

**National summary sheets on
education system in Europe
and ongoing reforms**

2009 Edition

LITHUANIA

SEPTEMBER 2009

1. Education population and language of instruction

In the beginning of 2009, the number of people aged 29 and under was 1 267 015 (37.8 % of the population). In the beginning of the school year 2008/09, the number of children of compulsory school age at public schools was 322 534. The official language of instruction is Lithuanian. Linguistic/regional minorities (Russians, Poles and Belorussians) are able to teach their children their mother tongue and national history, and to foster their culture. In the beginning of the school year 2008/09, teaching in a language of instruction other than Lithuanian was offered to 35 303 pupils (7.6 % of all pupils at public schools). 4.2 % of pupils were instructed in Russian and 3.2 % in Polish. Schools with linguistic minorities follow the common core curriculum for general education approved by the Ministry of Education and Science, and may supplement it with ethno-cultural elements.

2. Administrative control and extent of public-sector funded education

In the beginning of the school year 2008/09, 99.0 % of students attended publicly funded general schools financed by the central and local administration budgets. Private-sector education establishments are maintained by their founders. In 2008/09, there were 26 private-sector education establishments attended by 4 534 students.

The Ministry of Education and Science is responsible for the development and implementation of education policies, and defines the criteria for the allocation of financial resources. The year 2002 saw an introduction of a new system of financing general education schools which is based on a per capita model (whereby money follows the pupil). The new system of financing provides for the budget of general education schools to be drawn on the basis of pupil 'baskets' (per capita), in addition to funds for education environment (operational resources and capital assets), targeted funds for implementation of programmes and projects, funds of sponsors, etc.

Pupil 'basket' funds are allocated to municipalities as targeted grants. The funds of pupil 'baskets' are to be used for implementation of the education policy approved by the Minister of Education and Science, i.e. to remunerate teaching and administrative staff, the social pedagogue and librarian, acquire textbooks and other teaching aids, implement teacher in-service training policy.

Responsibilities with regard to the administration and organisation of the education system are assumed by central government, the regional or local education authorities and the administrative bodies of the establishments involved, depending on their institutional category.

Education is the responsibility of the Ministry of Education and Science. However, each of the ten counties has a department of education to which certain ministerial duties are delegated. The main task of these county departments is organising school inspection. Educational institutions directly responsible to the central authorities (i.e. Ministry of Education and Science or in some cases the Ministry of Internal Affairs) are essentially vocational schools.

Institutions of university-level higher education and the newly established sector of non-university higher education, i.e., colleges (*Kolegijos*) (following the new 2000 Law on Higher Education), are placed under the authority of the Higher Education Department at the Ministry of Education and Science. The State grants universities considerable autonomy. Under the county/regional authorities are schools for special education. Schools under local authorities are normally pre-schools and schools of general education. In this connection, special mention could be made about vocational schools. With the view to decentralisation of Vocational Education and Training (VET) management, in 2003, an experiment was launched with the aim of reorganising a sample of vocational schools from state-financed into public self-governing institutions (*viešojo įstaiga*). The changed status has led to the legal preconditions to increase the number and range of the founders of VET institutions. Furthermore, this reform offers an opportunity for diversification of VET funding sources including resources of enterprises and individuals. The General Plan of Reorganization of the Network of State Vocational Schools for 2005-2012, adopted in 2005, provides for the main objective of the reorganisation, i.e. to optimise the network of state vocational schools, and to decentralise its management. In the beginning of 2007, there were 75 vocational schools in the country, 13 of which were public self-governing institutions (*viešojo įstaiga*).

Currently, control-based school inspection is co-ordinated by the Ministry of Education and Science at different administrative levels, depending on the kind of educational institution concerned. To assure the quality of education at general education schools, starting from September 2004, the methodology of internal audit (evaluation) has been applied in all general education schools. In 2005, the Ministry of Education and Science established a National School Evaluation Agency with the main function of external improvement-oriented evaluation of general education schools. On a national basis, the external audit (evaluation) methodology has been applied from the 2007/08 school year onwards.

