



ANNUAL ACTIVITY REPORT 2014

HUMAN RIGHTS MONITORING INSTITUTE

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Tel +37052314677
[Facebook](#)

Didžioji str. 5
LT-00128 Vilnius, Lithuania

www.hrmi.lt/en/
hrmi@hrmi.lt

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About the Human Rights Monitoring Institute

Human Rights Monitoring Institute (HRMI) was founded by the OSF-Lithuania in 2003 as a human rights watchdog organisation. Since its establishment HRMI has been advocating for full compliance of national laws, policies and practices with international human rights obligations and working to encourage people to exercise their rights. Over the years, HRMI activities evolved and expanded, leading to the development of new strategies and approaches that would not only promote legal rights but would also ensure that rights are real and effective in practice.

In its work HRMI uses a combination of tools: research, reporting, litigation, public advocacy, lobbying, participating in legislative process, providing expert advice, consultations and trainings, building networks and coalitions, and campaigning. As a result, HRMI plays a unique role in the local human rights movement as the only non-governmental organisation in Lithuania employing a holistic approach to advance rights protection. It is also the only NGO covering such wide range of thematic human rights areas. In 2010-2013, HRMI activities cut across the following themes: criminal justice, freedom of information, right to private and family life, national security and counterterrorism, women's rights, rights of persons with disabilities, rights of the child, LGBTI rights, rights of migrants and asylum seekers, countering hate speech and discrimination.

To achieve its objectives, HRMI actively cooperates with foreign and international NGOs such as [Amnesty International](#), [Human Rights Watch](#), [Repriev](#), [Redress](#), [Irish Council for Civil Liberties](#), [Fair Trials International](#), [Hungarian Helsinki Committee](#), [Open Society Justice Initiative](#) and others. HRMI is a member of [EU Fundamental Rights Platform](#), [Eurochild](#), [UNITED for Intercultural Action](#), [Civic Solidarity Platform](#), [JUSTICIA](#), and [European Liberties Platform](#). Since 2005, HRMI representatives have been sharing expertise with the lawyers, NGOs and other actors in the countries of the FSU region: Serbia, Moldova, Georgia, Armenia, Russia, Tajikistan, Ukraine, Belarus and others.

Since its establishment, HRMI has litigated and won over 18 strategic cases on behalf of vulnerable and marginalized individuals and communities, submitted 14 shadow reports to international human rights bodies, [issued 55 public statements](#), [released 7 Human Rights Overviews](#) – comprehensive reports on human rights challenges and developments in Lithuania, [conducted research and released 21 publication](#), submitted 10 proposals for draft laws, [held 16 major awareness raising campaigns](#), organized 129 public and expert events – meetings, discussions, and conferences, [joined 6 national and international NGO networks](#), [held 4 intensive human rights summer courses](#) and delivered a number of trainings.

HRMI governance is three-fold: Shareholders, Board, and Executive Director. Currently the Executive Director is also Managing Director of the Operator of the EEA Financial Mechanisms NGO Programme in Lithuania. HRMI team consists of 11 staff members, working in two departments: Human Rights Department (HRD) and NGO Programme Department.

In 2012, HRMI was appointed a [national operator of the EEA Grants NGO Programme in Lithuania](#). It is the first time that an NGO was entrusted with the management of the funds designated to strengthen civil society in Lithuania. Together with the OSFL Projects, former OSF Lithuania, HRMI is responsible for the development and implementation of the Programme of a total value of EUR 4 640 664.



HUMAN RIGHTS DEPARTMENT



Dovilė ŠAKALIENĖ
Executive Director



Henrikas MICKEVIČIUS
Senior Legal Adviser



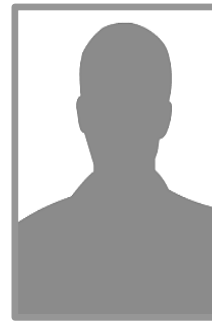
Natalija BITIUKOVA
Deputy Director



Jūratė GUZEVIČIŪTĖ
Legal Director



Mėta ADUTAVIČIŪTĖ
Legal and Policy Adviser



Karolis LIUTKEVIČIUS
Legal Officer



Julija DAILIDENAITĖ
Communication Assistant

Human rights monitoring is a collection, verification, and use of information to address human rights problems. We believe in evidence-based advocacy, and our statements are grounded in carefully collected and reviewed facts.

When awarded with the Human Rights Champion award, the Minister of the Foreign Affairs Linas Linkevičius said: "We must not be afraid to defend our dignity, our freedom and our rights, we must constantly and systematically strive towards of a society that respects human rights, that can share its experiences and extend a helping hand to others."

The award was presented to the minister on 10 December – International Human Rights Day. The date was chosen to honour the United Nations General Assembly's adoption and proclamation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) on 10 December 1948. It was the first global enunciation of human rights and one of the first major achievements of the recently-created United Nations.

1. Human Rights Monitoring



- **Analyzed the attitudes of Lithuanian public towards the situation of human rights in the country.** A representative public opinion poll commissioned by us showed that 95 percent of Lithuanian residents who thought that their rights had been infringed did not report said infringement to any institution. Compared to the study from 2012, we also saw a rising trend in understanding the vulnerability of all of the rights covered by the survey. However, majority of the respondents are not likely to report violations even when they are aware of them, due to the disbelief that the state will effectively help them.
- **Advocated for transparent implementation of the first ever Law on Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs).** The historic Law came into force on the 1st of April and gave more opportunities for NGOs and state institutions to cooperate, a practice that was fragmented up until now. Together with Transparency International Lithuanian Chapter we provided our assessment of legal gaps that may jeopardize transparent and efficient implementation of the Law, along with the proposals for remedying them. Our proposals were extensively discussed with the NGO community.
- **Acknowledged the work of human rights defenders in Lithuania.** On December 10, we announced the annual nomination for the Human Rights Champion. This year, the prestigious award was given to Linas Linkevičius, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Lithuania who signed the *Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence* and never ceased expressing his support for human rights defenders abroad.
- **Assisted the UN treaty bodies in their assessment of human rights situation in Lithuania.** We prepared alternative reports to the CEDAW and CAT committees identifying pressing human rights issues related to domestic violence, reproductive health, situation in prisons and other closed institutions, and provided

sets of recommendations how Lithuania could improve the status quo. Both committees incorporated their analysis into their concluding observations that were published the same year.

