

MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

**REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION
AND DEMOCRACY PROMOTION PROGRAMME FOR 2019**

Overview

The Development Cooperation and Democracy Promotion Programme (hereinafter referred to as the 'Programme') is an integral implementing measure for the official development assistance (hereinafter referred to as 'ODA') of Lithuania, financed from targeted budget appropriations allocated for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (hereinafter referred to as the 'MFA'). ODA means assistance and humanitarian aid for developing countries and territories funded from the state and municipal budgets. According to preliminary data, in 2019, Lithuania's ODA constituted about EUR 52 million, i.e. 0.11% of gross national income (GNI), whereas in 2018 it amounted to EUR 55 million or 0.12% of GNI, and in 2017, it made up EUR 52.55 million or 0.13% of GNI. Lithuania is committed to ensure that the value of ODA should reach 0.33% of GNI by 2030 but this indicator is steadily declining due to the non-increasing allocations and the GNI growth and is one of the lowest in the EU. It should be noted that Lithuania's bilateral assistance amounted to only EUR 11.15 million, i.e. 21% of the total assistance.

The MFA ensured the continuous and effective engagement of Lithuania in the shaping of the development cooperation policy that meets the national interests and the implementation of this policy through international, EU and bilateral arrangements, thereby strengthening the role of Lithuania as a responsible and reliable donor country. Lithuania's development cooperation policy reflected the national priorities of its foreign policy by focusing on the Eastern Partnership countries, in particular Moldova, Georgia and Ukraine.

Great attention was devoted to the increased engagement of state and municipal institutions, non-governmental organizations and business in the development cooperation activities, as well as to the publicity of those activities, for the purpose of ensuring the largest possible public support.

The role of the Central Project Management Agency (hereinafter referred to as the 'CPMA') has been further strengthened, in particular by exploiting the opportunities offered by the membership of the network of EU development cooperation agencies.

Taking into account the need to strengthen the role of development cooperation in the foreign policy of the Republic of Lithuania, discussions have been initiated on qualitative and quantitative changes in the development cooperation policy.

Shaping the EU and global development cooperation policy

In 2019, MFA representatives ensured full engagement in the shaping and implementation of the EU and global policy on development cooperation and humanitarian aid, supported international efforts to reduce global poverty and promote long-term and sustainable development of developing countries, and contributed to international efforts in addressing humanitarian crises and challenges of illegal migration.

During the reporting period, the greatest attention and efforts were devoted to the protection of Lithuania's interests in negotiations launched on financing EU external action under the EU multiannual financial framework for the period 2021-2027. This issue dominated in all discussion formats of negotiations: meetings of the ministers for EU development cooperation, meetings of the Directors General for EU development cooperation, meetings of the Council working parties as well as meetings of the European Commission committees which include representatives of the Member States responsible for development cooperation.

Much attention was devoted to the EU relations with the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States (ACP) after 2020. In the negotiations over the future partnership, the EC followed the negotiating mandate approved by the Council in 2018, but no substantial progress has been made on the most sensitive issues, including cooperation on migration and returns. Regular consultations took place between the EC and the MS on the possible relaxation of the negotiating mandate, but Lithuania consistently called for a strong position, even if this could delay the negotiation process.

In the field of humanitarian aid, the focus was retained on the key principle of humanitarian aid: providing aid where it is needed the most.

Lithuania further accelerated its engagement in the activities of the Development Assistance Committee (hereinafter referred to as the ‘DAC’) of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (hereinafter referred to as the ‘OECD’) in which it has been participating as an observer since 2013.

Funds and activities

To finance the Development Cooperation and Democracy Promotion Programme, EUR **3 275 480** was earmarked and used from the state budget allocations of the Republic of Lithuania approved for the MFA. It should be noted that, in 2019, the function of administering Lithuania's contributions to the European Development Fund was transferred to the Ministry of Finance.

Purpose	Funds, thou. euros
Voluntary contributions to multilateral funds	631.0
Projects	2 108.22
Humanitarian aid	400.0
Participation in activities of EU, UN and other international organizations, and programme monitoring	58.31
Other development cooperation activities (project administration, events, exhibitions, publications, etc.)	77.95
Total for the Programme	3 275.48

Multilateral development assistance

As part of fulfilment of its international commitments, contribution to the international efforts for poverty reduction, increase of resilience of aid recipient countries and the most vulnerable society groups and promotion of democratic values, the MFA provided multilateral development assistance as mandatory and voluntary contributions to funds and international organizations that carry out or coordinate development cooperation activities. In 2019, Lithuania assigned EUR 631 000 from the Development Cooperation and Democracy Promotion Programme for voluntary contributions.

