**EDUCATION CENTRE** For pupils, students, and everyone

8

INITIATIVES
Respect for
Taxpayers Day

GOVERNMENT WATCH
Reducing tax burden

STRONG INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

16

20

34



2017



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### **Contents**



### 1. Education Centre

1.1. International recognition 1.2. For pupils, students, and everyone



### 2. Initiatives

- 2.1. Scarcity, Morality and Public Policy
- 2.2. Municipal Performance Index
- 2.3. Shadow economy research
- 2.4. Employment Flexibility Index
- 2.5. Respect for Taxpayers Day 2.6. Know Your Taxes

p. 10



### 3. Government Watch

- 3.1. Reducing tax burden
- 3.2. Advocating lower and more effective public expenditure
- 3.3. Reducing regulatory and bureaucratic burden
- 3.4. Fostering competition
- 3.5. Increasing choice for patients
- 3.6. Promoting flexible labour relations
- 3.7. Supporting targeted social policies

p. 18



5. Policy solutions

p. 32



6. Strong international partnerships

p. 34

p. 6



4. A broad and targeted communication

p. 30

### Thank you for your investment in 2017

If individuals create a country, if *e pluribus unum*, then why the right of a group of people to decide how to live is so highly respected while it is almost completely disregarded in case of an individual?

Agrologistika Agrorodeo Amilina Arkada

Acme grupė

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Lietuvos keliai asociacija

Lifosa Linas Agro Litagra Lytagra Lotos Geonafta

LW Logistics Mantinga Mars Lietuva Maxima LT MDI Transport

Morita

Mums rūpi VŠĮ

Nemuno banga

Nemuno vaistinė

Novogaming

Olifėja Op Corporate Bank Orlen Lietuva

P. Varkojis ir kompanija

Panevėžio statybos trestas

Raminora Ryterna

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Šiaulių žemės ūkio technika Tarptautinė statybos

korporacija

Vilsota

Vakarų medienos grupė

Vėtrija Viking Malt Vilniaus prekyba Vilnoja visuomeninė organizacija

Viltis-Vikonda labdaros ir paramos fondas



In 2018, Lithuania celebrated the centenary of the restoration of its independence. The (re) birth of Lithuania was only possible because it refused to compromise on its freedom in 1918 and 1990, choosing not to live under German and Soviet occupation. Freedom is too precious to compromise on.

However, if the freedom of a country is the noblest objective in line with the highest morals, why does the freedom of an individual have a lower moral weight? Why is fighting for the freedom of a country noble, while protecting the freedom of an individual – selfish?

If individuals create a country, if e pluribus unum, then why the right of a group of people to decide how to live is so highly respected while it is almost completely disregarded in case of an individual?

The history of Lithuania has shown that a country can survive in people's hearts and minds even the darkest times. However, should a free country stand in the way of individual freedom?

This is not about social norms or taxes that are necessary to meet the basic needs of a country.
Rather, this is about a discussion whether an adult may decide upon what and how much to eat. Is it the right way to celebrate our centenary?

LFMI's mission for the next century is based on individual freedom – freedom of thought, freedom to act and freedom to make a decision. Though it does not ensure well-being, freedom empowers an individual. It makes the dividing line between well-fed slaves and free men, and between a Soviet state and an independent Lithuania.

Let us devote the next 100 years to the protection and defence of individual freedom. We will be a government watchdog, the herald of reforms, and the centre of education.

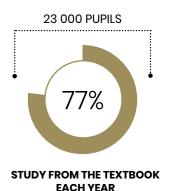
### Žilvinas Šilėnas

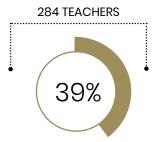
PRESIDENT, LITHUANIAN FREE MARKET INSTITUTE

### International recognition

Distinguished for its pedagogical value and practicality, in 2017 the textbook Economics in 31 Hours received the Educational Learning Resources Award in the London Book Fair's International Excellence Awards. In 2016 the textbook received a prestigious Templeton Freedom Award.







REACHED THROUGH PROFESSIONAL TRAINING AND THE INTERACTIVE **TEACHERS' MANUAL** 



"I've learned how far-reaching economics is. Having learned from Economics in 31 Hours, I am able not only to understand and evaluate information critically, but also to make rational economic decisions."