In the process of implementing the Education Improvement Project, the education monitoring system has been developed: in 2005, the Procedure Inventory and the List of Indicators of State Education Monitoring were approved. To perform education monitoring the Education Management Information System (EMIS) has been developed with the main principle of targeted and effective data collection for substantiating management decisions. This system has been used since 2006 to collect and provide data according to the List of Indicators of State Education Monitoring

3. Pre-primary education

<i>Lopšelis-darželis</i>	1 to 6/7 years of age
<i>Darželis</i> (kindergarten)	3 to 6/7 years of age
<i>Ikimokyklinio ugdymo grupės mokyklose-darželiuose</i> (pre-school groups in Kindergarten-schools <i>mokykla-darželis</i>)	3 to 6/7 years of age
<i>Priešmokyklinio ugdymo grupės</i> pre-primary education groups) provided at <i>Lopšelis-darželis</i> , <i>Darželis</i> (kindergarten), <i>Mokykla-darželis</i> (kindergarten school), <i>Pagrindinė mokykla</i> (general lower secondary education), <i>vidurinė mokykla</i> (secondary school).	6 to 7 years of age or 5 to 6 years of age

Pre-primary education is considered part of non-formal education. It caters for children from 1 year to 7 years of age. These institutions (*lopšelis-darželis*, *darželis*, *mokykla-darželis*) fall under the authority of local governments. The fees parents have to pay are established by the founder. Attendance is optional. With a view to fostering children's school maturity, pre-primary groups (*priešmokyklinio ugdymo grupės*) have been established in *lopšelis-darželis*, kindergartens, kindergarten-schools, schools of general lower secondary education, and secondary schools. In 2008/09, the attendance rate in pre-primary groups was 97.5 % of children of 6 years of age.

4. Compulsory education

(i) Phases

<i>Mokykla-darželis</i> (kindergarten school)	7–10/11 years of age
<i>Pradinė mokykla</i> (primary education)	7-10/11 years of age
<i>Pagrindinė mokykla</i> (general lower secondary education)	10/11-16 years of age
part of <i>Vidurinė mokykla</i> (secondary education)	7 – 16 years of age
part of <i>Gimnazija</i> (general lower secondary education)	14/15-16 years of age
<i>Profesinė mokykla</i> (vocational lower secondary education)	14-16 years of age
<i>Jaunimo mokykla</i> ⁽¹⁾ (general lower secondary education)	11/12-16 years of age

According to the law, children start compulsory education at the calendar year when they turn 7 years of age (or earlier if the child is mature for school). It ends when they reach the age of 16.

(ii) Admissions criteria

Public-sector primary and lower secondary schools are free. Priority enrolment in a public general education school is granted to children living in the catchment area of that school. A child may be enrolled in another general education school subject to the availability of free places. In the case of limited capacity of the institution, in some *gimnazija* (access at 14/15 years of age) selection is

⁽¹⁾ *Jaunimo mokykla* is an educational institution offering 5/6 years of lower secondary education for socially and educationally neglected pupils aged 12-16, who have dropped out of a mainstream general school. Institutions can operate as separate educational establishments or use the facilities of *Profesinė mokykla*. Pupils are admitted at the request of their parents or guardians. General and pre-vocational courses are offered. The language of instruction can be other than Lithuanian (Russian, Polish or Belorussian). Public establishments may receive non-budgetary funds from other activities. On completing year 10, pupils are awarded a *pagrindinio išsilavinimo pažymėjimas*, and entitled to enter an upper secondary school.

normally carried out on the basis of set requirements, with benchmarks for eligible subject assessment, and consideration of social aspects such as special needs. In extreme cases of limits on the number of places available, entrance examinations (tests on the basis of the eighth-year school curriculum) are organised and approved by expert commissions of the Ministry of Education and Science. Pupils can apply for admission to the vocational school (*Profesinė mokykla*) of their choice depending on the study programme they wish to follow.

(iii) Length of school day/week/year

The school year 2009/10 starts on 1 September 2009 for all compulsory education pupils and finishes on 28 May 2010 for forms 1 to 5 (primary education and the start of lower secondary education) and form 10 (last year of lower secondary education), whereas the school year in the remainder of lower secondary education finishes on 11 June 2010. The subjects (22 lessons in the first year of primary school (with the lessons lasting 35 minutes), 23 lessons in form 2, 24 lessons in form 3, 23 lessons in form 4, 26 lessons in the first year of lower secondary school (form 5), 28 lessons in form 6, 29 in form 7, 30 in form 8 and 31 lesson in forms 9 and 10 (in forms 2 – 10 the lessons last 45 minutes) are spread over five days a week in primary and lower secondary education.

