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Freedom House (Author)

Nations in Transit 2023 - Lithuania

CONSOLIDATED DEMOCRACY

78

/ 100

Democracy Percentage 77.98 / 100

Democracy Score 5.68 / 7

LAST YEAR'S DEMOCRACY PERCENTAGE & STATUS

77 / 100 Consolidated Democracy

The ratings are based on a scale of 1 to 7, with 7 representing the highest level of democratic progress and 1 the lowest. The Democracy Score is an average of ratings for the categories tracked in a given year. The Democracy Percentage, introduced in 2020, is a translation of the Democracy Score to the 0-100 scale, where 0 equals least democratic and 100 equals most democratic. [See the methodology.](#)

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Score changes in 2023

- **Civil Society rating improved from 6.00 to 6.25** due to a multiyear trend of improvements to the legal, financial, and reputational sustainability of nongovernmental organizations, exemplified by improved cooperation between civil society and the government during the COVID-19 pandemic and in response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

As a result, Lithuania's Democracy Score improved from 5.64 to 5.68.

Executive Summary

Lithuania experienced another consecutive year of multiple crises in 2022. Issues around the COVID-19 pandemic and “illegal migration” from 2021 were still at the top of the political agenda at the beginning of the year. After Russia’s large-scale invasion of Ukraine commenced on February 24, multifarious support for the attacked country and its people, as well as concerns for Lithuania’s own national defense, started to dominate and overlap many other topics for national and local government agendas, the media, and ordinary citizens alike. The situation was further complicated by a crisis in energy prices¹ and record-high inflation.² However, these challenges did not hinder the democratic character of the country, and to some degree caused even greater societal cohesion and focus on joint action as a result.³

All main Lithuanian institutions provided substantial and unwavering support to war-torn Ukraine during the year in sweeping ways: by condemning Russia’s actions, expressing solidarity with Ukraine,⁴ advocating its interests at various diplomatic levels (on the question of Ukraine’s European Union [EU] membership, for example) and in the public sphere, providing humanitarian support and munitions,⁵ and supporting tough sanctions against and seeking legal accountability for Russia.⁶

Significant and various forms of state support, both at the national and municipal levels, were complemented by civil society actions. These demonstrated, as in 2020 during the height of the pandemic, the self-mobilizing power of Lithuania’s civil society in a time of need. Civil society organizations (CSOs) reaffirmed their importance in crisis management and fundraised record sums of money, even over the course of a few days.⁷ Thousands of individuals volunteered, and two-thirds of the population⁸ contributed either individually or through communities and organizations to assist both the people in Ukraine and its war refugees. (At the end of the year, Ukrainian refugees comprised about 2.5 percent of Lithuania’s population.⁹) Moral support was widely expressed through symbolic actions, artistic performances, and ethical consumerism, and the government’s stand on the war in Ukraine received widespread public support.¹⁰

The war in Ukraine also raised the importance of national security concerns significantly. A state of emergency was reintroduced on February 24 and extended twice.¹¹ With 90 percent of Lithuanian’s sharing the fear that the war in Ukraine would spread to other countries,¹² the portion of the 2022 state budget allocated to defense was increased from 2.05 to 2.52 percent of GDP without resistance. Additionally, a strategy for preparing Lithuanian citizens for civil resistance was approved, the paramilitary Riflemen’s Union (Šauliai) was strengthened, and an all-parliamentary agreement on defense was signed.¹³ The topic of national security often spilled over into other areas;

for example, the national Special Investigation Service (STT) presented the fight against corruption as a matter of national security in June.¹⁴

However, the most painful spillover of national security concerns remained in the field of human rights. Migrants (mostly from the Middle East and Africa¹⁵) seeking to cross the Belarusian border illegally continued to be perceived as part of the Belarusian regime's hybrid attack and were turned away. Both national and international institutions and CSOs criticized this practice. Nevertheless, the Interior Ministry and the parliamentary Committee on National Security and Defense staunchly defended this political course,¹⁶ which did not change until the end of the year. Meanwhile, despite facing severe criticism in the first half of the year, the conditions of accommodations for detained migrants gradually improved.

Societal attitudes towards migrants who crossed the Belarusian border into Lithuania contrasted sharply with the positive and open attitude towards Ukrainian war refugees.¹⁷ In fact, public opinion research indicated that the overall openness of society towards the provision of assistance to refugees had increased, while social distancing in relation to other migrant groups, such as Iraqis, Syrians, and Muslims, had decreased.¹⁸

In the context of strong public solidarity with Ukraine, another inter-ethnic distrust towards Russians grew. Yet the potential strife between ethnic groups was contained by clear and unambiguous public reminders from top leaders that Lithuanian Russians (who constitute 5 percent of Lithuania's population) are an integral part of the community and citizens of Lithuania first.¹⁹ The actions of some well-known Lithuanian Russian-speakers and Russian communities, who declared their pro-Ukrainian stance, helped to further alleviate tensions,²⁰ allowing the public to understand the diversity of this minority group in Lithuania. At the same time, an acknowledgment that not all of the Russian minority takes the same approach²¹ and the portrayal of Russians in the media²² caused some distrust; at year's end, researchers reported that the attitudes of 75 percent of the population towards Russians had worsened, and social distance in relation to this group had risen quickly during the year.²³ This distrust was especially visible towards newly arriving Russians,²⁴ while Russia as a country had become even less favorably viewed by Lithuanians.²⁵

In the context of war, there was a sharp rise in the question of whether freedom of speech protections extend to disinformation, warmongering, and inciting discord. Lithuania firmly rejected this notion and adopted the public position that a lie is not "another opinion." The country took measures to prohibit the rebroadcast of Russian state media and introduced stricter supervision of other sources on the internet, while efforts were made to offer new sources of information.²⁶ Some observers

worried that these tighter controls could set a dangerous precedent for other contexts. Meanwhile, disinformation debunking initiatives and investigative journalism continued to grow stronger and provided accurate and objective information on various topics during the year.

The cleavage of traditional versus liberal values that was prevalent in 2021 was much less prominent in 2022. This change is due partly to the internally uniting geopolitical context and the diminished mobilizing power of the right-wing Lithuanian Family Movement (LŠS, Lietuvos šeimų sąjūdis). However, this sharp division was still visible in the Seimas, Lithuania's unicameral parliament, where the opposition tried to delay the hearing and adoption of liberal laws (namely, the Law on Civil Union, which includes same-sex couples²⁷) by arguing that society should not be further divided in the face of war. The governing liberal Freedom Party (LP, Laisvės partija) and Liberals' Movement (LRLS, Liberalų sąjūdis), on the other hand, emphasized the need to "finally establish the values of free Western society" in the clash between a democratic West and authoritarian cultures of the East.²⁸ Since the most triggering laws have yet to be adopted—in particular, the Civil Union law, which passed the first reading in the Seimas but lacked firm support even among the governing coalition partners LRLS and the center-right TS-LKD (Homeland Union–Lithuanian Christian Democrats) and was destined for further committee discussions²⁹—the active potential remains for future cleavages.

The multiple crises in Lithuania slowed the country's progress on major reforms—namely, in civil service, education, and health provision—and even suspended others, like tax reform, altogether. However, the Seimas still managed to pass a number of important laws, and the government was able to execute important decisions.³⁰ These included constitutional amendments on age and other criteria for parliamentary candidacy as well as the newly adopted electoral code. Additionally, a loophole in referendum regulations, which had opened up the previous year, was closed albeit without substantive improvements to the law.

Other important legislation passed in 2022 related to minority groups in Lithuania: the parliament finally allowed ethnic minorities to officially write their names with some non-Lithuanian letters,³¹ and in December, a long-awaited reform of the disability system was introduced.³² Although largely symbolic, some steps were taken towards greater recognition of sexual minorities.³³ And by the end of the year, the Seimas had approved €37 million in compensation claims for Jewish personal property expropriated in earlier eras by the Nazis and Soviets.³⁴

The parliament also introduced a new model of local self-government power-sharing and imposed stricter legal requirements for public electoral committees. These changes could affect local democratic governance practices after the local elections in 2023. This is particularly

significant given that municipalities attained greater financial and managerial independence in 2022.

The spheres of judicial independence and corruption experienced relatively few changes during the year. Lithuania's justice system remained at or above the EU average in efficiency and quality. However, courts continued to raise the issue of underfunding, while public trust in the court system, diminished since 2019,³⁵ remained quite low.³⁶ Meanwhile the lengthy process of high-profile corruption cases, coupled with court decisions that have fallen short of public expectations, met with controversy. In 2022, new strategic planning and approaches were formalized and implemented as part of the ongoing fight against corruption; with these preventive measures in place, experts are now calling for some practical results.

At-A-Glance

In Lithuania, national governance is democratic and stable, with a system of checks and balances in place to ensure accountability and prevent abuse of power. However, institutions still lack greater openness and cooperation with civil society in decision-making. Elections are free and fair, although at the local level, competitiveness in some municipalities is limited by entrenched political forces. Civil society is independent, and while not very active under normal conditions, the sector has demonstrated a high degree of self-mobilization under extraordinary circumstances. CSOs enjoy increasing public trust and growing partnerships with public authorities, businesses, and within the sector, but many still face funding difficulties. Generally, the media operate freely, yet there have been isolated incidents of politicians attempting to restrict press freedom, as well as cases of political and business pressure, especially at the local level. Though local self-governments operate freely, the system is highly centralized. Municipalities have only limited independence (legislative amendments in 2022 should bring greater financial and managerial independence), and, as in years past, the lowest level of self-government remains disabled. The principle of equality before the law is maintained by an effective justice system. However, low funding and public distrust in courts remain concerning issues. While the public's experience of bribe-giving has decreased significantly over the last decade, the perception of corruption in some institutions (such as health care, courts, and the parliament) remains high. This is also confirmed by "grand corruption" scandals that often undergo lengthy court proceedings but are ultimately overturned.

