

PARLIAMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF LITHUANIA

RESOLUTION

RE. PROVISIONS OF THE NATIONAL EDUCATION STRATEGY 2003-2012

No. IX-1700, 4 July 2003
Vilnius

Taking into consideration the President's Decree on the Approval of the Strategic Provisions for Development of Education in Lithuania (2003–2012) of 24 February 2003, and following the Law on Education, the Parliament of the Republic of Lithuania hereby resolves as follows:

Article 1

To approve the Provisions for the National Education Strategy 2003–2012 (appended).

Article 2

To propose to the Government:

1. To develop a programme for implementation of the Provisions for the National Education Strategy 2003–2012 by October 1, 2003.
2. To present the revised Provisions for the National Education Strategy 2003–2012 to the Parliament for deliberations by January 1, 2008.

Article 3

The Resolution shall be effective after it is adopted.

THE SPEAKER OF THE PARLIAMENT

ARTŪRAS PAULAUSKAS

APPROVED
by the Parliament of Lithuania
Resolution No. IX-1700
of 4 July 2003

THE NATIONAL EDUCATION STRATEGY 2003–2012

P R O V I S I O N S

I. PURPOSE AND GENERAL PROVISIONS

On 12 November 2002 the Parliament of the Republic of Lithuania passed a resolution to approve the Long-Term Development Strategy of the State. The Strategy projects development of Lithuania, as a future EU member state, by identifying three priority areas: knowledge society, secure society and competitive economy. The role of education in this development is of exceptional importance. In the Presidency Conclusions of the Lisbon summit on March 23-24, 2000, the EU Council underlines the direct link of the continuing economic and social progress in the EU and investment into people and their education: “People are Europe’s main asset and should be the focal point of the Union’s policies. Investing in people and developing an active and dynamic welfare state will be crucial both to Europe’s place in the knowledge economy and for ensuring that the emergence of this new economy does not compound the existing social problems of unemployment, social exclusion and poverty”. As Lithuania is striving to establish itself in the West, education should contribute to the strengthening of creative powers of society, protection and development of the identity of the nation, nurturing the mature civil society, increasing employment and competitiveness of the market, reduction of poverty and social exclusion.

1. The purpose of the Provisions for the National Education Strategy 2003–2012 (hereinafter referred to as the Strategic Provisions) is to provide the framework for implementation of the vision of education in Lithuania, and to provide the citizens of Lithuania, their interest groups and state institutions with the possibility to continue public discussions and to agree on the methods of implementation of this vision.

2. The Strategic Provisions supplement the long-term development strategy of the State and define the goals for development of education, the means for achieving these goals, as well as establishes the key quantitative and qualitative outcomes to be used as the basis for development of the Lithuanian education and evaluation thereof in 2003–2012.

3. Development of education should take into account the new challenges and new opportunities for the Lithuanian society, such as development of democracy and market economy, the process of globalisation, the vast amounts of information, rapid changes and fragmentation of the society. Education should help an individual and the society at large to respond to the challenges and to take advantage of the new opportunities. This necessitates essential reforms in the educational system of Lithuania in order to increase its efficiency, improve accessibility to education, create conditions enabling continuing education and life-long learning, ensure the quality of education that conforms to the European standards and meets the needs of the modern Lithuanian society.

4. In the light of the challenges faced by society today, as well as taking into account that knowledge society, secure society and competitive economy are defined as priorities in the Long-Term Development Strategy of the State, the mission of education is as follows:

- 1) to help an individual to understand the contemporary world, to acquire cultural and social competences and to become an independent, active and responsible person who is willing and able to learn and create a life of his own and life of society;
- 2) to help an individual to acquire a vocational qualification corresponding to the level of modern technologies, culture and personal skills, and to create conditions enabling life-long learning, which encompasses continuous satisfaction of cognitive needs, seeking to acquire new competences and qualifications that are necessary for the professional career and meaningful life;
- 3) to ensure balanced and knowledge-based development of the economy, environment and culture of this country, domestic and international competitiveness of the economy, national security and evolution of the democratic society, thus strengthening the creative powers of the society;

4) to guarantee continuity of culture nourished by the nation and the country, continuous process of creation, protection of identity, as well as to foster the open and dialogic nature of the culture.

5. To implement the above mission, education should help Lithuania and its society to achieve the following strategic goals:

- 1) to find lodgement in the cultural and economic area of the West;
- 2) to develop the democratic culture of the country;
- 3) to nurture solidary civil society;
- 4) to strengthen the national security;
- 5) to preserve the national identity;
- 6) to create and develop a knowledge-based competitive economy;
- 7) to ensure employment of people;
- 8) to achieve substantial reduction of social exclusion and poverty.