- **Advised the Parliament on implementation of the ECtHR and the UN CCPR judgements.** Upon the request of the parliamentary working group, we submitted our findings on the legal measures necessary to implement judgments in cases brought by the impeached Lithuanian president R. Paksas, and in line with the opinion of the Constitutional Court, advised to introduce constitutional amendments.
- For the 7th consecutive year **engaged in setting up a fully accredited National Human Rights Institution of Lithuania.** This year – by submitting proposals for the draft amendments to the Law on Parliamentary Ombudspersons, to ensure that the Ombudsperson’s Office – which seeks to become the NHRI – adheres to the principles of pluralism and undertakes functions attributed to the NHRIs in line with the Paris Principles.
- **Expanded our advocacy efforts to the EU-level via European Liberties Platform.** Throughout 2014, we contributed to the first multilingual civil liberties communication service Liberties.eu with the aim of mobilizing support to human rights issues across Europe. Unlike similar sites, Liberties.eu provides civil liberties news in a rapid manner in 12 languages, including Lithuanian, and allows to send open letters, sign petitions, vote and request public data with a single click.

The real scale of domestic violence became apparent after the passage of the Law on Protection Against Domestic Violence in 2011. With over 20 thousand reports and 10 thousand people officially classified as victims, domestic violence in 2013 made up more than 10 percent of the overall crime in the country.

Victims of domestic violence are now receiving more support from police officers and victim support services, but they still lack vital information regarding criminal proceedings, access to legal aid and protection for themselves and their children from threats and retaliation.

"According to one victim, the first time she had to deal with the police, she could feel the investigator's support and understanding, however, the second time, with another investigator, she only wanted to - in her own words - run away, cry and scream because she was blamed and treated with cynicism," – HRMI study "[The Victims' Rights Directive: a New Approach to Victims of Domestic Violence](#)," found.

2. Thematic Areas of Expertise

2.1. Rights of Victims of Crime



- **For the first time thoroughly assessed implementation of the *Law on Protection against Domestic Violence*.** Legal and sociological survey "EU Victims Directive: New Approach to Domestic Violence Victims" revealed that police lack sensitivity and necessary skills to deal with individual victims, often ignore reports received from the victims of further threats and intimidation, and does not treat such threats seriously. The findings confirmed that both legal framework and practice are yet to be improved considerably in order to meet the victims' needs for information, protection and support.
- **Discussed the new EU legal instrument on the protection of victims' rights with policy makers and state bodies.** During the national-level event we presented the EU Victims' Rights Directive to police officers, prosecutors, judges and special support services case-workers from Vilnius, Kaunas, Klaipėda, Šiauliai, Panevėžys and other Lithuanian cities. We discussed the strengths of the new victim-centered approach that will have to be transposed into the Lithuanian system by November 2015, and analyzed the steps we will need to take in order to complete this process successfully.
- **Urged authorities to improve response to domestic violence crime.** In response to several high profile domestic murders committed in December, we addressed the Ministry of Interior, the Police Department and the Police Commissioner General with an open letter outlining the main deficiencies in domestic violence victims' protection system. We recommended introducing risk assessment tools in domestic violence cases, guidance for uniform practice in dealing with psychological violence, threats and intimidation, and improving legal framework and practice of application and monitoring of protection measures such as obligation to reside separately or refrain from any contact.
- **Reminded the Government about its obligations under the UN CEDAW.** After our alternative report to the Committee was reviewed along with the submissions from the state and other NGOs, we presented

Committee's concluding observations at the Parliament. Specifically, the Committee urged the state to be more efficient in fighting violence against women by ratifying the Istanbul Convention, preparing a strategy for fighting various forms of violence against women, ensuring adherence to the Law on Protection against Domestic Violence and training for law enforcement personnel to develop an understanding of the needs of female victims of crimes.

- **Won a ground-breaking case on behalf of the CIA rendition victim.** In the beginning of 2014, together with our partners REDRESS we achieved a landmark national court judgment in the case related to Lithuania's role in CIA rendition programme. A national court acknowledged for the first time that rendition victims have a right to an effective investigation and the right to be heard and participate in the proceedings. Pursuant to the court's judgment, on 13 February 2014 Prosecutor General's Office opened an investigation into unlawful transportation of persons across state border. The investigation is ongoing, and we continue monitoring the process.

Excessive use of pre-trial detention remains one of the major unresolved criminal justice issues in Lithuania.

During the last five years pre-trial detention was used in Lithuania more than ten times as frequently as its closest, more lenient alternatives – house arrest and bail.

When deciding whether or not to order detention, Lithuanian judges often adopt a “rubber-stamping” approach towards the requests of prosecutors, ordering detention in the majority of cases. Although prosecutors are supposed to file individual motions, making clear why a particular suspect should be detained, many use identical applications – even with the same spelling mistakes – used from one case to another.

2.2. Rights of Suspects, Accused and Detained



- **Won a strategic case challenging unlawful detention of minor asylum seekers.** Together with the Lithuanian Red Cross Society we obtained a victory in a strategic case that exposed deficiencies in Lithuanian asylum system and highlighted the practice of abusing detention as a measure of restraint in Lithuania. Two minors were fleeing war-torn Afghanistan and applied for asylum in Lithuania. Even though national and international law requires that asylum seekers be exempt from criminal liability for illegal border crossing, Lithuania did not follow this rule. Pre-trial investigation was started and both minors were ordered by court to be detained. They spent three months locked up in the Lukiškės Remand prison, one of the worst remand facilities in Lithuania, in cells with adult men, where they endured humiliation, insults and a number of other human rights violations. Both applicants represented by us and the Lithuanian Red Cross Society were awarded more than 6.000,00 EUR in damages. The judgment of the court was appealed by the Prosecutor’s Office and we continue litigating the case before the Lithuanian Supreme Court.
- **Conducted a study on attitudes of police, prosecutors and judges towards the use of pre-trial detention in criminal proceedings.** A significant part of the respondents in our socio-legal study confirmed that pre-trial detention is sometimes sought while fully understanding that it is not necessary. Practitioners believe that in cases of grave crimes more lenient measures are simply unsuitable in Lithuania because the participants of the criminal procedure “lack relevant culture” which can be interpreted as lack of tradition of application of bail or house arrest. We presented and discussed our findings in a conference with 120 practitioners who indicated the need for specialized training in this area of criminal law.
- **Advised the President’s Office on legal reform to reduce rates of pre-trial detention in Lithuania.** During the meeting with the President’s adviser, we shared our expertise and research findings, as well as made concrete proposals for legislative amendments to the current criminal procedure rules on pre-trial detention. The President’s Office plans to propose draft amendments to the Criminal Procedure Code which are expected to improve the safeguards to the abuse of the strictest remand measure.
- **Promoted the implementation of Swedish Roadmap by following through the transposition of the Arrest Rights Directives.** To ensure quality transposition of the directives on the right to interpretation and

translation, and the right to information in criminal proceedings, we engaged with the Lithuanian Bar Association. During the round-table meeting with practicing attorneys, we identified key obstacles in legal regulations and proposed the Ministry of Justice and the Parliament the ways to remedy them.

