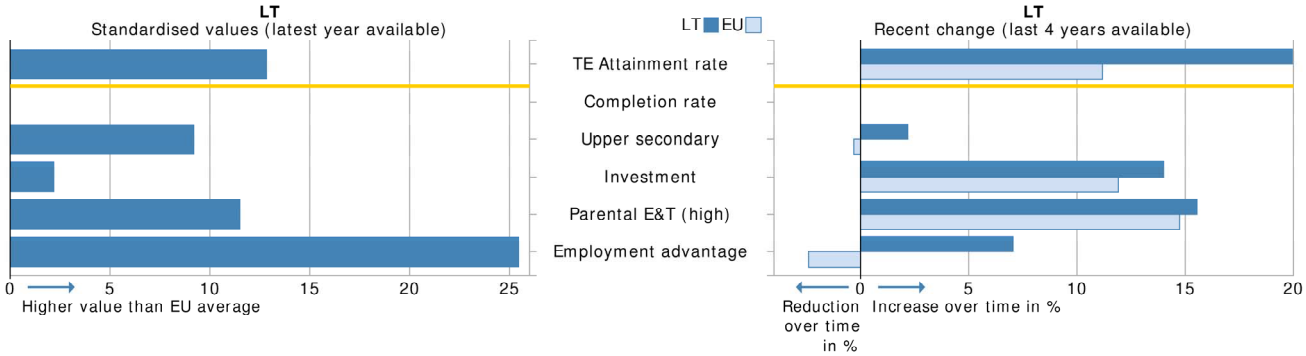
Lithuania's tertiary attainment rate (48.7% in 2012) is significantly above the EU average of 35.7% and the country already achieved its national 2020 target of 40%. More women (56.4%) than men (40.7%) have tertiary education in the 30-34 age group[3]. Concerning the distribution of tertiary graduates by field compared with the EU average, Lithuania shows a high share of graduates in social science, business and law (45.8% as against 35.7% in 2011) and a low share of graduates in maths, science and technology (21.2%) and in health and welfare (9.6%), which has a negative impact on the overall labour market integration of graduates and problems with employment. As the sub-indicators below show, in Lithuania tertiary level graduates however still have a relatively high employment advantage compared to graduates at secondary level.

Figure 4. Tertiary educational attainment of specific population sub-groups



Source: JRC-CRELL. *Note:* TE = tertiary education. See Annex 2 for further information.

Figure 5. Tertiary educational attainment and sub-indicators



Source: JRC-CRELL. *Note:* see Annex 2 for an explanation of the sub-indicators.

Quality of teaching in higher education, the provision of practical skills and competences, such as soft skills, problem solving, critical thinking and teamwork, and an adequate provision of career guidance services to match the labour market needs remain challenges. A complex reform aiming at increasing the quality of higher education, its effectiveness, efficiency and access was launched in 2009. The measures taken include improving the governance of universities, widening access and partnership with business. Further measures focus on creating competition between universities for students and reform of public funding (via a student voucher system) and increasing the quality of study programmes and research. The reform instigated consolidation of some universities and diversification of funding.

In higher education, the strengthening of knowledge triangle (mainly through the development of the "Valleys" – research, education and innovation triangles) should help to develop the high quality base for higher education and research.

One project provided training for 130 career guidance specialists in Higher Education who provided guidance services to more than 5000 students. In 2013, the implementation of projects aimed at the development of career education of students of higher education, and their career tracking and infrastructure will be continued.

[3] Source : Eurostat

6. Facilitating the transition from education to work and reshaping vocational training

Participation of upper secondary students in VET remains markedly below the EU average (28.4% vs. 50.3% in 2011). VET career is still perceived as a second choice by parents and pupils, who tend to choose upper secondary general education instead. Quality and image of VET is still insufficiently taken care of. Appropriate governance structures and conditions and provision of training, including apprenticeships places or work based learning as well as improvements in teacher education and career guidance, are still a challenge. Many vocational schools still do not have adequate equipment or are not using modern pedagogies. Another challenge is how to stimulate social dialogue with employers to find a formula that would suit VET schools, companies' needs and pupils' expectations to offer good quality practical training.

The apprenticeship concept was introduced in 2007, but so far there has been little progress in its implementation. Uptake is low both on company and student level due to a perceived lack of flexibility and quality. To address the challenges in initial VET, in 2011-2012 six vocational education and training schools were merged. Additionally, vocational training establishments have been restructured into public institutions. Lithuania is also modernising its VET system via projects financed by the ESF, e.g. definition of qualifications, preparation of the external evaluation of VET schools and teacher education. Sectoral skills competitions are organised together with sectoral exhibitions to attract young people to VET professions. One project targeted general and vocational education where 700 career coordinators and 70 career consultants were trained to provide and coordinate the services of vocational guidance (career education, information and counselling); models for career education and career education monitoring were prepared. Another project financed under the EU Structural Funds aims at updating technological skills of VET teachers by spending practical time in companies with a well prepared training plan and an individual tutor. So far around 700 teachers took part in the project (around 30% of all VET teachers).

In order to promote apprenticeships, Lithuania has introduced a special apprenticeship project (2013-2015), part of the Practical VET Resources Development Programme, with the objective to strengthen and expand this training form. This effort is complemented by a monitoring system for ensuring quality and efficiency in the provision of career services in general education and in VET. In order to further develop apprenticeship training forms and the arrangement of vocational training in real working conditions, a project financed from the European Social Fund (LTL 2.51 million) will be launched in 2013. Executor of the project will be the Vilnius Jerusalem Labour Market Training Centre with its partners.

Unemployment of VET graduates and, to a lesser extent, higher education graduates remains high and the participation rate is low, due to skills mismatches further aggravated by high emigration and unfavourable demographic developments. The employment rate of recent graduates (age 20-34, who completed upper secondary or tertiary education no more than three years ago) increased by around 3 percentage points between 2011 and 2012, reaching 76%, but was still lower than pre-crisis levels (83.3% in 2006).

At the same time employment rates of initial VET graduates decreased from 72.8% in 2007 to 48.2% in 2011, and the employment rates of higher education graduates (ISCED 5-6) aged 20-34 who have graduated no more than three years ago decreased from 92.5% in 2007 to 86% in 2012. This is a particular challenge as, according to the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop), employment in medium qualification jobs in Lithuania up to 2020 is forecast to increase faster than the EU average, while the forecast shows a possible decrease of high level qualification jobs (in contrast with an increase in the EU average) and demand for low qualification jobs is expected to grow in Lithuania compared to a big decrease in the EU average. This further accentuates the need for a well-established apprenticeship scheme.

7. Upgrading skills through lifelong learning

Participation of adults in lifelong learning is one of the lowest in the EU (5.2% against 9% in 2012)[4], further amplifying challenges to equip low-skilled and older workers with the possibility to up-skill or re-skill to better respond to labour market needs.

Companies do not invest sufficiently in employee training, also due to insufficient incentives. In 2010 only 52% of all companies provided continuing vocational education and training in Lithuania (compared with an EU average of 66%) with just half of the average hours per participant compared to the EU (19% vs. 38%). Only 31% of employees working in companies providing continuing education and training participated in training courses, against an EU average of 48%, and 35.4% of employees participated in non-formal and informal education, against an EU average of 47.4%.

The new Education Strategy 2013 – 2020 is expected to be adopted by the Parliament soon. The strategy mainly focuses on VET, adult learning, non-formal learning and the development of the qualifications system. The strategy may be a good base for implementing further measures enhancing the Lithuanian education and training system.

[4] Eurostat, LFS 2012