

## **DECISIONS OF THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF LITHUANIA RELATED TO MITIGATION OF COVID-19 NEGATIVE EFFECTS**

The Government of the Republic of Lithuania (hereinafter - the Government) has approved the Economic and financial action plan for COVID-19 (hereinafter referred to as the Plan) on the 16th of March 2020. It is planned to allocate 10% from the gross domestic product of the Republic of Lithuania for the implementation of all planned measures, it will amount to 5 billion euros. The plan covers five areas:

1. Ensuring the necessary resources for the efficient operation of health and public protection systems. The focus is on the purchase of personal protective equipment, reagents, medical and other equipment. The plan also provides additional funding for health care, including staff salary supplements and additional social guarantees for health care workers and officials working in COVID-19 outbreaks. In addition, additional funding is provided for public authorities involved in emergency management, including staff salary supplements. It also provides solutions for faster and simpler public procurement processes, which are necessary to ensure public health protection during an emergency. It is planned to allocate Eur 500 million for the implementation of these measures.

2. Preservation of jobs and personal income of residents. The plan allocates Eur 500 million to save jobs and income. In case of downtime and partial downtime, the following support is provided:

- 70 percent from the salary accrued to the employee, but not more than 1.5 Minimum monthly salaries (hereinafter - MMA), equal to EUR 910.5 gross.
- 90 percent. from the employee's accrued salary, but not more than MMA, i.e.. EUR 607 gross.

It was also decided to pay for creative downtime for artists who are unable to generate income from their activities due to quarantine, and to allocate additional funds for this purpose. In the event of quarantine in educational establishments or social care and employment centres, funds for sickness benefits are allocated to carers of children and the disabled. It is also planned to allocate funds to self-employed residents who have paid social insurance contributions: EUR 257 / month for up to 3 months, when due to quarantine they are unable to carry out their activities, and to extend the deferral period for paying mortgage payments (excluding interest) from 3 to 6 months and provide a state guarantee. There is also an opportunity to defer or arrange payments for the consumed electricity and natural gas to UAB "Ignitis", a recommendation has been made to make it possible for municipalities to defer or arrange partial paying out of utility payments and payments for heat energy.

3. Preserving business liquidity. The plan provides for emergency tax loans with deferred or prolonged partial tax payments on an agreed schedule without interest; suspension of recovery actions in accordance with prudent criteria; exemption of taxpayers from fines, and interest on arrears; as well as to increase the guarantee limit of the Agricultural loan guarantee fund and UAB "Investicijų ir verslo garantijos" by EUR 500 million and to extend the conditions for granting guarantees, to create an opportunity for business to defer or arrange payments for the consumed electricity and natural gas to UAB "Ignitis". It is also recommended that municipalities exempt businesses from commercial real estate and land taxes and it is decided to recommend that

municipalities make it possible to defer or settle utility bills and heating payments according to a prolonged schedule.

4. Stimulating the economy. The plan also aims to speed up investment programs by speeding up payments and increasing funding intensity, as well as redeploying EU investment funds to health, employment and business areas, speeding up the use of state budget funds for running costs, using all Climate change, Road maintenance and development programs and speeding up renovation of apartment houses. In addition, it is planned to recommend to the Bank of Lithuania to take measures to increase the lending potential of banks by EUR 2.5 billion through the reduction of capital adequacy requirements for credit institutions, reduction of liquidity reserves, reduction of other supervisory measures. An additional EUR 500 million of state guarantee limit is foreseen to create or supplement existing financial instruments while the state takes the primary risk and to set up a COVID-19 consequences mitigation fund, to which legal and natural persons will be able to contribute. The EUR 1 billion stimulus package for the economy will amount to EUR 500 million in additional investment and EUR 500 million in additional guarantees.

5. Ensuring the liquidity of the state treasury. The plan envisages giving the government the right to borrow an additional EUR 5 billion.

