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IMPLEMENTATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL COVENANT ON
ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS

Initial reports submitted by States parties under
articles 16 and 17 of the Covenant

Addendum
LITHUANIA*

[17 July 2002]

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Enjoyment of the benefits of science (paragraph 2 of the guidelines)

642. The natural rights and freedoms of the citizens of the Republic of Lithuania are protected by the Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania, which was adopted by all citizens of the country in a referendum on 25 October 1992. Article 25 of the Constitution provides as follows: “an individual shall have the right to have [his/her] beliefs and to express them freely. An individual shall not be prevented from seeking, receiving and spreading information and ideas ...”. Article 40 of the Constitution grants autonomy to higher education establishments and article 41 provides that “education is compulsory for persons under 16 years of age. Instruction at State and municipal schools of general education and vocational schools shall be free of charge. Higher education is accessible to everybody, in accordance with the abilities of every person. Advanced citizens studying at State higher education establishments are guaranteed education free of charge”, and article 42 provides that “culture, science and research as well as instruction are free. The State supports culture and science and provides protection of historical, artistic and other cultural monuments and properties of Lithuania. The spiritual and material interests of authors related to scientific, technical, cultural and artistic creations are safeguarded and protected by laws”.

643. Scientific research centres at scientific and study institutions of Lithuania, including those that have developed into business structures closely cooperating with a scientific research institute or higher education establishment, today are full-fledged creators of world-level products. In addition, there are in Lithuania scientific and technological parks. In 1994, with the assistance of UNDP, the Lithuanian Innovation Centre was established. The list of measures aimed at improving the enjoyment of scientific research

progress can be complemented by the following: increasingly strong relations between scientific and economic entities and closer cooperation between different ministries towards the formation and implementation of an innovation policy. An indisputable influence on the scientific progress in the country is exerted by the increasingly intensive process of development of the information society in Lithuania and the recently developed new vision of the knowledge society. Today Lithuania has the following institutional system allowing the development of science, its protection, and the dissemination of scientific applications:

(a) Higher education sector (32 institutions): 15 State higher education university establishments; 6 State scientific institutions at State higher education university establishments; 4 State non-university higher education establishments; 4 private higher education university establishments; 3 private non-university higher education establishments;

(b) State sector (59 institutions, Statistical Department data 1999): 29 State scientific institutes; 16 State scientific institutions; 14 other institutions;

(c) The system of business companies and non-profit organizations engaged in scientific research and technological development - 26 institutions (Statistical Department data 1999).

644. This institutional infrastructure also comprises scientific institutions and public organizations of scientists and students (Lithuanian Council of Science, Study Quality Evaluation Centre, Conference of Directors of State Scientific Institutes, Conference of Chairpersons of Senates of Lithuanian Scientific and Study Institutions, Lithuanian Academy of Sciences, Lithuanian Union of Scientists, etc.), scientific and technological parks, economic entities and/or experimental development units.

645. The Lithuanian scientific and study computer network LITNET started its activities as an association of Lithuanian scientific, study and other non-profit organizations in 1991 after installation of the first X.25 satellite communication channel between Oslo University and the Institute of Mathematics and Informatics in Vilnius. The first 64 Kbps inter-town channel Vilnius-Kaunas linking three scientific and study organizations was established in April 1992. In autumn 1993, a new 64 Kbps channel Vilnius-Kaunas was installed using more recent information technologies. In 1994 LITNET joined the world computer network Internet. Lithuanian organizations have a direct connection to the TAIPNET network used for transfer of international data flow to Internet. In 1995, data transmission channels Kaunas-Klaipeda and Kaunas-Panevezys were established. In autumn of 1995, LITNET starting using the new international communication channel LITNET-NORDUNET, which was upgraded up to 128 Kbps in May of 1996. In summer of 1996, the 2 Mbps data transmission channel between Vilnius and Kaunas was put into operation. LITNET members use, operate and develop the network. LITNET covers a great number of universities, scientific centres and libraries in the five largest towns of Lithuania, namely Vilnius, Kaunas, Klaipeda, Siauliai, and Panevezys.

