



The Review  
of the  
Public  
2017

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## INTRODUCTION

### **Publishing in Lithuania over the years of independence has undergone the same developments as its counterparts**

#### **in Eastern Europe:**

- The deterioration of the old structure of publishing.
- The formation of a new one.
- Incredible growth in early 1990s, a decline in the middle 1990s, and a new revival.
- Collapse in 2009 due to financial crisis.

Lithuanian publishers have proved their ability to find their place under the conditions of the market economy and make a substantial contribution to the development of the economy, education and culture in the new Lithuania despite the difficulties related to the small market, and the challenges it has posed.

Restoration of Lithuania's independence caused the transition to a market economy, the changes were facilitated and speeded up by the rapid changes in political and social life, the easing of censorship, the amendment of laws related to publishing.

Publishing became one of the most profitable industries. In the early 90's the profit could seek up to 300 per cent. 1990–1992 years can even be called Golden Age in publishing, as it was possible to sell several hundred thousand copies of one book. The number of new publishers increased rapidly and in 1992 reached 500 publishers that had published at least one book, booklet or brochure per year (in 1990 it was only 71).

In 1993 the situation became particularly difficult as Lithuania introduced its own national currency, reduced inflation and books became a luxury product. Publishing stopped being a profitable business. By around 1998 the local publishing market stabilized and was saturated. The Russian Financial crisis dealt a painful blow to the Russia-orientated Lithuanian economy. By 1999 book sales dropped by one third. Many publishers had their production piled up in bookshops or in warehouse. To invigorate sales, some publishers embarked on bookselling themselves while others tried to offer lower prices for their books.

The New Millennium came with recovering economy. Publishers started feeling the benefits, the turnovers of the biggest publishers started growing. Publishers tended to relate the recovery of publishing not to the economy, but rather to new methods of running their business. More attention was paid to bookselling and product quality.

A trend towards concentration among publishers was emerging. Lithuanian publishers mostly concentrate on the domestic market. A few publishers work for overseas markets. But publishers abroad are gradually discovering Lithuanian writers.

Like in some other countries, Lithuania has no specific law on book publishing. The same laws governing business and media, as well as the same publishing standards, are applied.

With no defined cultural policy, the support and assistance system for book publishing undergoes changes from time to time. Publishing is mostly supported through the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of Education and Science and Lithuanian Council for Culture. The main aim of state subsidies is to reduce prices for books and thus make books more affordable for readers, libraries and schools.

In Lithuania, the area of culture is supervised, and most of the National Policy for Promotion of Creation and Publishing is carried out by Ministry of Culture. The process of funding is carried out through a bidding process organized by the Culture Support Foundation (the Culture Support Foundation promotes public initiatives in developing the creative potential of artists, presents art to the Lithuanian people, expands international cooperation between art creators and cultural workers, and carries out cultural education). The measure for Ensuring the Implementation of Projects to Publish Books Written in Lithuanian and Other Publications Important to Lithuanian Culture is part of the program The Public's Provision with Information and Dissemination of Public Information. In 2006, 174 publishing projects were financed from the state budget, in 2007 – 169 projects, in 2008 – 172, in 2009 – 251, in 2010 – 93, and in 2011 – 99.

Ministry of Culture actively supports and promotes literary authors and translators. One of the incentives is grants. On the average, about 33 one-and two-year individual state grants are given to writers and

translators each year. In 2007, state grants were awarded to 43, in 2008 – to 46, in 2009 – to 32, and in 2010 – to 12 Lithuanian writers and translators.

Wishing to promote and evaluate the work and contribution of Lithuanian literature translators to international cultural exchange and dissemination of Lithuanian culture abroad, as well as to encourage Lithuanian writers, literary translators and critics, in 2007, the Ministry of Culture established the annual Prize Chair of the Translator of the Year for the best translation of fiction and essay writing into Lithuanian, and Prize St. Jeronimus (Saint Jerome) – for the best translations of Lithuanian literature into foreign languages.

