

**MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS**  
**REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION**  
**AND DEMOCRACY PROMOTION PROGRAMME FOR 2020**

**Overview**

The Development Cooperation and Democracy Promotion Programme (hereinafter ‘DCDPP’) is an integral measure of the implementation of the Lithuanian Official Development Assistance (hereinafter ‘ODA’) funded from the targeted budget allocations intended for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (hereinafter ‘MoFA’). The ODA is support and humanitarian aid to developing states and territories funded from state and municipal budgets. According to preliminary data from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), in 2020 the Lithuanian ODA amounted to EUR 58.3 million or 0.12% of gross national income (GNI), in 2019 – EUR 60.45 million or 0.13% of GNI, in 2018 – EUR 55 million or 0.12% of GNI, and in 2017 – EUR 52.55 million or 0.13% of GNI. Lithuania is committed to ensuring that the value of ODA reaches 0.33% of GNI by 2030 but due to non-increasing allocations and the rapid growth of GNI until 2020, this rate has been steadily declining and is one of the lowest in the EU. It should be noted that Lithuania’s bilateral support amounted to only EUR 9.2 million, i.e. less than 16% of the whole support. In 2020, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs ensured the uninterrupted and effective involvement of Lithuania in the making and implementation of development cooperation policy in international, EU and bilateral formats meeting its national interests, thus strengthening Lithuania’s image as a responsible and reliable donor country. Lithuania’s development cooperation policy reflected its national foreign policy priorities, with the main focus on the Eastern Partnership countries, especially Moldova, Georgia, Ukraine, Armenia and Belarus. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic that broke out at the beginning of the year, special attention was paid to the implementation of emergency humanitarian aid measures.

Much attention has been paid to the greater involvement of state and municipal institutions, non-governmental organisations and business in development cooperation activities as well as to the publicity of these activities in order to ensure as wide public support as possible.

The role of the Central Project Management Agency (hereinafter ‘CPMA’) has been further strengthened, especially by exploiting the opportunities offered by membership in the EU network of development cooperation agencies.

In order to increase the effectiveness of development cooperation policy, a systematic review of development cooperation policy and substantial legislative changes were initiated, which ensured the conditions and prerequisites for the implementation of qualitative and quantitative changes in this policy.

**EU and global development cooperation policy making**

In 2020, Representatives of the MoFA continued comprehensive involvement in EU and global development cooperation and humanitarian aid policy-making and implementation processes, supported international efforts to reduce poverty at a global level and promote long-term and sustainable development in developing countries, significantly contributed to responding the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic and humanitarian crises that require an urgent response.

The topic of the international response to the COVID-19 pandemic dominated all formats of international discussions. At EU level, special attention was paid to the coordination of the EU’s joint response ‘Team Europe’ at meetings of the EU Foreign Affairs Council, Directors General for development and humanitarian aid as well as working groups of the EU Council and committees of the European Commission which were attended by representatives of the Member States responsible for development cooperation.

In 2020, representatives of the MoFA intensively participated in the negotiations on the new Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI). The initiative of Lithuania allowed to reach an agreement in principle, according to which this Instrument will include essential provisions on compliance with nuclear safety standards in partner countries.

Much attention was paid to the EU's relations with the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) group of countries after the expiry of the Cotonou Agreement in 2020. As the negotiations could not be completed in time and stalled, transitional period measures were accepted twice to extend the Cotonou provisions until the end of November 2021. At the end of 2020, a political agreement on the text of a compromise agreement was reached. Completion of the agreement by initialling the text and adopting a Council decision on the signing of the agreement will be sought during the Portuguese and Slovenian presidencies. During the negotiations, Lithuania consistently advocated that the new agreement should establish procedures for the smooth return and readmission of ACP nationals.

In the field of humanitarian aid, the aim was to keep focus on the basic principle of humanitarian aid: to provide aid where it is most needed.

Lithuania further accelerated its involvement in the activities of the OECD Development Cooperation Committee (DAC), in which participates as an observer since 2013.

