

2018 ANNUAL REPORT OF THE RESEARCH COUNCIL OF LITHUANIA SUMMARY

The Research Council of Lithuania (hereinafter referred to as the Council) advises and provides expert evaluations to the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania (hereinafter referred to as the Seimas) and the Government of the Republic of Lithuania (hereinafter referred to as the Government) on the issues of research and the training of researchers, organizes the evaluation of research and experimental development (R&D) and doctoral studies carried out by the country's science and studies institutions, executes the assessment of competitive funding of R&D works and encourages the integration of the country's natural and legal persons into the international research area. The functions and tasks of the Council are determined by the Law on Science and Studies (LSS) of the Republic of Lithuania and the regulations of the Research Council of Lithuania.

The Council consists of the Chairman and Vice-Chairman, Scientific Secretary, Board members, the members of two expert committees – the Committee of Humanities and Social Sciences (HSS) and the Committee of Natural and Technical Sciences (NTS) – and the Research Foundation of the Council (Research Foundation). New Council members were appointed in July 2018: [Chairman of the Council](#), his vice-chairmen and [half of the members](#) of the Council committees. As of 31 December 2018, the Council consisted of 33 members of the Council and 65 members of the Research Foundation.

The Council made the following suggestions and conclusions to the Seimas and the Government: regarding the draft Law on Technology and Innovation of the Republic of Lithuania, regarding the amendment of the classification of scientific fields and directions, regarding draft plan for performance optimization measures of Klaipėda University for 2018-2019, regarding draft plan for improving the performance of European Humanities University, regarding draft guidelines for the development of Lithuanian defence and security industry for 2018-2026, regarding draft programme of the long-term development of science, technology and innovation, etc. On behalf of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania (the Ministry), the Council assessed the activities of non-governmental research institutes and made proposals regarding: the distribution of master and doctoral study places in 2018 to the institutions of science and studies, applications for competitive doctoral studies eligible for funding based on the fields of study in 2018, post-doctoral internships and the participation of undergraduates and graduates in traineeship programmes, the draft of the new research and innovation programme of European Union for the period of 2021-2027 "European Horizon", etc.

At the initiative of the Board, the following proposals concerning important aspects of Lithuanian science policy were discussed and presented: 1) amendment of the legislation regulating the minimum qualification requirements for researchers, the art and science doctoral studies (a document is prepared and is to be passed in 2019); 2) proposals for the Council's competitive funding strategy and a plan indicating measures to reduce administrative burdens for researchers; 3) promotion of transnationality of Lithuanian science and critical review of existing means; 4) measures to promote scientific activities of young researchers and doctoral students; 5) ex-post evaluation of Council competition programs; 6) proposals for the communication strategy and the publication of the results of projects funded by the Council.

The Council has carried out an expert evaluation of 5 best scientific works from a certain scientific direction from best Lithuanian universities of 2017. The Ministry used the results of the three-year (2015, 2016, 2017) assessment to accredit the study directions of universities. The Council launched an annual evaluation of research and experimental development and artistic activities of universities and research institutes: more than 10.6 thousands of evaluation units were evaluated (i.e., scientific and artistic works, R&D and social, cultural development orders from economic entities and international projects). They were submitted by 36 research and study institutions.

In 2018, the evaluation of art doctoral studies was completed, science doctoral studies were evaluated and the applications submitted by the institutions for the acquisition of doctoral studies and the possibility to gain the right of doctoral studies as well as the appropriateness of the composition of the doctoral committees were also analysed. Conclusions and suggestions were submitted to the Ministry.

The Council assessed the reports showing the results of implementation of long-term institutional R&D programmes in research institutes in 2017 and submitted a proposal to the Ministry to continue with 50 programs and to discontinue the execution of 1 program.

The Council's commission of the Research Infrastructures (RI) assessed the applications of Lithuanian science and studies institutions to become members of international research infrastructures and the reports indicating their participation in said research infrastructures. In 2018, Lithuania was a member of two international research infrastructures, i.e. Common Language Resources and Technology, and the European social research, intergovernmental organization European Molecular Biology Conference (EMBC). At the same time Lithuania also expressed its wish to become a fully fledged member of the European Molecular Biology Laboratory (EMBL). Membership in the EMBL enables the integration of molecular biology research carried out in Lithuanian science and studies institutions into the European Research Area.