Ministry of Culture funds the Yotvingian Prize awarded for the best book of poetry published in the last two years and the Young Yotvingian Prize – for the best book of original poetry, translated poetry or poetry criticism written by a young author (under 35 years of age), which are given at one of the largest annual poetry festivals Lithuania – the Druskininkai Poetic Fall.

In order to assess the best achievements in Lithuanian literature, language history, culture and book science, Ministry of Culture has set up the Mažvydas Award, which is granted for the merits to the Lithuanian language, literature and book art.

Ministry of Education and Science supports the development and publishing of original educational literature. The ministry has set up the Children’s Literature Prize, which is designed to encourage Lithuanian writers to write children’s books, and to evaluate the role of education, public and private institutions, and individuals in promoting children’s literature and reading in general.

One of the most important National Awards is the Culture and Art Award. The Cabinet of Ministers also annually awards World Lithuanian artists as well as artist collectives for significant contribution to Lithuanian art and culture or artists’ lifetime achievements. The National Culture and Arts Award is designed to promote work of culture and art creators or their collectives, and to evaluate the most significant cultural and artistic works, created by Lithuanian and World Lithuanian artists over the last five years.

## BOOK PUBLISHING

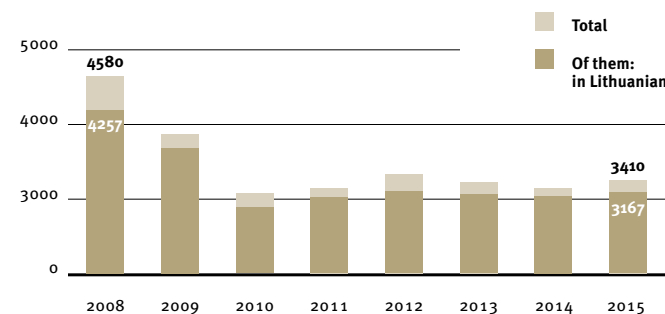
### The Scope of Book Publishing

There are almost 500 book publishers in Lithuania, who published more than 3,400 titles in 2015, and their circulation reached 4.3 million copies. Active participants in the market, publishing ten books or more, comprised 13% of all publishers (a total of 65) in 2015. Almost half of the publishers (233) published only one book in 2015.

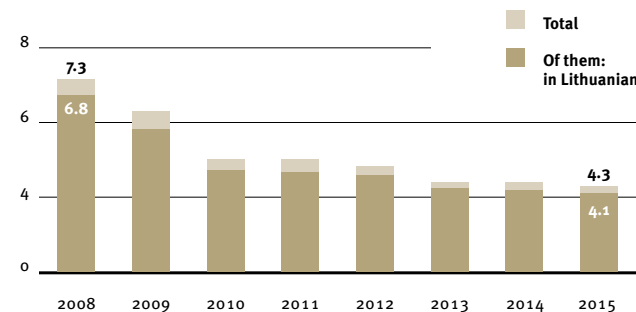
The economic crisis in 2009 considerably slowed down the development of the publishing industry: the number of titles declined by 31% in 2009–2010 (from 4,600 in 2008, to 3,200 in 2010), while the situation stabilised in 2011–2012. Now approximately 3,300 to 3,400

### The Scope of Publishing

#### Titles



#### Circulation, mill, copies

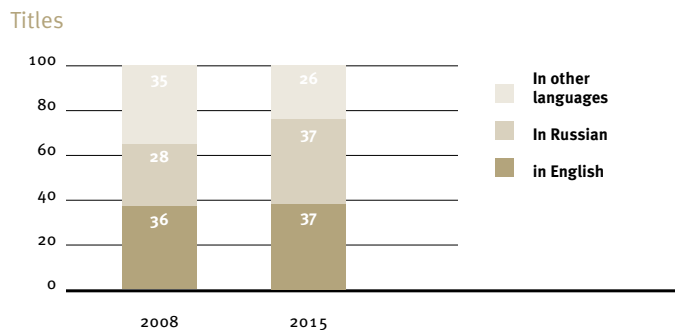


different titles are published each year. Before the crisis, the total of almost eight million books per year had levelled off; however, the economic downturn upset this balance (VAT increased, the price of books rose, and purchasing power and the desire to spend money decreased). Therefore, in 2008–2013 circulation decreased by 40%, from 7.3 million to 4.9 million books, and the numbers have remained similar until now. During the period 2008–2015, the number of books per capita decreased from 2.2 to 1.5, while the average print run went down from 1,600 to 1,300 books.