(iv) Class size/student grouping

In the beginning of the school year 2008/09, the number of primary level teachers at public secondary schools was 9 006. The number of primary level pupils was 129 514. The average number of pupils per teacher was 14.3 at primary level. In 2008/09 the average class size at primary level at public schools was 14.4. The law defines the maximum number of pupils per class as 24 in primary education and 30 in lower secondary education. Classes are mixed and made up of pupils of the same age. In primary schools, classes are taught by one single teacher (if available, a specialist teacher may teach any one of the subjects, most often religion, foreign languages, physical education, art or music). At lower secondary level, each subject is taught by a specialist teacher.

(v) Curriculum control and content

The curriculum is determined at national level.

In primary schools, all subjects are compulsory (as defined in the Minister's Order) and are the same for all pupils (except for morals education – parents may choose whether their children receive religious instruction relevant to a given denomination, or lessons in ethics). From 2000/01, with the implementation of strengthened subject provision, schools may choose to offer: early foreign language teaching, purposive artistic education, and deepened/extended teaching of some other subjects. Provision of other subjects is offered at the general level.

In lower secondary schools, compulsory subjects (17) are studied by all pupils, but may be allocated a variable number of lessons. Instruction is normally offered at one, general level. At the decision of each school, students can be offered a more intensive programme on foreign languages, fine arts, music and physical education.

In *Profesinė mokykla* at lower secondary education level (designed for pupils over 14 years who have not finalised lower secondary general education) there are 2 types of programmes: (1) to acquire only a qualification (2 years); (2) to acquire a qualification and basic education certificate (3 years). Subjects are divided into vocational subjects (*profesinio mokymo dalykai*), general cultural subjects (*bendrakultūriniai dalykai*) and general education subjects (*bendrojo lavinimo dalykai*) – only for the 2nd type of programme).

Teachers are free to use the teaching methods and textbooks of their choice from a list approved by the Ministry of Education and Science.

Before **Content and language integrated learning** (CLIL) became part of mainstream education in the 2007/08 school year, the following two types of CLIL type pilot projects had been implemented. In 2001, the first pilot project dealing with bilingual education (*dvikalbis ugdymas*) was launched. It was piloted in 24 schools where the language of instruction was not Lithuanian (in this case Russian). Its general aim was to improve the Lithuanian language competencies of pupils from regional (Russian) minority groups to better integrate them into society. The second type of CLIL (*užsienio kalbos ir dalyko integruotas mokymas*) was started in 2002. The general aim of the project was to improve the foreign language competencies (mainly English, French or German) of pupils. The project has been piloted in 35 schools. As of 2007/08, CLIL type of teaching has continued in all the formerly pilot schools and may be joined by other schools willing to introduce it in mainstream education.

(vi) Assessment, progression and qualifications

Pupils are continuously assessed by their teachers, and the results of the assessment are always communicated to the parents. Pupils in difficulty can be made to repeat a year. At the end of primary school, pupils automatically move on to the next level on the basis of a primary school leaving certificate (*pradinio išsilavinimo pažymėjimas*, based on continuous assessment and not in a final examination). The leaving certificate (*pagrindinio išsilavinimo pažymėjimas*) awarded at the end of compulsory education grants pupils access to upper secondary education.

5. Post-compulsory education/upper secondary and post-secondary level

(i) Types of education

Part of <i>Gimnazija</i> (general upper secondary education)	16/17-18/19 years
<i>Vidurinė mokykla</i> (general upper secondary education)	16/17-18/19 years
<i>Profesinė mokykla</i> (vocational upper secondary education)	16/17-19/20 years
<i>Profesinė mokykla</i> (vocational post-secondary education)	19-21 years

(ii) Admissions criteria

The leaving certificate awarded at the end of compulsory education is required by general upper secondary institutions (*Vidurinė mokykla* and *gimnazija*) and vocational school (*Profesinė mokykla*). Priority enrolment in a public general education school is granted to persons living in the catchment area of that school. Pupils can apply for admission to the vocational school (*Profesinė mokykla*) of their choice depending on the study programme they wish to follow.