Greta Gudauskaitė STUDENT, VILNIUS GABIJA GYM-NASIUM

**ACCORDING TO THEBESTSCHOOLS.** ORG. IN 2017 LFMI RANKED 35TH AMONG **TOP 50 PLACES IN THE WORLD TO** STUDY CLASSICAL ECONOMICS.

The Institute was distinguished for the success of Economics in 31 Hours, partnership with the Atlas Network, an extensive library, and publishing work.



Having learned from the textbook, the majority of students changed their perception of economics. They have realized that economics is about human action in the world of scarce resources rather than consumerism.

LFMI surveys



The textbook will reach students in Georgia, Ukraine, Romania, and Bosnia and Herzegovina. Educational resources are being piloted in Canada.



"A single textbook, teacher or student can change the future. Our vision of an independent society fuels our motivation more than awards and recognition. The best yet hardest way to build a free society is through teaching independent thinking."

Marija Vyšniauskaitė HEAD OF EDUCATION CENTRE

# For pupils, students and everyone

LECTURES FOR STUDENTS OF ECONOMICS AND POLITICAL SCIENCES.



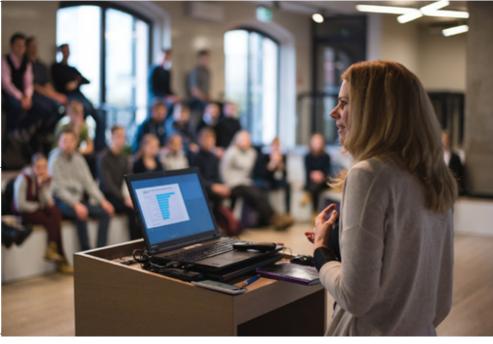
Our international project on integrated social education fosters independent thought and critical thinking among young people in the Baltics. Together with Estonian, Latvian and Finnish partners, we are developing a course on integrated economics, ethics and citizenship education. Our resources encourage students to think critically and independently in addressing an array of social issues such as poverty, consumerism, propaganda, and migration.

32

open lectures

1962

teachers, pupils, and students





Follow

**#LT** textbook '**#Economics** in 31 hours' - the best in the world! Textbooks come first, reality follows next;)



Lithuanian Free Market Institute 'Economics in 31 Hours' textbook wins 2... In high schools across the world, most students graduate without any exposure to the concepts of market economics. The Lithuanian Free Market Institute (LFMI), ....

### **100** articles and quotations in the media

Educating the public about the importance of economic literacy and critical thinking.



Piloting in

30 schools
with 90 teachers
and 2 000 pupils.



"Our ambition is to embed a holistic approach to social issues in school and informal education. We understand that personal development extends far beyond school and university; therefore, we aim to reach as many people as possible. Pupils, students and everyone interested in economics will have a chance to take our national economics exam."

### **Marija Vyšniauskaitė** HEAD OF EDUCATION CENTRE

2. INITIATIVES

## Scarcity, Morality and Public Policy



For the first time in scholarly research the phenomenon of scarcity has been taken out from academic peripheries to the center of analysis and thoroughly explored from the perspectives of social sciences and the humanities. including philosophy, theology, psychology, anthropology, sociology, and economics.



"Scarcity is not merely an economic phenomenon. It is a universal phenomenon intrinsic to the material world, manifesting in the lack of spirituality, unity, knowledge, etc. The understanding that scarcity is the catalyst for change and human progress liberates a person."

Elena Leontjeva PROJECT LEADER







"Capturing and visualizing the phenomenon of scarcity was no easy task for the production team. Philosophy documentary is especially rare in Lithuania, but we hope to succeed and draw the attention of the intellectually curious."

Kęstutis Drazdauskas PRODUCER



Our innovative project "Scarcity, Morality and Public Policy" approached the finish line as we completed shooting the documentary "The Phenomenon of Scarcity", featuring research results and insights from different disciplines. Members of our interdisciplinary team - project leader Elena Leontjeva, bishop Kęstutis Kėvalas, Prof. Mikas Vengris, Prof. Paulius Subačius, philosophers Prof. Albinas

Plėšnys and Dr. Naglis Kardelis, economist Žilvinas Šilėnas, anthropologist Saulius Matulevičius, psichologist Rita Rekašiūtė Balsienė, and others – will unfold the importance of the phenomenon of scarcity from an array of ten disciplines. The documentary is directed by Gintautas Smilga and Ramūnas Aušrotas and produced by Kęstutis Drazdauskas.