### Funds and activities

An amount of **EUR 3,210,000** was allocated and used from the state budget appropriations of the Republic of Lithuania approved by the MoFA to finance the Development Cooperation and Democracy Promotion Programme.

Purpose	Funds, '000 EUR
Voluntary contributions to multilateral funds	1,137.0
Projects	880.0
Humanitarian aid	1,117.0
Participation in the activities of the EU, the UN and other international organisations and monitoring of the programme	10.0
Other development cooperation activities (project administration, events, exhibitions, publications, etc.)	64.0
<b>Total DCDPP</b>	<b>3,208.0</b>

### Multilateral support to development

In performing its international obligations, contributing to international efforts to reduce poverty, increase the resilience of beneficiary states and the most vulnerable groups, and promoting democratic values, the MoFA provided multilateral development assistance by making compulsory and voluntary contributions and payments to funds and international organisations carrying out and coordinating developing cooperation activities. In 2020, Lithuania allocated **EUR 1,137,000** for voluntary contributions to the Development Cooperation and Democracy Promotion Programme.

Voluntary contributions	Funds, '000 EUR
Funds to SIDA for the implementation of the Programme regarding the support to the European Humanities University (EHU)	400.0
Democracy Promotion Fund (support for citizens of the Republic of Belarus who suffered from repressions as well as their relatives, civil society and independent media, provision of legal services)	300.0

The European Endowment for Democracy (provision of support for citizens of the Republic of Belarus who suffered from repressions)	100.0
British and Irish Agencies Afghanistan Group (BAAG)	50.0
The European Endowment for Democracy (EED)	50.0
OECD Eurasia Competitiveness Programme	30.0
OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine	30.0
WTO Doha Development Agenda Global Trust Fund	30.0
Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights	30.0
Women's Peace & Humanitarian Fund	20.0
Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF)	20.0
United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)	20.0
Lifeline Embattled CSO Assistance Fund	20.0
Africa Tikkun Foundation (to fight COVID-19)	19.0
Anna Lindh Foundation	15.0
Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (to support the activities of the UN Working Group on Enforced and Involuntary Disappearances)	3.0
<b>Total:</b>	<b>1,137.0</b>

### Humanitarian aid

In 2020, Lithuania allocated **EUR 1,117,000** for humanitarian aid from the funds of the Development Cooperation and Democracy Promotion Programme and the Reserve Fund of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania.

Humanitarian aid from DCDPP funds	Funds, '000 EUR
Voluntary contribution to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)	50.0
UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA); humanitarian aid for Palestinian refugees to fight against COVID-19	50.0
UN Yemen Humanitarian Fund (YHF); humanitarian aid to fight against COVID-19	100.0

UN World Food Programme (WFP); humanitarian aid to Sudan	25.0
UN Children's Fund (UNICEF); humanitarian aid to the Syrian people	50.0
World Health Organization (WHO), humanitarian aid to the Republic of Uzbekistan to fight against COVID-19	10.0
International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), humanitarian aid to victims of the Beirut explosion	50.0
International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), humanitarian aid to Palestine	17.0
International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) for humanitarian aid to those affected by the war in the Nagorno-Karabakh region	75.0
International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), humanitarian aid to Ukraine	100.0
Humanitarian aid for Montenegro (to fight against COVID-19)	20.0
Humanitarian aid for the Republic of Northern Macedonia (to fight against COVID-19)	20.0
NATO Pandemic Response Trust Fund, a voluntary contribution	30.0
Transportation of a humanitarian consignment to the United States	20.0
<b>Humanitarian aid from the reserve fund of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania</b>	<b>500.0</b>
Reserve Fund of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania (Resolution No 155 of 26 February 2020); International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) for humanitarian aid to fight against COVID-19	100.0
Reserve Fund of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania (Resolution No 196 of 10 March 2020); humanitarian aid to the Hellenic Republic to manage the effects of the refugee crisis in Europe	50.0
Reserve Fund of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania (Resolution No 367 of 8 April 2020); humanitarian aid to the Italian Republic and the Kingdom of Spain to fight against COVID-19	100.0
Reserve Fund of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania (Resolution No 399 of 22 April 2020); humanitarian aid to the Republic of Armenia, the Republic of Moldova, Georgia and Ukraine to fight against COVID-19	100.0
Reserve Fund of the Republic of Lithuania (Resolution N. 502 of 20 May 2020); humanitarian aid to the United States to fight against COVID-19	100.0
Reserve Fund of the Republic of Lithuania (Resolution No 565 of 3 June 2020); humanitarian aid to the Republic of Belarus to fight against COVID-19	50.0
<b>Total:</b>	<b>1,117.0</b>