Admission to post-secondary vocational schools (*Profesinė mokykla*) is based on the upper secondary leaving certificate (*Brandos atestatas*).

(iii) Curriculum control and content

The curricula of the *gimnazija* and *vidurinė mokykla* are defined at national level. In general education schools, the compulsory core curriculum subjects are the same for all pupils. Curriculum is being offered by way of individualised provision. 60 % of the curriculum is made up of the core curriculum compulsory to all pupils, while the rest pupils are able to choose of their own accord. The number of

hours of teaching per subject depends on the level of instruction (which is chosen by the pupil and may be as B – basic (*bendrasis*) and A – advanced (*išplėstinis*).

VET programmes are developed and achievements of students assessed on the basis of VET standards. The first VET standards were prepared in 1999. In 2003, to assure the quality of vocational education and training, a new VET standard structure was adopted in order to align vocational education to the needs of the labour market thus easing the transition from school to the labour market. In 2006, there were 86 adopted standards. Another 101 standards have been developed in the implementation of the European Social Fund project 'Development of the National System of VET Standards' which started in 2005 and was completed by end of August 2008. VET standards are developed on the basis of labour market analysis and in close cooperation with employers.

Requirements for VET programmes are as follows:

- 1 all curricula taught in vocational schools must be competence-based;
- 2 practical training should comprise 60-70 % of the total time allocated to teaching vocational subjects; practical training in a company or a school-based workshop simulating working conditions is obligatory during the last year of training and it should take up to 15 weeks;
- 3 supplementary competences which reflect local or/and temporary needs should take up 10-15 % of the total time allocated to teaching vocational subjects;
- 4 programmes should contain fundamentals of economy and business as well as civil security subjects;
- 5 environment, IT, foreign languages should be either integrated into the vocational subjects or developed as separate modules;
- 6 general education subjects should correspond to those in general education schools.

A common quality assurance system for initial and continuing vocational education and training has been developed by the Methodological Centre for VET (*Profesinio mokymo metodikos centras*) in the framework of the project 'Development and implementation of a common quality assurance system in vocational education and training' which was completed at the beginning of 2008. The aim of the project has been to develop a modern quality assurance system covering both initial and continuing vocational education and training compliant with relevant European policies and priorities as well as create preconditions for continuous improvement of education quality (for more information, see <http://www.projektai.pmmc.lt>).

(iv) Assessment, progression and qualifications

There is continuous assessment during the two years of the upper secondary level. In Lithuania for assessment of student performance a 10 point scale is used. The summative, diagnostic and formative assessment principles are usually applied for assessing student performance depending on the nature of the subject, the agreement at school level, the teacher's preferences or the aim of student assessment during each semester (usually 2-3 semesters per year), the final 'annual' mark (for each subject) consists of an average mark of previous semesters.

At the end of upper secondary general education, the final examination set by an external body – the National Examination Centre – is compulsory for all pupils. Final Matura examinations assess student overall 2 year performance (to get a certificate a student should pass at least 3 examinations, of which Mother tongue is compulsory, and two – optional). There are 12 state and 19 school maturity

examinations organized. Examination tasks and assessment criteria are prepared by the National Examination Centre. School examinations are assessed at the same schools where studies take place.

The certificate awarded for passing this examination (Maturity certificate – *Brandos atestatas*) grants the pupil access to post-secondary vocational and higher education.

Vocational school courses end in a final examination (theoretical and practical) which varies in content according to the curriculum. Students can be awarded the vocational qualifying certificate (*Kvalifikacijos pažymėjimas*) or the vocational education and training diploma (*Profesinio mokymo diplomas*). The vocational qualifying certificate and the vocational education and training diploma each grant the student access to an occupation.

6. Higher education

(i) Structure

Higher education comprises **university-level courses** offered by universities. They are provided at three academic levels (undergraduate (Bachelor's) studies, graduate (Master's) and post-graduate (doctoral) studies). At the beginning of the school year 2009 there were 15 state and 7 non-state universities.