We held two colloquia on cultural and moral consequences of government regulation in Prague and Potsdam, attracting representatives of 32 think tanks from 15 European countries.

We established Vilnius Club for the inquiry into the relationship between freedom, economics and morality.

We presented our interdisciplinary research and publication the Phenomenon of Scarcity: Being, Man and Community in Vilnius Book Fair. 04

We published a handbook on public policy analysis Government Against Scarcity: How it Changes Who We Are, focusing on labor relations, consumption habits and social support. We disseminated the handbook to over 50 think tanks worldwide and presented it to intellectuals and members of the European liberty movement during Atlas Network's Europe Liberty Forum in Hungary and Freedom Games 2017 in Poland.

### Municipal Performance Index

In 2017 we released the seventh edition of Lithuania's Municipal Performance Index. Our comprehensive annual research report on the performance of Lithuanian municipalities is a benchmark for policy reforms in local governance that allows municipalities to compare their performance and improve their services by adopting best practices.

### KĖDAINIAI DISTRICT

### Saulius Grinkevičius

MAYOR OF KEDAINIAI DIS-TRICT MUNICIPALITY (WWW.KEDAINIAI.LT, 2017 10 31)

"The index revealed both the strengths and weaknesses of our municipality. I think we should work and continue to improve."

### MAŽEIKIAI DISTRICT

### **Antanas Tenys**

MAYOR OF MAŽEIKIAI DIS-TRICT MUNICIPALITY (SAN-TARVĖ, 2017 10 31)

### KAUNAS DISTRICT

### Valerijus Makūnas

MAYOR OF KAUNAS DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY (SAVIVALDYBIŲ ŽINIOS, 2017 11 11)

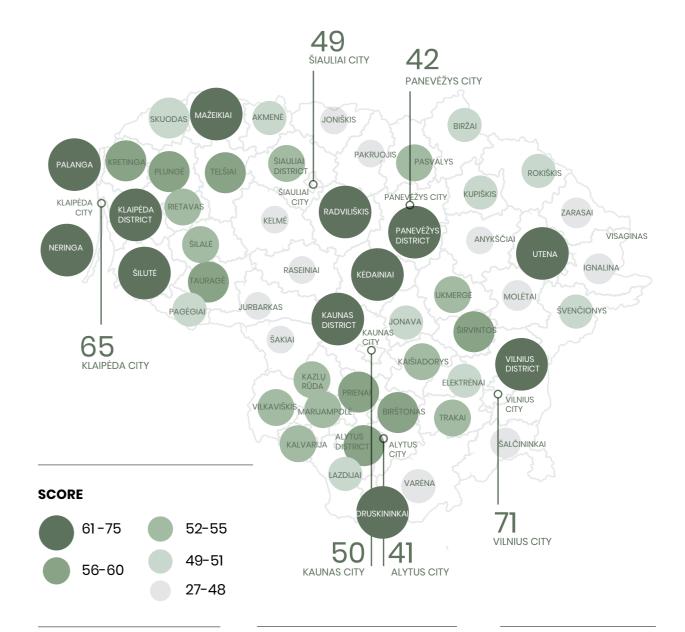
"Independent research helps to take a closer look at the performance of our municipality and to improve it."

### NERINGA DISTRICT

### **Darius Jasaitis**

MAYOR OF NERINGA MUNIC-IPALITY (VAKARŲ EKSPRESAS, 2017 12 07)

"According to LFMI, we



### DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY **RANKINGS**

... . . . . . .

#1	KLAIPEDA
#2	KAUNAS
#3	PALANGA
# 4-5	DRUSKININKAI
	MAŽEIKIAI
#6	VILNIUS
# 7-11	KĖDAINIAI
	NERINGA

**PANEVĖŽYS** 

**RADVILIŠKIS** 

ŠILUTĖ

### **RECOGNISED**

Over 300 media appearances and quotations by editors and opinion leaders.