Voluntary contributions	Funds, thou. euros
Funds to SIDA for the implementation of the Programme regarding the support to the European Humanities University (EHU)	200.0

Foundation for Expert Deployment for Governance and Economic Growth in Ukraine to support the Professionals for Reform Support Mechanism	200.0
OECD Eurasia Competitiveness Programme	30.0
The European Endowment for Democracy (EED)	25.0
OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine	20.0
Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund	20.0
Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF)	20.0
WTO Doha Development Agenda Global Trust Fund	20.0
United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)	15.0
Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights	12.0
EU-Latin America and Caribbean Foundation	10.0
Implementation of the Council of Europe Action Plan for Ukraine 2018-2021	10.0
UN Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine	10.0
EU Trust Fund for Colombia	10.0
UNESCO International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC)	10.0
Lifeline Embattled CSO Assistance Fund	9.0
UN Women	5.0
Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights in Georgia	5.0
Total:	631.0

Humanitarian aid

In 2019, Lithuania allocated a total of EUR 2 404 000 for humanitarian aid (of which EUR 1.12 million for support to refugees in Lithuania). Lithuania allocated EUR **460 000** from the Development Cooperation and Democracy Promotion Programme and the budgets of other institutions of the Republic of Lithuania.

Humanitarian aid	Funds, thou. euros
Humanitarian aid from the Programme	310.0

UN Yemen Humanitarian Fund (YHF), humanitarian aid for Yemen	20.0
United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), humanitarian aid for Syria	30.0
United Nations Humanitarian Fund for Ukraine (UHF), humanitarian aid for Ukraine	100.0
Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), humanitarian aid for Rohingya refugees	50.0
International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), humanitarian aid for Ukraine	100.0
International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), humanitarian aid for earthquake victims in Albania	10.0
Humanitarian aid from the budget of the institutions of the Republic of Lithuania	150.0
Reserve Fund of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania (Resolution No. 387 of 24 April 2019); International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) for humanitarian aid to the people of Venezuela	100.0
Reserve Fund of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania (Resolution No. 1202 of 4 December 2019); to the Government of the Republic of Albania for humanitarian aid to earthquake victims in Albania	50.0
Total:	460.0

Bilateral development assistance

In 2019, the Programme funds were used to implement 78 development cooperation projects (of which 70 were bilateral, four regional and four awareness raising projects) for the value of more than EUR 2.1 million.

In accordance with the development cooperation policies set out in the Inter-Institutional Action Plan on Development Cooperation for 2019-2021, Lithuania's priority in development cooperation in 2019 was the Eastern Partnership countries, including Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. Particular attention was devoted to Moldova, Georgia and Ukraine, where Lithuania provided assistance while implementing bilateral projects to promote political and economic integration with the EU, as well as social and economic reforms. In 2019, Lithuanian experts advised and provided technical assistance in support of the appropriate implementation of the European Union Association Agreements with Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia.

The diplomatic missions of the Republic of Lithuania accredited to the partner countries contributed to the implementation of Lithuania's development cooperation policy: they administered 41 development cooperation projects, helped identify the needs of assistance beneficiaries, actively participated in the search for partners and contributed to coordination of the donor activities.

Ukraine. Taking the needs of Ukraine into consideration, Lithuania has consistently continued the transfer of best practices while implementing the EU Association Agreement with Ukraine (AA/DCFTA), provided assistance to Ukrainian citizens affected by the annexation of the

Crimea and the conflict in Eastern Ukraine, supported the implementation of educational and health care reforms and the promotion of women's independence and entrepreneurship. Lithuanian experts transferred their experience in the fields of judicial reform, environmental protection and heritage protection. In 2019, 18 bilateral and two regional projects were implemented from the funds of the Programme in Ukraine.

The MFA coordinated the assistance provided to Ukraine by Lithuanian institutions and non-governmental organizations, assessed the needs for support to Ukraine, provided humanitarian assistance, and maintained regular contacts with partners in Ukraine.