### **Reducing the negative consequences of COVID-19 for the country's economy**

The Ministry of Economy and Innovation of the Republic of Lithuania (hereinafter referred to as the Ministry of Economy and Innovation) executes legal act amendments, changes in implemented measures and creates new measures to finance businesses according to administrated financial measures and related partial interest compensation measure, financed by the funds of the European Union, budget funds and returning funds from previously invested EU funds, due to the COVID-19 coronavirus outbreak:

- facilitation of individual guarantees for loans taken out by small and medium-sized enterprises (hereinafter referred to as SME) and conditions of individual guarantees for loans taken out by large companies;

- It is proposed to use the crowd-funding facility „Sutelktinës paskolos „Avietė“ (crowdfunding loans "Raspberry") on more favourable terms. EUR 4.6 million has been allocated for this measure;

- In order to help SMEs experiencing difficulties with COVID-19 and to reduce the debt burden, it was decided to compensate 100% interest on loans or financial lease payments during the "payment holiday" period (up to 6 months) regardless of the type of financial institution, type of lending transaction, purpose of the loan and the nature of the borrower's activities. The terms of interest compensation payments have also been changed - interest compensation will be paid to companies not quarterly, but monthly. Interest will be reimbursed from the quarantine announcement - from the 16th of March until the end of this year and the end of the "holidays".

- A new measure "Portfolio guarantees for factoring transactions 2" is being implemented. This measure facilitates easier and more lenient conditions to access factoring financing for micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (hereinafter referred to as SMEs). The application of this measure reduces financing risk and, as a result, facilitates the availability of factoring transactions for businesses, helps SMEs to address the lack of turnover capital to finance sales, finance higher turnover and thus develop the activities of SMEs. EUR 10 million has been allocated for this measure;

- A new preferential loan measure is being implemented. The measure aims to facilitate access to finance and preserve business continuity for the SMEs most affected by COVID-19, whose

turnover has fallen by more than 60%. The financial intermediaries selected under this measure will calculate the amount of funds needed by SMEs to cover basic expenses (staff salaries, rent, utilities) and provide a preferential loan. Loans will be subject to a fixed interest rate depending on the duration of the loan: loans with a term of up to 12 months - 0.1%, loans with a term of 13 to 36 months - 0.19%. EUR 50 million has been allocated for this measure;

- The new measure "Loans on accounts payable" is being implemented. The aim of the measure is to reduce the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on businesses, which may spread through payment chains and cause their disruption, and to help maintain the business continuity of trade credit recipients. The measure is intended to provide loans to companies that supplied goods, services or works to companies affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, but the latter can no longer pay the invoices provided for these goods, services or works. The loans will provide financing the unearned income of companies. EUR 50 million has been allocated for this measure;

- A new instrument, "Portfolio Guarantee for Loans 2", has been launched. The new instrument aims to facilitate access to finance in the form of loans and financial rent (hereinafter referred to as financial leasing) for micro, small and medium-sized enterprises and large enterprises that face a shortage of money. The financial intermediaries selected under this instrument will provide more flexibility in lending and financial leasing to support corporate liquidity, as well as provide the possibility to reschedule the payback of existing unsecured investment loans (including financial leasing transactions) and turnover capital loans (excluding reverse financial leasing transactions) including loans and financial lease transaction payment deferrals. EUR 85 million was allocated for this measure;

- A new measure "Alternative" was launched, the aim of which is to create more favourable conditions for SMEs to obtain financing from the alternative lending market in Lithuania. Selected financial intermediaries use the funds for new turnover capital and investment loans, including the provision factoring and finance leases, and for refinancing of loans granted to existing borrowers if loan repayment schedules are changed (extended repayment term) or loan repayment is deferred, etc. The maximum loan amount per borrower is not limited. Loans to SMEs under this measure are provided on market terms, i.e. the loan is provided at an interest rate set by the financial intermediary. EUR 50 million has been allocated for this measure;

- The terms of the new "Business support fund" are currently being prepared and harmonized with the European Commission. The measure aims to provide temporary financial support to medium-sized and large enterprises, which have been gravely hit by the COVID-19 crisis and are facing business continuity difficulties and which find no financing available for them on the market (no other financing alternatives or possibilities to attract needed funding). EUR 100 million has been allocated for this measure;

