

2016 ANNUAL REPORT OF THE RESEARCH COUNCIL OF LITHUANIA SUMMARY

The Research Council of Lithuania (hereinafter – the Council) performs the functions of an advisory body for the Parliament of the Republic of Lithuania (hereinafter – RoL) and the RoL Government on research and training of researchers, participates in implementing research and (social and cultural) development and other programmes, implements the competitive funding of these programmes and organises the assessment of research activities. Legal acts and other information of the Council are available on its website at www.lmt.lt.

The Council consists of the Board, two expert committees – the Committee of Humanities and Social Sciences and the Committee of Natural and Technical Sciences, and the Research Foundation of the Council. The Council is managed by the Chairperson of the Council, a single-person management body, and his or her two deputies – Chairpersons of the Committees assisted by the Scientific Secretary. In 2016, there were 89 posts in the Research Foundation of the Council, with 45 posts funded from the State budget and 44 posts funded by the EU and under international technical financial assistance instruments. The divisions managing the EU structural assistance currently employ 16 persons.

The functions and tasks of the Council as set forth in the Law on Higher Education and Research (hereinafter – LHER) and the Regulations of the Council include the expert activities, programme-based competitive funding of research and other activities, and the participation in building the international research area.

The Council fulfils its expert function by drawing up national research programmes (hereinafter – NRP) (in 2016 the Council approved and initiated the NRP ‘Modernity in Lithuania’ consistent with the Lithuanian studies priority under the LHER), and carrying out the assessment of research performance of Lithuanian education and studies institutions (in 2016, the Council assessed the research performance of university hospitals in 2012-2014). In 2016, the Council continued the evaluation of performance of doctoral studies adhering to the schedule set up by the Council and agreed with the Ministry of Education and Science. Summary self-evaluation reports in a total of 42 doctoral study fields were submitted for evaluation. On examining the self-evaluation reports, the expert panels set up by the Council drew up the summary findings together with recommendations and submitted proposals regarding any further improvement of the quality of the doctoral studies. In 2016, the Council examined one application for the right to conduct doctoral studies in the field of physics, and recommended to the Ministry of Education and Science to grant the right to conduct doctoral studies according to the application. The applications for the right to conduct doctoral studies in the field of public health by two universities were rejected by the Council. The institutions seeking to modify the composition of their doctoral studies’ committees, and the doctoral studies regulations are required to follow the Regulations on Research Doctoral Studies, and agree the modifications with the Council. In 2016, 10 universities applied to the Council notifying of their intentions to change the composition of their doctoral studies committees.

The Council is responsible for the quality of the long-term institutional research and (social and cultural) development programmes (hereinafter – R&D) implemented at research institutes. In 2016, the Council evaluated the reports of such R&D programmes. Furthermore, the Council took part in discussing the themes of new long-term programmes together with the stakeholder Ministries. The Council considered the subjects of new R&D programmes as

suggested by the institutes and drawn up in view of the research field assigned to the institutes by the RoL Government, and the proposals submitted by eleven Ministries regarding the issues to be addressed, and submitted a recommendation regarding the new R&D programmes to the Ministry of Education and Science. A total of 21 new long-term institutional R&D programmes in humanities and social sciences, and 29 new long-term institutional R&D programmes in physical, biomedicine, technologies and agriculture sciences were proposed for approval.

A separate long-term area of the Council's activity is the continued project 'Development of the Lituaništika Database' that in 2016 entered its fourth stage of development when the European Social Fund Agency and the Council signed a three-year contract on a project co-funded by the European Union Structural Funds. This is a modern infrastructure for Lithuanian studies, a well-functioning Open-Access database, ensuring the possibility for the Lithuanian studies material to enter the national and international academic area.

The special expert function is performed by the Research Infrastructure Commission at the Council in charge of the assessment of intentions of Lithuanian institutions to become members of international research infrastructures, and reports on their participation in such infrastructures. Currently, Lithuania is a member of two infrastructures (RI Common Language Resources and Technology infrastructure network, and the European Social Study), and of one conference, and two other potential memberships are being considered at the moment. In 2016, an updated Roadmap of Lithuanian Research Infrastructures was published on the website of the Council (<http://www.lmt.lt/lt/veikla/tyrimai-analizes-studijos.html>).

The expert function is also performed by the Research Activity Ethics Commission of the Council whose purpose is to ensure compliance with the principles of ethics of the research activity carried out by the Council. On establishing that the principles of ethics have been allegedly violated, the Research Activity Ethics Commission refers the application to be examined by the Office of the Supervisor of Academic Ethics and Procedures. In 2016, the Commission dealt with one application regarding an alleged violation of ethical behaviour in the research activities.