6. The Strategic Provisions outline the vision of implementing the above mission. Development of the Provisions is based on the Long-Term Development Strategy of the State, the Economic Development Strategy of the Republic of Lithuania until 2015, the European Memorandum of Life-Long Learning, the European Employment Strategy, the Bologna Declaration 1999, the most important aims raised by the EU Commission for development of the education systems in the member states until the year 2010. The Strategic Provisions herein follow the draft Education Development Guidelines (2002). Implementation of the Provisions shall be co-ordinated with other structural reforms of the country and common priorities of the EU education policy.

7. As a document of consensus reached between the parliamentary parties and the society at large, the Strategic Provisions shall be used as a tool to mobilise the efforts of different stakeholders, state institutions and non-governmental organizations, students and their parents, educators, employers and politicians which are targeted at implementation of the long-term goals in the area of updating the system of education.

II. VALUES AND PRINCIPLES

8. Education in Lithuania is based on the key values of the nation, Europe and global culture: the unrivalled value and dignity of an individual, love of our fellow, the natural equality of people, the human rights and freedoms, tolerance, and declaration of democratic relations in the society. Education is developing determination and ability of an individual to follow these values in all walks of life and activity.

9. Education is also based on the general principles of humanity, democracy and renewal.

III. KEY AIMS

10. By joining their efforts, the State and society shall seek to achieve the following key aims of developing education in 2003–2012:

- 1) to develop an efficient and consistent education system which is based on the responsible management, targeted funding and rational use of resources;
- 2) to develop an accessible system of continuing education that guarantees life-long learning and social justice in education;
- 3) to ensure a quality of education which is in line with the needs of an individual living in an open civil society under market economy conditions, and the universal needs of society of the modern world.

IV. MEASURES OF IMPLEMENTATION

11. To ensure efficiency and sustainability of the education development, the following shall be done:

- 1) introduction of the responsible management system based on periodic status analysis of all levels of education, education improvement oriented management culture, information and participation of the society at large. For this purpose:
 - functions, powers, obligations, responsibility and accountability of the state, municipalities and schools shall be redistributed and clearly

defined, and the procedure of co-operation between the schools shall be described;

- management shall be decentralised and de-concentrated according to the principle of subsidiarity;
- the Ministry of Education and Science shall gradually abolish the functions that are not typical to the state governance; at the same time, however, the state's overall responsibility for leading the education improvement process shall be strengthened. On the national level, the Ministry of Education and Science shall establish the key requirements for general education, vocational education and training, and be responsible for ensuring the quality of education, accessibility to education and the social justice in education, quality assessment and provision of information about it to the society;
- responsibility of municipalities for the accessibility and quality of education within their territories shall be strengthened. Municipalities and counties shall be vested with a big share of responsibility not only for general education, but also for vocational education and training, for special education, continuing adult education. Every municipality shall be responsible for a register of children residing in their territories, and co-ordination of the number and flow of pupils in the schools under their responsibility;
- the independence of schools – learning communities – shall be reinforced, and transparency of their activity shall be ensured. Schools shall conclude contracts with pupils and/or their parents and undertake responsibility for the quality of education of each and every pupil;
- responsibility of higher education schools for the quality of studies, close links with the labour market and regional economic development shall be reinforced. Without prejudice to the principle of their autonomy, the accountability for the higher education schools to the society at large will be increased, thus achieving the rational balance between the autonomy and accountability of such schools;

- strategic planning shall be introduced on all levels of education. The education information system shall be developed, capable of timely provision of information that is necessary for education managers of different levels and social partners. Political decisions shall be grounded on reliable and comprehensive information and analysis thereof. A contemporary self-evaluation and assessment culture shall be introduced on all levels of education;
 - the influence of society on education shall be strengthened: political and administrative decisions in the area of education shall be made through consultations and co-ordination with the social partners of education and other stakeholders. Efficient mechanisms of accountability to society shall be introduced in the field of education and its management institutions;
- 2) reform of education funding and use of resources patterns so as to ensure better adjustment of education to the free market conditions and ensure better accessibility and quality of education:
- novelties in education that are related to the emergence of new functions or reallocation of functions and responsibilities shall be justified financially;
 - programme budgeting shall be introduced in education: funds for education shall be accounted and allocated according to the approved priorities and methods both on the local, regional and state levels. Educational programmes shall be justified by the future funds of the state, municipal budgets and the EU Structural Funds;
 - determination to allocate at least 6% of GDP annually for education needs on the national level shall be observed;
 - education shall be funded from different sources: apart from the state budget, the EU Structural Funds and private capital shall be used for the purpose of renewing education;
 - the genuine financial independence and transparent financial accountability of schools shall be reinforced;