The Research Ethics Commission of the Council controlled that the principles of academic integrity were observed in the research activities funded by the Council. In 2018 the commission investigated whether the 61 valid decision of the Academic Ethics and Procedure Controller of the Republic of Lithuania were related to violations of ethics in research activity.

The Council announced three calls for applications for the position of Academic Ethics and Procedure Controller. This saw the submission of the nomination of Dr. Loreta Tauginienė to become the Academic Ethics and Procedure Controller.

The Council also carried out the academic recognition of 21 foreign science (art) doctoral degrees.

In accordance with Article 3 of the Law on Science and Studies, the Council constantly devotes considerable attention to the studies of lithuanistics. Funds for competitive research and dissemination projects that implement this priority are allocated through several activities financially supported by the Council. The competitive funding of humanitarian and social research and publishing related to Lithuanian studies is ensured by the State Lithuanian Studies and Dissemination Programme for 2016-2024, as well as national research programs "Welfare Society" and "Modernity in Lithuania". A significant number of projects related to Lithuanian studies are carried out under the rules of project of research groups and other programs administered by the Council. Urgent applied research projects important to the needs of the State of Lithuania are financed under the rules of necessary research projects. In 2018, the total of 190 projects related to Lithuanian studies were carried out. Almost 5 million EUR (i.e., about 30% of total Council appropriations for competitive funding from the state budget) were allocated for said projects. These projects were implemented in 24 different institutions: 10 universities, 11 institutes, 2 academies and 1 library. Most of the projects implementing the priority of the studies of lithuanistics were carried out by Vilnius University (59), Lithuanian Institute of History (26), Institute of Lithuanian Literature and Folklore (21) and Vytautas Magnus University (18).

In 2018, the project "Development of 'Lithuanistika' Data base" was being continued. In the course of this project, a modern Lithuanian infrastructure was created - a functioning open access database, allowing the material related to lithuanistics to enter the national and international academic space by applying international bibliographic information transfer protocols, standards and formats (*eLABa*, *ROAR* and *OpenDOAR*, *OpenAIRE*).

The Council allocates funds to state-commissioned and researchers-initiated research, the projects if international co-operation programmes and activities promoting careers and mobility of researchers. In order to strengthen the potential of Lithuania's R&D, the Council promoted the highest level of free research by funding projects initiated by different research groups: in 2018, 205 projects worth 5.8 million EUR were carried out. These researches in various fields of science are necessary to raise awareness of Lithuanian science in the world. At the same time, the Council promoted the adaptation of science, thus contributing to the solution of the problems relevant to the whole country.

In 2018, the implementation of Phase I of projects of 4 national research programmes was completed, and the implementation of another National Science and State Lithuanistics Research and Dissemination (2016-2024) programme was continued further. In total, more than 7.1 million EUR were allocated, funding 196 research and dissemination projects. By implementing these projects, a complex analysis of biomedicine and social medicine related issues of healthy ageing of Lithuanian society was carried out, as well as the consequences of climate change and the use of ecosystem resources, and the guidelines for controlling and restoring the sustainability of ecosystem were created. Research, creating conditions for Lithuanian researchers to compete in the European Space Agency's research programs, and innovative research of modernization processes and modernity in Lithuania has been carried out; the preconditions, tendencies and developmental possibilities of the development of welfare for the society in Lithuania have been analysed. Great attention was paid to the research of the conservation of Lithuanian heritage, the renewal of

lithuanistics, the response to changes in society with new knowledge and ideas, and the development of fundamental and applied research related to Lithuanian studies. The Council also contributed to addressing the immediate challenges of the country - the fulfilment of obligations of Protocol of the Convention on Long Range Transboundary Air Pollution on Persistent Organic Pollutants; the implementation of the right of the most vulnerable people to acquire or rent a housing; preventing and effectively overcoming domestic violence; more efficient recruitment of military personnel and the preparation for state defence; improving the health and quality of life of the population and developing health tourism by strengthening the system health and wellness institutions of; knowledge of the start-up phase of the Lithuanian state and the process of its' recognition; the ensuring of the efficiency of investments when it comes to the economic growth of the regions of the country - by financing the necessary research projects offering sustainable, knowledge-based solutions. Seven projects implementing the aforementioned objectives have been carried out (worth more than 300,000 EUR) and the public authorities concerned were provided with the results of five more relevant research projects conducted in 2016–2017 that will help policy makers to make research-based decisions and help with the training of specialists and educate of the members of public regarding the state and public security.