- **Called for effective implementation of a right to a lawyer.** We urged the Ministry of Justice to address regulation adopted by the Prison Department in September 2014 which impedes a lawyer's access to his client in custody. In addition, we suggested explicitly introducing into the national law a right to communicate with a lawyer prior to the first questioning, and a right of the lawyer to actively participate in questionings.
- **Promoted high standards of fair trial on the EU-level.** Together with the JUSTICIA European Rights Network and the Legal Experts Advisory Panel of the Fair Trials International we participated in the process of developing new EU-level legal instruments: one on legal aid and one of the presumption of innocence. Directives and recommendations will be discussed in the EU Commission, the Council of the Parliament dialogues in 2015, and are expected to be adopted in 2016.
- **Analyzed the lessons learnt from the first year of parole reform.** Lithuania has the largest population of inmates in the EU - there are over 300 prisoners for every 100 thousand inhabitants. Along with issuing a report on the outcomes of parole reform and discussing it at a round-table with judges and parole commission representatives, we also intervened as a third party in a case before the ECHR where the applicants seek to challenge legal provisions barring prisoners sentenced to life from being released on parole. We highlighted this issue together with other shortcomings of the Lithuanian penal system in the shadow report submitted to the UN Committee against Torture.

Four thousand children in Lithuania are still living in large-scale orphanages, and their ranks are swelled by at least a thousand new arrivals each year.

Studies show that once a young child winds up in an orphanage, his or her development is disrupted irrevocably in just three to six months. Scientific advances helped understand the harm caused to children by such institutions, and because of this many countries in Western Europe have closed down large-scale orphanages decades ago.

However, child care reform in Lithuania – just like in many other post-communist countries – has stalled. Even though Lithuanian institutions have prepared a multitude of plans for programs and measures to be taken, any true reform lacks political will. In addition, EU Structural Funds, which are meant to promote cohesion and social inclusion, are being heavily invested in the renovation and maintenance of orphanages.

2.3. Rights of the Child



- **As a member of the *Coalition of Non-Governmental Organizations for the Rights of the Child* worked to defend child rights in a coordinated and holistic manner.** Together with thirteen other national child and disability rights organizations, we jointly voiced our concerns on negative developments in the area of child rights, including deinstitutionalization, family support, and prohibition of all forms of corporal punishment, and proposed a number of recommendations for improvement.
- **Monitored child care reform in Lithuania to ensure transparent and effective investment of EU structural funds.** Lithuanian practice shows that EU Structural Funds, which are meant to promote cohesion and social inclusion, are still heavily invested in the renovation and maintenance of orphanages. We have made a request to the Minister of Social Security and Labour and the Minister of Finance to provide information on how the funds are going to be distributed in the new 2014-2020 period. In mid-2014 we organized an international seminar with where the representatives of the European Commission and the EU Fundamental Rights Agency discussed with the state institutions and NGOs the requirements for transparent and effective use of the EU funds.
- **Led a nation-wide campaign “Country Without Orphanages”.** Throughout the year, we worked towards improving the lives of 4000 Lithuanian children living in large residential care institutions known as orphanages. We have been collecting signatures urging the Lithuanian government to invest in families instead of the upkeep of orphanages, which irrevocably damage children's development. The campaign received a considerable support from the public and by April 2014 campaign's website www.bevaikunamu.lt was awarded with the prestigious national internet award LOGIN.
- **Invited almost 200 candidates for the European Parliament to sign the European Child Rights Manifesto.** We drew the candidates' attention to the fact that around 600 million children worldwide are currently living in poverty - and of that number, one in four reside in the EU. In just a year, the number of children in the EU at risk of poverty or social exclusion grew by half a million.

- **Drew the attention of the UN Committee against Torture to conditions in children’s socialization centres previously known as “teen jails”.** In the alternative report submitted to the Committee we reported that even though the names of these institutions denote their educational and socialization goals, these are none the less closed institutions operating under strict regimes, and placement in them amounts to de facto detention. In its concluding observations, the Committee recommended the state to review the activities of the socialization centres and ensure prevention of rights violations.
- **Initiated the investigation of the Parliamentary Ombudsmen into the conditions in children’s socialization centers.** Drawing on the information received from an employee in one of the children’s socialization centers, we repeatedly addressed the Ombudsmen Office requesting to exercise its monitoring power and investigate child rights violations in the centers. The Ombudsmen opened the investigation in late 2014.

"Less favorable treatment of an employee due to pregnancy is considered to be direct discrimination on the basis of gender. And even though gender discrimination is forbidden in Lithuania, quite often we receive information that employers are doing just that. For example, career-minded men or single women are always prioritized; at the interview, a woman is often asked to disclose her marital status and her future family plans, while women that are pregnant or on maternity leave are fired without giving any justified reason for doing so," said HRMI Legal Director Jūratė Guzevičiūtė, commenting on the court's decision in this strategic case of the Human Rights Monitoring Institute.

In this case, the claimant was represented by lawyer Diana Gumbrevičiūtė-Kuzminskienė. "The award of 50,000 litas to compensate for material loss was adequate, effective, and will deter employers from discriminatory acts and help ensure the implementation of the principles of equal treatment and equal opportunity for men and women in the field of employment and professional activities," claimed Ms. Gumbrevičiūtė-Kuzminskienė.

2.4. Right to Equality



- **Contributed to the reform of the legal (in)capacity laws.** At the 2014 parliamentary hearings, we drew the attention of the authorities that a *de facto* full legal incapacity as well as full incapacity in certain areas are incompatible with the international obligations Lithuania has undertaken under the UN Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. We expect that the Parliament takes our position into account when discussing legal capacity reform package in early 2015.
- **Achieved a strategic victory in a dismissal case on behalf of a former employee of the Romanian embassy.** Fired right after informing the employer about her pregnancy, the former employee of the Romanian Embassy in Vilnius was one of the first women in Lithuania to challenge her discriminatory dismissal in court. Her case was successful and sets a precedent that will help other wrongfully terminated women.
- **Strengthened advocacy efforts in the area of mental health policy.** Together with fourteen other Lithuanian NGOs and experts we joined forces to establish a first-of-a-kind coalition "Mental Health 2030," which seeks to enshrine the principles of openness, transparency and human rights in the country's mental health system. The coalition supports widening the range of mental health services available, with priority given to the development of effective community-based psychosocial services.
- **Contributed to drafting the Law on Reproductive Health.** Throughout the year, we participated in the working group established by the Ministry of Health to draft the law regulating access to safe and legal termination of pregnancy, access to contraception, and other sexual health issues. It is expected that the draft law will be put for voting in 2015.
- **Coordinated a national campaign for safe abortion in Lithuania.** On the occasion of the Global Day of Action for Access to Safe and Legal Abortion, together with eight European civil society organizations we launched a petition addressed to the European Parliament. The goal is to achieve a resolution that would

eliminate barriers women face by guaranteeing that human rights standards related to the access to safe and legal abortion are respected by all member states.