National Democratic Governance 1.00-7.00 pts

Considers the democratic character of the governmental system; and the independence, effectiveness, and accountability of the legislative and executive branches. 5.50 / 7.00

- After the outbreak of war in Ukraine on February 24, 2022, Lithuania's governing parliamentary majority, the opposition, the government, and the president all took a remarkably united position by collectively condemning the Russian invasion, organizing support for Ukraine and Ukrainian people, and vowing to strengthen Lithuania's national defense.³⁷ However, the diversity of opinions on other topics in Lithuania did not disappear: voices of dissent were still heard between and within the country's main institutions, indicating continuing political and social competition marked by moments of heightened internal tension and disagreements.
- Appeals by the government (specifically, coalition partner TS-LKD) and the president to the power-center in Lithuania's semi-presidential political system brought ongoing discord between the two institutions during the year. President Gitanas Nausėda continued to position himself as a protector of the common people and a counterweight to the government.³⁸ Increased focus on international issues in the political agenda gave him more visibility and informal levers of power as the country's current most popular political figure.³⁹ The government, on the other side, actively dealt with a wave of crises during the year,⁴⁰ firmly backed by the majority in the Seimas, Lithuania's unicameral parliament. Disharmony between the branches of power was exacerbated by mutual public criticisms,⁴¹ rejected proposals,⁴² and limited direct communication between Nausėda and Prime Minister Ingrida Šimonytė.⁴³ However, despite prolonged disagreements, consensus was finally found on important judicial and international appointments, such as judges to the Supreme Court (LAT, Lietuvos Aukščiausiasis Teismas), Ambassador to the European Union (EU), and a candidate member for the European Court of Auditors.⁴⁴ Furthermore, towards the end of the year, both sides reluctantly acknowledged that the main governance decisions adopted in 2022 were appropriate.⁴⁵
- Similarly, parliamentarians from both the governing coalition and opposition parties voted together to adopt major decisions regarding the country's defense, energy security, resolutions related to the war in Ukraine, constitutional amendments, and other important matters.⁴⁶ However, at the same time, the opposition occasionally complained about the governing majority's arrogance and disregard for other opinions.⁴⁷ A low point in relations came in June when the majority played with procedural rules to keep the interpellated Minister of Agriculture in office. In response, the opposition parties boycotted parliamentary sessions for two weeks, leaving the Seimas hall and holding separate meetings in another area of the parliament, the historic Act of March 11th ("Independence") hall.⁴⁸ The opposition also actively criticized the governing majority during the year's biggest domestic scandals, the Kaliningrad transit crisis in June-July⁴⁹ and the public conflict between the Interior

Minister and the former head of the Public Security Service in October.⁵⁰

- In 2022, the opposition held three no-confidence votes against the Agriculture Minister Kęstutis Navickas,⁵¹ Energy Minister Dainius Kreivys,⁵² and Foreign Minister Gabrielius Landsbergis, respectively.⁵³ All retained their posts, setting a new record since the restoration of independence for a government cabinet to reach the term's halfway mark intact.⁵⁴ Experts viewed this as reflecting the year's extraordinary circumstances, and strong leadership from PM Šimonytė.⁵⁵ Likewise, intentions to initiate a no-confidence vote for the entire government at once lacked support, even among opposition parties.⁵⁶
- Despite cases of open annoyance within the coalition in the previous year, the alliance between the largest parliamentary party, the conservative TS-LKD, and its two liberal partners, LRLS and LP, remained strong. Smaller coalition partners noted cases of unequal treatment and inadequate coordination of decisions,⁵⁷ and LP was especially disappointed with the lack of support for its liberal law proposals (like the introduction of civil union for same-sex couples, and the decriminalization of soft drugs).⁵⁸ Although TS-LKD was occasionally dissatisfied with its partners, this did not escalate into more serious discord among the coalition partners. For example, the TS-LKD presidium claimed in a statement that LP violated the coalition agreement in voting for the budget proposal not approved by the government, but it did not threaten the overall stability of the coalition.⁵⁹ As the largest coalition party, TS-LKD itself was publicly shaken by cases of internal disunity,⁶⁰ which it addressed directly.⁶¹ This diminished the number of coalition mandates from 74 to 73 in the 141-seat Seimas by year's end.
- The parliamentary opposition remained fragmented during the year.⁶² In January, the former prime minister in the previous LVŽS government, Saulius Skvernelis, established his own "economically center-left, socio-culturally moderately conservative"⁶³ party, DSVL.⁶⁴ The new party enlisted national and municipal-level former members of LVŽS⁶⁵ as well as LSDP,⁶⁶ TS-LKD,⁶⁷ and other parties.⁶⁸ DSVL instantly rose in the ratings as one of the three most popular parties during the year, along with TS-LKD and the oldest left-wing party, LSDP, thereby besting LVŽS for the country's center-left votes.⁶⁹

Electoral Process 1.00-7.00 pts

Examines national executive and legislative elections, the electoral framework, the functioning of multiparty systems, and popular participation in the political process. 6.25 / 7.00

- Although no elections took place in Lithuania in 2022, a few important changes to electoral regulations were adopted. In April, a united Seimas adopted 3 constitutional amendments, which is

noteworthy since only 12 articles of the constitution have been changed in the past 30 years.⁷⁰ The first amendment related to a 2022 Constitutional Court decision to re-legitimize direct mayoral elections, which had been introduced in 2015.⁷¹ The next amendment reflected the broader aim to encourage younger participation in politics, lowering the age for candidacy to the Seimas to 21 years.⁷² The final amendment allows individuals to run for constitutionally sworn office 10 years after impeachment. This amendment implements a 2011 European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) decision on Lithuania's impeached former president Rolandas Paksas; the court had ruled that the previous lifelong prohibition from running for office for impeached officials was disproportionate.⁷³

- In June, the Seimas adopted an electoral code, a constitutional law drafted by a special parliamentary working group⁷⁴ that consolidated previously separate election statutes.⁷⁵ The new regulations unify principles of election organization, shorten the campaign ban period, extend the number of early voting days, expand advertising regulation, reduce election deposits,⁷⁶ and encourage more active diaspora voting with the possibility of additional single-mandate constituencies elsewhere in the world,⁷⁷ among other measures.⁷⁸ These changes did not engender much debate, with the government, Seimas lawyers, and some opposition representatives only raising objections that the regulations seemed too insignificant for a constitutional law.⁷⁹
- The amendments to the Law on Political Organizations were much more controversial, as they helped level the playing field for competitors and tightened requirements for establishing public electoral committees ahead of the municipal elections in March 2023. For both European Parliament and municipal elections, the changes require that electoral committees be established as legal units and set up before the start of the election campaign, with the minimum number of signatures set to at least 0.1 percent of residents of the respective municipality,⁸⁰ or 1,000 residents for EP elections (the minimum number of signatures to found political parties remains 2,000).⁸¹ These changes were widely criticized for introducing more bureaucracy and discouraging the participation of citizens as nonpartisan candidates⁸² —the exact criticisms raised in a presidential veto that was nonetheless rejected by the Seimas.⁸³ The parliament relented somewhat after another veto, temporarily allowing less strict registration deadlines for electoral committees before the 2023 elections.⁸⁴ By the end of the year, statistics from the Central Electoral Commission (VRK, Vyriausioji rinkimų komisija) showed that the tightened regulations had had an effect: the number of registered electoral committees decreased significantly.⁸⁵ Some committees decried the new regulation as unconstitutional, violating their citizen's right to political representation.⁸⁶

- In June, the Seimas adopted the Law on Referendums as a constitutional law,⁸⁷ filling a legal vacuum created in the previous year.⁸⁸ However, the law did not encompass fundamental changes that would make it easier for citizens to exercise this right.⁸⁹ Meanwhile, the Law on Petitions, updated in December, expanded the list of institutions to which petitions may be submitted and which must consider them, and the publicity and transparency of the petition review process was increased.⁹⁰

Civil Society 1.00-7.00 pts

Assesses the organizational capacity and financial sustainability of the civic sector; the legal and political environment in which it operates; the functioning of trade unions; interest group participation in the policy process; and the threat posed by antidemocratic extremist groups. 6.25 / 7.00

- Since 2020, Lithuania's civil society has demonstrated cohesion, high self-mobilization, and considerable strength in times of need. The biggest civic initiatives and communal actions in 2022 were directed towards helping Ukraine and the Ukrainian people, in their homeland and as war refugees in Lithuania. Under the initiative "Strong Together," Lithuanians offered shelter to refugees in more than 10,000 private dwellings.⁹¹ The Lithuanian Red Cross unexpectedly had to halt its three-day campaign after only a few hours, collecting more aid than logistically able to deliver.⁹² Five major CSOs reported more than 45,000 volunteers involved in their initiatives.⁹³ Record high sums were donated to funds established for Ukraine assistance: in a country of 2.8 million, almost €40.5 million was donated to *Blue/Yellow*,⁹⁴ €2.5 million to *1k*⁹⁵ funds, and more than €2.5 million to five major CSO initiatives.⁹⁶ One particularly notable effort crowdfunded more than €5 million in three days to buy a Bayraktar unmanned combat aerial vehicle for the Ukrainian military in response to a stalled supply of Western armaments.⁹⁷
- These mass actions were supplemented by countless private, public, and citizen-led initiatives.⁹⁸ Well-known athletes, artists, and other famous professionals raised support for Ukraine by selling their trophies and works of art or donating prizes. Dozens of businesses and local communities sent humanitarian aid to Ukraine. For example, metalwork companies collected scrap metal from residents to be welded into emergency stoves sent to Ukraine.⁹⁹ Businesses, and cultural, transport, scientific, and other institutions cared for war refugees by offering free services¹⁰⁰ or raising other forms of expert support.¹⁰¹ By the end of the year, 58 percent of the population and 35 percent of small businesses had reported donating for such causes.¹⁰² Numerous manifestations of citizen solidarity with Ukraine and Ukrainians occurred: for example, around 10,000 individuals gathered for the rally "Freedom Shines" in the capital Vilnius in February.¹⁰³ There was also high public visibility of Ukrainian symbols, boycotts of businesses that had not withdrawn

from Russia,¹⁰⁴ numerous symbolic public demonstrations,¹⁰⁵ and artistic performances, among other actions.¹⁰⁶

- Beyond civil mobilization for Ukraine, there were other actions, including pro-democratic Belarus demonstrations throughout the year.¹⁰⁷ In June, thousands gathered for “Baltic Pride,” a multiday festival and rally supporting the LGBT+ community.¹⁰⁸ Uncharacteristic for the typically more passive Lithuanian context, two major strikes by trade unions broke out in 2022.¹⁰⁹ Prominent citizen initiatives also included the usual environmental actions¹¹⁰ and various other protests, including by business associations, farmers, and environmentalists, as well as demonstrations on education reform, energy issues, and immigration policy.¹¹¹
- The right-wing Lithuanian Family Movement (LŠS, Lietuvos šeimų sąjūdis), which had mobilized huge crowds in 2021, discredited itself with organized booing of national leaders at an honorary public event in January¹¹² and continued to dramatically lose support during the year.¹¹³ Even so, the denial of permits by the Vilnius municipality for some LŠS protests stirred controversy and was examined by the courts.¹¹⁴
- In the current tense geopolitical situation, the Lithuanian state has become increasingly suspicious of some protests, resulting in the large mobilization of police in advance of demonstrations to maintain order.¹¹⁵ Increased public focus also shifted to a newly formed marginal pro-Kremlin organization.¹¹⁶
- Amid Lithuania’s several major crises, the year once again showed the value and importance of CSOs to the state and society in coping with the challenges ahead. CSOs not only involved themselves heavily in actions but also forged strong intra-sectoral partnerships and alliances with the business sector and the state at national and local levels, expanding the latter’s infrastructural capabilities and increasing resilience. Recent crises have highlighted the growing strength of the civic sector, which has been gradually growing as CSOs become more organized, provide improved and better services, and actively advocate for and participate in state decision-making processes. The public image of CSOs has also improved. However, many organizations continue to face financial difficulties, especially with the high inflation in 2022.¹¹⁷ Some financial relief may come from an amendment to the 2004 law whereby citizens may allocate 1.2 percent of their income tax to support nonprofits, the public funds now focused solely on CSOs and excluding previously allowed state-financed institutions.¹¹⁸

Independent Media 1.00-7.00 pts

Examines the current state of press freedom, including libel 5.75 / laws, harassment of journalists, and editorial independence; 7.00

the operation of a financially viable and independent private press; and the functioning of the public media.