In 2008–2015, most books published (93–94%) were in the Lithuanian language (both originals and translations). Of the books published by Lithuanian publishing houses in foreign languages, books in English and Russian dominated. Of all books published, they comprised 2.1% and 2.3% respectively. During this period, the proportion of books published in English and Russian rose slightly among books published in foreign languages, but the share (6–7%) remained almost unchanged, while the proportion of print runs in English and Russian declined from 6% to 3% in the overall circulation of books in foreign languages. Of the books in foreign languages published by Lithuanian publishing houses, an increasing part is comprised of publications in English and Russian.

Nevertheless, the relatively stable breakdown of books published in Lithuanian and other languages demonstrates that the need for books in foreign languages is fulfilled by purchasing books from foreign publishing houses.

### Books in Foreign Languages (in per cent)



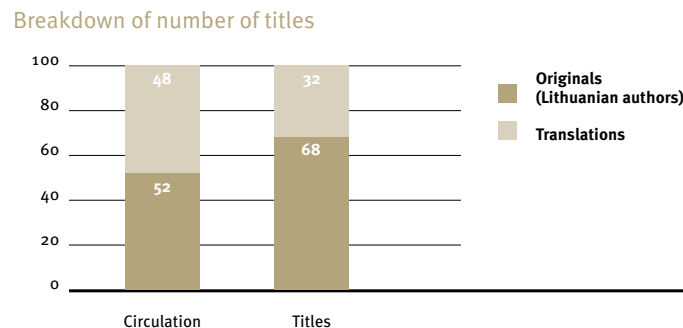
### Books by Lithuanian Authors and Translated Books

Originals in Lithuanian comprise approximately two thirds of all titles, and around half of the annual circulation in the market. During the period 2008–2015, this proportion varied insignificantly (65–68% of titles, and 49–54% of the annual circulation). The numbers of titles by Lithuanian authors and translated books and circulations decreased in a similar way: the number of translated titles suffered a more serious decline of 29%, while originals in Lithuanian declined by 24%. The annual circulation of originals in Lithuanian decreased more (41%, and translated books by 38%).

During the period 2008–2015, most books were translated from English, German, Russian or French. Translations from these languages constituted 85–86% of all titles by foreign authors, and the proportions did not change during the whole period.

Even though the circulation demonstrates that translated literature generated more demand among consumers, the latest tendencies reveal the increasing interest of readers in books by Lithuanian authors. In recent years, the situation in the top ten bestselling books has changed considerably, as high positions are held by Lithuanian authors. This trend encompasses not only fiction, but also popular literature (advice or recipe books, memoirs, psychological literature, and so on). In addition, the number of meetings with Lithuanian authors and visits to new book presentations every year are increasing significantly. According to players in the market, the main reasons for these changes are the policy of publishing

### Books by Lithuanian and Foreign Authors (in per cent)



houses and their more active competition for Lithuanian authors. Publishing houses do not take a passive role, hoping that a high-quality manuscript will appear out of the blue; they engage actively in managerial action, search for potential authors, initiate topics, take into consideration the tendencies noticed in other countries, and encourage readers to discover and meet new authors, and try out new genres and books.

### Books by Theme

Most titles in 2015 were fiction, at 27%. Scientific/educational and popular literature were 25% and 23% respectively. Books for children comprised 14%. Other literature comprised 11%. As for annual circulation in 2015, fiction, popular literature, and children's literature comprised almost equal percentages, at 27%, 26% and 25% respectively. Scientific and educational literature comprised 14%. Other literature comprised 8%. Circulation was very uneven in the different segments: books for children had the highest average circulation (2,200 copies), while scientific/educational literature was lowest (700 copies).