- part of the rent compensation measure. Ministry of Economy and Innovation, in its effort to help companies to cover fixed rental costs in the event of a break or drastic drop in turnover due to quarantine (recovery of turnover is only likely in the longer term), while striving to help to provide liquidity to companies whose activities are restricted or banned during quarantine and mitigate COVID-19 consequences for the economy (unbearable debt burden and bankruptcy prevention, which will help maintain the liquidity of business entities), has prepared the Concept of reducing the lease liabilities to business (hereinafter referred to as the Concept), which was approved at the 15 April 2020 meeting of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania, protocol No. 19. Partial rent compensation will be provided to the companies and entrepreneurs most affected by COVID-19 (hereinafter referred to as the Company) whose activities were banned during the quarantine period. It is planned to subsidize up to 50% of rent if the lessor will provide the company with at least 30%

rent payment discount. The company would have to contribute 20% of the rent payment with its own funds. The implementation of the Concept will create a measure, the conditions of which are currently being developed and will be coordinated with the European Commission in the near future. It is planned to allocate up to EUR 100 million for this measure. It is planned that the measure will be administered by UAB "Investicijų ir verslo garantijos" (Investments and business guarantees).

Businesses can also use the existing financial instruments of the Ministry of Economy and Innovation, implemented through UAB "Investicijų ir verslo garantijos". All information about existing and new financial instruments, approved facilitations is published on the Internet at: <https://invega.lt/lt/covid-19/pagalba-verslui-covid-19-krizes-metu/>.

On the 21 of April 2020 The Seimas (hereinafter referred to as Parliament) passed the Law of the Republic of Lithuania on the Application of the Law on insolvency of legal entities of the Republic of Lithuania due to the consequences of the new coronavirus (COVID-19), prepared and submitted by the Government. The law suspends the manager's obligation to apply to the court for insolvency proceedings (during the quarantine period and for 3 months thereafter), restricts the right of creditors to initiate insolvency proceedings and extends the term to reach an out-of-court settlement with the debtor (during the quarantine period), and additionally limits the possibility to terminate restructuring proceeding, if their payments were disrupted due to COVID-19 (during the quarantine and 3 months after the end of the quarantine).

### **Reducing the negative effects of COVID-19 in the field of taxation**

In response to the situation, decisions have been taken to apply the following tax support measures to taxpayers experiencing difficulties due to the coronavirus: to suspend the recovery of tax arrears, to provide exemption from due payment interest, to simplify the conclusion of tax loan agreements without application of interest. These measures apply to all taxes (including income tax, VAT, personal income tax, excise duties, etc.). For sectors, whose activities are restricted due to the quarantine introduced in Lithuania, tax collection and calculation of interest on arrears are suspended automatically, without a separate request (the State Tax Inspectorate under the Ministry of Finance has compiled lists of such taxpayers and activities). After the end of the emergency, taxpayers in these sectors will have two months either to pay taxes or to conclude a tax loan contract. During this two-month period for self-assessment and action planning, no new declared fees will be recovered from these taxpayers and no interest will be charged. Other taxpayers may submit an individual application in order to benefit from tax aid measures, in which they must substantiate that they have suffered adverse consequences. When the request of these taxpayers is granted, they are subject to the same aid measures and provisions as those taxpayers who have been automatically listed without an application. In principle, similar measures apply to the payment of social security contributions. In addition, imported goods intended for free distribution or use free of charge by victims of, potentially affected by or struggling with the COVID-19 outbreak shall be exempt from import duties and VAT. Regarding the issue of domestic support (charity), it should be mentioned that goods that are transferred as support (charity) for the provision of assistance in managing these situations and liquidation of consequences do not need to be taxed with VAT and VAT should not be calculated for such products.