Joint Lithuanian-Swedish support projects for educational institutions in Eastern Ukraine continued, during which teachers' qualifications and abilities to develop students' social and emotional competencies were enhanced, and leaders of educational communities were trained. Four visits of teachers and students from Donetsk and Luhansk regions to Lithuania were organized. Teachers in Eastern Ukraine received assistance in developing school violence and bullying prevention, non-formal education, career guidance and career planning programs. The project "Installation of educational and sporting facilities in the Avdiivka School No. 2 in Donetsk Region, Ukraine" with the value of EUR 1 million was launched in 2019. The project aims to create a modern training centre which would become a complex example with its infrastructure, equipment and organization of the educational process and serve as a pilot Ukrainian school reform project and as the centre for the dissemination of educational experience throughout the region.

In 2019, assistance was further continued in reforming the provision of mental health services, in particular psychosocial rehabilitation, in Eastern Ukraine. Mental health specialists from Donetsk, Luhansk, Poltava, Zaporozhye, Kherson and Dnipro regions underwent refresher training in Ukraine and Lithuania, visited the most advanced Lithuanian mental health institutions, namely, crisis intervention and psychosocial rehabilitation centres.

In 2019, Lithuania helped the victims of the annexation of Crimea and the conflict in Eastern Ukraine (especially women and children) to integrate into the host communities, develop entrepreneurial and self-employment skills, and form a positive image of the Crimean Tatars in the public. Summer camps, practical trainings, individual psychotherapy consultations helped to create a system for coping with post-traumatic stress, to restore full participation in public life and the labour market.

Lithuanian municipalities shared their experience in the field of cultural heritage protection and helped to organize summer camps for Ukrainian children.

Lithuania participated in the projects financed by other donors. The Central Project Management Agency, together with the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the Swedish Development Cooperation Agency SIDA and the Delegation of the European Union to Ukraine, implemented the European Commission's 4-year project "Support for Public Finance Management in Ukraine" worth more than EUR 50 million. The aim of the project is to create a modern, fair and efficient tax collection system and to strengthen the capacity of public financial management institutions.

In Georgia, in 2019, the Programme funds were used to finance 13 bilateral and one regional projects in the fields of economic development, gender equality, regional development, democracy and good governance, and environment protection.

Around one million people in Georgia were reached by the information campaign on access to the EU market for small and medium-sized enterprises through the Agreement on the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA). This project was financed by the EC and co-financed with funds under the Programme. A total of 50 Georgian honey and berry producers received consultations from Lithuanian experts on the issues related to the preparation of products for the EU market.

To promote the socio-economic development of the Georgian Highlands, ethnic minority settlements and internally displaced women, training for NGOs and local authorities on gender equality and women's empowerment and entrepreneurship training for local women was organised.

The Telavi and Tianeti municipalities organized a competition for girls' career plans and training for schoolgirls and young girls in the district on creating independent lives and self-realization.

Employees of the Alytus District Municipality shared their experience in the field of economic and social inclusion of women with representatives of Ozurgeti region. A workshop on the preparation of regional development strategies was organized for the employees of Georgian municipalities, and it was attended by 21 participants.

The training and international student summer camp improved the knowledge of the Georgian civil society and youth about disinformation and strategic communication. Lithuanian experts also transferred their experience in observing elections to representatives of Georgian NGOs.

In Moldova, in 2019, Lithuania implemented eight bilateral and one regional projects in the fields of gender equality, democracy, good governance and regional development.

For the third year in a row, support was provided for the GirlsGoIT project, in which 60 girls acquired the STEM skills and ten girls served internships in IT companies. The Moldovan regional communities learned from 53 women's success stories that encouraged women to engage in community development projects, social and cultural activities, business start-ups or social initiatives.

Under the Programme, support was provided to independent media, Black Box and Politica programs of the Moldovan TV channel TV8 which investigated the major cases of corruption. Scientific and educational activities about the country's totalitarian-communist past caught the interest of young people in the culture of memory and civic consciousness.

In 2019, cooperation between the Lithuanian and Moldovan transport safety institutions further continued, and partnerships were established in the field of science, innovation and technology.

In Belarus, the Programme funds were used to finance 14 projects in 2019. The main focus was placed on initiatives aimed at supporting civil society and public information, conservation of the Litvaks' cultural heritage and improvement of the social and economic situation of young people with disabilities by developing their entrepreneurship. An important direction of Lithuania's support in Belarus is projects for Belarusian youth that support the dissemination of European values. Funds under the Programme were allocated to the European Radio for Belarus (Euroradio) and the Charter'97 website.

