



Executive summary of the public audit report

STRATEGIC PLANNING OF THE YOUTH POLICY AND IMPLEMENTATION OF MEASURES IN THE FIELD OF SOCIAL SECURITY AND LABOUR

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Full audit report in Lithuanian is available on the website
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DEFINITIONS AND ABBREVIATIONS

Program of 02.13 – Budget Programme for Special Targeted Grants.

Program of 03.02 – Budget Programme for the Implementation of the Youth Policy implemented by the MSSL.

SAI – supreme audit institution.

ECA – European Court of Auditors.

EU Strategy for Youth – Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions – An EU Strategy for Youth. Investing and Empowering. A renewed open method of coordination to address youth challenges and opportunities, Brussels, 27/04/2009, COM(2009) 200 final.

Youth – persons aged from 14 to 29.

YGI – Youth Guarantee initiative.

LYPF – Law on Youth Policy Framework.

DYA – the Department of Youth Affairs.

LIJOT – Lithuanian Youth Council.

AAP – annual action plan.

NEET – young people not in education, employment or training.

NYPDP – National Youth Policy Development Programme for 2011–2019.

NPP – National Progress Programme.

OSP – Official Statistics Portal.

Regional youth policy – youth policy implemented in regions and municipalities.

MSSL – Ministry of Social Security and Labour.

SL – Statistics Lithuania.

YCM – youth coordinators within municipalities.

DSSS – Department of Supervision of Social Services.

Methodology for the Development and Application of the Assessment Criteria Used in Strategic Planning Documents – approved by Order No. 1K-330 of 25/10/2010 of the Minister of Finance.

Strategic Planning Methodology – approved by Resolution No. 827 of 06/06/2002 of the Government.

Links between strategic documents – traceable links, which allow assessing how one document is related to another document.

Strategic orientations – directions of the planned change set out in the strategic documents on the state progress.

SAP – strategic action plan.

Short-term (up to 3 years) planning documents – inter-institutional action plans approved by the Government; (3-year) strategic action plans approved by the relevant manager of state budget appropriations; annual action plans approved by managers of appropriations or approval of which is delegated to heads of the relevant institutions; action plans (where necessary, drawn up for the entire period of implementation of a long-term or medium-term planning document, or resolution of a specific problem, matter) approved by a minister or several ministers passing joint order.

IAP – inter-institutional action plan.

CEC – Central Electoral Commission.

SUMMARY

In 2015, young people in Lithuania accounted for nearly 20 percent of the country's population. The number of young people as well as residents in other population groups is dropping. In 2015, 44.5 thousand residents left the country, of which 49 percent were young people.

In Lithuania, emigration has significantly speeded up the ageing of population. The OECD¹ found that in the future, this will lead to an increase of the ratio of people over 65 to the persons of working age from 30 percent in 2015 to 50 percent in 2036. This will make the payment of pensions an unbearable burden for the social security system.

The youth policy is shaped by the Ministry of Social Security and Labour; in the field of social security and labour, it is implemented by the Department of Youth Affairs, Department of Supervision of Social Services, municipal authorities, other establishments and institutions in cooperation with non-governmental sector.

Institutions responsible for the shaping of youth policy should create the appropriate environment for the youth and plan as well as use state budget resources so as to particularly contribute to the identification and solving of youth challenges. In 2015, nearly 18 million euros were allocated to the youth policy in the field of social security and labour alone; however, state budget share spent on the youth for the purposes of participation in various project activities amounted to only 7.3 euros per person (the objective for 2015 was 24.62 euros). According to the EC, national budget share allocated to young people in Lithuania is among the smallest in Europe.²

We performed the audit with the aim of assessing whether the youth policy planning documents are properly drawn up and the funds allocated from the budget for the implementation of programme measures in the field of social security and labour are properly used. We performed the audit to answer the following questions:

- whether the strategic planning documents for the implementation of the youth policy in the field of social security and labour are properly drawn up;
- whether the Ministry of Social Security and Labour properly used the funds allocated for the implementation of the youth policy in 2015.

This audit assessed how the youth policy is being shaped and how 1.9 million euros were spent in the field of social security and labour³ in 2015. We audited the Ministry of Social Security and Labour, collected data and information from the following establishments and institutions implementing the youth policy in the field of social security and labour: Department of Supervision of Social Services, Department of Youth Affairs and municipalities.

The audit covered the year 2015; data from the previous periods (2012–2015) were used for the analysis of changes.

¹ OECD's International Report on the Education System Assessment is published online at: <http://www.oecd.org/pisa/keyfindings/pisa-2012-results.htm>.

² Data of the Eurofound, Commission Staff Working Document, 14/09/2015, SWD(2015) 168 final.

³ Audit conclusions and recommendations were drawn up after the analysis of data, reports and other documents of the EU, the EC, scientific or other types of research; the completion of the YCM survey; the analysis of applications and reports of programmes implemented by youth organisations; the assessment of the use of funds allocated under the budget programme for the Implementation of the Youth Policy (EUR 1.2 million) and targeted appropriations for the maintenance of YCM (EUR 790 thousand), interviews with the employees of the ministry and its subordinate institutions.

Having assessed the evidence collected during the audit procedures (data analyses, interviews, surveys, document reviews), we hereby issue conclusions and recommendations of the public audit.