### **Reducing the negative effects of COVID-19 on the health care system**

In order to manage the consequences of the spread of COVID-19 disease (coronavirus infection) during a state-level emergency and quarantine throughout the territory of the Republic of Lithuania, the Government is concentrating all efforts and resources to ensure the functioning of health and public health systems. The provision of personal protective equipment, medical and other equipment, protection and support for medical staff and the provision of their training, and the necessary funding of the needs of the institutions involved in emergency management are key measures to strengthen the health system during the current emergency and quarantine. These measures will also help prepare for possible future crises, build up resources and experience in the event of an emergency after the end of quarantine. EUR 109,636,708 is allocated from the state budget reserve for the implementation of the above-mentioned measures. Decisions have been taken to ensure the financing of additional health care expenses, including supplements to the salaries of health care workers, from the budget of the Compulsory Health Insurance Fund (hereinafter - CHIF) or the state budget. After assessing the challenges and threats facing the medical community in the fight against COVID-19 (coronavirus infection), it was decided to implement the final phase of medical salary increases scheduled for this year at an earlier time, which was agreed in an agreement with medical unions. Therefore, doctors' salaries will increase without waiting for the autumn - they will be increased already in April, and not in September, as planned. It is estimated that the wage bill would increase by about 18%, which will require approximately EUR 130 million of PSDF budget this year.

COVID-19 disease (coronavirus infection) is included in the list of particularly dangerous diseases, so healthcare professionals working with patients with or suspected of having COVID-19 disease (coronavirus infection) will be covered by the provisions of the Law of the Republic of Lithuania on the Prevention and control of communicable diseases of humans and apply for guarantees in the event of their incapacity for work or death. In addition, the Law on the amendment of Section eight of the Republic of Lithuania on the Prevention and control of communicable diseases of humans No. I-1553, extended the scope of the persons insured by the State budget to cover the risk of incapacity for work and death in the provision of healthcare to patients suffering from particularly serious communicable diseases or in the implementation of epidemic prevention measures in spawn spots of especially dangerous infectious diseases - from the passing of the law, not only healthcare institution, but also other employees are covered with insurance.

Ensuring additional social guarantees for employees of health care institutions when organizing and (or) providing health care services to patients with particularly dangerous communicable diseases or implementing epidemic prevention measures in outbreaks of particularly dangerous communicable diseases, was provided for in the adopted Law on amending Article 32 and supplementing Article 32-1 of the Law on Prevention and control of communicable diseases of the Republic of Lithuania no. I-1553, which provides that from the beginning of the month of quarantine in the whole territory of the Republic of Lithuania, several municipalities or one municipality until the end of the month of quarantine the monthly salary or fixed part coefficient is increased by 60 to 100 per cent.

It is also provided that from the beginning of the month of the announcement of quarantine in the territory of the Republic of Lithuania until the end of the month of quarantine, the costs of paying the 15 percent fixed wage part additional payment to personal health care facilities staff, who are organizing and providing personal health care to patients who are suspected or are suffering from the COVID-19 disease (coronavirus infection), will be paid for by the CHIF funds money (including the taxes paid from such sums by the employer). These costs are reimbursed only to those personal health care institutions where at least 1 patient with a confirmed diagnosis of COVID-19 (coronavirus

infection) was treated during the reference month, and to personal health care institutions providing emergency medical services.

The Sickness and maternity social insurance law amendment has also been adopted, ensuring to persons who, through their professional functions, until the entry of this law into legal force and during the state-level emergency, announced by the Government of the Republic of Lithuania due to COVID-19 disease (coronavirus infection) spread threat, have contracted the COVID-19 disease (coronavirus infection, to be paid an increased sickness benefit up to 77,58 percent of the benefit recipient compensated salary size.

Following the announcement of quarantine in the territory of the Republic of Lithuania, the provision of scheduled personal health care services was restricted in personal health care institutions and as a result the number of personal health care services provided decreased significantly. In order to ensure the stability of the financial condition of personal health care institutions, the procedure for payment for personal health care services has been changed.

During the quarantine period, when paying for personal health care services, personal health care institutions will be paid at least 1/12 of the annual contractual amounts stipulated in the contract valid with the territorial health insurance fund at the time of payment, regardless of the scope of services provided.