Of fiction books from other countries, literature from English-speaking countries, mainly the USA, the UK, Australia, Ireland and

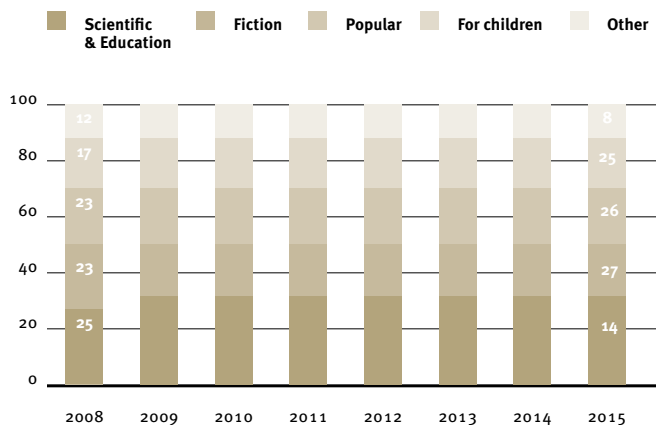
Canada, dominated, comprising roughly 43% of literature from other nations (except Lithuanian).

Popular literature demonstrated a certain stability in 2008–2015: both the number of titles and the annual and average circulations fell less than the market. The domination of these publications in the bestselling book lists demonstrates the need for informative, psychological, popular science, nutrition/recipe, and other books by Lithuanian and foreign authors, as well as the relatively large readership. According to players in the market, popular literature finds a readership more easily, as it is more adaptable to the dominant 'trends' in society (for example, books on neuro-linguistic programming and body language are in great demand at the moment).

The publication of books for children in particular has been increasing during this decade, offering wide variety in content, genre, scope, form, target group, illustration and design. Circulations range from several hundred to several thousand copies, depending on the author, genre, scope and aims.

According to data from the International Children's and Youth Literature Association, the number of toy-informative books for the youngest readers has grown considerably, as have comic-type books for children aged seven to 12; science fiction dominates among books for teenagers. The market for books for children and teenagers is particularly dynamic: as players in the market say, as soon as publishers adapt to readers' needs, the latter change their taste.

Book Circulation by Theme (in per cent)



### Electronic Publishing

The market for digital books in Lithuania occupies a niche position: it comprises around 2% of the general publishing market, and consists of approximately 1,000 titles. The first digital books were introduced in Lithuania around 2011, and they were sold by several e-shops (such as skaitykle.lt or knyguite.lt), while the publishing houses joined the process later. The main publishers of digital books are the following: Alma littera (fiction), Šviesa, TEV (textbooks), Vilnius Gediminas Technical University (textbooks for institutions of higher education), and small publishing houses Kitos knygos, Eugrimas, Svajonių knygos, Luceo, Žara, and others). The choice of

genres of digital books is still small: textbooks for institutions of higher education and informative-educational literature dominate; fiction, books for children, psychological literature and textbooks for schools form a smaller part of e-books; in addition, original fiction by Lithuanian authors tends to be published in digital format as well. The content of most Lithuanian books is made up of only text.

According to data from an anonymous survey of 73 publishing enterprises, almost a third of Lithuanian publishers publish digital books, and 43% more are planning to do so in the future.

We can see that the younger generation is less attached to reading printed books, and is used to obtaining information by digital channels; therefore, the publishing of electronic books might increase in the future, but slowly. The earlier preconception that the market for digital books would develop only at the expense of printed books is being changed by the understanding that the choice of format is determined by the situation (it is convenient to read using a smart phone, because it is always to hand), so printed and digital books do not compete. It is expected that the e-book will be in such demand that publishers will want to participate in the market, while they themselves will influence its reach, i.e. selling place, book cover, format and topicality for contemporary readers.