- **Delivered several human rights trainings to foreigners residing in Lithuania.** Hosted by the centre PLUS, we provided foreigners with the information on remedies for human rights violations available in Lithuania and the most effective means to obtain them. Training participants were particularly interested in anti-discrimination, hate speech and criminal law frameworks.
- **Argued for transsexual persons' access to timely and adequate health care.** In 2007, in the case *L. v. Lithuania* the European Court of Human Rights ordered Lithuania to introduce implementing legislation to enable transgender persons to undergo gender-reassignment surgery and change his/her gender identification in official documents. Since all attempts to address the Government were in vain, we addressed the Council of Europe's Committee of Ministers, responsible for supervision of the implementation of the Court's judgments pointing out that 6 years after the Court's judgment, no steps were taken to remedy the legislative gap. Throughout the year, we achieved that L. case was moved to the enhanced supervision procedure, which means that Lithuania's efforts to implement the judgment will be assessed on quarterly basis, by 47 CoE member states.

Public opinion surveys in Lithuania indicate that in 45% of all cases, residents requesting official information from state institutions received only a partial or unsatisfactory response, while in 7% of all cases they received no response whatsoever. No less than 44% of all Lithuanian residents believe that currently, the proportion of information not disclosed or publicized by the state is too large.

Even the press, tasked as it is with providing accurate and high-quality information to the public in a timely manner, is not always able to access the information held by state institutions. According to the data from July 2014, the Seimas (Parliament) Ombudsmen's Office received 10 complaints from various media outlets in which journalists claimed that state institutions did not allow them to access the information requested and prevented them from carrying out their professional functions.

The full study [is available at HRMI website.](#)

2.5. Freedom of Expression and Information



- **Defended the right of journalists to have their sources protected.** After a scandal involving surveillance of 17 Baltic News Service journalists broke in Lithuania, we published expert opinion on the incompatibility of journalist wiretapping with the human rights standards and released an [advocacy video](#) on the Lithuanian case featuring comments by the leading international experts. Ultimately, in August the court has ruled that the wiretapping of BNS employees by law enforcement personnel was unlawful.
- **Provided expert opinion in the hate speech case.** Upon the request of the Trakai district court, we provided an overview of the ECtHR standards in hate speech cases and reminded of the state's obligation to investigate such crimes thoroughly.
- **Released the first of its kind study on access to information in Lithuania,** which revealed that the laws regulating access to information in Lithuania are more than a decade old and not up to par with latest standards in this field. We shared our findings with media outlets and state institutions during the roundtable convened by the Parliamentary Ombudsperson.
- **Defended freedom of artistic expression against disproportionate restrictions.** Acting in the interest of designer Robertas Kalinkinas, we submitted an application to the ECHR in response to restrictions on an advertising campaign for his clothing line in fall 2012. The designer was fined for "using religious symbols in a disrespectful and inappropriate manner" and the campaign was banned. We argued that this sanction, together with the contradictory interpretation of the Law on Advertising, unreasonably restricts the freedom of expression of both artists and businesspersons.

The PRISM spying scandal and Snowden revelations created a powerful European debate around the right to privacy. In the words of Viviane Reding, the former EU Commission vice-president, "People have been reminded of why data protection is important; of why a strong framework for the protection of personal data is a necessity, not a luxury."

In Lithuania privacy rights has never been much discussed and the "I have nothing to hide" argument is prevalent in the public debate.

In terms of rights awareness, 58% of Lithuanians consider that their level of knowledge on data protection as low, and 41% as average.

2.6. Right to Privacy and Digital Rights



- **Launched first of its kind "Digital Rights" initiative to better inform Lithuanian society on the new technological developments and their effects on our right to privacy.** Prepared in cooperation with the privacy expert Raminta Šulskutė, the series of on-line articles unfold new and often complicated developments in the IT and legal fields that have a direct effect on our private lives. We discuss the digital traces that users leave behind and that render their identities easily discoverable and hence prone to abuse; and the ways and means how to ensure users protection against it.
- **Provided extensive explanation on the "right to be forgotten".** After the CJEU judgment against Spain, where the court established a duty of the search engines to remove certain information upon the users' request, was adopted, we organized radio shows and released expert opinions explaining the implications of this right and the ways it can be used in Lithuania.
- **Challenged the decision of the Communications Regulatory Authority to collect bulk data.** The Authority released an order instructing internet service providers to release the data about the users' behavior online, including their IP addresses. We publicly contested that *de facto* surveillance of users' online activity is only lawful when conducted by the criminal intelligence bodies. The Authority has later invalidated their order and promised to consult privacy experts more extensively in the future.
- **Raised the issue of identity theft online.** On several occasions, we provided commentary regarding the instances of identity theft conducted by e.g. hacking private Facebook accounts, and legal regulation in this regards. We raised concerns about the fact that identity theft is not criminalized as a separate offence under the Lithuanian criminal law which results in its ineffective prosecution.

“Person to Person” („Žmogus žmogui“) is a weekly radio talk show hosted by HRMI on the “News Radio.” Initially launched in 2011 as a three-month project, it continued and became a weekly program which brings relevant human rights issues into public discourse.

Radio station News Radio (Žinių radijas) is broadcasting since March 2000. After more than 13 years the News Radio became known as one of the most expeditious and impartial media in Lithuania.

All “Person to Person” radio shows are [available on the News Radio website](#).

3. Spreading the Word



- **Ran a radio talk show *Person to Person* on the News radio.** Throughout 2014, we hosted a radio talk show exploring various human rights topics with thematic experts, civil society leaders, politicians and other guests. In 2014, we focused on the rights domestic violence victims, everyday struggles of persons living with HIV/AIDS, physical barriers impeding the life of the handicapped and spreading the idea of universal design, freedom of religion and its limits, rights of LGBT community, human rights developments in neighboring countries and many other pressing human rights issues.
- **Every month delivered a Human Rights Newsletter to 2000+ subscribers.** We redesigned our newsletter and continued disseminating it to provide updates on our activities and on the most pressing human rights issues and the latest legal and policy developments at the national and international level. [Click here](#) to subscribe to the English language human rights newsletter and receive monthly updates.
- **Contributed to a public debate with a series of op-eds in *Delfi.lt*.** HRMI Executive Director wrote a series of op-eds for the biggest online news outlet in Lithuania “Delfi” focusing on controversial and widely debated human rights issues in 2014, including Council of Europe response to Crimean crisis, human rights violations in psychiatric facilities in Lithuania, and Putin’s information war.

The Civic Solidarity Platform functions as a decentralized advocacy network of independent civic groups from across the OSCE region, including a core group of activists that have already engaged in efforts to improve cooperation among human rights organizations based in the US, Europe, and former Soviet Union.