Due to the rapid spread of the virus in various regions, with the exponential growth in demand for reagents for laboratory testing, personal protective equipment (PPE) and medical devices, both international and national authorities are making every effort to ensure that the market supply of these products meets growing demand. In the light of the EU Commission Recommendation 2020/403 of 13 March 2020 on conformity assessment and market surveillance procedures within the context of the COVID-19 (coronavirus infection) threat (OJ 2020 L 791, p. 1), the urgent decision of the European Committee for Standardization CEN and CENELEC on temporary free publication standards (requirements) necessary for the production and distribution of personal protective equipment and medical devices, and by the 12 March 2020 order of the Minister of Health of the Republic of Lithuania No. V-334 "On the Placing on the market and use of medical measures (devices) in the Republic of Lithuania during a state-level emergency due to the dangers of the spread of the new COVID19 disease (Coronavirus Infection)" medical single use non-sterile masks, medical disposable non-sterile clothing (hats, gowns, booties, hooded overalls), medical disposable non-sterile gloves were allowed to be provided to the market of the Republic of Lithuania and be used here, to which the technical regulation on the safety of medical measures (devices) approved by the 19 January 2009 Order of the Minister of Health of the Republic of Lithuania No. V-18 "On the approval of the technical regulation on the safety of medical measures (devices)", conformity assessment procedures have not been applied.

Following these decisions, the market supply of PPE and medical devices is expected to grow. Lithuania has submitted applications to participate in three joint procurement procedures for personal protective equipment, artificial lung ventilation equipment and laboratory reagents as well as diagnostic equipment - initiated by the European Commission.

Every effort is also made to procure the necessary medical equipment and protective equipment independently. Public institution "Versli Lietuva" evaluates the offers of Lithuanian manufacturers and suppliers that can supply COVID-19 measures and compiles a publicly available list, which is used by state and municipal institutions planning public procurement, health care institutions and other economic entities. Public institution "CPO LT" administers a catalogue operating on the principle of an e-shop, in which Lithuanian contracting authorities have the opportunity to procure goods necessary for the fight against COVID-19 faster and more efficiently.

It should be noted that this "COP LT" electronic catalogue is open to all suppliers who meet the specific requirements.

It is planned to allocate EUR 54 mln. of European Union funds (European Union and general financing funds) for institutions that provide health care services to people with COVID-19 disease (coronavirus infection), as well as institutions that prevent and control the spread of COVID-19 disease (coronavirus infection) in the territory of the country. European Union funds are intended to finance the acquisition of equipment for the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of COVID-19 (coronavirus infection), medical devices (artificial lung ventilators, vital signs monitors, etc.), personal protective equipment, reagents, etc., as well as the training and preparation of healthcare professionals to work remotely in the care of patients with COVID-19 (coronavirus infection).

### **Reducing the negative effects of COVID-19 on employment and social protection**

Remote working is the most recommended form of work during an emergency and quarantine, in case remote working is objectively possible according to the nature of the company's or institution's activities.

After the government has announced an emergency situation and quarantine, whenever the employer cannot provide his employees with the work, specified in the employment contract, he has the right to declare downtime or partial downtime. During downtime, employees may not be required to perform work functions and are paid at least the minimum wage, but only if the employment contract stipulates a full working time rate.

In order to alleviate the situation of employers, the state will contribute to the maintenance of jobs with subsidies, the amount of which can be chosen by the employer: 90% from the employee's calculated salary, but not more than 607 euros gross, or 70% from the employee's calculated salary, but not more than 910.5 euros gross.

Employers who have benefited from subsidies will have to maintain at least 50 percent. jobs for at least 3 months from the end of the payment of the grant.

Employers may not force employees to take paid annual or unpaid leave during quarantine or emergency situations without their consent - such a measure can only be used with the employee's consent. An employer may insist that an employee should take paid annual leave only if he has accumulated the amount of paid leave for more than a year.

Following a government declaration of emergency or quarantine, in order to protect the health of workers and third parties, an employer may remove an employee from work in case his health condition threatens the health safety of other employees and in case the employee refuses to work remotely.

Self-employed persons who do not have an employment relationship and do not earn an income and whose activities have been registered for at least 3 months during the last year and who have not been deregistered by the time the Government declares emergency and quarantine are eligible for a flat-rate benefit of EUR 257 per month. Self-employed people will also be able to temporarily avoid payments for compulsory health insurance, which can be paid within two years of the end of the emergency and quarantine. The social protection of artists is also being increased.

It is proposed that municipalities pay one-off bonuses to employees of social service institutions who provide vital services to the elderly, people with disabilities, families susceptible to various social risks and children growing up in care homes during quarantine. These costs should

be included in the costs incurred by municipalities and their subordinates as a result of the government's declared emergency and quarantine, and subsequently reimbursed.