The year 2019 saw the launch of the project to strengthen the capacities of Belarusian customs and promote international trade.

A joint project of Lithuanian and Belarusian women's organizations in the field of gender equality, which strengthened the competence of Belarusian women's organizations to protect women's rights and reduce domestic violence, attracted considerable interest among the Belarusian public. In Belarus, the charity and support fund Maisto Bankas handed over the model of rescuing and redistributing food to charity for the needy and developed an action plan for the coming years.

The MFA continued to cooperate with the Vilnius-based representations of international organizations which support democratic processes in Belarus (Freedom House, Barys Zvozkau Belarusian Human Rights House, International Centre for Civic Initiatives, Our House, etc.), the participants in the projects, implemented by these organisations in Vilnius aimed at building democracy and open civil society, were issued free visas.

In 2019, the activities of the European Humanities University (hereinafter referred to as 'EHU') in Vilnius were further supported. EHU further pursued its mission of educating personalities who have critical thinking, creativity and responsibility and fostering the Western intellectual tradition in the fields of humanities, social sciences and arts in Belarus. These activities contribute to the development of a democratic Belarusian society and the strengthening the ties of Lithuania and the whole European Union with Belarus. In 2019, the MFA allocated a contribution of EUR 200 000 to the EHU. Similarly, to the previous years, support to EHU was also provided by issuing free visas to Belarusian citizens arriving at EHU for the entrance examinations, doors open days, conferences and other events.

In 2019, 170 students graduated from EHU and 231 students were admitted (91% of the entrants were Belarusian citizens); the total number of EHU students was 695. Since the relocation of the University to Vilnius, a total of 2 457 students have graduated from EHU. The University is currently supported by its three main donors: the European Commission, Sweden and Lithuania.

In Armenia, the year 2019 was marked by an abundance of economic reforms which actively engaged the Armenian state institutions and non-governmental organizations. In 2019, the Embassy of the Republic of Lithuania in Armenia supported three projects that contributed to the economic and social development of rural areas, with a special focus on women's employment, increasing child safety on the roads and promotion of entrepreneurship in rural communities. The children's summer camp helped Armenian youth with disabilities and children from socially disadvantaged families integrate into society, and the employment of the rural population in the Sisian region was increased by the region's beekeepers who acquired the knowledge and skills in marketing, product packaging and branding.

In Azerbaijan, the Embassy of the Republic of Lithuania supported two projects in 2019. In the former military conflict zone, an area was demined and a safe space for children to play was created; the safe playground is used by the students at Sahlabad Village School in the Ter Ter county. The second project helped women to create pre-school care facilities and thus strengthened their independence.

In the EU's neighbourhood, four regional projects were implemented to develop the regions and strengthen self-government, support civil society and public information.

An international conference (170 participants) was held in Vilnius, where representatives of Ukrainian, Moldovan, Georgian and Lithuanian municipalities addressed the topical issues of sustainable development policy and experience of EU municipalities, signed a cooperation agreement between the Association of Local Authorities in Lithuania (ALAL) and the Association of Ukrainian Cities and discussed the possibilities of cooperation between the ALAL and Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia.

Training was provided to Serbian experts (45 experts trained) on the influence of third countries and interference in the democratic and socio-economic processes, on persuasive ways of providing information to the general public; eight articles analysing the challenges of Euro-Atlantic integration in the Balkans were prepared in English.

In 2019, the network of correspondents of Charter'97 Foundation prepared 109 articles that provided alternative independent information in Belarus and the region, drafted (translated or reprinted from other sources) a total of 822 articles and performed 33 translations.

The Programme funds were used to finance 12 development cooperation projects in migration origin and transit countries and other states included on the OECD list of assistance recipients: two projects in Mongolia and one project in each of Algeria, Bhutan, Côte d'Ivoire, Mali, Myanmar, Nigeria, Palestine, the Republic of South Africa and Turkey. These projects promoted young people's entrepreneurship, strengthened women's social and economic independence, and built capacities in education and agriculture. One project was devoted to support studies of Middle Eastern students in Lithuania who have no opportunities for access to education in their home countries.