## **Bilateral support to development**

In 2020, the funds of the DCDPP allowed to implement 48 development cooperation projects (including 40 were bilateral, 4 regional, and 4 public information projects), the value of which was about EUR 1 million. The pandemic caused by the spread of the COVID-19 virus and the deterioration of the political situation in Belarus inevitably affected the implementation of the projects – some of the planned activities were not implemented.

In accordance with the development cooperation policies for 2019–2021 set out in the Interinstitutional Development Cooperation Action Plan, the priority is given to the countries of the EU Eastern Partnership: Ukraine, Belarus, Armenia, Georgia, Moldova, and Azerbaijan. The main focus was on Ukraine, Georgia, Armenia and Moldova – Lithuania provided support through bilateral projects promoting political and economic integration with the EU and social and economic reforms. In 2020, Lithuanian experts provided consultations and technical assistance for the proper implementation of the association agreements between the European Union and Ukraine, Moldova, and Georgia as well the Partnership Agreement between the EU and Armenia.

Diplomatic missions of the Republic of Lithuania accredited in the partner countries contributed to the implementation of Lithuania's Development Cooperation Policy by administering 20 development cooperation projects, helping to identify the needs of the beneficiary countries, actively involving in the search for partners, and contributing to donor coordination.

**Ukraine.** Taking into account the needs of Ukraine, in 2020 Lithuania consistently continued to share good practices and provide assistance to Ukrainian citizens affected by the annexation of Crimea and the conflict in eastern Ukraine, supported the implementation of educational reforms and the promotion of women's independence and entrepreneurship. Lithuanian experts conveyed their experience in the fields of the fight against disinformation and propaganda, non-formal education and heritage protection. In 2020, 13 bilateral and 2 regional projects in Ukraine were funded by DCDPP .

The MoFA assessed the needs for support to Ukraine, coordinated the support provided by Lithuanian institutions and non-governmental organisations, and provided humanitarian assistance to fight against the spread of COVID-19 virus in the country.

Projects to support education institutions in eastern Ukraine were continued: improvement of teachers' qualifications and building of abilities to develop students' social and emotional competencies, introduction of a new civic education programme and a development of distance learning methodology for teachers in eastern Ukraine. In 2020, the EUR 1 million worth project 'Support to the equipping and improvement of the well-being of the environment of Avdiivka School No 2 in the Donetsk Oblast of Ukraine' was continued. This project is intended to provide war-torn Avdiivka School No 2 with specialised equipment and modern educational facilities, and to equip a children's playground and a multifunctional sports field. Successful project implementation will create a modern training centre, whose infrastructure, equipment and organisation of the educational process would become an integral example and could be a pilot project for the reform of the Ukrainian school in the whole region and a centre for the dissemination of educational expertise.

Through the projects, funded by the DCDPP, Lithuania continued to consistently help internally displaced people (mostly women and children) who suffered from the annexation of Crimea and the conflict in eastern Ukraine to integrate into host communities, develop entrepreneurial skills and also supported the development and maintenance of the activities of the Crimean Tatar Cultural Centre in Lviv.

Lithuania also participated in projects funded by other donors. The Central Project Management Agency, together with the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, Sida (the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency), and the Delegation of the European Commission to Ukraine, implemented the European Commission's 4-year project 'Programme for the Support to Public Financial Management in Ukraine' worth more than EUR 50 million. The

purpose of the project is to build a modern, transparent and efficient tax collection system and to strengthen the capacity of public financial management institutions.