The Civic Solidarity Platform was born out of recognition that non-government groups need to work in a more effective and coordinated way in order to counteract negative trends in the field of human rights and defense of democratic principles. During recent years, members have observed that narrowly defined state interests have prevailed over concern for human rights principles and democratic values in international politics, leading to public cynicism toward democratic institutions and impunity for governments that commit rights abuses.

HRMI is a founding member of the Civic Solidarity Platform.

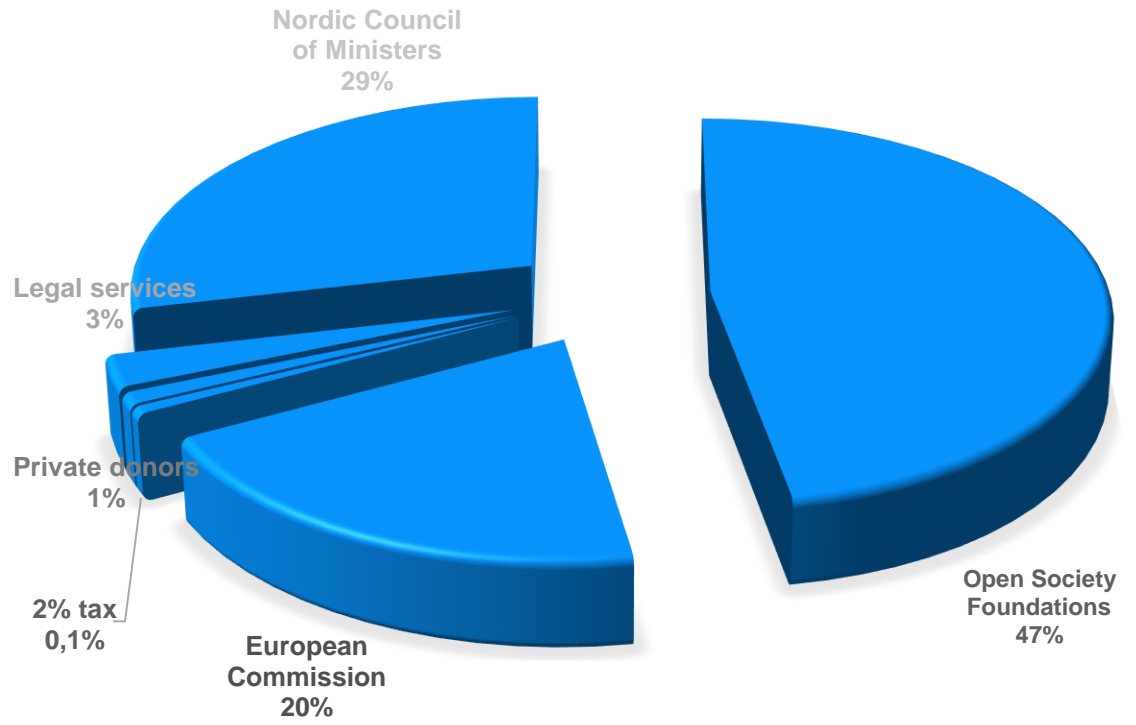
4. International Solidarity



In 2014, together with the Civic Solidarity Platform, we initiated four joint statements calling to bring to end human rights violations in Azerbaijan, Ukraine and Tajikistan:

- In January, we **expressed our solidarity with the human rights community of Ukraine** that has been calling for the protests to remain peaceful from the very first days of Euromaidan and to keep the priority of human rights in mind.
- In March, we joined the appeal to the OSCE, its participating States and other influential international actors **to take urgent actions to de-escalate this dangerous crisis situation in Ukraine**, ensure an end to Russia's de facto occupation of Crimea and prevent an expansion of the crisis to other regions of Ukraine.
- In November, we **joined the campaign "No more business as usual for Azerbaijan"** calling on Council of Europe to put real pressure on Azerbaijan government to immediately release all political prisoners imprisoned on unfounded charges. While Azerbaijan was chairing CoE, four human rights defenders including Anar Mammadli, Leyla Yunus, Rasul Jafarov and Intigam Aliyev, were unlawfully imprisoned.
- In November, called on the **government of Tajikistan to drop new restrictive draft legislation on NGOs** and to respect the right of NGOs to have unhindered access to funding for their work.

5. Income Statement



NGO PROGRAMME DEPARTMENT



Dovilė ŠAKALIENĖ
Managing Director



Tomas KUBILIUS
Programme Coordinator



Jovita VALEIKAITĖ
Communication Director



Vilma GABRIELIŪTĖ
Project Supervisor



Agnė GAISRĖ
Project Supervisor



Julija DAILIDENAITĖ
Administrative Officer

The NGO Programme Lithuania, funded by EEA Grants, is thematically focused on human rights and aims to build capacity of non-governmental organisations.

The NGOs in Lithuania are operating in an environment where the adoption of legislation does not necessarily reflect a commitment by the state to fully implement it, and the social and political attitudes towards rights-based reforms range from distrustful to openly hostile. It is therefore not surprising that, after considering the latest periodic report of Lithuania in July 2012, the UN Human Rights Committee urged the Government “to bridge the discernible gap between legal framework and social reality”. The Committee also rightly observed that without a strong commitment from the state human rights legislation and programming will be rendered ineffective, and urged to take necessary steps to bring “social and political attitudes in line with human rights for all Lithuanians”.

1. Priorities and Areas of Support

1.1. Areas of Support



Through the NGO Programme Lithuania, we support activities in the following areas:

- **Democracy and good governance support area** – includes promotion of democratic values, including enhancement of participatory democracy and active citizenship on the whole, as well as promotion of good governance, access to information and transparency.
- **Human rights support area** – includes promotion and protection of civil and political rights and freedoms and combating discrimination on all grounds (ethnic origin, religion, gender, sexual orientation, disability, age, etc.).
- **Vulnerable groups support area** – includes provision of welfare and basic services to vulnerable groups, where such services are not otherwise or not adequately provided by governmental institutions; also strengthening of membership-based NGOs representing these vulnerable groups. Under the framework of this Programme the target groups constituting vulnerable groups will be defined as:
 - children and youth at risk
 - people affected by HIV/AIDS
 - children with disabilities and/or mental disorders and their families
 - victims of trafficking and gender-based violence and/or domestic violence
- **Protection of the environment and climate change** – support to NGOs working in the field of environment protection, climate change and sustainable development (add'l area of support).

Launch of EEA Grants 2009-2014 NGO Programme Lithuania in January 2013 was very timely and played a critical role in providing human rights and environmental NGOs with the support and tools to sustain their independence and contribute to more active role of civil society in the policy- and decision-making processes.

Total funding throughout the Programme is EUR 4 640 664 or LTL 16 023 284, including EUR 134 000 (LTL 462 675) for the Fund for Bilateral Relations.