Women's rights and equal opportunities

Contributing to the development of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls in the partner countries is one of the ongoing objectives of Lithuanian development cooperation. In 2019, the Programme funds were used to implement 14 projects in eight countries intended for building the capacity of organizations operating in the field of gender equality and increasing the social and economic empowerment of women. In Azerbaijan, Côte d'Ivoire and Palestine, women's capacities to create and develop innovative businesses were strengthened. In Mongolia, women were encouraged to participate in the self-government and election processes. In Moldova, girls acquired software development skills. In the regions of Moldova and Ukraine, women were involved in

community projects, social and cultural activities. In Belarus and Georgia, the capacity of women's organizations to defend and advise women on human rights, social and economic issues were strengthened.

The development cooperation assistance and humanitarian aid of Lithuania contributed to the implementation of the United Nations (hereinafter referred to as the UN) Security Council Resolution No. 1325 (2000) on Women, Peace and Security. In 2019, a voluntary contribution of EUR 20 000 was allocated to the UN Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund. Furthermore, the contribution of EUR 5 000 was also made to the UN Women. As an observer Lithuania further continued cooperation with the OECD Development Assistance Committee's Network on Gender Equality. Lithuania also actively participated in shaping the EU development cooperation policy in the field of gender equality and contributing to the implementation of the EU Gender Action Plan for 2016-2020 with the provided development cooperation assistance.

EU Twinning and TAIEX programmes

In 2019, Lithuania continued its successful participation in the EU Twinning Programme by transferring the expertise to the beneficiary countries (the European Commission funded EU Twinning Programme supports cooperation between related institutions in different countries). Under the EU Twinning Programme, 48 calls for proposals were announced in 2019, and Lithuanian institutions, acting individually or in a consortium with other EU Member States, submitted 15 project applications and won seven projects for a total of EUR 8.4 million. It is noteworthy that in 2004-2019 Lithuania won 106 EU Twinning projects. In terms of the number of projects won in 2019, Lithuania ranks among the top five EU Member States together with France, Spain, Germany, Austria and Croatia. Lithuania won the largest number of projects in the Eastern Partnership countries - 4 projects (Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia and Ukraine).

Of the seven projects won in 2019, Lithuania manages two projects (in Ukraine and Georgia) as a senior partner of the consortium of the parties. Two projects (in Macedonia and Palestine) were won individually, and the role of Lithuania in three projects (in Azerbaijan, Armenia and Belarus) is that of a junior partner. The partners of the projects in which Lithuania participates are Estonia, Latvia, the Netherlands, Italy, Poland and Sweden. The Lithuanian authorities that won the submitted Twinning project proposals this year include the Fire Protection and Rescue Department, the State Border Guard Service, the Ministry of Health, the Communications Regulatory Authority, the National Paying Agency, the State Medicines Control Agency, the National Blood Centre, and the CPMA.

In 2019, the Lithuanian authorities participated in the implementation of 24 projects under the EU Twinning Programme: Macedonia (2), Georgia (2), Moldova (3), Ukraine (4), Azerbaijan (5), Kosovo (1), Turkey (1), Jordan (1), Serbia (3), Belarus (1), and Palestine (1). The geography of Lithuania's participation in the EU Twinning Programme expanded: in 2019, the first EU Twinning project in Palestine was won, and it will be implemented without partners by the State Border Guard Service and the Customs Department.

In 2019, Lithuanian experts attended 61 events of the TAIEX Programme (seminars, training, expert missions), of which 20 took place in Lithuania. Under the EU TAIEX Regio Peer-to-Peer Programme (sharing of expertise among the EU Member States), Lithuanian experts as beneficiaries went abroad for training/traineeship 11 times. Lithuanian experts transferred their experience in the following key areas: justice and internal affairs, internal markets, agriculture and food safety, environment, transport, communications, and support to the Turkish Cypriot Community. In 2019, 88 new experts from various Lithuanian institutions registered in the list of TAIEX experts.