In 2020, the DCDPP funded 4 bilateral and 1 regional projects in the fields of economic development, gender equality, regional development, democracy and good governance **in Georgia**.

With a view to helping the private sector to make use of the opportunities offered by the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement (DCFTA) with the European Union, efforts were made to raise awareness of the importance of clusters, which can become strong pillars in accelerating the process of Georgia's integration into the EU. 12 articles and 5 videos were prepared, in which the relevant clusters and challenges are reviewed. 10 articles dealing with the current situation were prepared, each of which reached about 1,000 users. 7 information videos were prepared to promote the advantage of clusters for entering the EU market. 3 recommendations on formation and development of clusters in the fields of furniture, agriculture, logistics and transportation were prepared (the recommendations on the grouping of the furniture and agriculture sectors were submitted to the Prime Minister of Georgia).

With a view to resolving the systemic issues of women's empowerment, the capacity of lawyers to defend and promote women's rights in strategic cases were strengthened and the skills of civil society organisations to engage in international litigation and representation of interests were improved. Gaps in laws were identified in the areas of gender equality, the fight against domestic violence, necessary defence and others. Widespread gender stereotypes, which partly determine the inappropriate investigation of cases, and their negative impact on the case-law of court were discussed. Strategic issues of the consideration of disputes were identified and the need for expert assistance (for lawyers of the participating countries) was discussed. Consultations were provided on two legal cases, mentoring was given in developing in Georgia a legal strategy in a case under the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

In promoting the development of tourism in Khashuri municipality, consultations of representatives of the sister Radviliškis city municipality were organised for Georgian colleagues. A map (4,000 copies) was developed and printed, 30 tourism information stands were prepared in Georgian and English, which will help to promote tourism activities and involve residents and entrepreneurs of Khashuri municipality.

Three week-long trainings for 120 people were organised and one-day training seminars were conducted in four Georgian cities, including Kutaisi, Batumi, Zugdidi, and Telavi (20 participants in each). These activities were designed to develop the capacity of Georgian government agencies, civil society, non-governmental organisations as well as journalists to identify hybrid threats such as disinformation, fake news or propaganda and to publicise or deny them respectively.

On 14 May 2020, a cargo of Lithuanian-made medical protective equipment necessary to combat COVID-19 was shipped to Georgia. It was humanitarian aid provided at the request of Georgia and other countries in the Eastern Neighbourhood of the European Union by the resolution of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania of 22 April 2020. The cargo included 10,500 protective shields for medical personnel fighting COVID-19 every day.

**In Moldova**, 6 bilateral and 1 regional projects in the areas of democracy and civil society strengthening, gender equality, good governance and regional development, and health care system strengthening were implemented in 2020.

Cooperation between Lithuanian and Moldovan transport safety institutions was expanded and maritime transport specialists were trained.

For the fourth year in a row, support was provided to the GirlsGoIT project, in which 67 girls acquired STEM skills and 25 girls undertook internships in private IT companies.

The DCDPP is intended to promote the efforts of the independent media to publicise facts of corruption and public intolerance as well as to support anti-corruption efforts in Moldova. NGO leaders were trained to create blogs, recognize hybrid threats – disinformation, fake news or propaganda – and combat them.

Contribution was made to the reform of the Moldovan primary health care system, the system's resilience to crises was strengthened, and access to services for the population was improved. Based on international best practice, recommendations were prepared for the reform of primary health care in Moldova.

Cooperation with the Institute of History of Moldova, which examines the country's totalitarian communist past, was continued.

The MoFA concluded an agreement on the use of state budget funds with the Central Project Management Agency and allocated EUR 26,028 as co-financing for the implementation of objective No 3 'Enhanced transparency, accountability of and access to judiciary system' of the European Union's measure 'EU4MOLDOVA: Facility to support the health response to the COVID-crisis and Association Agreement related Reforms'.