The Council supports researchers' career ideas, funds the publication of scientific results and promotes their dissemination in society. In 2018, more than 0.8 million EUR were allocated for these purposes. The academic achievements of doctoral students' were awarded with financial support, their academic-led trips and activities of researchers' academic associations were encouraged, international, national scientific events and the dissemination of research results were financially supported.

In 2018, the Council continued the project "Development of Doctoral Studies": 512 doctoral students participated and/or participate in the activities of this project.

With the resources of European Union Structural Funds, 276 Lithuanian higher education students improved their skills by implementing research projects as well as taking up traineeships during semesters and summer holidays. For this, the Council allocated the grant of 1.23 million EUR. In 2018, 300 researchers from Lithuanian science and studies institutions raised their scientific competence by going to prestigious foreign science events and taking up internships at the most prominent foreign research centres. 17 experienced foreign scientists were invited to participate in the doctoral study process of Lithuanian state science and studies institutions (SSI) and raise the competence of local researchers. For this purpose, a total of 0.85 million EUR were allocated from European Union Structural Funds. In 2018, 86 young PhD graduates from around the country pursued a career as an independent researcher and were prepared to successfully participate in national and international scientific competitions by carrying out post-doctoral internship projects. For these projects, the Council allocated the funding of 3.9 million EUR. A competition for projects devoted to attracting and reintegrating researchers from foreign countries was announced (13 project financing agreements were signed for 11.8 million EUR); funding was allocated for projects under the EU's joint research and innovation programme "Horizon 2020" (H2020) that have not received funding from the EU because of strong competition.

The Council is an institution coordinating the COST (European Cooperation in Science and Technology) in Lithuania and represents Lithuania in the committees of high level officials and scientific committees of COST Association. The Council continued to administer a standing invitation to participate in the activities of COST and the Council's Expert Commission evaluated the applications of science and studies institutions to join the activities of COST. In 2018, 41 representatives of Lithuania joined the committees of the management of new activities of COST.

The Council is the most active Lithuanian public sector institution and receives the most funding from the European Commission (EC). According to the data of the European Commission of October 2018, the Council is involved in 13 programmes and initiatives, and the funding from the European Commission for the aforementioned programmes and initiatives currently amounts to 815,039 EUR.

In 2018 The Council became a member of the QUANTERA (Quantum Technology Research Network) and the "European Joint Programme on Rare Diseases".

In addition, the Council participates in the activities of H2020 "National Contact Point" (NCP) network, which includes all EU Member States, the associated H2020 countries and the third world countries. The aforementioned network was created by the European Commission. In separate states, the NCP networks consist of national representatives of the H2020 areas, providing qualified assistance to H2020 participants

and applicants. In 2018, the Council carried out the NCP functions in 12 H2020 areas and organized 16 informative events for potential Lithuanian participants in these areas.

In 2018, the project "Increasing the internationalisation of the Lithuanian research– development of R&D links (LINO LT)" was continued with the aim of encouraging Lithuanian researchers and scientists to develop or acquire the missing scientific and subject-specific competences through participation in EU research and innovation programmes and initiatives. From July 2018, the Lithuanian RDI Liaison Office LINO took over the chair of an Informal Group of RTD Liaison Offices in Brussels (IGLO), and, together with its partners in Brussels, organized 11 events presenting Lithuanian science and innovation and raising the competences of research and science managers (about 400 participants), and three calls for funding the visits (over 180 researchers were funded).

In April 2018, the Republic of Lithuania, the Republic of Iceland, the Principality of Liechtenstein and the Kingdom of Norway signed agreements regarding the implementation of the European economic area and Norwegian financial mechanisms in the period of 2014-2021. On the basis of these agreements, throughout the new funding period it was agreed to also finance a research programme the implementation of which is the responsibility of the Council. Whilst negotiating the content of the programme, a regional Baltic science programme has been developed to help Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia consolidate their research funding and research potential. In 2018, Estonia launched a call for applications for this programme. In 2019 the call will be launched by Latvia and in 2020 – by Lithuania.

The Council organizes information days, weeks for individual consultations, events to discuss various aspects of research policy in order to communicate and collaborate, and to familiarize applicants and project operators with the regulations and requirements of competitions.

In 2018, about 15.7 million EUR or 0.035 percent of country's GDP were allocated from the state budget to finance the competitive research activities administered by the Council. Although the importance of science in the current, rapidly changing world is growing, the latter indicator for the period of 2017-2019 decreases every year.