The sector of **non-university higher education** was established in 2000 following the passing of the Law on Higher Education. The first non-university higher education institutions with the name of *Kolegija* – 'colleges' (4 public and 3 non-state) were established on the basis of the former *Aukštesniosios mokyklos* (advanced vocational schools) now extinct. Over the period of 2001 and 2002, established were 11 public and 6 non-state non-university higher education institutions. In 2009/10, there were 13 state non-university higher education institutions (colleges) and 11 non-state.

(ii) Access

The upper secondary leaving certificate (*brandos atestatas*) is required by all higher education establishments. Admission to studies takes place on a competitive basis. The usual admission criterion is a competition rating determined by the grades of some subjects, the number of which is usually no more than four, the results of school leaving examinations. Programmes which require specific abilities (for painters, journalists, architects) or knowledge assessment in the subjects which do not have state examinations can have entrance examinations. With a view to ascertaining a student's special abilities, higher education establishments may organise not more than two entrance examinations or tests.

The new Law on Science and Studies adopted on 30 April 2009 introduces the change of funding methods of higher education by introducing the 'student's basket'. The 'basket' can be taken to any higher education institution (State or private) upon student's choice. In State higher school no extra fees in connection with the direct implementation of study programme can be required from the student. In private education institutions the student has to pay extra fees if the study price set by the private institution is higher than the price fixed by the State. The fixed price is a maximum State budget sum allocated for the period of one year to fund one student's place in a certain field of studies. The method of calculation of the fixed study price and the allocation of State funding to certain study fields is approved by the Government. Study basket quotas for universities and colleges are stated by the Ministry of Education and Science. The students who do not get 'student baskets' can be supported with the help of State-guaranteed loans. Student's right to get the 'basket' is decided upon his/her school results (*matura* examination and study results), additional points that candidate may get, candidate's choice priorities, other candidates' choice, additional tests organised by higher schools (if

they are planned). However, the candidate's study results cannot be lower than the minimal requirements set by the Ministry of education and science. The sum of money allotted by the State to finance one student's studies is twice bigger after the adoption of the new law than before.

Also, new regulations for the management of the assets of State higher education institutions have been adopted.

(iii) Qualifications

Non-university level courses of each subject are completed by an examination or a student's individual work (project) or a credit test with the assessment pass/fail. Each course programme is concluded by leaving examinations and/or defending of a final work (project). During the final assessment, a student is to demonstrate that he/she has acquired the knowledge, skills and abilities defined/set by the course programme.

The amendment of July 2006 to the Law on Higher Education enables colleges from 2007/08 onwards to award a *Professional Bachelor* degree (*profesinis bakalauras*). With the coming into force in June 2007 of the revised *General Requirements Framework for Master Studies Programmes*, college graduates wishing to continue Master studies in universities do not have to complete university Bachelor programmes. To continue Master studies they have to complete remedial/additional studies of a fixed duration.

At the end of university courses, students are awarded the *bachelor* (*Bakalauras laipsnis*) and/or the professional qualifying diploma (as a teacher, engineer, artist, etc.). Graduates can go on to follow specialised professional higher education courses, or courses leading to a Master's degree (*Magistro laipsnis*) lasting one-and-a-half to two years. Students who have a Master's degree can pursue the third level studies – by enrolling in the doctoral courses or post-graduate art studies. Upon completion of the doctoral programme, a Doctor's degree (PhD) is awarded, upon completion of the post-graduate art programme, awarded is the qualification of an artist.

Integrated courses (those that integrate first and second level university education) include basic as well as specialised higher education courses. If this kind of programme is not completed, higher education is not recognised. Integrated studies include medicine, veterinary medicine, dentistry, pharmacy, law (in Vilnius University only), and agriculture studies.

7. Special needs

Children with special educational needs attend special and mainstream schools. The structure of special education in special schools is very similar to that of mainstream education. In 2008/09, around 2.3 % of pupils attended special schools.