The Central Project Management Agency, together with the French international cooperation public agency Expertise France, will implement objective No 3 'Enhanced transparency, accountability of and access to judiciary system' of the Measure.

The implementing agency prepared and, in 2020, formally submitted to the Delegation of the European Union to Moldova three annexes to the contribution agreement: the drafts of the Description of the Action, the Budget and the Communication and Visibility Plan, which were prepared jointly with Expertise France.

**In Belarus**, the DCDPP funded 9 bilateral projects and 1 regional project in 2020. The greatest attention was paid to initiatives aimed at supporting civil society, enhancing its political activism and solidarity, strengthening the national identity of Belarusians, and disseminating European values in the independent Belarusian media. In order to bar the way to Russian propaganda in Belarus and the region, the funds of the DCDPP were used to support the alternative information website Charter'97.

The project of fostering Litvak culture, which has been implemented for many years, helped to convey Lithuania's experience related to the preservation and use of the community's architectural heritage to meet the needs of local people and to develop the city. In 2020, a project to build the capacity of the Belarusian customs was completed, during which a coordination mechanism between the customs and border services of both countries was created, the quality of customs services was improved, and conditions for business and trade were streamlined. The launch of the environmental project 'Understand, measure and reduce CO<sub>2</sub> footprint in Belarus' increased the knowledge of Belarusian youth about environmental protection and climate change, and promoted the awareness and willingness of organisations to carry out their activities in a responsible way. During a project implemented by the Catholic charity organisation Caritas, children growing up in boarding schools, orphanages and poor families were provided with knowledge about the importance of personal hygiene, and their self-protection skills in the face of the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic were developed.

The MoFA continued to cooperate with the Vilnius-based representations of international organisations supporting democratic processes in Belarus (Freedom House, Barys Zvozkau Belarusian Human Rights House, Public institution Mūsų Namai International Centre for Civic Initiatives, etc.). Participants of the projects, which are aimed at building democracy and an open civil society, carried out by these organisations in Vilnius were issued free visas.

In 2020, the activities of the European Humanities University (EHU) in Vilnius were further supported. The EHU continued its mission to develop critically thinking, creative and responsible personalities, to foster the Western intellectual tradition in the fields of Belarusian humanities, social sciences and arts. These activities contribute to building a free and civil society in Belarus. During the peaceful political protests in Belarus, 37 graduates and 10 students of the EHU were detained, three of whom remain imprisoned and are recognised as political prisoners. In 2020, the MoFA allocated EUR 200,000 as a contribution to support the EHU. As in previous years, support to the EHU was also provided by issuing free visas to Belarusian citizens to attend the EHU's entrance examinations, open days, conferences and other events.

In 2020, the EHU produced 120 graduates, 176 students (91% of who were Belarusians) were admitted, and 64 students were admitted to the University additionally in response to the repression of higher schools students by the Belarusian government. Currently, the EHU has 684 students. Since the EHU has moved to Vilnius, the University produced 2,577 graduates. The University is supported by three main donors: The European Commission, Sweden and Lithuania. In 2020, support was also provided by the Swedish Institute as well as Estonia, Norway, and Denmark.

In response to the political developments in Belarus, on 2 September 2020, the Government of the Republic of Lithuania approved a plan of support for the people of Belarus. The plan provides for the following measures: assistance to victims of repressions, their treatment and rehabilitation, support for science and studies, civil society initiatives, media, high value-added business, legal assistance and consultations, and more flexible procedures for issuing national visas to enter Lithuania. As was provided by the plan, the MoFA allocated an additional EUR 200,000 to the EHU to attract new students and researchers. The MoFA transferred EUR 100,000 to the European Endowment for Democracy (EED) from the funds of the Development Cooperation and Democracy Promotion Programme to provide assistance to Belarusian citizens affected by repressions.

**In Armenia**, active cooperation with state institutions and non-governmental organisations continued. 7 bilateral projects and 1 regional project were implemented, contribution was made to the improvement of transport safety, gender equality and women's empowerment, environmental protection and fight against climate change, development of economic and social activity of rural areas, and strengthening of resilience to disinformation.