### **IMPACTFUL**

A benchmark widely used by municipal governments in implementing reforms and reporting to electorate.

### **INTERNATIONAL**

The Municipal Performance Index was implemented in Kenya, Georgia and Greece and is currently under development in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

### **CITY MUNICIPALITY RANKINGS**

#1 VILNIUS

#2 KLAIPĖDA

#3 KAUNAS

#4 ŠIAULIAI

#5 PANEVĖŽYS

#6 ALYTUS



2.4.

# Shadow economy research

LFMI has been doing research on shadow economy for over a decade. In 2017 we continued our research together with a renowed expert Dr Friedrich Schneider and think tanks from Latvia, Estonia, Poland, Sweden and Finland.

We are recognized experts in the field of shadow economy.

Our recent study on illegal alcohol and tobacco trade in Lithuania revealed that largely due to ill-founded policies and political decisions shadow economy in Lithuania is back on the rise.



"Shadow economy will remain widespread unless the conditions for legal activity are improved. At least a third of measures against shadow economy should focus on improving those conditions. Regrettably, today's policies are different"



## **Employment Flexibility Index**

### Employment Flexibility Index 2018

DENMARK	96,9
USA	92,4
JAPAN	91,0
GREAT BRITAIN	83,2
CANADA	82,6
IRELAND	82,1
NEW ZELAND	81,1
CZECH REPUBLIC	80,3
BULGARIA	79,6
SWITZERLAND	79
MALTA	77,5
ICELAND	74,9
ITALY	74,3
HUNGARY	72,5
LITHUANIA (NEW LABOUR CODE)	70,3
CYPRUS	70,2
AUSTRIA	69,1
LATVIA	68,3
BELGIUM	68,2
ISRAEL	68
NORWAY	63,9
ROMANIA	63,9
GERMANY	63,5
CHILE	62,4
SPAIN	60,8
SLOVAKIA	60,7
LITHUANIA (OLD LABOUR CODE)	60,6
ESTONIA	59
SWEDEN	57,7
POLAND	57,5
THE NETHERLANDS	56,5
FINLAND	55,4
SLOVENIA	52,9
CROATIA	51,2
GREECE	50,6
TURKEY	48,3
KOREA	46,2
PORTUGAL	45,5
MEXICO	45,1
LUXEMBOURG	43,6
FRANCE	39,4

In cooperation with think tanks in Poland, Slovakia, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic and Estonia we have developed and launched Employment Flexibility Index 2018.

The Employment Flexibility Index of EU and OECD countries is based on the World Bank's Doing Business methodology and data, and is prepared in cooperation with Simeon Djankov, author of the Doing Business report.

14

media outlets published the index in 2017

380

media quotations on labour regulation issues

"Employment flexibility is particularly important to the economy. Our index and research promote well-informed policy debates and sound policy solutions to increase the competitives of Lithuania".

Jurgita Čyžiūtė POLICY ANALYST, LFMI 10

think tanks across Europe use the Employment Flexibility Index as a reference point in their research and advocacy

### LONG-TERM RESEARCH

We are conducting comparative studies on hiring, working time and redundancy regulation in CEE countries

### 2.5.

## Respect for Taxpayers Day

The 11th of May became the official Respect for Taxpayers Day in Lithuania as both Seimas and the President upheld LFMI's petition in late 2017.



It will honour taxpayers and their contribution to the state as well as educate the public on how much tax they pay and how their taxes are spent by the government. This landmark achievement has received international recognition, featuring in the news of Atlas Network and World Taxpayers Association.