## AFFORDABILITY OF BOOKS

### Household Expenditure on Books

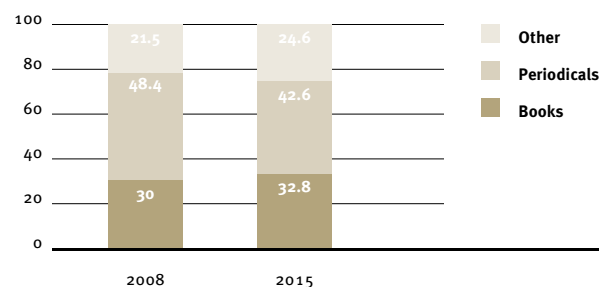
In 2015, residents of Lithuania spent 212.6 million euros on printed matter. On a per capita basis, the average Lithuanian spends 73 euros annually. In the total consumption basket, expenditure on printed matter comprises 0.88% of the value (0.85% in 2008); by comparison, the figure is 1.1% for the EU.

Almost a third of expenditure on printed matter is on books (69.7 million euros in 2015), slightly more than 40% (90.5 million euros) is spent on periodicals, while the rest is on the purchase of various printing and stationery and drawing materials. The biggest structural change in 2008–2015 was the decrease in expenditure on periodicals.

## Individual Consumption of Household

### Expenditure on Printed Matter (at current prices)

Breakdown by type of printed matter (in per cent)



Before the recession, when the economy and incomes were growing, expenditure on printed matter was increasing by double figures every year; however, the economic crisis stopped this trend, and optimistic consumer spending was replaced by cautious pragmatism. This long-term trend was reinforced by the introduction of the euro in 2015, and residents' fears about the prices of goods and services related its introduction. Therefore, despite the fact that the sum spent on printed matter recovered in 2011, and has even exceeded the pre-crisis level, residents increased their expenditure on printed matter very moderately in the succeeding years (expenditure per capita increased on average by 3.6% a year).

### Prices of Books

According to players in the market, the average retail price of a book in Lithuania is nine or ten euros. During the period 2008–2015, the sharpest increase in prices was in 2009, when as a part of the crisis management plan, VAT on books was increased from 5% to 9%, and the taxation of royalties was equated with income tax, leading to a more than 50% increase in income tax and social security payments (in 2010, the tax on royalties was withdrawn). For these reasons, and under the extremely unfavourable economic conditions, the price of books increased by 9.4% in 2009. This resulted in a decrease in book sales from 7.3 million in 2008 to five million copies in 2010.

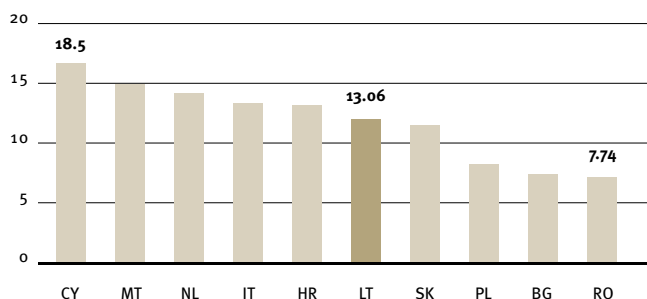
## Affordability of Books

A book from the list of the five top bestsellers cost 13.06 euros in 2015. Based on the average income of a standard family (two working adults and two children), the affordability of books in Lithuania is the lowest among EU countries which provided data: a Lithuanian family could buy 82 popular books with their monthly income; while, for example, in Poland the number is 147, and in the Netherlands nearly 400.

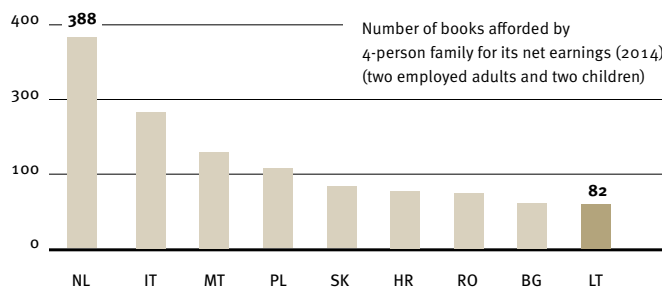
One reason why prices of books are so high in Lithuania is the small sales figures, for the cost of producing a book depends little on the circulation. The preparation of a book and copyright cost the same as in a larger market. Approximately 60% of the cost of publishing a book, such as translation, editing, proofreading, layout and design, is fixed and independent of the circulation. Around 40%,

## Prices and Affordability of Books

Price (novels, top 5), eur/unit (2015)



## Affordability, units/month



royalties and printing, is made up of costs dependent on the circulation. In addition, the production of printing forms (a different form for each order) and the preparation of the printing press are also independent of circulation size. The average circulation of a book is low in Lithuania because of the small market size, and the cost price is relatively high.