**In addition, activities targeting development of cooperation with municipalities to address the issues of domestic and gender-based violence as well as cooperation with civil society in Belarus are eligible under relevant outputs.*

1.2. Outcomes



By financially supporting Lithuanian non-governmental organizations, we aim to achieve a number of outcomes that overall reflect the objective of the NGO Programme Lithuania - *strengthened civil society development and enhanced contribution to social justice, democracy and sustainable development; and strengthened bilateral relationship between Lithuania and the Donor States – Norway, Iceland, and Liechtenstein.*

Outcomes for the NGO Programme Lithuania:

1. Active citizenship fostered
2. Increased involvement of NGOs in policy and decision-making processes with local, regional and national governments
3. Democratic values, including human rights, promoted*
4. Advocacy and watchdog role developed
5. Developed networks and coalitions of NGOs working in partnership
6. Strengthened capacity of NGOs and an enabling environment for the sector promoted
7. Provision of welfare and basic services to defined target groups increased
8. Empowerment of vulnerable groups

Outcomes for bilateral relations:

1. Increased cooperation
2. Shared results
3. Improved knowledge and mutual understanding

During the opening of the NGO Programme Lithuania, Mr Steinar Egil Hagen, the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs Deputy Director General responsible for EEA Grants, presented the Donors expectations of the Programme and highlighted the importance of human rights in NGO Programmes in all recipient countries including Lithuania. He emphasized the importance of tackling within the Programme such priority human rights issues as racism, extremism, xenophobia, homophobia, anti-Semitism, equal opportunities, domestic violence (including gender-based violence) and human trafficking.

1.3. Horizontal concerns



Horizontal concerns of the NGO Programme Lithuania are addressed under all relevant outcomes to the maximum extent. Horizontal concerns include:

Combating:

- Hate speech, hate crime and extremism,
- Racism and xenophobia,
- Homophobia,
- Anti-Semitism,
- Roma discrimination,
- Sexual harassment,
- Gender based violence and domestic violence,
- Human trafficking.

Fostering:

- Tolerance,
- Multicultural understanding.

Most of the projects of the 2nd open call started in Autumn 2014.

The aggregate numbers for all outputs planned within the Programme and selected by project promoters indicate that 29 (out of 35) output indicators will most likely be fully achieved or even exceeded significantly in several cases. FO has also actively promoted the inclusion of horizontal concerns into the project ideas and extensively discussed their meaning during 5 regional trainings for applicants, direct consultations and other communication channels.

We expect that supported NGOs shall make a significant contribution towards the overall objective of the NGO Programme Lithuania – strengthened civil society development and enhanced contribution to social justice, democracy and sustainable development; and strengthened bilateral relationship between Lithuania and the Donor States – Norway, Iceland, and Liechtenstein.

2. Achievements at a Glance

2.1. Second Open Call for Proposals



We announced the second call for project proposals in January 2014.

- **Number of applications received**
 - 148 small scale project applications
 - 97 large scale project concepts
 - 28 large scale project applications
- **Number of organizations involved in those applications**
 - More than 320 project promoters and partners
 - More than 100 associated partners
- **Total projects awarded – 22**
- **Ratio of supported vs received applications**
 - 22 out of 245 (9%)
- **Type and number of organizations supported during the 2nd call:**
 - 8 public policy NGOs
 - 3 service provider NGOs

- 11 mixed (public policy & service provision) NGOs
- **Top three outcomes of the 2nd call:**
 - **Outcome No. 7:** Provision of welfare and basic services to defined target groups increased
 - **Outcome No. 1:** Active citizenship fostered
 - **Outcome No. 6:** Strengthened capacity of NGOs and enabling environment for the sector promoted

These results may reflect the response to the Lithuanian NGO sector immediate needs presented in the Programme proposal and once already proved by results of 1st open call. Civil society actors indicate the need of urgent attention to issues of vulnerable groups as well as strive to strengthen their managerial capacity and financial sustainability, promote active citizenship and democratic values.

On the other hand, several “unpopular” outcomes may indicate that there are only few NGOs able and willing to commit to improving specific areas of NGO sector such as development of networks and coalitions, empowerment of vulnerable groups or strengthening of watchdog roles. This should be taken into account as a prerequisite for the future NGO sector funding programmes.

*Fund for Bilateral Relations
– EUR 134,000 was set
aside to form a dedicated
fund within the NGO
Programme.*

*The Fund operates two
support measures:*

*“Seed money” – for
establishment of contacts
and partnerships between
Lithuanian and EEA non-
governmental
organizations,*

*Networking – support for
mutual initiatives and
sharing of experience.*

2.2. Fund for Bilateral Relations



Number of awarded projects with Donor Project Partners during the 2nd open call

- 4 projects with Norwegian organizations
- 2 projects with Icelandic organizations

Number of awarded initiatives within the Fund for Bilateral Relations

- 2 aimed at cooperation with Norwegian organizations

Two bilateral matchmaking seminars organized:

- 15 Norwegian and 12 Icelandic organizations have participated
- More than 40 Lithuanian NGOs have participated

Currently we provide funding for 53 projects selected during the first and second calls for proposals.

Majority of the initiatives aim at combating poverty, promoting child rights, raising awareness on the avenues for human rights defense, addressing violence against women, building transparency initiatives, creating diverse and inclusive space for persons with different ethnic, religious, and other backgrounds.

Detailed project descriptions are available on the [EEA grants website](#).

To learn more individual project stories, visit [NGO Programme Lithuania website](#).

3. Initiatives We Support



1. Save the Children Lithuania, "Creating safe schools through the promotion of active citizenship and empowerment of the school community"
2. Coalition "I Can Live", "Ensuring service availability to people affected by HIV (including IDUs) and implementation of their rights"
3. Food Bank, "Stop Food Waste in Lithuania!"
4. Caritas Lithuania, "Lithuanian society against trafficking: the model of systematic approach"
5. Kaunas women society, "Women initiative against violence"
6. Centre for Equality Advancement, "Global Rights, Local Actions: Women's Voice for Progress"
7. Lithuanian Association of Families with Deaf and Hearing Impaired Children "Pagava", "Reduce Discrimination of Deaf Children and their Families"
8. NGO "Let's destroy", "Promoting tolerance, human rights and creating socially safe living environment for foreign nationals residing in Lithuania, "ESu"
9. Mental Health Perspectives, "Towards advocacy of Mental Health and Human Rights in Lithuania: the role of NGOs"