When quarantine is announced in schools or kindergartens and there is no access to childcare, parents or grandparents can receive a certificate of incapacity for work and sickness benefit.

A person with a severe chronic illness can also receive an incapacity benefit of 62.06 percent from his salary (gross).

Healthcare workers, officials or other staff who have contracted a disease for which a state of emergency has been declared will be paid 100% of their average salary as an incapacity benefit.

Persons who have participated in a vocational rehabilitation program and have been suspended due to a declared emergency and quarantine will continue to receive a social rehabilitation benefit of 0.39% of minimal monthly wage.

Municipalities have been asked to ensure that residents receive and do not lose the right to the support they are entitled to and receive it in a timely manner, and to encourage residents to apply for support remotely. It is suggested to evaluate the possibility of extending cash social assistance without a person's request. It is also requested to be more flexible in assessing a person's (family's) situation and to ensure the adequacy of additional provided social support (it is recommended that these benefits be at least equal to the minimum consumption needs size (MVPD) - for the first person or one resident with a sum of 100% of MVPD (257 euros), for the second person - 80 percent of MVPD (EUR 206), for the third and each subsequent person - 70% of MVPD (EUR 180).

After the declaration of an emergency situation and quarantine in Lithuania, some social services are provided by telephone or e-mail and if the decision on a person's disability, ability to work or special needs expires during quarantine, it will be extended automatically.

For socially vulnerable groups of persons, such as the poor and families, people receiving social services at home, social care or integrated home care recipients, children and young people, people with disabilities and the elderly, day-time and employment centre visitors and their families, children receiving free school meals, persons at social risk and families, single persons, single persons with mental and other disabilities, persons in quarantine, it is necessary to ensure the supply of food or prepared meals, medicines, as well as to provide relevant, up-to-date information.

According to the decision of the head of the operations centre, municipalities must ensure the care of children and people with disabilities in exceptional cases in institutions, if it is not possible to do so at home.

The Ministry of Social Security and Labour of the Republic of Lithuania (hereinafter referred to as the Ministry of Social Security and Labour) called on municipalities to coordinate the provision of assistance to municipal residents by involving non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and local communities in the provision of assistance and services. NGOs receiving project funding from the Ministry of Social Security and Labour are recommended not to cease their activities, but to provide services in a non-contact, remote way, as much as possible. Organizations can also purchase personal protective equipment from project funds.

### **Reducing the negative effects of COVID-19 in the field of public procurement**

In response to the emergency situation that has arisen in Lithuania and in the world, when it is necessary to urgently adapt to the market conditions in order to solve the emerging problems, during the month of March of 2020, amendments to the Law on Public Procurement of the Republic of Lithuania were adopted, establishing simplified procedural requirements for procurements carried out

by means of unannounced negotiations due to special urgency. The regulatory changes made allow the contracting authority to conclude the procurement contract without the requirements stated for the procurement procedures and the content of the contract, and thus to perform the procurement extremely quickly and easily.

In order to achieve more efficient, professional and transparent public procurement in the country, last year the Government has adopted decisions on the centralization of the public procurement function of its subordinate institutions and prepared amendments to the Law on Public Procurement for the implementation of this function. One of the main elements of the public procurement centralization model is the concentration of competencies in central contracting authorities and the development of the electronic catalogue of the Public institution "CPO LT". This catalogue is being developed by maximizing the standardization of procurements, which, due to the frequency of procedures and the wide spread of use, are expedient to transfer to the information system operating on the basis of "CPO LT" data. It is a convenient and useful platform for both contracting authorities and suppliers, allowing to shorten and simplify the procurement process and ensure competition between suppliers. This is particularly important in order to conclude procurement contracts quickly and transparently and thus boost the economy. It is planned that in 2020, the electronic catalogue of CPO LT will contain 58 different procurement modules, including the possibility for Lithuanian contracting authorities and suppliers to conclude contracts for the procurement of goods necessary for the fight against COVID-19 coronavirus.