Building capacity to participate in the development cooperation activities

The implementation of the three-year project “Improving the implementation of the development cooperation policy and building capacities of public governance institutions of Lithuania and their employees” financed under Measure No. 10.1.1-ESFA-V-912 'Promotion of national reform and improvement of the activities of public administration institutions' of Priority Axis 10 “Society-Oriented Smart Public Administration” of the Operational Programme for EU Structural Funds Investments for 2014-2020 in 2019 included the following:

- Training on the preparation of strategic documents was organized by the Swedish experts who have many years of experience working for the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency SIDA. During the training, the process of preparation and implementation of regional and thematic strategies in the development cooperation countries was reviewed, and practical examples and models of strategies relevant to Lithuania were presented.
- A discussion was held with the participation of Vassilis Maragos, Head of Unit of the DG NEAR (EU Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations). He presented some strategic ideas and suggestions on the further growth of Lithuanian public administration institutions in the field of international development cooperation.
- The Institute of International Relations and Political Sciences of the Vilnius University hosted a discussion “Lithuania's Development Cooperation: 15 Years of Progress”. During the discussion, Lithuania's experience in providing assistance to developing countries was discussed, and whether the current Lithuanian development cooperation policy is effective and properly financed, how to encourage more active involvement of society and business.
- Four study visits were organized to the development cooperation agencies of the EU Member States: the German Development Cooperation Agency GIZ, the Luxembourg Development Cooperation Agency LuxDev and the Luxembourg Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs, as well as the Czech Development Cooperation Agency CzechAid and the Development Department of the Czech Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Danish Development Cooperation Agency DANIDA.
- The third meeting of the Practitioners' Club was held to discuss the main challenges and obstacles faced by Lithuanian public administration institutions in participating in international development cooperation activities by placing a major focus on the issues of legal regulation related to the participation of experts in such projects.
- A representative of the MFA attended the conference “Euroafrica Revisited: Towards a New Agenda Between Europe and Africa in the 21st Century” held in Brussels.
- A representative of the MFA participated in the training “Managing Journalists and Online Communities” organized by the European Academy in Prague. The training was aimed at developing a communication strategy and improving it.
- An international conference “Lithuanian Development Cooperation: Contribution to the Africa-EU Partnership” was organized to discuss the possibilities of the Baltic States to engage in mutually beneficial cooperation with African countries.

Awareness raising

A special public opinion survey conducted by Eurobarometer in June-July 2019 showed that, compared to 2018, the opinion of the general public on support for developing countries was less favourable. Despite the fact that 8 out of 10 Lithuanian respondents still believe that helping people in developing countries is important, only 27% of Lithuanians are of the opinion that this should be a priority for the Government of their country.

The MFA consistently pursued activities intended for awareness raising, especially information for young people, on the Sustainable Development Goals and the importance and benefit of development cooperation. In 2019, three public education and awareness raising projects were implemented. The projects were implemented by Lithuanian non-governmental organizations.

For thirteen consecutive years, the MFA has contributed to the organization of the international human rights documentary film festival *Inconvenient Films*. The festival presented an abundant programme of 70 documentary films in Vilnius and other cities of Lithuania and organised meetings with film producers and discussions with film participants, human rights activists and experts. The key theme of the festival was global migration.

On 6 September 2019, a thematic discussion on the importance of development cooperation was held at the annual discussion festival *Būtent* in Birštonas.

From the mid-2019, informative quizzes on the UN Sustainable Development Goals and development cooperation were organised on the M1 Plus radio.

In 2019, the MFA worked purposefully with its economic and social partners (business, NGOs, academic and scientific communities) to inform about the importance of development cooperation and the opportunities to engage in the practical implementation of this policy.

The most important meetings and events in Lithuania funded by the Development Cooperation and Democracy Promotion Programme

On 7 March 2019, the MFA, in cooperation with the CPMA, organized training for development cooperation project implementers which presented the communicational, financial, result sustainability and other aspects of development cooperation projects, and enhanced cooperation among project implementers, the MFA and the CPMA in implementing the Programme.

On 8 October 2019, The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in cooperation with the CPMA, organized training for development cooperation project applicants concerning the criteria for project evaluation, the technical requirements for the submission of development cooperation applications and the new electronic application platform.

Amendments to the legal framework

On 23 April 2019, the National Development Cooperation Commission (hereinafter referred to as the 'NDCC') decided not to continue the implementation of the Inter-Institutional Action Plan for Development Cooperation (hereinafter referred to as the 'IAP') from 2021, when the National Progress Strategy "Lithuania 2030" which will integrate the goals, principles and directions of Lithuania's development cooperation policy and its thematic and geographical priorities will come into force.

On 28 November 2019, the NDCC meeting focused on the necessary quantitative and qualitative changes in the development cooperation policy. The NDCC instructed the MFA, in cooperation with the Ministry of Finance, to prepare proposals, the implementation of which will require amendments to the legal framework in 2020.