Disabilities are diagnosed on the basis of the following criteria:

1. state of physical functions (limited mobility (motor and support apparatus defects)), degree and duration of impairment;
2. degree of correspondence between mental functions and age;
3. predictability of further development of physical and mental functions;
4. level of development and attainment (only for school-age persons);
5. aptitude (only for school-age persons).

8. Teachers

Pre-primary, primary, lower secondary and upper secondary school teachers receive initial teacher education through non-university (*Kolegija*) or university courses lasting respectively from three to four years at non-university studies and four years at university level. They have to complete a Professional Bachelor's degree (*Profesinio Bakalauro laipsnis*) or Bachelor's degree (*Bakalauro laipsnis*) and acquire a professional qualification (*profesinė kvalifikacija*). In some cases Professional Bachelors or Bachelors may follow an additional one-year course to acquire a professional teacher's qualification. Teachers are not civil servants.

9. Current reforms and priorities

While implementing the targets of the Provisions of the National Education Strategy 2003-2012 regarding the improvement of **pre-school education** availability, quality and effectiveness, in September 2007 the Lithuanian Government approved a 'Programme for the Development of Pre-school and Pre-Primary Preparatory Education' for 2007-2012 developed by the Ministry of Education and Science. The Programme sets out measures for increasing availability of pre-school and pre-primary education provision, in particular in rural areas, introduction of more flexible working hours at pre-school educational institutions, a greater variety of curricula, improvement of competencies of the teaching staff and the material facilities of pre-school educational institutions.

In November 2006, a 'Strategy for the Development, Implementation, Assessment and Renewal of the **Content of General Education**' for 2006-2012 was adopted. The Strategy provides for the upgrade of the curriculum on the basis of the development of key competencies. Following the Strategy, general education content has been undergoing revision: Programmes of Primary and Lower Secondary Education have been developed and approved. The new content of general education is targeted at developing the key competencies of the knowledge society. The revision of general education programmes and standards involves balancing the volume of the education content and reducing the learning loads. The revision of the content of general education programmes is geared to the differentiation and individualisation of learning with the main focus on learning outcomes and the relationship between the educational content and life.

The *Strategy* also sets out the principles of management of the education content and provides for the municipalities to take decisions on the adjustment of the state level education content to the demands of the local communities, for schools to adapt the education content to the needs of the pupils and the school community, and for teachers to decide on adjusting the education content to the needs of the class and individual pupils. The *Strategy* does not provide for decentralisation of the general education content, rather it defines more precisely the principle of the interpretation and adaptation of the education content, and the rights of the education providers to do so.

With the view to tackling the issues of learning outcomes and acquisition of **key competencies**, the following programmes have been approved and are now in the process of implementation: the 'National Programme of the Promotion of Entrepreneurship Skills of the Youth' for 2007-2011, the 'Programme of Compulsory Early Foreign Languages Teaching' (according to which starting from 2009-2010, all pupils in their second year of primary education will learn a foreign language), and the 'Long-term Programme of Citizenship and National Identity Education'.

With the aim of improving the quality of education, implementation of optimisation of the school network (mapping) has been under way. In 2005, plans for reorganisation of the network of schools by 2012, were worked out. The reorganisation of the school network have been conducted in two phases:

the first phase spans the period of 2005-2007, with the second phase to span the period of 2008-2012. Reorganisation of the school network will include transformation of secondary schools into the four-year *gimnazija* in cities, as well as creation of an optimised network of primary and lower secondary schools.

The implementation programme for a new remuneration system of teachers, approved in 2004, was launched in September 2005. Prior to the reform, teachers' salaries have greatly depended on the number of contact hours. The main principles of the new payment system are transparency – a clear payment system for all teachers, social fairness – the amount of the salary depends on the complexity of work and responsibility, and security – for a teacher's position the minimum and the maximum number of contact hours are set, thus the teacher's salary does not directly depend on the number of contact hours.