- the funds allocation principle “money follow a pupil” shall be gradually implemented in all chains of education;
 - financial incentives to encourage private capital investment into education shall be used; for the purpose of encouraging investments into learning and training, certain tax privileges shall be introduced;
 - a mixed system of payment for teachers combining full time position payment and hourly payment shall be introduced. In the process of increasing efficiency of education, training and studies, salaries for teachers shall be raised. The lowest teacher salary should exceed the average salary of the employees in the state sector;
- 3) development of the flexible and open structure of education, uniting the general education, vocational education and training, studies, formal and informal education and self-education into the single area of education:
- a new education structure shall be introduced: it will be based not on the closed type of schools, but on flexible programmes. The schools shall implement different general education and VET programmes and modules thereof; the choice between different types of schools and programmes shall increase mobility of students;
 - formation of the flexible three-stages structure of general education shall be completed; it shall consist of preparatory, primary, basic and secondary (matura) education programmes to be implemented in the primary, basic and secondary schools, gymnasiums or associated structures thereof. Some secondary schools may gradually grow to become gymnasiums, if the founder of a school shall so decide. The key principle is that a secondary school and gymnasium should be open and accessible to every young persons who is willing to be educated there;
 - the secondary (matura) education programme shall become more flexible, diverse and offer more choices. The contents of the last two years of matura programme shall become more individual: only the disciplines that form the nucleus of the curricula shall be compulsory to all pupils; all other disciplines shall be subject to free choice of pupils;

- academic and technological, general education and VET directions shall be brought closer; not only academic, but also technological and mixed types of gymnasiums shall be founded;
 - the Lithuanian higher education shall join the single European area of higher education;
 - the continuing education services of general education, vocational and, in particular, higher education schools shall be expanded for young and adult population; the certification procedure for both formal and informal education programmes and modules shall be developed;
 - formal, informal education and self-education shall be joined;
 - the system of recognition of competences acquired through different forms of education shall be established;
- 4) development of the school network responding to all efficiency, accessibility and quality requirements:
- detailed plans for development of the municipal, county and state education networks shall be developed. The ambition is to bring pre-school, preparatory and primary education schools closer to children: a pupil's journey to the basic school should not take more than 30 minutes; a secondary school, gymnasium or vocational school should be reached in not more than one hour; every local neighbourhood should have a school or library functioning as a distance learning centre; every municipality should have a school offering general education and vocational training programmes to children, youth and adults;
- 5) ensuring transportation of pupils from schools reorganised as a result of the school network optimisation to the nearest school; development of the system for transportation of pupils living in distant villages and suburbs, as well as of the disabled pupils to and back from school by using special means of transportation;
- 6) provision of new jobs for teachers and opportunities to acquire new qualifications;
- 7) opening schools towards the labour market, development of social and cultural functions of schools, thus strengthening the link between education and actual life:
- vocational information and counselling system shall be introduced in schools offering basic and secondary (matura) education programmes;

- practical social and labour activity shall become an official part of the general education curriculum;
- vocational and higher education school students shall take most of the final qualification examinations in the presence of the representatives of employers and other social partners;
- at least half of the time allocated for acquisition of the vocational technological qualification in vocational schools shall be spent for training at a particular work place;
- a system enabling continuous matching of qualifications offered by the Lithuanian education institutions with their demand on the labour market shall be developed;
- pedagogical and social programmes designed for risk group children shall start functioning in the general education and vocational schools;
- if necessary, day centres shall be established in primary and basic schools;
- non-governmental organizations and different informal unions shall start their activity in local neighbourhoods, municipalities and counties, thus enforcing the notion of local communities and institutions' joint responsibility for education of children;
- interaction of the school and local community shall be strengthened and further developed.

12. To ensure accessibility, continuity and social justice of the education development process, the following shall be accomplished:

- 1) guaranteeing equality of the starting position in education;
- 2) development of the family pedagogical counselling and information system;
- 3) expansion of the pre-school education services; pre-school education shall first of all be made available for socially excluded children and children from social risk families;
- 4) development and expansion of the universal preparatory education;
- 5) initiation of the targeted pedagogical and cultural support to all social risk families with children;

6) ensuring socially fair conditions for learning and studies:

- opportunities for efficient education of children with different abilities and needs shall be created;
- a reliable system for registration of school-age children shall be developed; municipalities shall be responsible for the register of local children, handling of the register and co-ordination of the number of pupils at schools under their responsibility;
- targeted complementary pedagogical and social work programmes shall be developed for working with children experiencing difficulties;
- conditions for maintaining and strengthening health of pupils shall be created, and continuous monitoring of their health shall be ensured;
- learning and studying conditions for children of ethnic minorities shall be ensured; additional attention shall be given to the educational needs of small ethnic communities;
- opportunities to learn and acquire education shall be created for children of migrating families;
- the personal responsibility of parents for compulsory education of their children shall be enforced and gradually implemented; financial support to families shall be tied to the parental duty to take care of their children's education;
- the system of support for children and youth of exceptional abilities shall be developed and expanded;
- a flexible and efficient system for supporting students shall be developed: study credits, differentiated social scholarships, differentiated hostel charges; loans for studies shall be accessible to all students;

7) creation of the life-long learning opportunities:

- an area of integrated life-long education shall be created; to achieve this, the efforts and resources of the Ministry of Education and Science and other ministries shall be brought together, the learning environment shall be created to match the different needs of individuals, and diversity of the forms of education shall be developed;

- financial life-long learning capabilities shall be expanded; the national and regional continuing education development programmes shall be developed and implemented;
- favourable learning and study conditions shall be offered to all Lithuanian adult residents seeking basic, secondary or higher education; a system of information and counselling about learning opportunities shall be expanded; learning barriers shall be overcome (learning time and speed, limitations of the learning location, strict education requirements at the beginning of learning or studies);
- gradual transition to credit, modular and accrual learning shall be effected.

13. To ensure the quality of education development:

- 1) the contents of education shall be updated and related to new competencies of an individual:
 - a system of regular updating of the education contents shall be developed. The contents of education shall be under continuous evaluation and revision, selection, supplement and adjustment. It shall be continuously updated in line with the goals and objectives of education, by taking into account the interests of learners and social partners. The common programmes of general education, education attainment standards and maturity examination programmes shall be periodically renewed;
 - the learning load of pupils shall be balanced and matched to meet health care requirements;
 - a more consistent transition to the new contents development policy oriented towards development of general abilities, values, provision of the necessary competencies based not so much on the transfer of knowledge, as on their analysis, critical assessment and practical application; such competencies shall relate the contents of education to actual life, actual problems and their solutions;

- the contents of education shall be connected to the moral and civil values of the present world; an exceptional attention is given to patriotism of an individual, and building of its civil, cultural and national identity. Active political activity becomes part and parcel of the education contents;
- the contents of education is related to the provision of values, general skills and competencies that are necessary for the life of an individual and society; targeted development of the main literacy skills, social, cultural and communication competences, critical thinking, problems solving skills and ability to learn;
- attention to development of information culture shall be strengthened on all levels of education; pragmatic computer literacy programmes shall be introduced, and computer literacy exams that comply with the international standards shall be established;
- enforced foreign language training; all pupils who graduate from the secondary education (matura) programme shall be able to communicate in two foreign languages. Good knowledge of two or three foreign languages becomes a natural part of higher education;
- on all levels of education more attention shall be given to encourage entrepreneurship and to develop financial wisdom; all basic school pupils undergo the basics of economic literacy; ultimately, the basics of economic literacy and entrepreneurship skills shall be provided to all pupils and students;
- vocational education and training programmes shall be brought in line with the international standards and the labour market needs. The courses of humanities and social sciences contributing to the development of civil culture of an individual become part and parcel of the study programme;
- on all levels of education the methods of conveying the contents of education shall be changed essentially; active learning methods and individual project activity shall be introduced to encourage independence and co-operation;

2) new developments in the training and work of teachers:

- efficiency of teacher training and qualification upgrading systems shall be assessed and international expertise of the study programmes shall be carried out continuously;
- an integral teacher training and qualification upgrading system shall be developed; it should be oriented towards the changing role of a teacher in knowledge society, and the new competences and values that are necessary for a contemporary teacher. Knowledge society will change the role of a teacher: the holder of knowledge will be replaced by the organiser of the learning process, creator of learning opportunities, learning adviser, partner, mediator between the learner and different modern sources of information. At the same time a teacher in the present day society should remain an educator, a witness of the facts of life, a conveyor and creative developer of traditions;
- teacher training standards and requirements for study plans shall be developed. The common teacher training study and qualification upgrading modules, as well as common qualification granting and recognition system shall be introduced;
- the Ministry of Education and Science becomes an actual client for teacher training services;
- adequate financing of teacher training, qualification upgrading and new qualification acquisition programmes that are in line with the needs of the education reform shall be ensured. All teachers shall have the same opportunities to upgrade their qualification or to acquire new qualifications;
- the role of social teachers and in-house psychologists of education institutions shall be made more specific, and their functions shall be defined more precisely. An exceptional attention shall be paid to training of such specialists and upgrading of their qualification;