10. Children Support Centre, *“Creation and implementation of the model for early prevention and intervention work with families at risk in the municipalities of Lithuania”*
11. NGO “School of success”, *“Creating safe schools through the promotion of active citizenship and empowerment of the school community”*
12. Youth line, *“Strengthening of institutions providing children and youth emotional support and increase of services accessibility”*
13. National Institute for Social Integration, *“All different- All equal: Human rights, active participation and variety”*
14. Lithuanian Centre for Human Rights, *“My Rights – Active Participation”*
15. Lithuanian association of people with disabilities, *“Social Welfare Development, representing the rights of disabled people”*
16. NGO “Social action”, *“Social Volunteering Year”*
17. Lithuanian community of people with mental disability “Giedra”, *“Independent living homes model dissemination and protection of human rights in psychiatric hospitals”*
18. Lithuanian association “Gyvastis”, *“Gyvastis” capacity building and expanding of the volunteers network”*
19. US LT Alumni association, *“Ethnic Kitchen: Human Rights Advocacy Campaign to Combat Xenophobia, Racism, Sexism, and Ageism in Lithuania”*
20. Lithuanian multiple sclerosis union, *“Strong NGO network for life with multiple sclerosis”*
21. Baltic Environmental Forum, *“Strengthening the role of environmental NGOs in climate change policy-making”*
22. Lithuanian Jewish Community, *“„Bagel shop“: tolerance campaign against anti-Semitism and public hatred”*
23. Lithuanian children's foundation, *“NGO network for the empowerment of Roma community”*
24. Kaunas district Men's Crisis Centre, *“Better for all: work with violent men in a domestic environment – help for women and children, who are victims of violence”*
25. European Anti-Poverty Network Lithuania, *“The Mobilization of Civil Society in Lithuania To Address the Problems of Poverty and Social Exclusion”*
26. New Religions Research and Information Centre, *“Religious diversity awareness and its dissemination in Lithuania”*
27. SOS Children Villages Association in Lithuania, *“Sustained transition from children’s institutional care to family-based and community-based alternatives”*
28. Tolerant Youth Association, *“Promoting Friendly Society by strengthening the Role of NGO’s”*
29. Lithuanian welfare society of persons with mental disability “Viltis”, *“Temporary respite service – help and unfettered freedom for families raising persons with mental disability”*
30. Lithuanian Gay League (LGL), *“Towards Practical Implementation of LGBT Rights in Lithuania”*
31. Transparency international Lithuanian Chapter, *“Towards more transparent Lithuania”*
32. Trust in development, *“Strengthening of NGO Institutional Capacities within Advocacy for Humanitarian Actions”*
33. European Voluntary Service Association SALTES, *“Volunteering Network Strengthening in Lithuania”*
34. Oncohematological patients' association “Blood”, *“Volunteering program “Friends’ calendar”*
35. The Civil Society Institute, *“Conscious and active citizens' participation in public life”*
36. The Lithuanian Free Market Institute, *“Strengthening the advocacy of local communities and NGOs in the area of environment protection”*
37. Lithuanian Red Cross Society, *“Migration and Human Rights: Protection of Migrants’ Dignity”*
38. In Corpore, *“Connecting Voices”*

39. Lithuanian Forum for the Disabled, *„DIS(ability) vs PRO(bability) ENSURING the RIGHTS of People with Disabilities“*
40. Kaunas Women Employment Information Centre, *„WIP: Women Initiative for Parity“*
41. Association Lithuanian Bočiai Vilnius Chapter, *„Consolidating Sustainable Development of National Equality and Diversity Forum“*
42. Baltic Charity Foundation, *„Live in countryside – be aware of your worth“*
43. The Institute of Family Relations, *„Early identification, prevention and intervention of parent-child relationship alienation: an integrated model of support for families experiencing intra-parental post-divorce or separation conflict“*
44. Vilnius archdiocese Caritas, *„Development and improvement of integrated support for children at-risk and their families; victims of human trafficking and violence in Varena, Trakai, Salcininkai and Vilnius region municipalities“*
45. Lithuanian Pupils’ Union, *„Empowering school students in the creation of youth politics at regional and national level“*
46. Community Change Center, *„Strengthening of Belarusian Democratic NGOs, which Work from Lithuania“*
47. Vilnius Women’s House, *„Mobilizing the community and promotion of volunteering in responding to gender-based violence“*
48. Child Line, *„Quality improvement of voluntary emotional support for children and youth“*
49. Psychological support and counseling center, *„Expansion of services to risk families provided by NGO leveraging Norwegian experience“*
50. The Auxiliary Service of the Order of Malta, *„Strengthening of the performance of the Maltese Children Day care Centers“*
51. Welfare Society for Persons with Mental Disability „Vilniaus Viltis“, *„Innovative Social Services for Persons with Mental Disabilities“*
52. Kaunas Women’s Line, *„Women’s help line – I live so I could share“*
53. Studio of Social Innovations, *„I am here“*

Long-term NGO capacity building is one of the NGO Programme Lithuania pillars.

For selected project promoters we offer trainings on project monitoring, accounting and reporting, quality assurance, and project adjustment mechanisms.

Participants of the trainings also have a chance to consult our financial and communication experts and approach them any time in the course of the project implementation.

4. Building Capacity of Lithuanian Civil Society



To enable Lithuanian civil society organizations to perform their functions effectively and implement high quality activities under the NGO Programme Lithuania framework, in 2014 we implemented the following capacity-building strategy:

- Trained more than **200** applicants in **5** major Lithuanian cities on project development and preparation of applications. Besides regular clarification of Programme goals, guidelines and selection procedures, NGOs were given deeper insights into the needs and challenges of NGO sector in Lithuania. Special attention was given to improvement of project building and application drafting skills as the assessment of quality of applications of the 1st call revealed that the majority of NGOs misinterpret project structure and are more process- rather than results-oriented. In relation to this, results based management and risk management courses were conducted.
- Direct consultation of applicants was a continuous process, which enabled FO to address their specific needs and provide professional advice on improvement of quality of project structure: over **200** consultations were organized until the deadline for submission of applications.
- Consulted applicants on building local, cross-sectoral, Donor- and other partnerships, and organized a second matchmaking seminar for Lithuanian, Norwegian and Icelandic NGOs, which resulted in effective partnerships.
- Communication, project management and reporting trainings for project promoters of 2nd call for proposals conducted
- **2** Lithuanian NGOs were provided with opportunity and cost coverage to participate in World Forum for Democracy 2014 in Strasbourg. The key topic of the event – “From participation to influence: can youth revitalise democracy?”.

The NGO Programme Lithuania communication strategy pursues a double goal: to contribute to a clear understanding of the NGOs and their role in building a prosperous State with open society based on respect for fundamental rights and freedoms, and to raise awareness of the fundamental rights and freedoms through the consistent and diverse work performed by numerous NGOs and their cross-sectoral partners.

