Reducing obstacles to young people's access to culture

On 1 March 2016, a total of 156 cultural centres with juridical personality were operating in various regions of Lithuania, along with 90 of their branches, 385 cultural centre divisions or territorial subdivisions, and 95 other institutions partly carrying out the functions of cultural centres. These cultural centres are very important in creating conditions for the dissemination of professional and amateur art, the creative expression of the population, and access to cultural services in the regions. The activities of cultural centres in Lithuania are regulated by the Law on Cultural Centres [1], a new version of which is currently being considered by the Government of the Republic of Lithuania.

Disseminating information on cultural opportunities

To encourage creativity among cultural centres and recognise the best achievements and work of cultural centres, the Ministry of Culture established three Prizes for the Best Cultural Centres of the Year [2]. These prizes are awarded for active, creative and innovative activities over the past five years in fostering ethnic culture and amateur art, creating artistic programmes, expanding educational and recreational activities, meeting the cultural needs of the community and organising the spread of professional art. Since 2006, 40 cultural centres in different categories have received this prize as a form of incentive.

In 2005, the Ministry of Culture established the Prize for Active, Creative Activities at Cultural Centres [3]. The goal of the prize is to encourage professional activities among arts and culture employees at cultural centres and recognise their best achievements and work. Heads of cultural centres and arts and culture employees who work at cultural centres can be nominated for the prize. Since 2005, this prize has been awarded to 11 cultural centre employees.

In order to encourage cultural institutions and creators of culture and evaluate their activities in the
field of cultural education for children and youth, the Ministry of Culture has, since 2007, been awarding four prizes [4] per year for the best education projects that were prepared and implemented for children and youth.

Knowledge of cultural heritage amongst young people

Article 6(13) of the Republic of Lithuania Law on Local Self-Government [5] establishes that the ‘cultivation of general culture and fostering of ethno-culture of the population (participation in cultural development projects; the establishment, reorganisation, restructuring and/or liquidation of museums, theatres, culture centres and other cultural institutions as well as the supervision of the activities thereof; the establishment, reorganisation and/or restructuring of public municipal libraries as well as supervision of the activities thereof)’ is the independent function of the municipalities.

In the area of regional cultural policy-making, the Ministry of Culture is responsible for the formation of a national policy in the fields of culture and amateur artistic activities. The strategic objective of the Ministry of Culture in the area of regional cultural policy is to promote access to culture for various groups of society as well as their participation in nurturing cultural traditions and diversity of cultural expression. The Ministry of Culture works in constant collaboration with Lithuanian municipalities in implementing this objective.

In 2003, the first State Programme for the Development of Ethnic Culture was approved by resolution of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania. One of the goals of this programme is to activate the development of culture in the regions and to give residents the opportunity to foster their regional and national traditions and customs. In 2015, the 2015-2018 Action Plan for the Development of Ethnic Culture was approved by order of the Minister of Culture. In 2011, the 2012-2020 Programme for the Development of Regional Culture was approved, as well as the measures for implementing this programme in 2012-2014 [6]. The purpose of the 2012-2020 Programme for the Development of Regional Culture is to establish priority areas of regional cultural development and create conditions for cultural access and dissemination by making the regions more attractive for young persons, local communities, investors and tourism. In 2015, the measures for implementing the 2012-2020 Programme for the Development of Regional Culture in 2015-2017 were prepared and approved.

Numerous municipalities have approved programmes for the development of ethnic culture and regularly plan their budgets to provide funding for the nurturing, preservation and dissemination of traditional culture.