- After Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the main concerns in Lithuania's media field in 2022 shifted towards containment of disinformation, hate speech, war propaganda, and warmongering. For this purpose, the Seimas temporarily banned rebroadcasting of Russian and Belarusian state media in February and then extended the ban to September,¹¹⁹ along with the EU-imposed bans.¹²⁰ Already in February, the national media regulatory commission, the Radio and Television Commission of Lithuania (LRTK, Lietuvos radijo ir televizijos komisija), had stopped reception for eight Russian state channels¹²¹ (adding to the five banned in 2020¹²²), and during the year expanded this list¹²³ and imposed additional fines for spreading disinformation.¹²⁴ Oversight institutions, such as the Inspector of Journalist Ethics, received expanded powers to limit war propaganda in April¹²⁵ but still faced obstacles from the courts.¹²⁶ While these actions received widespread support, some parliamentarians and experts saw them as a troubling precedent for freedom of expression, which could be transferred to other contexts such as any criticism of the government. As an alternative strategy, they recommended to focus on strengthening citizens' critical thinking skills.¹²⁷
- Meanwhile, the state and the private sector took additional actions to support foreign independent media: they offered refuge to independent media retreating from Russia,¹²⁸ expressed solidarity with such voices,¹²⁹ started rebroadcasting Ukrainian national radio in April,¹³⁰ introduced a new channel in Russian in June,¹³¹ and expanded Polish TV broadcasting in August.¹³² To combat increased cases of disinformation, incitement of hatred, and non-democratic actions, members of the Internet Media Association temporarily disabled comments on the largest Lithuanian news portals on February 24,¹³³ while several internet providers extended restrictions on their own retransmissions even without a legal obligation to do so.¹³⁴ By the end of the summer, Kantar surveys showed that Russian-speaking programs had lost half of their audience.¹³⁵
- Various fact-checking initiatives and strong investigative journalism teams worked tirelessly to combat the flow of disinformation and provided objective information to the public during the year. Often, on the basis of their investigations, authorities took further actions, including imposing fines or launching legal investigations.¹³⁶ As information battles increasingly moved to social networks, various initiatives emerged to make this environment more transparent as well. In 2022, after individual scandals,¹³⁷ CSOs and state institutions began to inquire into cases of unjustified blocking on Facebook and the extent of the problem.¹³⁸ LRTK also sought to regulate video

bloggers, equating some with mass media, which sparked debate during the year.¹³⁹

- In 2022, experts noted that state institutions continued to hide behind the EU's "General Data Protection Regulation" (GDPR) by withholding important information from journalists and the general public.¹⁴⁰ However, the journalist community and CSOs achieved several precedent-setting victories: in February, after again reviewing an important 2021 case, the Supreme Administrative Court (LVAT) annulled the decision of the Inspector of Journalist Ethics that news portal Atvira Klaipėda had violated data protection rules in its investigation into public procurement abuse.¹⁴¹ In the same month, after Justice Ministry interference, the State Data Protection Inspectorate (VDAI) decided not to impose an administrative fine on the creators of the database Karštos Pėdos.¹⁴² In December, the parliament granted journalists the right to receive detailed data on real estate ownership.¹⁴³ Meanwhile, the quality and use of open data remained modest.¹⁴⁴
- Lithuania's public broadcaster, LRT, remained an object of discontent among some groups. In May, the European Commission rejected a commercial media complaint about the LRT financing model.¹⁴⁵ However, in December, a group of opposition parliamentarians applied to the Constitutional Court to assess LRT's controls, which the public broadcaster viewed as another campaign to limit its independence.¹⁴⁶
- Two other legislative initiatives drew attention in 2022. In November, the Seimas discussed a new media self-regulation model, which sparked debate and drew harsh criticism from the media, who argued that it would compromise press freedom by reducing the number of seats for media and journalist organizations within the self-regulation body.¹⁴⁷ As a result, the proposal was suspended. In December, the parliament also began to consider a new media financing model, which would create a clear division between the public broadcaster and the national media and minimize the representation of public authorities in the allocation of public funds.¹⁴⁸

Local Democratic Governance 1.00-7.00 pts

Considers the decentralization of power; the responsibilities, election, and capacity of local governmental bodies; and the transparency and accountability of local authorities. 5.75 / 7.00

- After years of advocacy by municipalities, two important steps were taken towards greater independence for local self-governance in 2022. In June, the parliament transferred to municipalities the right of state land management. Municipalities called this decision historic and stated that it will allow more efficient planning of territories and construction processes, quicker decision-making, increased investment opportunities, and better service provision.¹⁴⁹ In the last

days of December, the Seimas also alleviated the previously excessive regulation of municipal fiscal discipline and introduced more flexible borrowing for investment projects. Critics warned this move could lead to an increase of debt in the national budget, and complained these changes should have been made many years ago. Nevertheless, municipalities, the president, and most parliamentarians celebrated these changes as the opportunity to carry out more public investments that will improve the quality of public services as well as the appeal and openness of regions.¹⁵⁰ The two aforementioned amendments were in line with a memorandum signed by political parties to strengthen local self-government, which was initiated by the president and signed in 2020.¹⁵¹

- A new model of self-governance was also in the spotlight in 2022. The Constitutional Court's demand to amend the constitution to reintroduce direct election of mayors¹⁵² became an opportunity to review the powers and relationship between mayors and municipal councils. The compromise model adopted in the new Local Self-Government Law separates the legislative function of municipal councils from the executive function of mayors. The new law grants mayors additional powers (like the ability to veto and unilaterally appoint key officials) and defines their term limits, as well as provides more rights for the opposition in municipal councils.¹⁵³ The assessment of these changes was mixed: some praised the strengthening of mayoral powers as a clearer assignment of responsibility, while others criticized these moves as weakening municipal councils and creating conditions for undemocratic dominance by a single leader.¹⁵⁴ The new model will come into effect after the 2023 local elections.
- Lithuanian local government played a significant role in helping Ukrainian war refugees by organizing transportation, housing, financial and material aid, providing various benefits, organizing recruitment fairs, and offering education and kindergarten services, among other assistance.¹⁵⁵ Aid was organized and sent to Ukraine (including food, medicines, hygiene products, and other necessities) in cooperation with CSOs, local communities, and businesses.¹⁵⁶ Local governments also took a moral and political stance. For example, many municipalities cut their ties with partner cities and towns in Russia and Belarus, decided to remove the remaining USSR monuments from public spaces, and refused to host cultural events or withdrew awards from prominent Russians who did not condemn the invasion.¹⁵⁷
- Tensions between local and national governments seemed to decline in 2022, likely due to the adopted reforms mentioned above.¹⁵⁸ The government called for partnership in dealing with the war-refugee crisis and, taking into account the lessons of previous years, prepared a new crisis management model that involves

municipalities even more.¹⁵⁹ Nevertheless, some complications still emerged, such as when the Šalčininkai municipality ignored national directives regarding the implementation of education reform.¹⁶⁰ Furthermore, the general atmosphere has become heated in the run-up to the local elections in March 2023.

Judicial Framework

- In 2022, the efficiency and quality of the Lithuanian justice system, as well as its perceived independence, remained consistent with previous years and corresponded generally to (or above) the EU average.¹⁶¹ However, the court system's self-governance institutions and individual judges spoke out more loudly about the judiciary's current financial situation as a threat to judicial independence.¹⁶² In 2022, despite efforts by judges to propose a national agreement on the courts, politicians remained unconvinced and the proposal was not adopted.¹⁶³ Similarly, the civil service reform, which could have raised judicial salaries, was stalled.¹⁶⁴ The Prosecutor's Office also reported financial problems similar to those facing the courts.¹⁶⁵
- At the same time, the European Commission raised concerns about the selection process for some judges as being insufficiently public, which could create a possible niche for politicization.¹⁶⁶ At the end of the year, the "precedent of the court's politicization" was raised again by President Nausėda when he opposed the nomination of a current parliamentarian and chairman of the Committee on Legal Affairs as a judge to the Constitutional Court.¹⁶⁷ On the bright side, several judicial appointments that had been stalled in recent years were finally moved forward.¹⁶⁸ And the Justice Ministry, reacting to the abovementioned criticisms, took steps to change some appointment procedures, including increasing transparency, publicity, and a reduction in political influence.¹⁶⁹
- Amid Belarus's government-orchestrated migrant crisis,¹⁷⁰ the rights of "illegal migrants" (predominantly from the Middle East and Africa) remained the most complicated human rights issue in 2022. The government continued to confront the situation as a hybrid attack on Lithuania, thus national security was prioritized before human rights concerns. Insufficient attention to migrants' rights was repeatedly criticized by both national and international institutions and CSOs.¹⁷¹ And although conditions in detention centers gradually improved, in response both to this criticism and the natural decline in numbers of migrants,¹⁷² the most worrisome issues remained the practice of turning migrants away at the Lithuanian-Belarus border¹⁷³ and questions over asylum procedures.¹⁷⁴ The EU Court of Justice (CJEU) ruled in June that Lithuania's asylum policy was incompatible with EU law,¹⁷⁵ and cases related to migrant detention and pushbacks have already reached the ECtHR.¹⁷⁶ Nevertheless, Lithuania did not adjust the course of government policies in this area in 2022.¹⁷⁷

- In response to other high-profile ECtHR cases, Lithuania's parliament finally changed the constitution to allow individuals to run for constitutionally sworn office 10 years after a previous impeachment (see "Electoral Process"). However, another attempt by the Seimas to implement the 2021 ECtHR decision related to religious pluralism, which would grant state-recognized religious community status to the ancient Baltic faith "Romuva," was halted.¹⁷⁸
- In 2022, under its new chairperson, the Constitutional Court (KT) ruled on several pandemic containment measures. The KT received public criticism after terminating or returning cases regarding "opportunity passports" (COVID-19 immunity certificates), masks for children, and the requirement to have a negative test when returning to the country, all based on the reasoning that these restrictions were no longer valid.¹⁷⁹ Some urged the KT not to forget its mission to actively form judicial doctrine, and by doing so, to ensure the clarity of the legal environment.¹⁸⁰ Later in the year, the KT's decisions on the mandatory testing of employees and the authority of the National Public Health Center (NVSC) to limit personal freedoms confirmed the legality of these measures during the pandemic.¹⁸¹
- In December, the KT also ruled that the new Law on Intelligence Ombudspersons does not contradict the constitution, allowing appointment procedures for these positions to get underway. The Intelligence Ombudsperson was established in 2021 by the parliament but not in effect due to the opposition's appeal to the KT on the law as possibly violating the rights of the Seimas Ombudspersons.¹⁸²
- The number of convicts in Lithuanian prisons was at a record low in 2022, and oversight institutions declared further reorientation towards mitigation of the penal policy, such as moving from simple isolation and guarding of prisoners to changing their modes of behavior, restoring their relations with society, and more.¹⁸³ However, in December, after two high-profile cases, the possibility of the temporary restriction of convict communications was introduced by the Seimas.¹⁸⁴ In the summer, the parliament approved the restructuring of the prison system, starting in 2023.¹⁸⁵
- Meanwhile, police reforms that were initiated earlier were criticized more broadly in 2022, that is, the path of optimization¹⁸⁶ did not suit all police officials, and the reforms prompted a number to quit.¹⁸⁷ Nevertheless, despite the criticisms, public trust in the police remained high. Crime and case resolution statistics continued to improve; meanwhile, police updated their technology, and the wider society showed a greater intolerance for offenders.¹⁸⁸

Looks at public perceptions of corruption, the business interests of top policymakers, laws on financial disclosure and conflict of interest, and the efficacy of anticorruption initiatives. 4.50 / 7.00