3) modernisation of education research and assessment:

- a state system of surveying pupils' achievements shall be developed; it shall be used to improve education on the national, regional and school levels;

- research of the status in different fields of education shall be regularly contracted and carried out; Lithuania shall be a consistent participant of the international comparative studies of education;
- an efficient procedure for financing education research efforts shall be developed; dissemination of findings and accountability of researchers to the society at large shall be ensured;
- the system of assessing pupils' achievements in education shall be reformed; pupils should be motivated to learn better, teachers – to seek the quality of education and to provide better information for pupils and their parents alike about the learning results; pupils should be taught to evaluate their achievements;
- part of the education supervision and inspection functions will be gradually replaced by the school auditing (internal and external) system, the main purpose whereof is to improve the quality and efficiency of education;

4) modernisation of the general education, renovation of schools and improvement of the education supply system:

- implementation of the School Improvement Programme was started in 2002, thus improving the quality of education in basic schools of Lithuania;
- the national school renovation plan is being developed and implemented; 80% of schools will be renovated in ten years;
- an information and communication technologies introduction programme is under implementation in schools all over the country; a system of supporting and continuous updating of these technological bases shall be developed. All schools shall have the access to Internet. By level of computerisation of schools, Lithuania reaches the EU average;
- consistent development and publishing of training and learning tools shall be ensured, as well as provision of pupils therewith. The procedure for drafting textbooks shall be improved by matching it to the needs of the school and conditions of the market economy;

- an exceptional attention shall be given to the development and application of the original training software, development of audio and video training aids, the use of Internet for training and education of pupils;
- improved psychological, social, scientific, cultural and medical supplies of education.

V. KEY OBJECTIVES

14. Education in Lithuania shall be developed so as to achieve the following objectives by the year 2012:

- 1) all children, especially those coming from socially deprived families, have the opportunity and possibility to prepare for school and start schooling; all children (over 3 years of age) from socially deprived families have a guaranteed access to free pre-school education; preparatory education becomes universal;
- 2) the most necessary social conditions for training and studies are created for all those in need thereof;
- 3) at least 95% of children complete basic education programme;
- 4) at least 95% of children who completed basic education programme continue in the secondary school, or acquire secondary education and a vocation qualification in demand in the labour market;
- 5) all children and youth with special educational needs have a possibility to learn in all types of schools and in the learning environment best fitting their needs according to the formal and informal education programmes;
- 6) every citizen of Lithuania has a possibility to study at a higher school by the chosen mode of study (distance, extramural or other), and more than 60% of Lithuanian youth acquire higher university or non-university education;
- 7) all residents of Lithuania, first and foremost the young boys and girls who failed to acquire general basic, secondary education or vocational qualification, are invited and encouraged to get educated; the percentage of drop-outs and early leavers (individuals of 18-24 years of age who completed only the basic or secondary school and not continuing their education or vocational training) does not exceed 9%; the percentage

- of individuals who completed at least the secondary education programme is more than 80% in the age group of 25-59 years;
- 8) the residents of Lithuania have genuine opportunities for life-long learning, continuous update and development of their abilities; every year at least 15% of working age adult population undergo some kind of training or education activity;
 - 9) at least 85% of working age Lithuanian population have real opportunities and are capable of using computer information technologies;
 - 10) the percentage of 15 years old pupils who fail to achieve the minimal level of reading, writing, calculating, natural and social science literacy has been reduced by half;
 - 11) the number of youth and adult population participating in the activities of non-governmental and community organisations has at least doubled;
 - 12) the first foreign language skills of at least 70% of graduates from the basic general education school are at the proposed “Threshold” level; at least 70% of the secondary school graduates have the first foreign language skills at “Top” level, and the second foreign language skills at “Threshold” level;
 - 13) the relative difference between the number of boys and girls graduating from mathematics, informatics, natural science and technology studies has reduced at least by half.

VI. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STRATEGIC PROVISIONS

15. Based on the Strategic Provisions herein and in co-operation with stakeholders, the Government of the Republic of Lithuania shall develop a programme for implementation of the Strategic Provisions, which has to be substantiated by financial obligations of the state, such as the long term plan of funding and investments into education, as well as the project for attracting private capital and EU Structural Funds for education in Lithuania.

16. Following the main objectives of education development as outlined in the Strategic Provisions herein, the Government shall co-ordinate implementation and monitoring of the action programme, and, in case of necessity, make proposals regarding improvements of the document. The overall supervision over implementation of the Strategic Provisions shall be carried out by the Parliament of the Republic of Lithuania.