During 2016, the Council was continuing its other expert activities. At a request of the Ministry of Education and Science, the Council evaluated private research institutes and applications submitted under the 'Teaming action' measure of the 'Spreading Excellence and Widening Participation' Section of the Horizon 2020 programme. The Council continued its work regarding the academic recognition of the doctoral degree in research (art) acquired abroad. In 2016, 27 individuals applied to the Council with a request to recognise the doctor's degrees in research (art) awarded to them by foreign research and education institutions. The number of applicants in the area is increasing.

As part of its functions, the Council allocates the funding for commissioned research or studies initiated by researchers, also for international cooperation projects, and provides financial assistance to different activities promoting researchers' careers and their mobility. In 2016, such activities received allocations of more than EUR 15 million.

With a view to benefiting from the opportunities offered by international cooperation and ensuring the highest possible competitiveness of Lithuanian science, in 2016 the Council approved the Transnationality Guidelines of the Research Council of Lithuania for 2016–2020, summarising the experience in international cooperation and setting out the main directions for the future. During 2016, the Council participated in the activities of six

international organisation, and Lithuanian researchers joined the research carried out by eight international networks, two joint programming initiatives and four programmes. Specialists of the Research Foundation of the Council are currently managing ten sections of the Horizon 2020 programme. The Council acts as an administrator of five cross-border contracts on cooperation in the area of research and technologies, and in 2016 two institutional cooperation agreements were signed at the initiative of the Council with Japan and Poland. The Council is implementing the special financing measure 'Open partnership' which facilitates cooperation with foreign partners, and the services of EURAXESS, a network of the European national centres of mobility, are delivered further to Lithuanian researchers at www.euraxess.lt.

International cooperation of researchers is promoted using nearly a full range of financing instruments (in particular five national research programmes and the National Lithuanian studies and dissemination programme), and the mobility of researchers, especially of young ones, is supported by funding research trips and visits, as well as international events hosted in Lithuania. Researchers also benefit from other kind of support promoting their international dimension, and support is granted to associations seeking to enhance their international presence, as well as to publications in high-level international journals.

Closely related to the activity of research dissemination is the Open Access policy pursued by the Council and anchored in the 'Guidelines on Open Access to Scientific Publications and Data' approved by the Council in 2016. The Guidelines were drawn up as part of the implementation of the Open Access Policy Alignment Strategy for European Union Research <http://www.pasteur4oa.eu/> funded by the European Commission. The Guidelines systematise the national provisions on the Open Access to the results of publicly funded research and the possibilities to use them.

In fulfilling its role as an advisory body, the Council collects, systematises and analyses the data on the efficacy of research financing instruments. In the course of five years (2012–2016), the Council published 41 calls for proposals under nine financing instruments to obtain funding for research, also analysed and summarised the success rates of individual competitions. Over that period, a total of 57 institutions participated in research funding competitions, and submitted more than 4,000 proposals altogether. The overall success rate of the project competitions in 2012–2016 reached 27%. The data on the success rate of Lithuanian research and studies institutions show their competitiveness at national level.

The year 2016 was to a large extent dedicated to preparations for the 2014–2020 investment period of the European Union funds, i.e. to identify research and mobility financing instruments managed by the Council, as well as related activities and draw up the descriptions of project financing conditions. The Council was appointed responsible for administering measures and activities under objective 9.3.3 of priority axis 9 of the EU Operational Programme for the European Union Funds' investment in 2014–2020. The objective of the first measure was to facilitate the development of competences of scientists and researchers by implementing R&D activities. The second measure is designed to boost knowledge commercialisation and technology transfer, and promote research institutions to engage in R&D activities with a commercial potential.

The year 2016 was also important for the Council in the sense that it celebrated the 25th anniversary of its founding. On that occasion the undertakings included a jubilee press release of the Chairperson, review articles drawn up in cooperation with the editor's offices

of the journals *Mokslo Lietuva* (*Science Lithuania*) and *Valstybė* (*The State*), as well as a meeting with the research community. Furthermore, 24 public events were held for the occasion, and included five conferences and discussions on the science policy, and 19 events dedicated to information and consultations on the competitions.

The research communication and public relations activity of the Council also included the dissemination of research results. In the course of the year, researchers of the Council published, in different months, 20 articles posted on the internet portals www.delfi.lt (Section Sugalgvota Lietuvoje (Devised in Lithuania)), www.15min.lt (Section Mokslas (Science)), and www.lzinios.lt. However, the main vehicle for the dissemination of the Council news is its website at www.lmt.lt. The news published on this website reach more than 2,000 unique subscribers. During the year, the Council posted on its website 197 messages primarily relevant for the research community. The website of the Council has become a gateway for Lithuanian research and studies institutions to search for information on competitions for positions in research and studies institutions and dissertations defended in Lithuania. By the end of 2016, the database of defended dissertations contained a total of 4 695 entries. In 2016, the Council started constructing a new internet website that would be better adapted to its users' needs, and would be more efficient in introducing the Council's functions and the scope of activities. The new website will have an upgraded structure and a dynamic environment, and be adapted to access via mobile devices.