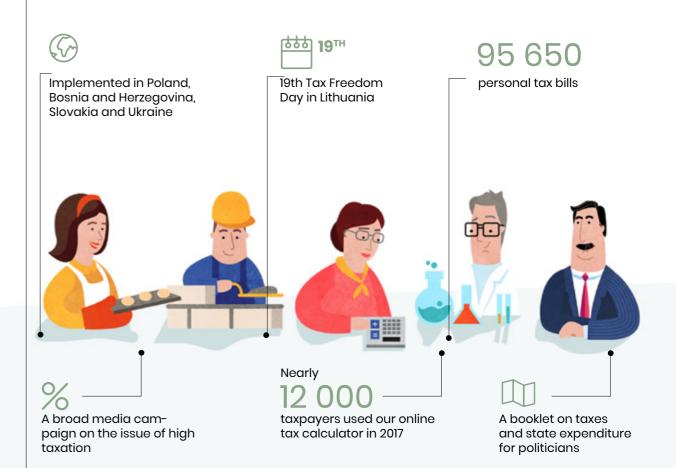


"The Respect for Taxpayers Day is an opportunity to show our gratitude to those who support our country and to remind policians about their responsibility. Taxpayers are largely neglected group in Lithuania, but they are exactly those who the government should fear the most. Politicians and authorities should be constantly asking themselves about what else they can do to serve those who create the well-being of our country."

Žilvinas Šilėnas



## Laces Know Your Taxes





"There have been plans to reduce labour taxation which is extremely high in Lithuania. That is a good approach, but let's not forget to reduce VAT to the former 18 percent which was temporarily increased during the crisis."

**leva Valeškaitė** POLICY EXPERT, LFMI

### Government Watch



3 360 media

appearances.

# Polic ons

draft legislation.

94 position notes.

9 policy papers.

"We have to act in defence of economic freedom. It is the most attacked freedom of all in today's democracies threatened by regulation and public spending. Think tanks such as LFMI are vital to an effective fight against bad policies. Excellence and creativity are the key drivers of change. Let's stop attempting to foresee policies, let's influ-

Leszekas Balcerowiczius POLISH ECONOMIST



"We seek to be the first to react to, review, and evaluate policies so to prevent harmful decisions and support positive reforms and initiatives. Being one step ahead in proposing policy solutions for a prosperous Lithuania is our daily target."

Edita Maslauskaitė VICE PRESIDENT, LFMI

### **(1)** Govern

A team of policy experts analyse public policies and draft legislation on a daily basis, providing extensive reviews and policy

Our areas of expertise include security and pension reform, private property protection, regulation policy, paternalist policy, health, education, and



566 legal acts analysed.

S

policy makers and other stakeholders.

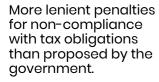
# Reducing tax burdern

### **KEY ACHIEVEMENTS:**

Higher tax-exempt income threshold.

3. GOVERNMENT WATCH

A rejection of the proposal to introduce a universal requirement to declare assets.



A rejection of the proposal to reduce VAT-exempt income threshold for business lincese holders.

No increases in reduced VAT rates for hotel services, central heating, pharmaceuticals, etc.

Twice as high taxable income threshold for self-employed individuals than propsed by the government.



"The promotion of lower taxation, accountable governance and transparent and efficient public finance is our daily business. As the government is more and more tempted to take even more money out of taxpayers' pockets, we act as a watchdog of ill-founded policies."

Žilvinas Šilėnas PRESIDENT, LFMI



1950 media appearances on taxation





original analyses of draft legislation







Autorius: Žilvinas Šilėnas

Jei mokesčiai būtų įtraukti i standartini vartotoio



### Reducing tax burden

### **CORE TARGETS:**

Unified social security contributions for more transparency in the tax system.

An upper limit on social security contributions.



Zero tax on reinvested profit.

No sugar and fat taxes.

Flat tax rates.

Lower social security contributions.

Transparent, effective and responsible use of public finance.



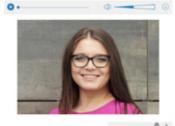
"The government should start making decisive steps. The unification of the tax base for social security contributions leading to a simple and more transparent tax system might be the first one. Then they could move on to review tax tariffs and financial aid policies."

leva Valeškaitė Policy expert, LFMI



analyses of draft legislation





Valdžios parengtoje mokesčių pertvarkoje vanizos parengoje morescu pertvarioje numatoma daug naujienų savarankiškai dirbantiems asmenims. Įgyvendinus valdžios planus, vieniems gyventojams mokesčių našta turėtų palengėti, tačiau kitiems teks daugiau atseikėti mokesčiams.









12 000 taxpayers calculated their tax burden at mokumokescius.lt.







problemomis lieka deficitas, išlaidų ribojimo taisyklių apėjimas, skola. O kas **5.**2.