### **Reducing the negative effects of COVID-19 in the field of education**

After the earlier start of holidays for ~~students/school children~~ due to the threat of COVID-19 coronavirus<sup>1</sup>, ~~the heads of schools~~ schools leaders, higher education and research ~~research and study~~ institutions, other institutions implementing the rights and obligations of the owner of education providers (meetings of legal entity participants) were instructed to ensure that from 30 March 2020 onwards, they must ~~be have~~ prepared to carry out ~~infant teaching, pre-school, school, primary, basic, secondary education, formal vocational training and higher education studies by to~~ organize/organized the teaching education process in a distance remote way<sup>2</sup>.

In order to help the communities of schools implementing pre-school, ~~pre-~~primary, general education ~~and vocational training~~ programs to prepare for the educational process on distance remotely, until the normal educational process is resumed, recommendations for the organization of distance education have been prepared<sup>3</sup>.

The decision was made to continue allocating the non-formal education basket for children to remote distance learning programs. Requirements for the implementation of non-formal education for children and a list of documents that must be submitted in order to finance activities carried out remotely on distance have been prepared<sup>4</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> 13 March 2020 Order of the Minister of Education, Science and Sports No. V-350, No. V-349, No. V-362 after the amendment of the ~~General primary, basic and secondary Education programs and vocational training~~ General education programs and vocational education plans for the 2019–2020 and 2020–2021 school years.

<sup>2</sup> 13 March 2020 Order of the Minister of Education, Science and Sports No. V-366 “Regarding the situation with coronavirus”.

<sup>3</sup> ~~Approved by~~ 16 March 2020 Order of the Minister of Education, Science and Sports No. V-372 and 19 March 2020 order No. V-396.

<sup>4</sup> Director of the Lithuanian Center for Non-formal Education of Pupils, 27 March 2020 letter No. R6-246 (online access [https://www.lmnc.lt/uplfiles3/Written about the project.pdf](https://www.lmnc.lt/uplfiles3/Written%20about%20the%20project.pdf)).

The Ministry of Education, Science and Sports of the Republic of Lithuania (hereinafter referred to as the Ministry of Education, Science and Sports) ~~discussed continues consultations~~ with the representatives of municipalities, schools ~~heads~~ leaders, teachers and students regarding the end of the school year. ~~It is noted that the school year should not end earlier than on the 1st of June this year.~~

Decisions were made on the ~~examination assessment~~ of ~~basic lower secondary~~ education achievements, maturity exams and credits. During the 2019–2020 school year, students in the final grade of the ~~basic lower secondary~~ education program are exempted from the ~~assessment examination~~ of ~~basic lower~~ education achievements (liet. Pagrindinio ugdymo pasiekimų patikrinimai – PUPP). New schedules for Lithuanian language and literature credit and maturity exams (liet. Valstybiniai brandos egzaminai – VBE) for the 2019–2020 academic year have been approved – it is planned that the main session of maturity exams will take place from 22 June to 21 July this year. The time by which the school ~~must~~ organized a credit of Lithuanian language and literature for graduates ~~has been were~~ extended until May 22 of this year. Maturity test work, as well as ~~school~~ technology and art maturity exams ~~extended can be held~~ until May 18 this year.

General admission to higher education institutions will be carried out in two stages. ~~The first stage will last until August 18 of this year, additional reception – September 4 of this year.~~ Registration of applications for general admission to higher education institutions ~~are will take taking~~ place from June 1 until August 18 of this year. In the main stage, invitations to study will be published on August 25 this year, study agreements will be signed this year on August 26–28. Additional admission will start from August 31 and will end on September 11 this year. Higher education institutions are offered to delay the start of studies for first-year students until September 14 this year.

A decision was made on the assessment of the competencies acquired by the final year students of vocational ~~training education~~ programs in order to obtain a qualification<sup>5</sup>. Assessment of competencies acquired by final year students of vocational ~~training education~~ programs for the 2019–2020 school year (except in the case of several programs, as well as assessment of competencies of persons sent by the Employment service or employer to study at their own expense, the procedure of which is determined by relevant accredited competence assessment institutions during quarantine) will not be executed during the quarantine period, and the issued vocational education diploma, in the space reserved for the theory and practical studies assessment results, the scores will be written near the name of the theory and practice (program modules for theory studies or program educational subjects theory and practical training achievement assessment averages).