- According to data from the national Special Investigation Service (STT), released at the beginning of 2022, Lithuania's population found corruption to be in the top five most pressing problems facing the country.¹⁸⁹ The trend over the last decade of diminishing public experience with corruption halted,¹⁹⁰ with 10 percent of the population, 5 percent of business people, and 2 percent of civil servants indicating they had given a bribe in the last 12 months. However, business representatives reported an improved business environment in terms of corruption.¹⁹¹ Meanwhile, healthcare, courts, the parliament, and municipalities were perceived as the most corrupt sectors.¹⁹²
- With all main institutions showing support for the fight against corruption, the Seimas adopted a new "National Agenda on Corruption Prevention for 2022–33" in June. Prepared by the Justice Ministry with the STT and coordinated with social partners, this new strategy focuses on education, prevention, and control.¹⁹³ In response to the new Law on Corruption Prevention, adopted in 2021, changes were made to the rules for anticorruption assessment of legal acts,¹⁹⁴ updates were made to the preparation of corruption prevention planning documents,¹⁹⁵ and new positions for corruption prevention were established in some institutions.¹⁹⁶
- Nonetheless, experts who contributed to these changes noted the need to shift attention from legislation and bureaucracy to practical implementation. They emphasized the importance of ensuring that anticorruption measures are "taken seriously" and enforced on the ground.¹⁹⁷ The STT's investigation, announced in November, illustrated this underlying problem, revealing that corruption reporting channels established in most municipalities do not actually function effectively.¹⁹⁸ Additionally, experts criticized limitations on another preventive measure, open data.¹⁹⁹
- In April, a verdict was reached in one of Lithuania's most resonant political corruption cases of recent decades. This sprawling case involves the parliamentary Liberals' Movement (LRLS) and Labor Party (DP), one of the country's largest business concerns (MG Baltic), several parliamentarians, and businessman Raimondas Kurlinskis, all of whom were accused of influence peddling. After six years of proceedings and 330 court hearings, all of the accused were acquitted.²⁰⁰ This verdict drew a stormy reaction and contradicted prior public expectations, raising doubts about the quality of investigators' evidence collection and the "threshold" for evidence applied by the courts.²⁰¹ Lawyers came to the defense of those judges under pressure,²⁰² and the STT noted that, in 2021, the

courts had found 86 percent of persons investigated by the STT guilty.²⁰³ In any case, the long-delayed outcome did not increase public confidence in the courts, politicians, business, or the fight against corruption in Lithuania.²⁰⁴ It also failed to restore the reputations of the accused. In May, some on both sides appealed the verdict.²⁰⁵

- In 2022, the investigation and examination of individuals continued in the high-profile “judges’ corruption” case.²⁰⁶ By July, the courts acquitted 2 defendants, and 9 others were found guilty.²⁰⁷ During the year, a new prominent political corruption scandal arose in Kaunas, where the director of the municipal administration was accused of taking a record-breaking bribe.²⁰⁸ Meanwhile, for the first time in the health sector, doctors convicted of bribery had their licenses temporarily revoked.²⁰⁹

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Footnotes

- ¹Reaching peak in the summer, for example, Lithuanian Energy Agency, “Elektros energijos rinkoje – išskirtinė situacija” [An exceptional situation in the electricity market], Lithuanian Energy Agency, 09 August 2022, <https://www.ena.lt/Naujiena/elektros-energijos-rinkoje-isskirtine-situa...> On the yearly dynamic of prices of electricity, gas, gasoline, diesel and biofuel see Lithuanian Energy Agency, “Energetikos duomenų apžvalga” [Overview of energy data], Lithuanian Energy Agency, 16-22 December 2022, <https://www.ena.lt/uploads/2022%2012%2016-22%20Energetikos%20duomenu%20...>
- ²Yearly inflation reached even 24,1 percent in its peak in September. State Data Agency, “Annual changes in consumer prices (annual inflation)”, State Data Agency, July-December 2022, <https://osp.stat.gov.lt/statistiniu-rodikliu-analize?hash=eb3e825c-f627...> [viewed on 4 January 2023]. According to the EU-harmonised index of consumer prices, Lithuania’s average annual inflation was 18.9 per cent in 2022. State Data Agency, “Changes in prices calculated based on harmonised index of consumer prices”, State Data Agency, 10 January 2023, <https://osp.stat.gov.lt/informaciniai-pranesimai?articleId=10496440>.
- ³For example, Civic Empowerment Index 2022 research demonstrated that although society remained polarized along the lines of liberal-traditional values, the issue of support for Ukraine united these groups. Civil Society Institute, „Pilietinės galios indeksas 2022 m.“ [Civic Empowerment Index 2022], Civil Society Institute,

January 2023, http://www.civitas.lt/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/PGI_2022metai.pdf, p.30.

- 4For example, like number of resolutions adopted unanimously in Seimas: Resolution on the aggression of Russia and Belarus against Ukraine (on February 24th), Resolution Regarding the granting of candidate-country status to Ukraine and Ukraine's full membership in the European Union (on March 10th), Resolution for proactive measures to ensure the safety of the Ukrainian civilian population and critical infrastructure (on March 17th), Resolution Condemning the Russian Federation's aggression and war crimes in Ukraine (on April 12th), Resolution recognizing the war waged by the Russian Federation against Ukraine as genocide of the Ukrainian people (on May 10th), Resolution on full support for Ukraine's victory, accelerating its membership in the European Union and ensuring safe navigation in the Black Sea (on June 9th), Resolution on the abduction and illegal deportation of Ukrainians by the Russian Federation (on June 16th). Jadvyga Bieliavska, ELTA, "Iš Lietuvos Seimo – jau ketvirtoji Ukrainą palaikanti rezoliucija" [From the Seimas of Lithuania - already the fourth resolution supporting Ukraine], delfi.lt, 12 April 2022, <https://www.delfi.lt/news/daily/lithuania/is-lietuvos-seimo-jau-ketvirt...>; Office of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania, "The Seimas has unanimously recognised the war waged by the Russian Federation against Ukraine as genocide of the Ukrainian people", Irs.lt, 10 May 2022, https://www.irs.lt/sip/portal.show?p_r=35403&p_k=1&p_t=281039; Jadvyga Bieliavska, ELTA, "Seimo rezoliucija: palaikys Ukrainą iki pergalės" [Seimas resolution: will support Ukraine until victory], Klaipeda.diena.lt, 9 June 2022, <https://klaipeda.diena.lt/naujienos/lietuva/politika/seimo-rezoliucija-...>; Office of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania, "Seimas adopted a resolution on the abduction and unlawful deportation of Ukrainians by the Russian Federation", Irs.lt, 16 June 2022, https://www.irs.lt/sip/portal.show?p_r=35403&p_k=1&p_t=281591.
- 5In December, Minister of National Defense stated that Lithuania's aid to Ukraine amounts to 660 million. EUR, of which 240 million EUR consists military support. According to the calculations of the Kiel Institute for the World Economy, Lithuania was 3rd worldwide according to government support in percentages of GDP. Augustas Stankevičius, BNS, "Anušauskas: Lietuvos parama Ukrainai siekia 660 mln. eurų, iš jų 240 mln. eurų – karinė" [Anušauskas: Lithuania's support to Ukraine amounts to 660 million EUR, of which 240 million euro – military support], Irt.lt, 6 December 2022, <https://www.irt.lt/naujienos/lietuvoje/2/1837965/anusauskas-lietuvos-pa...>; Kiel Institute For The World Economy, "Ukraine Support Tracker", Kiel Institute For The World Economy, update on 21

February 2023, <https://www.ifw-kiel.de/topics/war-against-ukraine/ukraine-support-trac...>

- ⁶In 2022, Lithuania sought to bring Russia to justice for its actions in Ukraine in various ways, for example, by turning to International Criminal Court (ICC) in The Hague, by calling EU (together with other Baltic countries) to establish a Special Tribunal, or by launching a pre-trial investigation into crimes against humanity and war crimes. LRT.lt, BNS, "Lithuania turns to Hague court over Russia, Belarus military aggression in Ukraine", lrt.lt, 28 February 2022, <https://www.lrt.lt/en/news-in-english/19/1628733/lithuania-turns-to-hag...>; Ignas Jačasuskas, BNS, "Baltics call to establish special tribunal to probe Russia's crime of aggression", lrt.lt, 17 October 2022, <https://www.lrt.lt/en/news-in-english/19/1802190/baltics-call-to-establ...>; Prosecutor General's Office, "Generalinė prokuratūra pradėjo ikiteisminį tyrimą dėl nusikaltimų žmoniškumui ir karo nusikaltimų / EN" [The General Prosecutor's Office opened a pre-trial investigation into crimes against humanity and war crimes / EN], Prosecutor General's Office, 3 March 2022, <https://www.prokuraturos.lt/lt/generaline-prokuratura-pradejo-ikiteismi...>
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- ⁸"Kantar", "„Kantar“ „Karo barometras“: gyventojai sunerimę ir – itin susitelkę" [Kantar's War Barometer: Residents are worried and extremely united], "Kantar", 8 April 2022, <https://www.kantar.lt/lt/news/-kantar-karo-barometras-gyventojai-suneri...>; "Kantar", "„Kantar“ „Karo barometras“: nerimas dėl karo lenkia rūpestį dėl infliacijos" [Kantar's War Barometer: Worries over war overtake worries about inflation], "Kantar", 1 June 2022, <https://www.kantar.lt/lt/news/-kantar-karo-barometras-nerimas-del-karo-...>; "Kantar", "„Kantar“ Karo barometras: lietuviai finansiškai kol kas mažiausiai įsitempę tarp kaimyninių šalių" [Kantar's War Barometer: Lithuanians are the least financially stressed among neighboring countries so far], "Kantar", 21 July 2022, <https://www.kantar.lt/lt/news/-kantar-karo-barometras-lietuviai-finansi...>
- ⁹More than 70 thousand in total, State Data Agency, "War Refugees from Ukraine", State Data Agency, viewed on 2 January 2023, <https://osp.stat.gov.lt/ukraine-dashboards>. As in August, Lithuania had the 4th largest share of Ukrainian refugees by population size in Europe. Arianna Antezza, André Frank, Pascal Frank, Lukas Franz, Ivan Kharitonov, Bharath Kumar, Ekaterina Rebinskaya, Christoph Trebesch, "The Ukraine Support Tracker: Which countries help Ukraine and how?", Kiel Institute For The World Economy, August 2022, <https://www.econstor.eu/bitstream/10419/262746/1/KWP2218v5.pdf>, p. 38.

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- 27 However, it is noteworthy, that some other more liberal legislative amendments, like, for example, abandoning the eternal freezing of assisted-fertilization-embryos, were successfully adopted. Office of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania, "Seimo Pirmininkės Viktorijos Čmilytės-Nielsen ir Seimo nario Armino Lydekos pranešimas: „Pagalbinis apvaisinimas nuo šiol bus liberalesnis ir žmogiškesnis“" [The announcement of the Speaker of the Seimas Viktorija Čmilytė-Nielsen and the member of the Seimas Arminas Lydeka: "Assisted fertilization will be more liberal and humane from now on"], lrs.lt, 24 May 2022, https://www.lrs.lt/sip/portal.show?p_r=36002&p_k=1&p_t=281314; Modesta Gaučaitė-Znutienė, LRT.lt, "Seimas nutarė – pagalbiniam apvaisinimui sukurtų embrionų nebereikės saugoti amžinai" [Seimas decided that embryos created for assisted fertilization will no longer need to be stored forever], lrt.lt, 24 May 2022, <https://www.lrt.lt/naujienos/lietuvoje/2/1701054/seimas-nutare-pagalbin...>
- 28 Jūratė Skėrytė, BNS, "Premjerė apie siūlymą braukti iš programos partnerystę: kolegos negerbia Seimo" [Prime Minister on the proposal to delete partnership from the agenda: colleagues do not respect Seimas], BNS, 22 March 2022, <https://www.bns.lt/topic/1912/news/66006015/>; lrt.lt, "Karbauskis pritaria gynybos susitarimo turiniui, bet jo nepasirašys: atsisako prisidėti dėl valdančiųjų „prastumtų“ skaldančių įstatymų"