The recommendations were issued to the MSSL and the DSSS, and the plan for their implementation is presented in Annex 9.

CONCLUSIONS

1. When shaping the youth policy, the Ministry of Social Security and Labour incorporates therein the main goals of the European Union Strategy for Youth, but fails to direct it towards the progress and development of Lithuania. The policy emphasizes that the youth is one of the most important factors contributing to the future stability; however, the lack of integrity between the applicable documents shaping the policy does not create preconditions for significant contribution of the youth policy to the change within the state (Subsection 1.1).
2. The ministry fails to adequately ensure objective monitoring of the situation of the entire youth population, shape evidence-based public policy, and assess the effectiveness of the use of funds on the activities, since the planning of programme assessment criteria is not ambitious enough, while the established quantitative indicators fail to show objective changes to the situation of young people (Subsections 1.3, 1.4).
3. There are no preconditions for the identification and solving of challenges faced by all youth groups, since strategic documents shaping the youth policy define the relevant age limits differently (Subsection 1.2).
4. When shaping the policy, the Ministry of Social Security and Labour should focus on the needs of all youth groups. However, in 2016, 83 percent of funding went to young people not in education, employment or training, even though they account for 6.3 percent of the youth population, yet the level of youth unemployment has been dropping and is better than the EU average (Section 2).
5. Some municipalities failed to create preconditions for the proper organisation of the youth policy (Subsection 2.1):
 - 5.1. delegated tasks not related to the youth policy to youth coordinators within municipal administrations; therefore, the employees were unable to devote all of their working time to their primary job functions, even though the ministry spends substantial amounts of money to maintain this position within municipalities (790 thousand euros in 2015; 800 thousand euros in 2016);
 - 5.2. the ministry issued recommendations for the implementation of the youth policy, but some municipalities failed to follow them.
6. The Department of Youth Affairs failed to adequately contribute to the implementation of the youth policy (Subsection 2.1):
 - 6.1. it failed to perform some of the functions assigned to it, purchasing services necessary for the performance thereof from third parties;
 - 6.2. it failed to ensure sufficient cooperation with different municipalities, since inter-sectoral activities corresponding to the challenges faced by the local youth were

organised by only 1 out of 60 municipalities, while about 30 percent of youth coordinators within municipalities indicated that they did not receive adequate methodological assistance for effective performance of the assigned tasks.

7. The contribution of projects to the achievement of goals and quality implementation of the youth policy is not clear (Subsection 2.2):
 - 7.1. Programmes for the strengthening of youth organisations and regional youth councils fail to provide clear goals or priority orientations, indicating specific youth challenges tackled by the funded projects;
 - 7.2. Out of 19 funded youth organisations, 7 are associated with political parties operating in Lithuania; therefore, it is difficult to determine the extent to which projects implemented by youth organisations related to political parties are aimed at achieving the targets of the youth policy, and to which they are aimed at the propagation of ideology of the relevant party;
 - 7.3. requirements of the procedure for the selection of coordination activity projects limit the possibilities of other organisations to receive funding due to conditions that had to be met by organisations seeking to receive funding;
 - 7.4. the relevant institutions fail to ensure that all the planned activities provided for in the projects are carried out and the results of the implemented projects (eg., number of events or persons) are properly accounted for.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Ministry of Social Security and Labour:

With the aim of ensuring progressive future of the state based on comprehensive education and integration of young people in the life of a socially responsible society, to develop and implement youth policy meeting these objectives, which:

1. would provide links between strategic documents on the state's development and youth policy.

The ministry should devote more attention to the integrity of the strategic documents on the state progress (Lithuania 2030 and NPP) and the NYPDP, while the strategic action plan of the ministry should ensure links between the strategic documents and budget programmes (Conclusion 1).

2. would identify and deal with the problems of all youth groups, properly planning state interventions and measuring their effect on the youth.

Legal acts and strategic planning documents should give uniform definition of the youth in terms of age. would provide for and measure ambitious criteria and indicators, which would allow assessing the progress made. plan the appropriate state interventions in all fields relevant to young people (Conclusions 2, 3, 4).

3. would properly control the implementation of the youth policy.

The ministry should review the functions assigned to the DYA and those actually performed by it; if necessary, the ministry should clarify them, taking into account the need of human resources required to perform such functions (Conclusion 6).

To ensure that project activities of youth organisations generate added value in the improvement of the situation of young people in Lithuania and promote participation of young people in political activities (Conclusion 7):

- to improve procedures for the project selection: define clear priority orientations for youth organisations and criteria measuring the quality of project implementation (Conclusion 7.1);
- to initiate inter-institutional discussions, when deciding on the transfer of funding from youth organisations associated with political parties to other institutions involved in the supervision of political parties (Conclusion 7.2).

Department of Supervision of Social Services:

For the purpose of ensuring proper administration of projects implemented in the field of youth policy, to strengthen project implementation control, paying greater attention to proper accountability of the executive bodies and the assessment of qualitative project results (Conclusion 7.4).

CHANGES MADE DURING THE AUDIT PERIOD

Uniform principles of activities of YCMs and coordination of the implementation of youth policy in municipalities are provided for in the drafted bill amending the Law on Youth Policy Framework which is currently being coordinated with the relevant institutions; the amended law will further regulate the implementation of youth policy in municipalities and the activities of YCMs (Conclusion 5).