646. In 1998, the Lithuanian Council of Science and the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences made an application to the President of the Republic of Lithuania, the Speaker of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania and the Government of the Republic of Lithuania, in which they expressed the concern of the scientific community of Lithuania about the necessity of ensuring the development of the information society in Lithuania, recommending that this objective be declared as strategic and this sphere of activity a priority in Lithuania.

647. In February 1999, the Government of the Republic of Lithuania, aiming at guaranteeing publicity for and strengthening of public relations, adopted the Resolution on Publication of Draft Laws and Other Regulations on the Internet (Announced: *Valstybes Zinios*, 1999.02.10, No. 15, Publication No. 389). In May 1999, the Government set up the State Information Policy Coordination Commission and approved its regulations.

648. A significant role in the dissemination of scientific progress is also played by distance training centres established at higher education institutions. They enable the spreading of information to institutions based in different regions.

649. On 29 August 2000, the Ministry of Education and Science and the company Microsoft signed a letter of intent on the introduction of information and communication technologies in the educational system of Lithuania. Microsoft is determined to make an effective contribution to the development of education and science in Lithuania.

650. By the order of 30 January 2001, the Minister of Education and Science approved the Programme on Information Technology for Science and Research for 2001-2006. The key objective of the programme is to develop, with the existing resources, the information environment of Lithuanian education and research designated for the accumulation of information on science and research and its use in institutional activities, through decision-making and presentation of Lithuanian science and research on the world computer networks. The programme will assist scientists, lecturers and students to receive the necessary information and to use information technologies for education and in teaching the Lithuanian people.

651. Lithuania is a member of the Convention on Human Rights and Biomedicine of 4 April 1997 and a signatory to the Additional Protocol to the Convention on the Prohibition of Cloning Human Beings of 12 January 1998. The Law on the Ethics of Biomedical Research of the Republic of Lithuania (VIII-1679, Announced: *Valstybes Zinios*, 2000.05.31, No. 44, Publication No. 1247) provides for the requirements and principles of biomedical research ethics, the procedure for the issuance of authorizations to perform biomedical research, the procedure for the control of biomedical research practices and the assigning of responsibility for violations of this law.

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Conservation, development and diffusion of science and culture (paragraph 4 of

the guidelines)

670. The Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania provides:

“Article 25

“Individuals shall have the right to have their own convictions and freely express them. Individuals must not be hindered from seeking, obtaining, or disseminating information or ideas. Freedom to express convictions, as well as to obtain and disseminate information, may not be restricted in any way other than as established by law, when it is necessary for the safeguard of the health, honour and dignity, private life, or morals of a person, or for the protection of the Constitutional order. Freedom to express convictions or impart information shall be incompatible with criminal actions - the instigation of national, racial, religious, or social hatred, violence, or discrimination, the dissemination of slander, or misinformation. Citizens shall have the right to obtain any available information, which concerns them from State agencies in the manner established by law.

“Article 26

“Freedom of thought, conscience, and religion shall not be restricted. Every person shall have the right to freely choose any religion or faith and, either individually or with others, in public or in private, to manifest his or her religion or faith in worship, observance, practice or teaching. No person may coerce another person or be subject to coercion to adopt or profess any religion or faith. A persons’ freedom to profess and propagate his or her religion or faith may be subject only to those limitations prescribed by law and only when such restrictions are necessary to protect the safety of society, public order, a persons’ health or morals, or other fundamental rights and freedoms of others. Parents and legal guardians shall have the liberty to ensure the religious and moral education of their children in conformity with their own convictions.

“Article 37

“Citizens who belong to ethnic communities shall have the right to foster their language, culture, and customs.