[Karbauskis approves the content of the Defense Agreement, but will not sign it: he refuses to contribute because of the divisive laws "pushed through" by the government majority], lrt.lt, 15 July 2022, <https://www.lrt.lt/naujienos/lietuvoje/2/1739477/karbauskis-pitaria-gy...>

- 29Indrė Jurčėnaitė, "Tos pačios lyties porų sąjungos projektas sulaukė paramos Seime: kurie politikai išgelbėjo?" [The project of same-sex couple union received support in the Seimas: which politicians saved?], 15min.lt, 31 May 2022, <https://www.15min.lt/naujiena/aktualu/lietuva/tos-pacios-lyties-poru-sa...>; Roberta Tracevičiūtė, "Partnerystės įstatymas Seimo salės vis nepasiekia: arklius stabdo ir susvyravę savi?" [The law on partnership still does not reach the halls of the Seimas: are the horses held back by the wobbling partners as well?], 15min.lt, 9 November 2022, <https://www.15min.lt/naujiena/aktualu/lietuva/partnerystes-iteisinimas-...>
- 30Like the increase of energy-security and adoption of the previously planned law introducing new crisis management model, or, in the economic sphere, the adoption of a package of anti-inflationary measures and decisions on energy-prices compensations for residents and businesses. Office of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania, "Seimas patvirtino vėjo elektrinių jūroje plėtrą ir didesnius energijos gamybos iš atsinaujinančių išteklių tikslus" [Seimas approved the development of offshore wind farms and higher goals for energy production from renewable resources], lrs.lt, 31 March 2022, https://www.lrs.lt/sip/portal.show?p_r=35435&p_k=1&p_t=280556; BNS, "Prezidentas pasirašė atsinaujinančios energetikos skatinimo įstatymų paketą" [President signed a package of laws for the promotion of renewable energy], vz.lt, 7 July 2022, <https://www.vz.lt/pramone/energetika/2022/07/07/prezidentas-pasirase-at...>; Augustas Stankevičius, Sniegė Balčiūnaitė, BNS, "Seimas pritarė naujam krizių valdymo modeliui, bus steigiamas centras" [Seimas approved a new crisis management model, a center will be established], KaunoDiena.lt, 8 December 2022, <https://kauno.diena.lt/naujienos/lietuva/politika/seimas-pritare-naujam...>; BNS, "Priimtas pataisytas biudžetas: daugiau pinigų skirta pensijoms, elektros ir dujų kainų kompensavimui" [The revised budget was adopted: more money is allocated to pensions, compensation of electricity and gas prices], Kasvykstakaune.lt, 17 May 2022, <https://kaunas.kasvyksta.lt/2022/05/17/lietuvoje/priimtas-pataisytas-bi...>; Valdas Pryšmantas, BNS, "G.Nausėda: Vyriausybė ir Seimas priėmė gerus sprendimus dėl pagalbos visuomenei" [G.Nausėda: The Government and the Seimas made good decisions regarding assistance to the public], 15min.lt, 28 December

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- **31**Lithuanian Poles missed the legalization of diacritical marks nevertheless. The Government explained this lack as a consequence of technical unpreparedness of the systems and promised it in the future. BNS, "Seimas įteisino „x“, „w“ ir „q“ raides asmens dokumentuose" [Seimas legalized the letters "x", "w" and "q" in personal documents], delfi.lt, 18 January 2022, <https://www.delfi.lt/news/daily/lithuania/seimas-iteisino-x-w-ir-q-raid...>
- **32**Disability and capacity for work Service under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour, "The Seimas agreed: a major reform for people with disabilities will begin next year", Government of the Republic of Lithuania, 21 December 2022, <https://ndnt.lrv.lt/lt/naujienos/seimas-pritare-kitamet-prasides-zmonem...>
- **33**Ignas Jačauskas, 15min.lt, BNS, „Naujovės kraujo donorystės srityje: nuo gegužės homoseksualūs žmonės galės duoti kraujo“ [News in the field of blood donation: from May, homosexual people will be allowed to donate blood], <https://www.15min.lt/naujiena/aktualu/lietuva/naujoves-kraujo-donoryste...>; Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Lithuania, „Gerės translyčių asmenų teisinė padėtis“ [The legal status of transgender people will improve], Government of the Republic of Lithuania, 31 December 2021, <https://tm.lrv.lt/lt/naujienos/geres-translyciu-asmenu-teisine-padetis>.
- **34**At the same time annoying former prime ministers among some other politicians, who considered the issue already settled. BNS, "Seimas skyrė 37 mln. Eur kompensacijų už nusavintą asmeninį žydų turtą" [Seimas allocated 37 million EUR compensation for expropriated Jewish personal property], vz.lt, 20 December 2022, <https://www.vz.lt/verslo-aplinka/2022/12/20/seimas-skyre-37-mln-eur-kom...>; Milena Andrukaitytė, Jūratė Skėrytė, BNS, "S.Skvernelis, A.Butkevičius: naujos kompensacijos žydams „atidarys Pandoros skrynią“" [S. Skvernelis, A. Butkevičius: new compensations for Jews will "open Pandora's box"], 15min.lt, 15 November 2022, <https://www.15min.lt/naujiena/aktualu/lietuva/s-skvernelis-a-butkeviciu...>
- **35**See NIT2020.
- **36**On average, 24 percent trusted and 31 percent did not trust the courts according the surveys during the year.
- **37**At times even recognising it publicly: for example, Margiris Meilutis, "G.Nausėda apie didelį darbą dėl NATO sprendimų: tai – visų institucijų nuopelnas" [G. Nausėda about the great work on NATO decisions: this is the merit of all institutions], 15min.lt, 30 June 2022, <https://www.15min.lt/naujiena/aktualu/lietuva/g-nauseda-apie->

dideli-dar...; Jūratė Skėrytė, BNS, "Prezidentūra: sprendimas dėl Rusijos ambasadoriaus išsiuntimo suderintas su G.Nausėda" [Presidency: the decision on the expulsion of the Russian ambassador has been coordinated with G. Nausėda], 15min.lt, 4 April 2022, <https://www.15min.lt/naujiena/aktualu/lietuva/prezidentura-sprendimas-d...>

- 38 Roberta Tracevičiūtė. "Išeikite į gatvę ir paklauskite žmonių": kodėl G.Nausėda nuomonę grindžia ir liaudies balsu? ["Go to the street and ask people": why does G. Nausėda base his opinion also on the voice of the people?], 15min.lt, 13 February 2022, <https://www.15min.lt/naujiena/aktualu/lietuva/iseikite-i-gatve-ir-pakla...>; BNS, "G.Nausėda: valdžia nesikalba su nepatenkintais žmonėmis, todėl šie protestuoja" [G.Nausėda: the government does not talk to dissatisfied people, so they protest], 15min.lt, 27 January 2022, <https://www.15min.lt/naujiena/aktualu/lietuva/g-nauseda-valdzia-nesikal...>; Vaidotas Beniušis, Jūratė Damulytė, Vidmantas Balkūnas, Gabrielė Navickaitė, "Be cenzūros: ką lietuviai mano apie Gitaną Nausėdą" [Without censorship: what Lithuanians think about Gitanas Nausėda], 15min.lt, 11 July 2022, <https://www.15min.lt/naujiena/aktualu/lietuva/be-cenzuros-ka-lietuviai-...>; Roberta Tracevičiūtė, "G.Nausėdos pusiaukelė: ar jau klojami pamatai antrajai kadencijai?" [G. Nausėda's half-way: are the foundations for the second term already being laid?], 15min.lt, 12 January 2022, <https://www.15min.lt/naujiena/aktualu/lietuva/g-nausedos-pusiaukele-ar-....>
- 39 Not reaching the popularity of previous presidents like V.Adamkus or D.Grybauskaitė at their mid-first-term-cadency, however. See for example: Lietuvos rytas, "Naujausi reitingai: G. Nausėdos šuolis aukštyn ir labai prastos žinios valstiečiams" [Latest ratings: G. Nausėda's jump up and very poor news for peasants], lrytas.lt, 28 May 2022, <https://www.lrytas.lt/lietuvosdiena/aktualijos/2022/05/28/news/naujausi...>; BNS, "Populiariausi tarp politikų išlieka Dalia Grybauskaitė ir Viktoras Uspaskichas" [Dalia Grybauskaitė and Viktoras Uspaskichas remain the most popular among politicians], 15min.lt, 19 May 2012, <https://www.15min.lt/naujiena/aktualu/lietuva/populiariausi-tarp-politi...>. Also: BNS, "Palankiausiai vertinami politikai – V. Adamkus, G. Nausėda, A. Anušauskas" [The most favorably evaluated politicians are V. Adamkus, G. Nausėda, A. Anušauskas], vz.lt, 17 October 2022, <https://www.vz.lt/verslo-aplinka/2022/10/17/palankiausiai-vertinami-pol...>
- 40 COVID-19 pandemic, migrant crises (at the Belarusian border), large-scale Russian aggression against Ukraine, energy price crises and finally, record high inflation.

- 41 Just to name the few: Gabrielė Sagaitytė, LRT.lt, "Šimonytė apie Nausėdos kritiką: galbūt prezidentas pavargo užsiimti užsienio politika ir grįžo prie Vyriausybės kritikavimo pomėgių" [Šimonytė on Nausėda's criticism: maybe the President got tired of dealing with foreign policy and returned to his hobby of criticizing the Government], lrt.lt, 16 March 2022, <https://www.lrt.lt/naujienos/verslas/4/1645965/simonyte-apie-nausedos-k...>; Jurgita Andriejauskaitė, BNS, "Prezidentas: su šia Vyriausybe socialinės politikos klausimus spręsti sudėtingiau" [President: it is more difficult to solve social policy issues with this Government], 5 September 2022, <https://www.15min.lt/naujiena/aktualu/lietuva/prezidentas-su-sia-vyriau...>; Saulius Jakučionis, BNS, "I.Šimonytė: Prezidentūra nori būti „truputį Vyriausybe“" [I.Šimonytė: The Presidency wants to be "a little bit like the Government"], 22 September 2022, <https://www.15min.lt/naujiena/aktualu/lietuva/i-simonyte-prezidentura-n...>; Benas Brunalas, ELTA, "Nausėda sureagavo į Landsbergio pastabą: Šimonytės vyriausybė neturi jokių konkrečių pasiūlymų" [Nausėda reacted to Landsbergis' remark: Šimonytė's Government does not have any specific proposals], delfi.lt, 29 September 2022, <https://www.delfi.lt/news/daily/lithuania/nauseda-sureagavo-i-landsberg...>; Benas Brunalas, ELTA, "Šimonytė atsakė prezidentui: nelabai etiška mokėti tik piršteliu parodyti į kitus" [Šimonytė answered to the president: it is not very ethical to only be able to point the finger at others], delfi.lt, 29 September 2022, <https://www.delfi.lt/news/daily/lithuania/simonyte-atsake-prezidentui-n...>; BNS, "Nausėda rėžė Gabrieliui Landsbergiui: daugiau dirbk, mažiau mokyk" [Nausėda to Gabrielius Landsbergis: work more, teach less], tv3.lt, 5 October, 2022, <https://www.tv3.lt/naujiena/verslas/nauseda-reze-gabrieliui-landsbergiu...>
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- 45Valdas Pryšmantas, BNS, “G. Nausėda: Vyriausybė ir Seimas priėmė gerus sprendimus dėl pagalbos visuomenei” [G. Nausėda: The Government and the Seimas made good decisions regarding assistance to the public], 28 December 2022, <https://klaipeda.diena.lt/naujienos/verslas/ekonomika/g-nauseda-vyriaus...>; Rita Miliūtė, LRT „Dienos tema“, LRT.lt, “Šimonytė – apie klaidas dėl Kaliningrado tranzito, ministrų atleidimą ir Vokietijos brigadą Lietuvoje” [Šimonytė - about the mistakes regarding the Kaliningrad transit, the dismissal of ministers and the German brigade in Lithuania], lrt.lt, 30 December 2022, <https://www.lrt.lt/naujienos/lietuvoje/2/1855834/simonyte-apie-klaidas-...>
- 46For example, raising the budget for defense from 2,05 to 2,52 percent GDP this year; introducing the state of emergency, approving the development of wind farms in the sea and higher targets for energy production from renewable resources; 6 resolutions,

