



NATIONAL AUDIT OFFICE OF THE REPUBLIC OF LITHUANIA

PUBLIC AUDIT REPORT NOISE MANAGEMENT IN LITHUANIA

31 May 2012, No. VA-P-60-8-7
Vilnius

SUMMARY

Audit started 1 August 2011
Audit completed 31 May 2012

Full audit report in Lithuanian is available on the website
of the National Audit Office: www.vkontrole.lt

The audit aimed to assess effectiveness of noise management actions and measures taken to protect from noise and its harmful effects. The audit was conducted in the Ministry of Transport and Communications, Ministry of Health, and in the municipalities of Vilnius, Kaunas, Klaipėda, Šiauliai, Panevėžys cities and those of Jonava, Radviliškis, Ukmergė districts.

The auditors focused on Lithuania's preparation to implement the requirements of the Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council relating to the assessment and management of environmental noise – to draw up strategic noise maps and action plans in due time¹. In the first phase of the implementation of this Directive, Lithuania was delayed to provide information about strategic noise maps to the Commission for more than one year. As a result, the Commission intended to initiate the EU law infringement procedure and issued a warning about possible actions before the European Court of Justice. In the second phase, Member States are required to make

¹ Directive 2002/49/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 June 2002 relating to the assessment and management of environmental noise

strategic noise maps by 30 June 2012. This phase will also be implemented with a delay, therefore Lithuania may be sanctioned if no urgent measures are taken.

The auditors found that no single ministry has been appointed to be responsible for the formation of the national noise prevention policy and organisation, coordination and control of its implementation. The audit revealed that not all state and municipal institutions which are supposed to submit annual data on noise management to the Noise Prevention Council actually provide this information, therefore the noise management reports presented to the Government are insufficiently comprehensive.

The Ministry of Transport and Communications (as well as the Lithuanian Road Administration and the State Railway Inspectorate, which are subordinate thereto) has failed to implement five measures, which will result in a delay to draw up strategic noise maps. The Ministry of Health has not implemented all measures either, so there is no information available on the application of noise prevention measures in all municipalities and on the noise situation in the vicinity of schools and hospitals in the country.

Not all municipalities have provided for conditions to protect human health and the environment from harmful effects of noise. For instance, 57 (out of 60) municipalities have not delineated noise prevention zones, i.e. areas where noise exceeds threshold values and where noise reduction measures are required; 6 (out of 8) of the audited municipalities have not implemented reimbursable measures near schools and hospitals where the maximum allowable noise levels are exceeded; not all municipalities have delineated quiet areas not to be disturbed by transport, industry and commercial noise, so people might not have places for rest from the city noise; half of the Lithuania's municipalities have not developed and approved noise prevention action plans to manage noise problems, even though they are obliged to do so by the Law on Noise Management, which entered into force on 31 December 2004. Although certain positive changes did take place in the audited municipalities during the audit, they are not sufficient to protect people from harmful effects of noise.

The auditors recommended to the Government of the Republic of Lithuania to appoint a ministry responsible for the formation of the national noise prevention policy and organisation, coordination and control of its implementation. It was also recommended to determine requirements for the development of municipal noise prevention action plans and to regulate control of the noise from construction and repair works. Representatives of the Government in counties were recommended to examine whether municipalities observe requirements of relevant legislation and implement Government's resolutions on noise management.

A recommendation implementation plan is provided in Annex 2.