“Article 42

“Culture, science, research and teaching shall be unrestricted. The State shall support culture and science, and shall be concerned with the protection of Lithuanian history, art, and other cultural monuments and valuables The law shall protect and defend the spiritual and material interests of authors, which are related to scientific, technical, cultural, and artistic work.

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672. After the restoration of independence in Lithuania, a new phase of Lithuanian science commenced. Since then, the system of science has been reformed to meet the needs of an independent State. During the period of radical political, public and hardly predictable economic changes, an attempt was made to ensure most autonomous functioning possible of the system of science and to establish academic freedom and responsibility of scientists, thus maintaining the basic scientific potential.

673. In June 1991, a list of State scientific institutions of the Republic of Lithuania was approved; in July of the same year, typical by-laws of the State scientific institutions were approved and State grants of two grades for celebrated figures of art, culture and science, as well as gifted young artists and scientists, were established; in November, the rules of remuneration of scientific workers and pedagogues of scientific and research institutions were approved and in December, the criteria and principles of tenders for scientific workers and pedagogues of higher education establishments and scientific institutes were approved.

674. In January 1992, the Resolution of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania On the Annuity of Professors and Associate Professors was adopted; in March, the Resolution On the System of Scientific Degrees and Academic (Scientific) Titles of the Republic of Lithuania and Procedure for their Awarding was adopted, and in July, the Resolution On the Recognition of Scientific Degrees and Academic (Scientific) Titles and Registration of Diplomas (Certificates) were adopted. With a view to developing and implementing the State policy in the sphere of science, research and technology, on 1 September 1992, the Government of the Republic of Lithuania founded the State Service of Science, Research and Technology. In October, a resolution was adopted by which the scientific fields and classification of scientific trends were approved as well as the list of institutions granted the right to award the scientific degree of doctor. The Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania guarantees the protection, development and spreading of science and culture in Lithuania.

675. In January 1993, the Government of the Republic of Lithuania resolved to establish 11 annual scientific awards of the Republic of Lithuania, which are granted annually for significant scientific works. The resolution adopted in December of the same year concerning the preparation and implementation of State scientific programmes provided for a new complex solution to the scientific and technological problems important for the development of the country's economy and culture.

676. In 1994, the assessment of the activities of State scientific institutes and higher education establishments started and the Law on Science and Research (I-1052, Announced: *Lietuvos Aidas*, 1991.02.19, No. 35; *Valsybes Zinios*, 1991.03.10, No. 7, Publication No. 191), was adopted on the basis of the principles that the State supports and promotes science and research and considers them to be of particular importance to the culture and economy of the Republic of Lithuania and shall legitimize the

indivisibility of science and research. At present, new wording of this law is under preparation.

677. Experts of the Council of Sciences of Lithuania and Norway, who carried out an assessment of the scientific potential of Lithuania in 1994 and 1995, state that, irrespective of the insufficient financing to science and out of date scientific research base, the education of the society in Lithuania might serve as the basis for the improvement of living conditions and that scientific research in most areas corresponded to the international level. The Lithuanian scientific research and experimental work priorities were determined by the necessity of fundamentally reorganizing the national economy inherited from the Soviet period as well as building a free and democratic State based on a free market economy and integrated into the European Union and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

678. By decree of the Prime Minister of the Republic of Lithuania, further assessment of the activities of Lithuanian scientific and research institutions was continued in 1997, aiming at the reform of the system of science. A group of experts made proposals concerning the revision of the criteria for the assessment of the quality and productivity of scientific activities, reasonable financing of science, more effective use of scientific potential for solving the education, higher education, economic and social problems, structural reform of the system of science, science management and the system for the implementation of the State science policy. The work accomplished is held to be the first attempt to prepare a White Paper on science in Lithuania.