supporting Ukraine (like recognizing the war waged by the Russian Federation against Ukraine as genocide of the Ukrainian people; resolution on full support for Ukraine's victory, accelerating its membership in the European Union and ensuring safe navigation in the Black Sea and others). BNS, "Seimas lėšas gynybai šiemet padidino iki 2,52 proc. BVP" [Seimas increased defense funds to 2.52 percent of GDP this year], 15min.lt, 17 March 2022, <https://www.15min.lt/naujiena/aktualu/lietuva/seimas-balsuos-del-lesu-g...>; Office of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania, "Seimas patvirtino vėjo elektrinių jūroje plėtrą ir didesnius energijos gamybos iš atsinaujinančių išteklių tikslus" [Seimas approved the development of offshore wind farms and higher goals for energy production from renewable resources], lrs.lt, 31 March 2022, https://www.lrs.lt/sip/portal.show?p_r=35435&p_k=1&p_t=280556; Jadvyga Bieliavskā, ELTA, "Iš Lietuvos Seimo – jau ketvirtoji Ukrainą palaikanti rezoliucija" [From the Seimas of Lithuania - already the fourth resolution supporting Ukraine], delfi.lt, 12 April 2022, <https://www.delfi.lt/news/daily/lithuania/is-lietuvos-seimo-jau-ketvirt...>; Office of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania, "The Seimas has unanimously recognised the war waged by the Russian Federation against Ukraine as genocide of the Ukrainian people", lrs.lt, 10 May 2022, https://www.lrs.lt/sip/portal.show?p_r=35403&p_k=2&p_t=281039&p_kade_id...; Jadvyga Bieliavskā, ELTA, "Seimo rezoliucija: palaikys Ukrainą iki pergalės" [Seimas resolution: will support Ukraine until the victory], Klaipeda.Diena.lt, 9 June 2022, <https://klaipeda.diena.lt/naujienos/lietuva/politika/seimo-rezoliucija-....> Seimas also approved three constitutional amendments. Rinkosaikste.lt, "Seimas įteisino tiesioginius merų rinkimus, kandidatuoti į parlamentą leido nuo 21-erių" [Seimas legitimised direct elections for mayors and allowed candidates to stand for Parliament from the age of 21], Rinkosaikste.lt, 21 April 2022, <https://rinkosaikste.lt/seimas-iteisino-tiesioginius-meru-rinkimus-kand...>; Indrė Jurčenkaitė, Jūratė Skėrytė, 15min, BNS, "Seimas vieningai įvedė nepaprastąją padėtį dėl Rusijos agresijos Ukrainoje" [Seimas unanimously introduced a state of emergency in response to Russia's aggression in Ukraine], 15min.lt, 24 February 2022, <https://www.15min.lt/naujiena/aktualu/lietuva/seimas-renkasi-i-neeiline....>

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M.Majauskas unexpectedly for himself was expelled from the party and pushed to resign from the position in the committee and leave party's parliament fraction, after he disobeyed the will of the party not to submit budget proposals that were not confirmed by the Government. The President and even parliamentary opposition supported M.Majauskas as a professional and conscientious politician, however this had no effect on party's principled stance and M.Majauskas ended the heated situation himself by withdrawing from TS-LKD fraction and the position of committee chairman. Modesta Gaučaitė-Znutienė, LRT.lt, "Iš URK vadovų besitraukiantis Pavilionis: būtų negarbinga nepaklusti partijos sprendimui" [Pavilionis, who is stepping down from the leadership of the Foreign Affairs committee: it would be dishonourable to defy the party's decision], lrt.lt, 3 January 2022, <https://www.lrt.lt/naujienos/lietuvoje/2/1576982/is-urk-vadovu-besitrau...>; Roberta Tracevičiūtė, "Konservatorių į postą grąžinamas Ž.Pavilionis: tam tikrą pamoką išmokau" [Pavilionis, who is being returned to office by the Conservatives: a lesson learned], 15min.lt, 15 November 2022, <https://www.15min.lt/naujiena/aktualu/lietuva/konservatoriu-i-posta-gra...>; Ramūnas Jakubauskas, "M.Majauskas nesitraukia dėl PVM lengvatos: pasisakė apie „vertybinį požiūrį“ į mokesčius ir kurstomą konfliktą" [M.Majauskas doesn't back down on VAT exemption: he talks about "value-based approach" to tax and the conflict that is being fueled], 15min.lt, 18 October 2022, <https://www.15min.lt/naujiena/aktualu/lietuva/m-majauskas-nesitraukia-d...>; Jūratė Skėrytė, BNS, "Partijos ultimatumą gavęs M.Majauskas palaiko biudžeto projektą, bet nesitraukia dėl mokesčių" [M.Majauskas, who has received an ultimatum from his party, supports the draft budget but does not back down on taxes], 15min.lt, 25 October 2022, <https://www.15min.lt/naujiena/aktualu/lietuva/ts-lkd-prieziuros-komitet...>; Roberta Tracevičiūtė. "Konservatorių verdiktas M.Majauskui: nepaklusniam politikui – vilko bilietas" [Conservatives' verdict on M.Majauskas: a wolf's ticket for a disobedient politician], 15min.lt, 28 November 2022, <https://www.15min.lt/naujiena/aktualu/lietuva/konservatoriu-verdiktas-m...>; Ramūnas Jakubauskas, Roberta Tracevičiūtė. 15min.lt, "M.Majauskas tikina nesitikėjęs tokio griežto partijos atsako" [Majauskas says he didn't expect such a strong response from the party], 15min.lt, 28 November 2022, <https://www.15min.lt/naujiena/aktualu/lietuva/skiriasi-m-majausko-ir-ko...>; Austėja Masiokaitė-Liubinienė, BNS, Rugilė Augustaitytė, ELTA, "Nausėda: nėra teisinga „pervažiuoti volu“ per Majauską" [Nausėda: it's not right to "roll over" Majauskas], lrt.lt, 29 November 2022, <https://www.lrt.lt/naujienos/lietuvoje/2/1832442/nauseda-nera-teisinga-...>; Ramūnas Jakubauskas, "M.Majausko istorija taip

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- **65**15min, BNS, "Sukritikavęs LVŽS, K.Mažeika jungiasi prie S.Skvernelio: „Slogu stebėti tai, kas vyksta su partija"" [After criticizing LVŽS, K. Mažeika joins S. Skvernelis: "It's sad to watch what's happening with the party"], 15min.lt, 29 January 2022, <https://www.15min.lt/naujiena/aktualu/lietuva/sukritikaves-lvzs-prie-s-...>
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- **67**Karolina Aleknavičė, "S.Skvernelis nuvilioja Kauno konservatorius: ką tai reiškia miesto politikai?" [S. Skvernelis seduces the conservatives of Kaunas: what does this mean for city politics?], 15min.lt, 27 January, <https://www.15min.lt/naujiena/aktualu/lietuva/s-skvernelis-nuvilioja-ka...>
- **68**Roberta Tracevičiūtė, "S.Skvernelio kariaunoje – įvairių politinių spalvų žmonės: kiek sėkminga bus tokia sąjunga?" [S. Skvernelis's army includes people of various political colors: how successful will such a union be?], 15min.lt, 28 January 2022, <https://www.15min.lt/naujiena/aktualu/lietuva/s-skvernelio-kariaunoje-i-...>
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- **71**Though direct mayoral elections were already held in 2015 and 2019, the Constitutional Court ruled in 2021 that such a process should be introduced not by a regular law (as it was done), but with the constitutional amendment. This was done in 2022. Under pressure of KT decision and broad public support for the direct mayors' elections, opposition parties succumbed to the more concise wording proposed by governing majority, moving related and more debates raising regulation of mayors' powers to a lower-rank law. Office of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania, "Konstitucijos pataisomis įteisinti tiesioginiai merų rinkimai" [Direct elections of mayors are legalized by constitutional amendments], lrs.lt, 21 April 2022, https://www.lrs.lt/sip/portal.show?p_r=35435&p_k=1&p_t=280797; Constitutional Court of the Republic of Lithuania, "Dėl savivaldybių merų rinkimų ir įgaliojimų" [Regarding the elections and powers of municipal mayors], lrkt.lt, 19 April 2021, <https://lrkt.lt/lt/teismo-aktai/paieska/135/ta2407/content>; as in April 2021, 83 percent of the respondents indicated support for the direct elections of the mayors. Association of Local Authorities in Lithuania, "Galimybė tiesiogiai rinkti merą paskatintų daugiau gyventojų dalyvauti rinkimuose" [The possibility of directly electing the mayor would encourage more residents to participate in the elections], Association of Local Authorities in Lithuania, 4 May 2021, <https://www.lsa.lt/naujienos/2021/05/04/apklausa/>; Indrė Jurčenkaitė, "A.Vyšniauskas: „Meras nebus juostelių karpytojas“, bus „tikras savivaldybės ūkininkas“" [A. Vyšniauskas: "The mayor will not be a ribbon cutter", he will be a "real host of the municipality"], 15min.lt, 21 April 2022, <https://www.15min.lt/naujiena/aktualu/lietuva/greitu-metu-projektas-del...>
- **72**Office of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania, "Priimta Konstitucijos pataisa leis į Seimą kandidatuoti nuo 21 metų" [The adopted amendment to the Constitution will make it possible to run for the Seimas from the age of 21], lrs.lt, 21 April 2022, https://www.lrs.lt/sip/portal.show?p_r=35435&p_k=1&p_t=280800.

- **73**Constitutional Court of the Republic of Lithuania, “Konstitucijos pataisomis Seimas įgyvendino Konstitucinio Teismo nutarimą ir Europos Žmogaus Teisių Teismo sprendimą” [By amending the Constitution, the Seimas implemented the ruling of the Constitutional Court and the decision of the European Court of Human Rights], Irkt.lt, 22 April 2022, <https://lrkt.lt/lt/konstitucijos-pataisomis-seimas-igyvendino-konstituc...>; The European Court of Human Rights, “Grand Chamber judgment: Permanent and irreversible disqualification of a former President from parliamentary office following his removal in impeachment proceedings was disproportionate”, 2001 January 6, <https://hudoc.echr.coe.int/app/conversion/pdf/?library=ECHR&id=003-3387...>
- **74**This special working group for the revision of electoral laws was set up after 2020 Parliament elections. Initially this group considered bigger changes in 2021 (see NIT2022 report).
- **75**I.e., Seimas elections Law, Presidential elections Law, Law on Elections to the European Parliament, Municipal Council elections Law, the Central Electoral Commission Law and the Law on Financing and Financing Control of Political Campaigns.
- **76**More on the election deposits see Article 88 and 89, Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania, „Lietuvos Respublikos Rinkimų kodeksas“ [Election Code of the Republic of Lithuania], 19 July 2022, <https://e-seimas.lrs.lt/portal/legalAct/lt/TAD/44e06821075711edbf9c72e...>
- **77**Since 2020, one of the 71 single-member constituencies in the Lithuanian parliamentary elections is specially reserved for the diaspora - the so-called World Lithuanians, who have the right to vote and who vote in the diplomatic missions and consular offices of the Republic of Lithuania. See Article 17 for the current regulation: Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania, „Lietuvos Respublikos Rinkimų kodeksas“ [Election Code of the Republic of Lithuania], 19 July 2022, <https://e-seimas.lrs.lt/portal/legalAct/lt/TAD/44e06821075711edbf9c72e...>
- **78**Office of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania, “Seimas priėmė konstitucinį įstatymą – Rinkimų kodeksą” [Seimas adopted a constitutional law - the Election Code], Irs.lt, 23 June 2022, https://www.lrs.lt/sip/portal.show?p_r=35403&p_k=1&p_t=281676.
- **79**Milena Andrukaitytė, BNS, “Seimas sutraukė rinkimų įstatymus į vieną, sugriežtino komitetų veiklą” [Seimas consolidated the election laws into one, tightened the regulation of the electoral committees], 15min.lt, 23 June 2022, <https://www.15min.lt/naujiena/aktualu/lietuva/seimas-sutrauke-rinkimu-i...>
- **80**Not less than twice the number of council members of that municipality, however.