The Programme for a new remuneration (amended by the Government Decision of 26 August 2009, No.900) includes 2 phases. Within the first phase (1 September 2005 – 31 August 2011) five stages are planned for teachers remuneration. Stage 1: since 1 September 2005 teacher's weekly workload is 23.2 hours (18 contact (i.e., the time when the teacher directly communicates with pupils during lessons, trainings, extracurricular activities) and 5.2 extra hours (i.e., the time devoted to indirect work with pupils: preparation for lessons, checking written works, assessment of students, work with parents and teachers, the form master's work, etc.); stage 2: since 1 January – 24.2 hours (18 contact and 6.2 extra); stage 3: since 1 January 2007 – 26.3 hours (18-20 contact and 7.3 extra) and since 1 January 2008 – 25.2 hours (18 contact and 7.2 extra). The second phase, i.e. the year 2011 sees the switch to the system of **position-based payment for teachers' work** which will mean a fixed salary for the number of working hours per week set for a teacher's position. Not less than 30-working-hour week and not more than 36-working-hour week will be set for a teacher's position that will include not less than 18 contact hours.

The implementation of the 'Long-term Programme of the Remuneration Increase for Pedagogical Staff' (approved by the Government in the beginning of March 2008 and (amended on 29 April) was started to be carried out from 1 May 2008. On the basis of the Programme pedagogical salaries have been increased as of 1 May 2008 by 10 % and as of 1 September 2008 – by 15 %. Likewise, pedagogical staff salaries have been additionally raised by 10 % on the average as of 1 January 2009. The plans to raise the salaries as of 1 September 2009, also as of 1 January 2010 and again as of 1 January 2011 have been delayed according to the amendment of the Long-term Programme (Government Decision of 26 August 2009, No. 898). On the basis of the amendment pedagogical salaries will be raised according to State financial situation and the change of average monthly salary. Upon completion of the implementation of the Programme, pedagogical staff salaries in 2013 will have been increased up to 100 % as compared with the salaries paid before 1 May 2008.

'The Concept for Teacher Education and Training', worked out in 2004 is discussed to be updated. Study programmes are going to be amended under the Profile of the Competence of the Teacher's Profession. The Regulation for Initial Teacher Training has been approved and Recommendations for the Amendment of the Programmes of Initial Teacher Training have been prepared. Study programmes will be amended according to the requirements of the Regulation for Initial Teacher Training and under the Profile of the Competence of the Teacher's Profession.

Qualifications will be managed according to the 'National Qualification Framework' which has been submitted to the Lithuanian Government for approval. This will create necessary prerequisites for the Lithuanian qualifications to be recognized in the European Union and other countries. Due to internal procedures the National Qualification Framework is being on final discussions.

In the field of vocational education and training, on the basis of the ministerial order of 2003, with the view to **decentralisation of VET management**, an experiment was launched with the aim of reorganising a sample of vocational schools from state-financed into public self-governing institutions (*viešoji įstaiga*). The changed status has led to the legal preconditions to increase the number and range of the founders of VET institutions. Furthermore, this reform offers an opportunity for diversification of VET funding sources including resources of enterprises and individuals. The 'General Plan of Reorganization of the Network of State Vocational Schools' for 2005-2012, adopted in 2005, provides for the main objective of the reorganisation, i.e. to optimise the network of state vocational schools, and to decentralise its management. In the beginning of 2009, there were 75 vocational schools in the country, 13 of which were public self-governing institutions.

In April 2006, the Government adopted a '**Plan of long-term development of higher education 2006-2010**'. The Plan envisages the development of higher education along the following guidelines: improvement of the management of the higher education system, improvement of the internal management of state universities, reform of financing of higher education, renewal of study programmes and quality assurance of higher education.

On 15 October 2008 an updated 'Strategy of Lifelong Learning' was approved by the minister of education and science and minister of social security and labour. The strategy is planned to be implemented up to the year 2012. The Strategy of Lifelong Learning aims at enhancing opportunities for adult learning while improving the lifelong learning system, the quality of services, and maximising accessibility to education. These goals are planned to be attained by strengthening institutions of formal and non-formal education, adapting curricula and teaching aids to the learners' needs, by improving the infrastructure and the qualification of andragogues, also by balancing up finances and providing better counselling services about lifelong learning opportunities. The updated Strategy treats non-formal adult education as fundamental not only for ensuring employability and economic prosperity, but also social cohesion, active citizenship and personal fulfilment of people.

For more detailed information on education systems in Europe, you may consult the EURYDICE data base, EURYBASE (<http://www.eurydice.org>)