679. With a view to improving the scientific and technological development system and its efficiency, a working group, established by decree of the Prime Minister of the Republic of Lithuania on 14 May 1999, prepared and submitted to the Government of the Republic of Lithuania a draft White Paper on Lithuanian Science and Technology, which will serve as the basis for the development of the Scientific and Technological Development Strategy for 2000-2005.

680. An especially important event for the system of science and research was the adoption of the Law on Long-term Financing of Science and Education by the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania on 7 December 2000. This law provides for the variation of State budgetary allocations for science and research in 2001-2004 and that the Government reform the entire system of scientific, research and educational institutions in 2001. This measure would also guarantee the enhanced implementation of scientific progress. The mentioned law provides that in the year 2001, the allocation for science and research will be at least 1.35 per cent of GDP, in 2002 at least 1.5 per cent, in 2003 at least 1.75 per cent and in 2004 at least 2 per cent.

681. Aiming at more efficient coordination of activities of State scientific and research institutions and more reasonable use of the country's scientific potential and State funds allocated for science and research, a working group was established by Order No. 1487 of the Minister of Education and Science of 18 December 2000, which has to provide proposals on the reasonable use of the country's scientific potential as well as a plan and

methods of structural reform of State scientific and research institutions. The Minister of Education and Science, by his Order No. 1528 of 28 December 2000, approved the procedure for the distribution of State budgetary allocations to scientific and research institutions for 2001, and by Order No. 1523 of 29 December he approved the rules for the assessment of scientific and research institutions. The complex plan for restructuring the State scientific and research institutions is expected to be prepared in the second quarter of 2001.

682. A lot of attention has been paid to the improvement of the financing of the country's system of science and research. By Order No. 1488 of the Minister of Education and Science of 18 December 2000, a working group was set up which produced conclusions on the efficiency of scientific and applied scientific activities of State scientific and research institutions as well as conclusions on their financing. While considering the financing of State scientific institutes from the State budget for 2001, the volumes of financing to the institutes were for the first time estimated, taking into account the quantitative indicators of effectiveness, quality, competitiveness and urgency of their scientific research and applied scientific activities.

683. It is planned to further develop the project for the modernization of the experimental facilities of State scientific institutes. A draft programme for the renovation of buildings of State higher education establishments and State scientific institutes was submitted to the Government of the Republic of Lithuania. The implementation of the latter projects will provide better conditions for successful participation in international scientific research and technological development programmes.

684. There is a media system developed in Lithuania which contributes to safeguarding, developing and spreading scientific progress. It comprises national dailies publishing information, reviews and analytical articles, as well as special columns in such dailies; newspapers for the scientific community (*Mokslo Lietuva*) and magazines (*Mokslas ir Technika*, *Mokslas ir Gyvenimas*, etc); different databases, both existing and under development; the whole range of the latest information technologies used for dissemination of scientific research, as well as radio and TV broadcasts. Lithuania is an associate member of the EU. It is integrating into international computer networks, thus obtaining access to all means of information dissemination held by the EU States. The effective world satellite systems allows spreading and reception of information from all over the world.

System of protection of scientific and creative activity (paragraph 5 of the guidelines)

685. There is no special legal system in Lithuania to protect the freedom necessary for scientific research and creative activity. Disputes, if any, are investigated by courts of general competence. The legal system consists of legislation such as the Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania, laws of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania approving governmental programmes containing the principles of activity as proposed by the ruling political party as well as the directions and priorities of State development for the term of

the Government, and other legislation regulating the development of the system of science and research.

686. The main administrative institution currently responsible for the development of State policy in the sphere of science and technology is the Department of Science and Research (47 employees) at the Ministry of Education and Science, which was established in 1998 and which, following reorganization, will be joined to the Ministry of Education and Science on 4 April 2002.

687. There is no legislation in the Republic of Lithuania prohibiting the exchange of scientific, technical and cultural information, opinions and experience. These freedoms are guaranteed by the main law of the Republic of Lithuania, the Constitution.