## BUSINESS RESULTS OF BOOK PUBLISHING ENTERPRISES

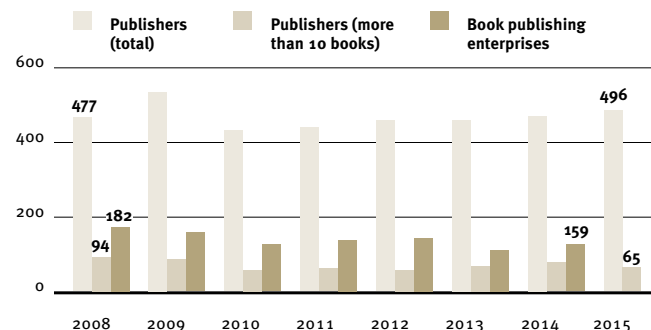
### Sector Enterprises

In 2015, 496 publishers published one book or more. The number of publishers has been increasing since 2011; nevertheless, the formal number of publishers does not fully reflect the real situation, as most of this number is made up of organisations for which publishing is not the main activity, or their volume of activity is very small. Only a third (150–160) of the above-mentioned organisations indicate book publishing as their main activity, while most of the sector is made up of only 60 to 70 publishers, who publish ten or more books annually.

Small enterprises dominate the sector. The average publisher is a micro-enterprise, which employs an average of 3,5 full-time employees, and generates slightly more than 200,000 euros in income per year.

## Enterprises in the Publishing Sector

Number of publishers





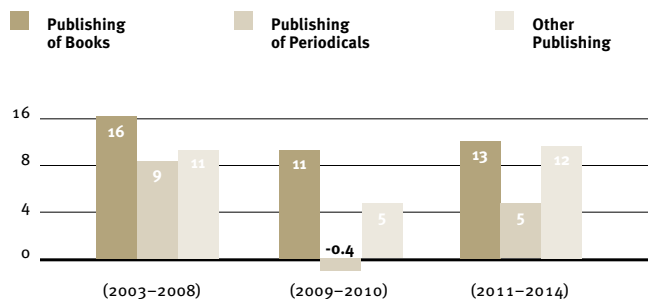
The structure of the sector is demonstrated more accurately by the market distribution according to the circulation of books published. There is a clear leader, the Alma littera group (including the Šviesa publishing house), which surpasses its closest rivals by several times in its volume of activity. For instance, on the basis of data from 2012–2015, Alma littera and Šviesa accounted for 23% of the sector’s output (physical units); its closest rivals (including Svajonių knygos, Obuolys, Tyto alba and Baltų lankų leidyba) published 4% to 5% of the overall book circulation. In total, the top ten publishers supply half of the market, while the other half is supplied by more than 400 smaller ‘formal’ publishers.

### Financial Health

Specific information on the financial indicators in book publishing is not publicly available, but a general picture may be formed by analysing the results of the whole publishing sector. Publishing is a low-profitability activity: the net profit margin was 5.6% in 2015, and this was the best result during the period under review. It should be noted that the sector profit indicator is affected negatively by the difficulties in publishing periodicals in the post-crisis period, while the situation is more favourable in book publishing (for comparison, the average gross profit margin in book publishing was ~13% in 2011–2014, while it reached ~5% in the periodicals sector).

### Profitability of Publishing Enterprises

Average gross profit margin (in per cent)



The profit demonstrates the result and efficiency of an economic activity; however, the freezing of funds, turnover, debts of enterprises, and solvency are important for financial health. This is especially important in book publishing, because a publisher invests when publishing a book, and takes on the biggest risk in all the supply chain: the copyright (it might be paid a year before publishing the book), translation, editing, layout and publishing costs are covered immediately; all the sales, marketing and logistics costs are met later; while income from sales comes in over approximately two years (the average period for a book to be on sale).