# Advocating lower and more effective public expenditure

Reducing regulatory and bureaucratic burden

We were actively engaged in 2018 budgetary negotiations, drawing attention to key fiscal challenges, including public deficit and debt, high taxes and circumvention of measures to contain expenditure.

Our analysis of state expenditure on general public services revealed inefficient public spending areas in the bureaucratic apparatus of the state.

Our position paper on the future of EU finance, calling for a fundamental budgetary reform for a prosperous European Union was supported by eight renowed public policy think tanks from across Europe.



"We should not be afraid of asking why is the quality of public services so low while the government is so expensive. Indeed, authorities make mistakes on a daily basis, but our action can change that. We should keep calling for more transparency and accountability to move things forward."

**Aistė Čepukaitė,** POLICY ANALYST, LFMI Our policy proposals and work to streamline the process of getting construction permits and electricity connection paid off in terms of improved business climate, allowing Lithuania to claim 16th position in the World Bank's Doing Business rankings.

Our comprehensive review of a policy proposal on introducing a mandatory registration of all pre-paid SIM cards had a significant contribution to the prevention of additional regulatory burden on businesses.

Our idea to substitute prohibitations with permissions was the most popular in its category in the contest Idea for Lithuania.

Our open letter on the posting of workers in the European Union, calling on EU decision-makers to refrain from protectionist policies was undersigned by fifteen public policy think tanks from across Europe.



"Having killed personal initiative, we will have a society living on benefits and charity instead of strong, active and creative citizens. The government should stay out of the way and empower its citizens. I can guarantee that it would be the best program to promote economic prosperity in Lithuania."

**Žilvinas Šilėnas,** PRESIDENT, LFMI

# Fostering competition

Safeguarding competition and standing against state-owned businesses, in 2017 LFMI:

- acted upon the proposal to allow municipalities to engage in any business activity;
- publicized government's aspirations to build state-owned internet infrastructure whereby distorting one of the most competitive markets in Europe;
- revealed that the majority of state-owned IT&T service providers directly compete with private businesses, provide low quality service and operate inefficiently;
- advocated against privileges of state- and municipality-owned enterprises, resulting in a prohibition of internal deals between state-owned companies and their subsidiaries;
- supported the introduction of higher income threshold in merger regulation beyond which companies should obtain a concentration permit from the Competition Council;
- called for embracing an explicit reference to the principle of competition in the draft National Energy Strategy.



"Municipal enterprises should be allowed to provide services only temporarily, in exceptional cases and under special circumstances. Private businesses may solve many problems."

Gintarė

Deržanauskienė

POLICY ANALYST, LFMI

## Increasing choice for patients

We put forward alternatives to "the cheapest drug policy", pointing at specific regulations that prevent drug prices from falling. We emphasized that neither "the cheapest drug policy" nor "mystery shoppers" in pharmacies will help create a sustainable, efficient and quality-oriented healthcare system.

We advocated against a proposal to allow hospital pharmacies to engage in retail trade in pharmaceuticals, emphasizing a potential threat to fair market competition and efficient and targeted use of public finance allocated for the provision of healthcare services.



"Recent decisions taken by the Ministry of Health demonstrate distrust in the health care sector. Decisions made in such athmosphere of distrust may paralyse the whole health care system."

**Edita Maslauskaitė** VICE PRESIDENT. LFMI

### 3.6.

# Promoting flexible labour relations

# Supporting targeted social policies



Concrete policy proposals for facilitating employment processes of non-EU nationals.

Rigorous arguments against stringent regulation of fixed-term employment contracts and in favor of more flexibility in the new Labor Code.

Sound arguments against increasing the minimum wage to 500 euro.



"Flexible labour relations are key in attracting investment, job creation, and productivity and income growth."

**Jurgita Čyžiūtė**POLICY ANALYST. LFMI

We put forward arguments against ill-founded, expensive and inefficient social welfare policies, including universal child benefits, support for housing in regional cities and others that are provided without conducting a means test.

Teikėme argumentus, kad socialinės politikos sprendimai, tokie kaip vaiko išmokos, parama būstui įsigyti šeimoms regionuose ir kiti, kurie priimami neatsižvelgiant į gyventojų turimas pajamas ir turtą, neproporcingai didina biudžeto išlaidas, socialines problemas sprendžia netaikliai.