688. State institutions engaged in scientific research activities are financed from the State budget and receive funds from participation in international programmes and by fulfilling orders from private institutions and businesses. State scientific institutions have to search for additional financial sources independently. The Academy of Sciences of Lithuania and the Lithuanian Council of Science are the experts of the Seimas and Government of the Republic of Lithuania receiving State financial support. Various scientific societies and public organizations receive financial support in the form of membership fees and through their activities comprising different creative and scientific research projects and consulting services.

689. On 21 July 1993, the Government of the Republic of Lithuania adopted Resolution No. 540 (Announced: *Vastybes Zionios* 1993.07.28, No. 32, Publication No. 741) establishing the State Fund for Science and Research of Lithuania and approved its regulations. With a view to providing the most favourable conditions possible for full-time students of State higher education establishments of Lithuania, the regulations of the Fund were partially amended to allow the Fund to extend study loans for students.

690. The Law on Charity and Sponsorship Funds of the Republic of Lithuania, adopted on 14 March 1996, (I-1232, Announced: *Valsyb* _____, 1996 04.10. No. 32, Publication No. 787) regulates the support to different spheres of activity including science, culture, education, etc.

Measures to encourage international cooperation (paragraph 6 of the guidelines)

691. There is no legislation in Lithuania prohibiting international contacts and cooperation in the sphere of science and culture, with the exception of cases when such cooperation might be related to damage to the State or its interests.

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695. Cross-border agreements on bilateral cooperation and interdepartmental agreements signed on the basis of the Law on Treaties promote and develop international contacts and cooperation in the sphere of science.

696. The development of participation of Lithuanian scientific and research institutions in international scientific and technological development programmes has become increasingly intensive. The fact that Lithuania is an associate member of the EU promotes the development of international relations. Lithuania has successfully accumulated the experience of participation in the EU scientific research and technological development programmes (1994-1999). Presently, Lithuania takes part in the fifth EU framework programme. There is a framework for the provision of methodological and information assistance to the programme's participants. Participation in the programme strengthens the relationship between science and industrial structures. With a view to supporting international scientific cooperation, a draft resolution on joining INTAS, the International Association for Cooperation with the Scientists of the Newly Independent States of the Former Soviet Union, was submitted to the Government of the Republic of Lithuania.

697. The Government also promotes the participation of Lithuanian scientists in other European scientific and technological programmes. Lithuania became a member of the Eureka programme and COST activities and established the Eureka national centre, which coordinates the participation of Lithuanian scientists in that programme: in the year 2000 alone, seven Eureka projects were approved and another two project concepts were provided and are now being evaluated. Great attention was paid and financial support rendered to the companies participating in Eureka by the Ministry of Economy. The participation in COST activities develops successfully, as Lithuanian scientists currently participate in 17 COST activities.

698. The Government of the Republic of Lithuania promotes the participation of scientists in various international activities not only by paying, from State budgetary funds, the international programme participation fees, but also by adopting resolutions providing for tax deductions and financial support, including the resolutions on the establishment of the State International Study Commission and the State Fund for Science and Research and the resolution on international organizations and funds for paying grants which are exempt from income tax (550, Announced: *Valsybes Zinios*, 1997.06.06, No. 50, Publication No. 1208). In addition, the laws of the Republic of Lithuania such as the Law on the Value-Added Tax (I-345, Announced: *Valsybes Zinios*, 1994.01.12, No. 3 Publication No. 40 *Valsybes Zinios*, 1994.04.15, No. 28, Publication No. 490), the Law on Customs Duty (VIII-633, Announced: *Valsybes Zinios*, 1998.03.25, No. 28, Publication No. 727) or the Provisional Law on Income Tax of Natural Person (I-641, Announced: *Lietuvos Aidas*, 1990.10.12, No. 101; *Valsybes Zinios*, 1990.11.10, No. 31, Publication No. 742) provide for various benefits for scientific research and creative activities.