### ACCESSIBILITY OF BOOKS

Traditionally, the main outlet for the book trade is bookshops. In 2015, there were 144 bookshops in Lithuania, the same number as in 2009, the year of the crisis. The number and size of bookshops demonstrate that in 2012–2013 a tendency towards concentration started; that is, the number of bookshops started to decline, but bookshop space increased. In 2015, the space of the average bookshop was 160 square metres, which was 47% larger than in 2008. These changes were partly preconditioned by the changing function of bookshops. Because of the increasing popularity of digital information and e-commerce, bookshops have become a certain showcase, where a reader can choose freely, leaf through or read a book. For this, spacious and attractive bookshops are necessary. It is estimated that the average number of titles in a bookshop is approximately 9,000; in large network bookshops it may reach 15,000 to 20,000; while in independent bookshops it is 6,300.

It is becoming more difficult to attract readers by books only. Therefore, bookselling is combined with other activities, such as selling office supplies or educational games (part of the bookshop is rented to sellers of these goods) or cafés (part of the space is rented to café operators). Special spaces for reading, events and gatherings are created in bookshops. In this way, bookshops seek to become centres of attraction, to form the face of the bookshop, and create cultural spaces and a unique atmosphere to encourage visitors to visit the

bookshop more often and spend more time there. According to players in the market, additional activities (additional commodities or cafés) generate 10% to 20% of a bookshop's income.

Two main specialist networks dominate the retail book trade, together running 45% of the bookshops in the country. These are Vagos prekyba, which manages the Vaga chain, comprising 35 bookshops and franchise partners, and ALG knygynai, which manages the Pegasas chain, with 33 bookshops, nine of which operate on a franchise basis. Most of the bookshops operating on a franchise basis are in the smaller towns. The bookshops of the large chains are quite evenly distributed throughout Lithuania. The positioning and range of these chains are similar, and both have bookshops in large supermarkets, where the flow of buyers is huge.

There are also a number of smaller bookshop chains or individual bookshops in the market (they make up 55% of the total number

of bookshops). For instance, Humanitas, which has six bookshops, Litterula with two, Eureka!, Sofoklis, and others. However, it is complicated for independent bookshops to compete with the large chains. Successful independent bookshops have the advantage of an individual relationship with the customer, and strive mainly for uniqueness, specialising in one area or offering a different range of books compared to the larger bookshops (e.g. they sell books published by small publishing houses, or stock a specific range).

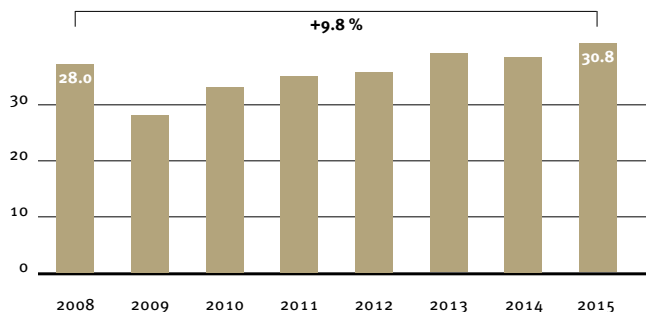
According to players in the market, the Maxima, Iki, Rimi and Norfa retailers of food and everyday consumer goods comprise around 20% of the retail book market. The range is narrower in supermarkets than in bookshops, and these traders usually focus on popular literature for the general public (fiction, self-help or children's literature).

E-commerce is becoming more popular. The number of residents who bought printed matter (books, magazines or newspapers) on the internet increased from 1.2% to 4.4% in 2008–2016. Buying books online is most popular among readers aged 25 to 34. Mainly paper books are bought on the internet, while e-books form a very small niche, which comprises only around 1–2% of the market, according to various estimates.