A website has been set up to publish relevant information on distance ~~(remote)~~ learning<sup>6</sup>. Recommendations for teachers on the use of virtual tools in the educational process<sup>7</sup>, as well as on the use of electronic diaries for distance learning have been prepared.<sup>8</sup> Information on planned trainings for teachers is regularly published, as well as material on the trainings that have taken place<sup>9</sup>.

The Ministry of Education, Science and Sports regularly conducts video conferences with ~~heads~~ leaders of general education schools, teachers, representatives of the Council of the Association of Vocational Education Institutions, ~~heads~~ leaders of vocational education institutions, ~~and deputies~~

<sup>5</sup> 17 April 2020 Order of the Minister of Education, Science and Sports No. V-574 “On the assessment of competences acquired by a person during the quarantine period”.

<sup>6</sup> Internet access [www.nsa.smm.lt/nuotolinis](http://www.nsa.smm.lt/nuotolinis) .

<sup>7</sup> Internet access <https://sites.google.com/itc.smm.lt/nuotolinis/aplinkos/virtualios-mokymo-aplinkos> .

<sup>8</sup> Internet access <https://sites.google.com/itc.smm.lt/nuotolinis/aplinkos/el-dienynai> .

<sup>9</sup> Internet access <https://sites.google.com/itc.smm.lt/nuotolinis/mokymai> .

~~of vocational education institutions for education.~~ Video conferences were also organized with representatives of pre-school, ~~and pre-~~primary education and ~~special education needs, special schools.~~

Recommendations have been developed for parents raising children with developmental disabilities in regard of distance (~~remote~~) education<sup>10</sup>. Advice for parents ~~/,~~ carers<sup>11</sup> and teachers<sup>12</sup> ~~on about~~ online safety during distance learning is also published. Educational videos are being created and published for teachers, educational support professionals, and students about distance learning opportunities<sup>13</sup>.

A digital ~~education teaching~~ base with ~~teaching and~~ learning environments, ~~methodological methods, materials tools and teaching aids~~ has been developed and is constantly being updated for general education schools.<sup>14</sup> A pool of good practice in ~~professional-vocational~~ education digital resources has been set up to encourage ~~professional training vocational~~ (education) institutions to cooperate and actively share digital learning tools<sup>15</sup>.

The Ministry of Education, Science and Sports buys and distributes 35 thousand of computers with internet access to students from socially sensitive families.

The TV program "LRT pamokėlės" (Lithuanian radio and television lessons) has been launched<sup>16</sup> for pre-school, ~~pre-~~primary school children and students in grades 1–4. Project organizers: public broadcaster LRT, Ministry of Education, Science and Sports and Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Lithuania.

<sup>10</sup> Internet access

<https://www.smm.lt/uploads/documents/Patarimai%20t%C4%97vams%2C%20kurie%20augina%20raidos%20sutrikim%C5%B3%20turin%C4%8Dius%20vaikus.pdf> .

<sup>11</sup> Internet access

[https://www.smm.lt/uploads/documents/Rekomendacijos%20t%C4%97vams%20d%C4%97l%20vaik%C5%B3%20sau gumo\\_RRT.pdf](https://www.smm.lt/uploads/documents/Rekomendacijos%20t%C4%97vams%20d%C4%97l%20vaik%C5%B3%20sau gumo_RRT.pdf) .

<sup>12</sup> Internet access

<https://www.smm.lt/uploads/documents/Rekomendacijos%20mokytojams%20d%C4%97l%20nuotolini%C5%B3%20mokym%C5%B3.pdf>.

<sup>13</sup> Internet access <https://sites.google.com/itc.smm.lt/nuotolinis/metodin%C4%97-med%C5%BEiaga/vaizdo-med%C5%BEiaga>.

<sup>14</sup> Internet access <https://sites.google.com/itc.smm.lt/nuotolinis/skaitmenin%C4%97s-priemon%C4%97s>.

<sup>15</sup> Internet access <https://www.kpmc.lt/kpmc/sukurtas-profesinio-mokymo-skaitmeniniu-istekliu-gerosios-patirties-bankas/>.

<sup>16</sup> Internet access <https://www.lrt.lt/tema/lrt-pamokeles>.