- **81**Office of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania, “Partijoms leista steigti analitinius centrus, detaliau reglamentuotas rinkimų komitetų steigimas” [Parties are allowed to set up think tanks and the establishment of electoral committees is further regulated], Irs.lt, 30 June 2022, https://www.irs.lt/sip/portal.show?p_r=35403&p_k=1&p_t=281762&p6=25.
- **82**Ramūnas Jakubauskas, „Ačiū, Stasy“: Šiaulių ir Panevėžio merai piktinasi Seimo sprendimu dėl rinkimų komitetų” [Thank you, Stasys": the mayors of Šiauliai and Panevėžys are angry with the decision of the Seimas regarding election committees], 15min.lt, 16 September 2022, <https://www.15min.lt/naujiena/aktualu/lietuva/aciu-stasy-siauliu-ir-pan...>; Milena Andrukaitytė, BNS, “G. Nausėda apie atmestą veto dėl rinkimų komitetų: niekas nemėgsta konkurencijos” [G. Nausėda about the rejected veto on election committees: nobody likes competition], KaunoDiena.lt, 16 September 2022, <https://kauno.diena.lt/naujienos/lietuva/politika/g-nauseda-apie-atmest...>; Aistė Valiauskaitė, LRT.lt, Vesta Tizenhauzienė, “Partijos užsimojo prieš politinius komitetus? Merai ir opozicija tvirtina – didieji žaidėjai jau nukentėjo ir bijo konkurencijos ateityje” [Parties against political committees? Mayors and the opposition claim that the big players have already suffered and are afraid of future competition], Irt.lt, 20 July 2022, <https://www.lrt.lt/naujienos/lietuvoje/2/1741749/partijos-uzsimojo-prie...>; 15min.lt, “Rinkimų kodeksą sukritikavę 5 savivaldybių merai kreipėsi į Prezidentą: įstatymų naudą partijos gaudo” [Criticizing the Election Code, 5 municipal mayors appealed to the President: the parties reap the benefits of the law], 15min.lt, 2 May 2022, <https://www.15min.lt/naujiena/aktualu/lietuva/rinkimu-kodeksa-sukritika...>
- **83**Office of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania, “Seimas atmetė šalies vadovo veto dėl Politinių organizacijų įstatymo” [Seimas rejected the Head of state's veto on the Law on Political Organizations], Irs.lt, 15 September 2022, https://www.irs.lt/sip/portal.show?p_r=35403&p_k=1&p_t=282236.
- **84**Office of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania, “Seimas pritarė Respublikos Prezidento veto dėl Rinkimų kodekso” [Seimas approved the veto of the President of the Republic on the Election Code], Irs.lt, 19 July 2022, https://www.irs.lt/sip/portal.show?p_r=35435&p_k=1&p_t=281876.
- **85**Jūratė Skėrytė, BNS, “Dalyvauti savivaldos rinkimuose registravosi triskart mažiau komitetų nei anksčiau” [Three times less committees registered to participate in local government elections], Irt.lt, 13 December 2022, <https://www.lrt.lt/naujienos/lietuvoje/2/1843004/dalyvauti-savivaldos-r...>

- **86**Milena Andrukaitytė, BNS, “Visuomenininkas į savivaldos rinkimus bandė registruotis senąja tvarka – VRK atmetė” [Civic activist tried to register for the municipal elections using the old procedure – VRK rejected it], lrt.lt, 31 October 2022, <https://www.lrt.lt/naujienos/lietuvoje/2/1812053/visuomenininkas-i-savi...>
- **87**Office of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania, “Seimas po svarstymo pritarė Referendumo konstitucinio įstatymo projektui” [After the discussion, Seimas approved the draft constitutional law on the Referendum], lrs.lt, 7 June 2022, https://www.lrs.lt/sip/portal.show?p_r=35435&p_k=1&p_t=281485.
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- **89**Like reducing the number of signatures needed for a citizens’ referendum initiative. One of the initiatives proposing such an amendment failed in 2022 as well: BNS, “Referendumo kartelės mažinimo iniciatoriams nepavyko surinkti reikiamo skaičiaus parašų” [The initiators of the referendum’s bar reduction failed to collect the required number of signatures], alfa.lt, 20 April 2022, <https://www.alfa.lt/aktualijos/lietuva/referendumo-karteles-mazinimo-in...>
- **90**LRT.lt, “Dobrowolska: kitąmet visuomenė turės platesnes galimybes peticijoms teikti” [Dobrowolska: Next year, the public will have more opportunities to submit petitions], lrt.lt, 23 December 2022, <https://www.lrt.lt/naujienos/lietuvoje/2/1852113/dobrowolska-kitamet-vi...>
- **91**Strong Together, “Pagalba į Lietuvą atvykstantiems karo pabėgėliams” [Help for war refugees arriving in Lithuania], Strong Together, viewed on 2 January 2023, <https://stipruskartu.lt/lt/>.
- **92**More than 50 trucks of warm clothes, footwear, bedding and sleeping bags in less than half of the day. Gytis Kapševičius, “Pamatykite patys: susivieniję lietuviai per dieną ukrainiečiams surinko 50 vilkikų paramos, akcija stabdoma” [See for yourself: the united Lithuanians collected 50 truckloads of support for the Ukrainians in a day, the campaign is being stopped], 15min.lt, 27 February 2022, <https://www.15min.lt/naujiena/aktualu/lietuva/pamatykite-patys-lietuvia...>
- **93**Lithuanian Red Cross, “Mūsų širdys ir rankos - Ukrainai!” [Our hearts and hands are for Ukraine!], aukok.lt, viewed on 2 January 2023, <https://www.aukok.lt/projektai/Musu-sirdys-ir-rankos-Ukrainai>.
- **94**40.316.000,00 EUR as for 27th of December, 2022. Blue / Yellow, “Kovai jau surinkome” [Already collected for the fight], Blue/Yellow, viewed on 7 January 2022, <https://blue-yellow.lt/>.

- 952.535.000,00 EUR as for January 7, 2023. 1K Fund, "Support Ukraine against Russian aggression", 1K fund, viewed on 7 January 2022, <https://1kfund.org/>.
- 962 568 981,99 EUR as for January 8, 2023, Lithuanian Red Cross, "Mūsų širdys ir rankos - Ukrainai!" [Our hearts and hands are for Ukraine!], aukok.lt, viewed on 2 January 2023, <https://www.aukok.lt/projektai/Musu-sirdys-ir-rankos-Ukrainai>.
- 97 Similarly more than 318.000 USD were crowd-funded for helmets and safety vests in one day of April and more than 2 million EUR for kamikaze drones in August. BBC Newsday, "Lithuanians raise over \$5m to buy drone for Ukraine", [bbc.co.uk](https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p0c9w3rp), 30 May 2022, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p0c9w3rp>; Andrius Tapinas FB account, "Andriaus gimtadienio dovana - šalmai ir šarvuotos liemenės Ukrainai" [Andrius' birthday gift - helmets and armored vests for Ukraine], FB Andrius Tapinas account, 5 April 2022, <https://www.facebook.com/andrius.tapinas/posts/pfbid02wGx7YAw4DrTaVAXmy...>; delfi.lt, "Gimtadienio proga - Tapino prašymas paremti Ukrainą: surinkta suma pranoko visus lūkesčius" [On the occasion of his birthday - Tapinas' invitation to support Ukraine: the amount collected exceeded all expectations], delfi.lt, 6 April 2022, <https://www.delfi.lt/veidai/zmones/gimtadienio-proga-tapino-prasymas-pa...>; delfi.lt, "Pasirašyta sutartis dėl Ukrainai skirtų dronų kamikadzių įsigijimo" [A contract signed for the purchase of kamikaze drones intended for Ukraine], delfi.lt, 30 September 2022, <https://www.delfi.lt/news/daily/lithuania/pasirasyta-sutartis-del-ukrai...>
- 98 Much more of them than above could be mentioned, for example, the one by the Lithuanian National Museum of Art, which together with "Strong Together" collected funds and sent heaters and generators to Ukrainian museums, which became the shelters during the war. Among other types of initiatives, one can mention "Call Russia" initiative launched in Lithuania, which in the first weeks of war counted more than 180.000 calls made to Russia to inform random residents on the war and its atrocities. Lithuanian National Museum of Art, "„Stiprūs kartu“ ir Lietuvos nacionalinis dailės muziejus pradeda iniciatyvą „Sušildyk Ukrainą“" ["Strong Together" and the Lithuanian National Art Museum launch the initiative "Warm Ukraine"], Lithuanian National Museum of Art, 2 December 2022, <https://www.lndm.lt/stiprus-kartu-ir-lietuvos-nacionalinis-dailės-muzieus-pradeda-iniciatyvą-sušildyk-ukrainą>; <https://callrussia.org/eng>.
- 99 Few individual examples: Rūta Mikšionienė „Lietuvos rytas“, "Gimtadienio proga parėmė Ukrainą - darbus apie karą kūrė nuo pat Krymo užpuolimo" [On the occasion of his birthday, he supported Ukraine - he has been creating works about the war since the invasion of Crimea], lrytas.lt, 8 May 2022, <https://www.lrytas.lt/kultura/daile/2022/05/07/news/ne-tik->

[ukrainos-bet...; 15min.lt, Žmonės.lt, "Aukcione parduotas diskas su Virgilijaus ir Mykolo Alekno parašais: įsigijo garsus verslininkas" \[A disc with the signatures of Virgilius and Mykolas Aleknos was sold at auction: it was bought by a famous businessman\], zmones.lt, 24 August 2022, <https://www.zmones.lt/naujiena/aukcione-parduotas-diskas-su-virgilijaus...>; Rytis Zemkauskas, "Kolega Rytis Zemkauskas: šiemet gautą Petro Babicko premiją paaukojau Ukrainai" \[Colleague Rytis Zemkauskas: I donated the Petras Babickas prize received this year to Ukraine\], Union of Lithuanian Journalists, 28 May 2022, \[http://www.lzs.lt/lt/naujienos/aktualijos_354/archive/p34/kolega_rytis_....\]\(http://www.lzs.lt/lt/naujienos/aktualijos_354/archive/p34/kolega_rytis_....\) Other examples: Aina Mizgirdė, LRT.lt, "Krosneles ukrainiečiams gamina iš ratlankių – šiauliečiai siunčia šilumą kariams ir civiliams" \[Stoves for Ukrainians are made from rims - the people of Šiauliai send heat to soldiers and civilians\], lrt.lt, 08 December 2022, <https://www.lrt.lt/naujienos/lietuvoje/2/1840475/krosneles-ukrainieciams...>; Gabrielė Sagaitytė, LRT.lt, "Vienas kitam nedovanos – aukos: žmonės ir jų darbuotojai įprasmina Kalėdas rinkdami paramą Ukrainai" \[They don't give each other gifts, they make donations: companies and their employees make Christmas meaningful by collecting support for Ukraine\], lrt.lt, 25 December 2022, <https://www.lrt.lt/naujienos/verslas/4/1842267/vienas-kitam-nedovanos-a...>; Telia Lithuania, "„Telia“ siunčia savo įrangą atstatyti Ukrainos mobiliojo tinklams" \[Telia is sending its equipment to Ukrainian mobile networks to be rebuilt\], Telia Lithuania, 12 October 2022, <https://www.telia.lt/pranesimai-spaudai/telia-siuncia-savo-iranga-atsta...>](#)