Cooperation between Lithuanian and Armenian transport safety institutions started, and the capacities of civil servants were enhanced.

With a view to resolving the systemic problems of women's empowerment and building the capacity of lawyers to defend and promote women's rights in strategic cases, the skills of civil society organisations to engage in international litigation and representation of interests were improved, and gaps in legislation in the areas of gender equality, domestic violence, necessary defence and others were identified. Widespread gender stereotypes, which partly determine the inadequate investigation of cases, and their negative impact on case-law were discussed. Strategic dispute resolution issues were identified and the need for expert assistance was discussed.

Projects aimed at waste sorting and education on the importance of sorting are very relevant in Armenia, which is only taking the first steps in this area. Two projects were implemented: in the cities of Alaverdi and Armavir and in 5 neighbouring villages, kindergarten educators and teachers, pupils and the community were trained in the importance and basics of sorting; plastic and paper sorting boxes were placed, and collection of waste and its transportation to recycling points was ensured.

In the effort to strengthen resilience to disinformation, the activities of Lithuanian 'elves' were presented to representatives of Armenian civil organisations, and the unique experience and methodology of the fight against fake news were conveyed.

As an alternative to traditional media, four podcasts were prepared at the Political Guest website to present various aspects of the implementation of the European Union-Armenia Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement (CEPA). The topics covered during the podcasts include police reform, implementation of the CEPA, urban planning, and media reform.

The women of Dilijan District of Armenia learned traditional popular crafts – sewing, ceramics, jewellery, gained knowledge about modern methodologies (how to start a business, use Internet tools, and develop e-commerce), which they will be able to use in the future in selling their products.

In response to the educational challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, in particular in ensuring conditions for distance learning, 16 children from the most vulnerable families who learn in School No 8 in the town of Artik were given tablet computers, which enabled them to participate in the distance learning process.

On 14 May 2020, the Spartan transport aircraft of the Lithuanian Air Force brought Lithuanian humanitarian aid to Armenia. This was not only the first humanitarian aid from the European Union, but also the first flight of the Lithuanian and NATO air forces to the territory on this side of Ararat. The Lithuanian humanitarian cargo of 10,500 Lithuania-made face shields was handed over to nine Armenian hospitals, including the Armenian National Infectious Diseases Hospital 'Nork Marash', which treats COVID-19-infected patients in the most severe condition.

On 19 June 2020, a team of eleven specialist volunteers flew from Šiauliai Zokniai Airport to Yerevan in Armenia to help the country, which faced especially severe challenges of the pandemic. During two weeks, the Lithuanian specialists shared skills in treating and caring for COVID-19-infected patients and their experience in managing a virus-induced emergency. The healthcare professionals were delegated by the Hospital of Lithuanian University of Health Sciences Kauno Klinikos, Vilnius University Hospital Santaros Klinikos, and Republican Hospital of Panevėžys. The medics participated in doctors' morning meetings, addressed issues related to artificial pulmonary ventilation, helped to determine the nature of circulatory disorders, consulted on antimicrobial treatment, and assisted in performing interventional procedures. Nurses actively engaged in patient care, performed many procedures, and shared their experience. The Lithuanian medics helped to adapt methodologies to international recommendations and instructed on the most important factors related to the management of the COVID-19 situation. The mission was organised after the Lithuanian Embassy in Yerevan received a request for emergency humanitarian aid from the Ministry of Health of Armenia. The mission was funded by the Lithuanian Government, which allocated funds for the humanitarian aid to Armenia, as well as by the Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which decided to provide a financial contribution.

**In Azerbaijan**, 1 bilateral project and 1 regional project were implemented. A safe play space for children was equipped in the former military conflict zone in the village of Shikhli in Qazakh District as contribution to the promotion of children's social welfare and engagement in the regions.

With a view to resolving the systemic problems of women's empowerment, the capacity of lawyers to defend and promote women's rights in strategic cases were strengthened. Gaps in laws were identified in the areas of gender equality, domestic violence, necessary defence and others. Widespread gender stereotypes, which partly determine the inadequate investigation of cases, and their negative impact on case-law were discussed. Strategic dispute resolution issues were identified and the need for expert assistance was discussed.