We pointed at negative consequences of generous longterm unemployment benefits and other social welfare payments that disincentivize reintegration into the labor market.

In light of the plans to reform the pension system, we emphasized the importance of personal pensions and the need of sound policies that would promote personal pension schemes in Lithuania as well as create incentives for people to choose them.

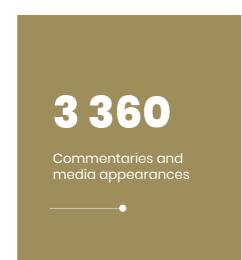


"Social policies should be targeted to actually address the issues of those in need. There should be space for private initiative and charity."

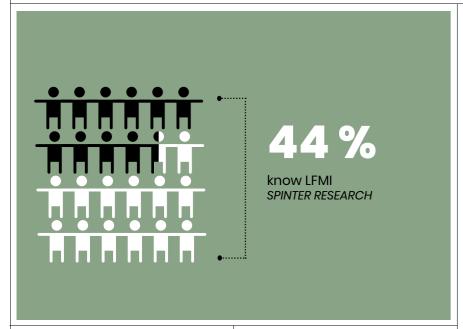
**Edita Maslauskaitė** VICE PRESIDENT. LFMI

### 6.

# A broad and targeted communication





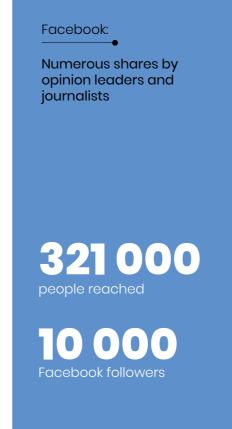
















### Policy solutions

### Diverse stakeholders – different products

STATE **EXPENDITURE ON GENERAL PUBLIC SERVICES:** THE CASE OF

LITHUANIA

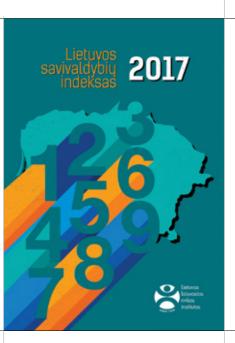


**PATERNALIST FOOD POLICIES.** 

A COMPARATIVE **ANALYSIS** 

**KOL PERSKAITYSITE** ŠIĄ TRUMPĄ ANTRAŠTĘ, LIETUVOS **VALDŽIA IŠLEIS** 3308 EURUS

COMMERCIAL **ACTIVITIES OF MUNICIPAL ENTERPRISES** 



**DISCREPANCIES** IN EDUCATION **INFRASTRUCTURE AND FINANCING** 

**COMPARING LABOUR CODES BASED ON DOING BUSINESS METHODOLOGY** 

WAGES, **UNEMPLOYMENT AND SOCIAL BENEFITS ACROSS MUNICIPALITIES** 

STATE **PARTICIPATION IN** THE PROVISION OF **ICT SERVICES** 

### Strong international partnerships

**OVER 10 000 EU OPINION LEADERS AND POLICY MAKERS REACHED THANKS** TO EUROPEAN THINK TANK **NETWORKS.** 

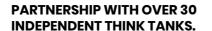


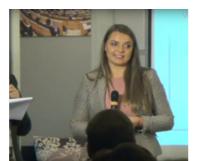
↑ World Taxpayers Association regional conference in Zagreb

international projects implemented

presentations to international events abroad







↑ A conference on tax competitiveness in Riga



↑ Atlas Network's Vice President Tom G. Palmer presents LFMI's handbook Government Against Scarcity: How it Changes Who We Are at Freedom Games in Budapest

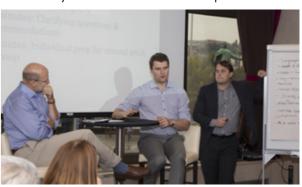








↑ LFMI present its research project Scarcity, Morality and Public Policy at Freedom Games in Budapest



↑ CEO summit of European think tanks in Budapest



"According to the Global Go to Think Tank Index by the University of Pennsylvania, LFMI is the best public policy think tank in Central and Eastern Europe among those promoting economic freedom. We among top 60 independent, non-partisan, privately funded think tanks in the world."

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