5. Communication and Outreach



We see communication as a key element of the NGO Programme Lithuania, and therefore throughout 2014, we:

- Organized communication trainings for project promoters were. 35 persons working with communication of NGOs they represent attended both trainings conducted by communication and public relations professionals and prominent journalists.
- Maintained NGO Programme webpage with continuous publication of news, relevant events, projects success stories and other useful information related to NGO Programme and NGO sector at large.
- Consulted and guided project promoters in creation of publicity content, reaching out to the media, establishing contacts with state institutions and politicians, communicating with target groups, etc.
- Consulted project promoters on technical and organizational issues of communication process.
- Prepared and aired 53 radio shows (1 per week, every Tuesday on News Radio), 38 of which were specifically dedicated to projects of NGO Programme.
- 11 project stories presented to FMO and announced at official EEA Grants webpage www.eeagrants.org, another 6 stories involving successful bilateral partnerships were presented and announced at NGO partnership portal <http://www.ngonorway.org>.
- 18 project success stories in Lithuanian and 15 in English announced at Programme's official webpage <http://nvoprograma.lt/lt/projektai/projektu-naujienos> (LT) and <http://nvoprograma.lt/en/projects/projects-news> (EN).
- 9 periodical newsletters prepared and disseminated to more than 500 subscribers in Lithuania. Newsletters inform receivers of areas and particular issues addressed by NGO Programme Lithuania and presents interesting interviews with prominent actors of Lithuanian society on unexpected but inspiring topics.

STRUCTURE AND CONTACTS

The Board



Leonidas DONSKIS

Chair of the Board

Philosopher, ISM Vice-President for Research, human rights and civil liberties defender, political commentator, former MEP.



Henrikas MICKEVIČIUS

Member

Lawyer, Founder of the Human Rights Monitoring Institute



Dalia FOIGT-NORVAIŠIENĖ

Member

Attorney-at-law, Partner at the Law firm *Borenius*



Arūnas PEMKUS

Member

PR Expert, Chair of the board at *Integrity PR*



Šarūnas LIEKIS

Member

Professor, Dean of the Faculty of Political Science and Diplomacy, Vytautas Magnus University

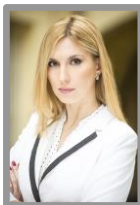
Staff Contacts

**Dovilė ŠAKALIENĖ**

Executive Director |
 NGO Programme Managing Director
dovile.sakaliene@hrmi.lt

**Henrikas MICKEVIČIUS**

Senior Legal Adviser |
 Human Rights Department
h.mickevicius@hrmi.lt

**Natalija BITIUKOVA**

Deputy Director |
 Human Rights Department
natalija.bitukova@hrmi.lt

**Jūratė GUZEVIČIŪTĖ**

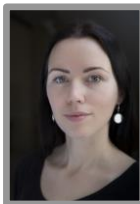
Legal Director |
 Human Rights Department
jurate.guzeviciute@hrmi.lt

**Mėta ADUTAVIČIŪTĖ**

Legal and Policy Adviser |
 Human Rights Department
meta.adutaviciute@hrmi.lt

**Karolis LIUTKEVIČIUS**

Legal Officer |
 Human Rights Department
k.liutkevicius@hrmi.lt

**Julija DAILIDENAITĖ**

Communication Assistant |
 Administrative Officer
julija.dailidenaite@hrmi.lt

**Tomas KUBILIUS**

Programme Coordinator |
 NGO Programme Department
tomas.kubilius@nvoprograma.lt

**Jovita VALEIKAITĖ**

Communication Director |
 NGO Programme Department
jovita.valeikaite@nvoprograma.lt

**Vilma GABRIELIŪTĖ**

Project Supervisor |
 NGO Programme Department
vilma.gabrieliute@nvoprograma.lt

**Agnė GAISRĖ**

Project Supervisor |
 NGO Programme Department
agne.gaisre@nvoprograma.lt

WE ARE GRATEFUL

We are grateful to our volunteers and interns who invested their time and energy to help us promoting an open democratic society through the implementation of human rights and freedoms. We truly value your commitment and dedication.

THANK YOU,

- Fausta Šimonėlytė,
- Jurgita Nemeikšytė,
- Laura Matelionytė,
- Marija Fedotovaitė,
- Martynas Šilgalis,
- Raminta Šulskutė,
- Tomas Asminavičius,
- Vincent Hauquier,
- Vytautas Klimas,
- Vytautė Janušaitytė.



"I discovered my interest for human rights in high school and since then working in this field has been one of my biggest wish. Taking an internship at Human Rights Monitoring Institute was one of the greatest experiences, which gave me an opportunity to take a big step forward to fulfill my dream.

During my internship time I had a chance to participate in a lot of activities, which required me not only to use my legal knowledge, but also to be more creative and open minded. The people I worked with helped me to learn a lot of things, but the biggest lesson they thought me - you have to love your job and be passionate about it. I have never seen before so many people who has such a strong faith in the things they do and I really hope that this atmosphere will stay there forever."

- Fausta Šimonėlytė,
student of Law (Vilnius University)

PHOTO CREDITS

- Pg. 05 HRMI Executive Director Dovilė Šakalienė and HRMI Chair of the Board Leonidas Donskis announcing Linas Linkevičius, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Lithuania, a 2014 Human Rights Champion.
- Pg. 07 Illustration by Liberties.eu/David Szebenyi.
- Pg. 09 “Pre-trial detention: a story of one person”. Video is available on Youtube: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kCreZ_k-27Q
- Pg. 11 Illustration by Liberties.eu/David Szebenyi.
- Pg. 13 HRMI representative delivering human rights trainings to foreigners residing in Lithuania @ centre PLUS.
- Pg. 15 Commercial advertising for designer’s Robertas Kalinkinas line of clothes.
- Pg. 16 Illustration by Liberties.eu/David Szebenyi.
- Pg. 17 HRMI Communication Director Jovita Valeikaitė hosting a radio show “Person to Person”.
- Pg. 18 Protest against political repressions in Azerbaijan at the BP’s International HQ in London. *Photo courtesy – Platformlondon.org.*
- Pg. 21 NGO “School of success”, project “Creating safe schools through the promotion of active citizenship and empowerment of the school community”.
- Pg. 22 Coalition “I Can Live”, project “Ensuring service availability to people affected by HIV (including IDUs) and implementation of their rights”.
- Pg. 23 Food Bank, project “Stop Food Waste in Lithuania!”
- Pg. 24 Lithuanian association of people with disabilities, project “Social Welfare Development, representing the rights of disabled people”.
- Pg. 26 HRMI organized international seminar with where the representatives of the European Commission and the EU Fundamental Rights Agency discussed with the state institutions and NGOs the requirements for transparent and effective use of the EU funds in the deinstitutionalization process.
- Pg. 27 Lithuanian association “Gyvastis”, project “Gyvastis” capacity building and expanding of the volunteers network”.
- Pg. 30 Capacity-building seminar organized by the NGO Programme Lithuania for the project promoters.
- Pg. 31 SOS Children Villages Association in Lithuania, project “Sustained transition from children’s institutional care to family-based and community-based alternatives”.