Within **the EU Neighbourhood**, 4 regional projects aimed at democracy and civil society, gender equality and women's empowerment were implemented.

The training tool 'Fake news in media and social environment' ('FAKE NEWS', VU Faculty of Communication) was developed, an informal network of bloggers has been created, and an educational promotional film was created to be used as supplementary training material for video bloggers.

In 2020, Charter'97 Foundation correspondents network prepared 116 articles that provided alternative independent information in Belarus and the region, drafted (translated or reprinted from other sources) a total of 708 articles and made 33 translations.

The DCDPP funds were used to finance 8 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 each in Côte d'Ivoire, Myanmar, Nigeria, Iraq, Turkey and Uganda. These projects promoted cooperation between science and business, regional development, economic development, strengthened women's social and economic independence, and built capacity in the field of education. 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 objectives of Lithuania's development cooperation. In 2020, the DCDPP funded 8 projects implemented in five countries with the aim of building the capacity of organisations functioning in the field of gender equality and promoting the social and economic empowerment of women.

In Armenia, Ukraine and Côte d'Ivoire, the capacities of women to create and develop innovative businesses were strengthened. In Mongolia, women were encouraged to participate in local elections local government processes. Moldovan girls acquired theoretical and practical software development skills.

By implementing the regional project, the skills of civil society organisations in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Ukraine to engage in international litigation and advocacy to address systemic issues affecting the empowerment of women in their countries were improved.

By development cooperation and humanitarian aid, Lithuania contributed to the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security. In 2020, a voluntary contribution of EUR 20,000 to the UN Women's Peace & Humanitarian Fund was allocated. As an observer, Lithuania also continued cooperation with the Development Assistance Committee Network on Gender Equality.

Lithuania took an active part in the formulation of the EU development cooperation policy in the field of gender equality and, by providing development cooperation support, contributed to the implementation of the EU's Gender Action Plan 2016-2020. Lithuania also actively participated in the debate on EU's Joint Communication – the Action Plan on Gender Equality 2021–2025 (GAP II) that continued the work started in 2010 to promote change in the field of gender equality, which was presented on 25 November 2020.

The target of the GAP III Action Plan is to ensure that 85% of all new EU external actions contribute to gender equality and women's empowerment, and at least one action in each partner country is dedicated exclusively to gender equality.

## **EU Twinning and TAIEX Programmes**

In 2020, Lithuania continued to successfully participate in the EU Twinning Programme by providing expert support to recipient countries (EC-funded EU Twinning Programme supports cooperation between related institutions of different countries): 45 project selection procedures were announced under the EU Twinning Programme, Lithuanian institutions individually or in consortia with other EU Member States submitted 22 project applications and won 13 projects with a total value of EUR 16.8 million. In 2004–2020, Lithuania has won a total of 119 EU Twinning projects. By the number of projects won in 2020, Lithuania is among the most successful EU Member States together with France, Spain, Germany, Austria and Croatia. In the Eastern Partnership countries (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Moldova, Georgia, and Ukraine), Lithuania won the most projects – as many as 11. Out of the 13 projects won in 2020, Lithuania leads 5 projects (in Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Jordan, Ukraine, and Georgia) as a consortium senior partner of the countries and participates as a junior partner in 8 projects (in Azerbaijan, Armenia, Belarus, Moldova, Georgia, and Ukraine). The partners of the projects in which Lithuania participates are Austria, Denmark, Estonia, Latvia, Italy, Poland, France, Romania, Finland, Sweden, Hungary, and Germany. The Lithuanian institutions that won tenders submitted for Twinning project this year: the Competition Council, the Fire and Rescue Department, the Bank of Lithuania, the Department of Statistics, the Police Department, the Ministry of Social Security and Labour, the ESFA, the Centre for Equality Advancement, the State Food and Veterinary Service, the State Border Guard Service, the SIS, the National Cyber Security Centre, the State Plant Service, and the CPMA.