- **100** Like free abonnements, free ride, tickets to events, free activities for children, free studies, scholarships for higher education students etc.
- **101** Like well-known producer of children's shows, who organized a bicycles, scooters and other vehicles donation campaign and weekend camps for Ukrainian children in Lithuania during the summer. More than 3500 vehicles were fundraised: Ukrainian families in Lithuania, "Laurynas Šeškus: karo Ukrainoje akivaizdoje lietuviai įrodė, kad stebuklai įmanomi, tikimės ir dar vieno" [Laurynas Šeškus: in the face of the war in Ukraine, Lithuanians proved that miracles are possible, we hope for one more], delfi.lt, 5 July 2022, <https://www.delfi.lt/multimedija/ukrainos-seimos-lietuvoje/laurynas-ses...>
- **102** Noteworthy, other surveys in the course of the year showed higher proportions. Civil Society Institute, "Pilietinės galios indeksas 2022 m." [Civic Empowerment Index 2022], Civil Society Institute, 30 January 2023, <http://www.civitas.lt/time-line/pilietines-galios-indeksas-2022-m/>; Luminor, "Baltijos šalių smulkusis verslas ir toliau remia Ukrainą" [Baltic small businesses continue to support Ukraine], Luminor, 28 October 2022, <https://www.luminor.lt/lt/naujienos/baltijos-saliu-smulkusis->

[verslas-ir...; "Kantar", "„Kantar“ „Karo barometras“: gyventojai sunerimę ir – itin susitelkę](#) [Kantar's War Barometer: Residents are worried and extremely united], "Kantar", 8 April 2022, <https://www.kantar.lt/lt/news/-kantar-karo-barometras-gyventojai-suneri...>

["Kantar", "„Kantar“ „Karo barometras“: nerimas dėl karo lenkia rūpestį dėl infliacijos](#) [Kantar's War Barometer: Worries over war overtake worries about inflation], "Kantar", 1 June 2022, <https://www.kantar.lt/lt/news/-kantar-karo-barometras-nerimas-del-karo-...>

["Kantar", "„Kantar“ Karo barometras: lietuviai finansiškai kol kas mažiausiai įsitempę tarp kaimyninių šalių](#) [Kantar's War Barometer: Lithuanians are the least financially stressed among neighboring countries so far], "Kantar", 21 July 2022, <https://www.kantar.lt/lt/news/-kantar-karo-barometras-lietuviai-finansi...>

- **103**Andresa Repšytė, "Lietuva solidarizuojasi su Ukraina: į palaikymo akciją „Laisvė šviečia“ susirinko apie 10 tūkst. žmonių" [Lithuania stands in solidarity with Ukraine: around 10,000 people gathered for the "Freedom Shines" support campaign], tv3.lt, 24 February 2022, <https://www.tv3.lt/naujiena/lietuva/lietuva-solidarizuojasi-su-ukraina-....>
- **104**For example, Karolina Stažytė, „Prie „Charlie Pizza“ restorano Kaune surengtas protestas: nori būti sotus – perlipk kūną" [A protest was held at the "Charlie Pizza" restaurant in Kaunas: if you want to be full, climb over the body], 15min.lt, 12 April 2022, <https://www.15min.lt/naujiena/aktualu/lietuva/prie-charlie-pizza-restor...>
- **105**Like three days protest at the Russian embassy, protests at the German embassy or support at the Ukrainian embassy. LRT.lt, „Laisvė šviečia“ jau tris dienas: prie Rusijos ambasados sostinėje toliau budėjo protestuotojai, buvo sakomos kalbos" ["Freedom shines" for three days already: protesters continued to stand guard at the Russian embassy in the capital, speeches were made], lrt.lt, 3 March 2022, <https://www.lrt.lt/naujienos/gyvenimas/13/1633718/laisve-sviecia-jau-tr...>; <https://www.delfi.lt/news/daily/lithuania/prie-vokietijos-ambasados-vil...>; Leonardas Marcinkevičius, ELTA, "Prie Vokietijos ambasados Vilniuje susirinkę protestuotojai ragino aktyviau padėti Ukrainai: „Berlyne, pabusk!“" [Protesters gathered near the German embassy in Vilnius called for more active help to Ukraine: "Berlin, wake up!"], delfi.lt, 11 April 2022, <https://www.lrt.lt/naujienos/lietuvoje/2/1638316/keli-simtai-zmoniu-sus...>
- **106**Like Olympic champion swimming in blood-stained ponds at Russian Embassy in Vilnius, women's demand to stop aggression against Ukrainian women, massive murals on buildings, et cetera. LRT.lt, "Prie Rusijos ambasados Vilniuje tvenkinys nusidažė kraujo

spalva, performanse dalyvavo ir Meilutytė" [Near the Russian embassy in Vilnius, the pond was painted the color of blood, Meilutytė also participated in the performance], lrt.lt, 6 April 2022, <https://www.lrt.lt/naujienos/sportas/10/1664882/prie-rusijos-ambasados-...>; Ramūnas Jakubauskas (BNS), 15min, "80 merginų ir moterų prie Rusijos ambasados ragino nutraukti agresiją prieš ukrainietes" [80 girls and women outside the Russian embassy called for an end to aggression against Ukrainian women], 15min.lt, 16 April 2022, <https://www.15min.lt/naujiena/aktualu/lietuva/prie-rusijos-ambasados-so...>; LRT.lt, "Ukrainos nepriklausomybės dieni – vertikalaus šokio pasirodymas ant „Maskvos namų“ sienos" [For the Independence Day of Ukraine - a vertical dance performance on the wall of "Moscow House"], lrt.lt, 24 August 2022, <https://www.lrt.lt/naujienos/kultura/12/1765966/ukrainos-nepriklausomyb...>; Evaldas Činga, "Ant Maskvos namų sienos šokis Ukrainos nepriklausomybės dienai" [A dance on the wall of a Moscow house for the Independence Day of Ukraine], madeinvilnius.lt, 24 August 2022, <https://madeinvilnius.lt/pramogos/renginiai/ant-maskvos-namu-sienos-sok...>

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- **108**LRT.lt, BNS, "Baltic Pride in Vilnius attracts 10,000 participants – photos", lrt.lt, 4 June 2022, <https://www.lrt.lt/en/news-in-english/19/1712081/baltic-pride-in-vilniu...>
- **109**Valdas Pryšmantas, BNS, "Inga Ruginienė: streikas „Achemoje“ – pirmas toks Lietuvoje" [Inga Ruginienė: the strike at "Achema" is the first of its kind in Lithuania], lrt.lt, 8 February 2022, <https://www.lrt.lt/naujienos/verslas/4/1609875/inga-ruginiene-streikas-...>; Violeta Grigaliūnaitė, "Vilniaus vairuotojai baigia streiką: niekas nelaimėjo, bet niekas ir nepralaimėjo" [Vilnius drivers end their strike: no one won, but no one lost either], 15min.lt, 22 December 2022, <https://www.15min.lt/naujiena/aktualu/lietuva/vilniaus-vairuotojai-baig...>
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2022, <https://www.15min.lt/naujiena/aktualu/lietuva/s-rudenaiteismu-sistem...>; Milena Andrukaitytė, BNS, "Teisėjų tarybos vadovė: be resursų idealistiškai kalbėti apie reputaciją ilgai negalime" [Head of the Council of Judges: Without resources, we cannot talk idealistically about reputation for long], *diena.lt*, 16 September 2022, <https://www.diena.lt/naujienos/lietuva/salies-pulsas/teisejutybos-va...>; Ingrida Steniulienė, BNS, "Teismai klimpsta į skolas – vien Lietuvos paštui įsiskolino per 1 mln. eurų", *lrt.lt*, 15 September 2022, <https://www.lrt.lt/naujienos/verslas/4/1780443/teismaiklimpsta-i-skola...>; Ignas Jačauskas, BNS, "Per maži atlyginimai kelia grėsmę nepriklausomumui, sako juos didinti raginantys teisėjai" [Salaries that are too low threaten independence, say judges calling for them to be raised], *15min.lt*, 5 July 2022, <https://www.15min.lt/naujiena/aktualu/lietuva/per-mazi-atlyginimai-keli...>; Augustas Stankevičius, BNS, "Prezidento patarėja: į 35 laisvas apylinkės teisėjų vietas pretenduoja tik 26 kandidatai" [Advisor to the President: only 26 candidates are applying for the 35 vacant positions of district judges], *15min.lt*, 26 April 2022, <https://www.15min.lt/naujiena/aktualu/lietuva/prezidentopatareja-i-35-...>; BNS, "Dėl per mažo atlygio iš darbo traukiasi 3 teisėjai" [3 judges resign due to insufficient remuneration], *vz.lt*, 26 August 2022, <https://www.vz.lt/verslo-valdymas/personalovaldymas/2022/08/26/del-per...>; Ingrida Steniulienė, BNS, "Dėl padėjėjų stygiaus teisėja J. Vėgelienė iš Vilniaus keliasi dirbti į Širvintas" [Due to the lack of assistants, judge J. Vėgelienė is moving from Vilnius to work in Širvintas], *15min.lt*, 9 October 2022, <https://www.15min.lt/naujiena/aktualu/lietuva/del-padejeju-stygiaus-tei...>; Ingrida Steniulienė, BNS, "Teismų sistemą paliekanti teisėja Makelienė: jaučiuosi labai pavargusi ir perdegusi" [Judge Makelienė, who is leaving the judicial system: I feel very tired and burnt out], *lrt.lt*, 25 November 2022, <https://www.lrt.lt/naujienos/lietuvoje/2/1830210/teismusistema-palieka...>; Ramūnas Jakubauskas, "Teismą į advokatūrą keičiantis teisėjas – atvirai apie algą ir "nežmonišką" krūvį" [The judge changing the court to the bar - openly about the salary and "inhuman" workload], *15min.lt*, 15 August 2022, <https://www.15min.lt/naujiena/aktualu/lietuva/teisma-i-advokatura-keici...>

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[pirmininke-santuria...](#) Earlier politicians' criticism of the courts was based on unimplemented "systemic changes": un-optimized court activities, uncharacteristic functions not abandoned, objective workload indicators for judges not established, workloads not equalized between courts of the same chain. Ingrida Steniulienė, BNS, "Teisėjų tarybos pirmininkė: teismų sistemos skauduliai – personalo trūkumas, mažos algos, išdėstymas" [Chairperson of the Council of Judges: the pain points of the judicial system - lack of personnel, low salaries, arrangement], lrt.lt, 11 November 2022, <https://www.lrt.lt/naujienos/lietuvoje/2/1819332/teiseju-tarybos-pirmin...>

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