In 2020, Lithuanian experts participated in 22 events under the TAIEX Programme (seminars, trainings, and expert missions). The main areas in which Lithuanian experts conveyed their

expertise include justice and home affairs, internal markets, environment, and transport. According to the data for 2020, there are 100 experts from various Lithuanian institutions registered in the list of TAIEX list, with 14 new experts registered.

### **Capacity building for participation in development cooperation activities**

In 2020, the three-year project ‘Improving the Implementation of Lithuanian Development Cooperation Policy and Strengthening the Capacity of Lithuanian Public Administration Institutions and Their Employees’ financed under Implementation Measure 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 the EU Funds’ Investments in 2014–2020 was implemented.

### **Awareness raising**

Eurobarometer opinion poll published on 23 October 2019 revealed a steadily declining public support for aid provided to developing countries. Although 8 out of 10 Lithuanian respondents continue to believe that it is important to help people in developing countries, only 27% Lithuanians believe that this should be a priority for the country’s government.

The MoFA continued to consistently pursue activities aimed at informing the public, in particular young people, about the Sustainable Development Goals, about the importance and benefits of development cooperation. In 2020, Lithuanian non-governmental organisations implemented 4 public education and awareness raising projects.

For fourteen consecutive years, the MoFA contributed to organising the international human rights documentary film festival Inconvenient Films. During the festival, which took place in a different format – in a virtual space, a large programme of 50 documentaries was presented, meetings with film makers were held, and discussions with film heroes, human rights activists and experts were organised. The festival focused on the topics of democracy and citizenship.

This year’s festival reached a record number of 17,266 spectators. Partnerships were established with almost 200 Lithuanian libraries (in more than 80 Lithuanian cities, towns and rural areas), where all the films of the festival and the content of the festival could be watched free of charge.

Informative quizzes on the UN Sustainable Development Goals and development cooperation were prepared jointly with M1 Plus radio station.

In 2020, the MoFA worked purposefully with economic and social partners (business, NGOs, academic and scientific communities), informed them about the importance of development cooperation and opportunities to become involved 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 4 February 2020, the MoFA organised an international conference to discuss the importance of the experience of the public sector in the implementation of projects under the development cooperation programmes of the European Union (EU). The conference was organised within the project ‘Improving the Implementation of Lithuanian Development Cooperation Policy and Strengthening the Capacity of Lithuanian Public Administration Institutions and Their Employees’ funded under the Operational Programme for the EU Funds’ Investments in 2014–2020.

On 27 February 2020, the annual Lithuanian Development Cooperation Conference ‘More Support - More Opportunities - More Results’ was held. The conference was attended by Ingrida Šimonytė and Aušrinė Armonaitė, Members of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania, Prof. Jurgis

Kazimieras Staniškis, Member at United Nations Independent Group of Scientists for Global Sustainable Development Reporting, and other development cooperation practitioners and experts. The main focus of the conference was on the assessment of the current situation, new ideas and changes that would ensure qualitative and quantitative changes in development cooperation policy.

### **Improving the effectiveness of development cooperation policy**

Taking into account the discussions on the need to achieve qualitative and quantitative changes in development cooperation policy that were started in the National Development Cooperation Commission (NDCC) in 2019, legislative changes based on a comprehensive extended impact assessment were initiated. On 23 September 2020, they were presented and discussed at the extended meeting of the NDCC held in the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania, to which representatives of all political fractions were invited. On 15 December 2020, the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania adopted amendments to the Law on Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid, legitimising substantial qualitative changes, the most important of which was the Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid Fund to be non-tied with a the budget year and adapted to the international development cooperation context, which would allow implementing Lithuania's political and economic interests in the international space more efficiently and also responding to international humanitarian challenges rapidly and flexibly.

At the end of 2020, the MoFA, together with the institution of the President of the Republic of Lithuania, joined the project 'Create Lithuania', the main objective of which was to provide recommendations for improving the effectiveness of development cooperation policy.

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