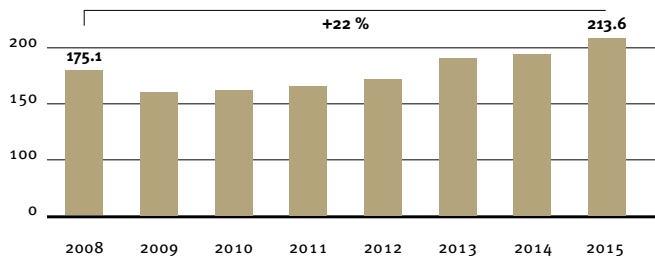
In aiming to use the advantages of direct trading, a number of traders have their own internet bookshops, such as Baltos lankos ([www.baltoslankos.lt](http://www.baltoslankos.lt)), Tyto alba ([www.tytoalba.lt](http://www.tytoalba.lt)) and Versus aureus ([www.versus.lt](http://www.versus.lt)). Traditional bookshops also sell books on the internet, such as Humanitas ([www.humanitas.lt](http://www.humanitas.lt)), Litterula ([www.litterula.lt](http://www.litterula.lt)) and Eureka ([www.knygynas.biz](http://www.knygynas.biz)). There are also specialised online bookshops selling books published by various publishing houses, such as [www.patogupirkti.lt](http://www.patogupirkti.lt) and [www.nestandartiniai.lt](http://www.nestandartiniai.lt).

### Specialised Trade in Books

Turnover (not including VAT), million euros



Average bookshop turnover, thousand euros

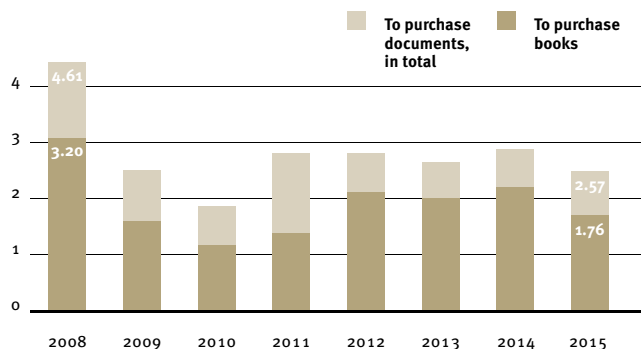


### LIBRARIES

It is important to ensure access to books for those who cannot afford to buy them. This is why the library network plays an especially important role. In 2015, there were 1,400 libraries and branches of libraries in Lithuania (there were 1,750 in 2008).

## Expenditure by Libraries on Renewing Stock

Dynamics, million euros



According to data from 2013, 35% of the population use library services in Lithuania. This percentage is slightly higher than the EU average (31%). According to the percentage of residents who visit a library, Lithuania is 11th among EU countries.

A positive feature is that the frequency of visits to libraries is increasing; however, the declining average number of loans made to a user (31.9 units in 2008, 29.5 in 2015) indicates a need to increase the attractiveness of the stock to users of traditional services.

The renewal of public library stock is funded mainly by the state and local governments; in addition, libraries obtain some publications for free from various support funds and private individuals. In 2015, libraries spent 2.57 million euros on renewal of stock, which comprises 5.5% of all their expenditure. Approximately 70% of spending on the renewal of stock is on books.

## PROMOTING READING

Reading habits and intensity depend on the number of potential readers, that is, on demographic changes in residents of the country. In 2008–2015, the population of Lithuania declined by 9.1%. Since 2012, less than three million people live in Lithuania: according to the data of Statistics Lithuania, at the beginning of 2016, there were 2.89

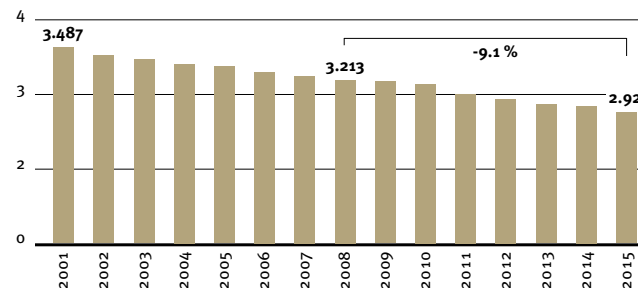
million people. The birth rate is improving slightly and has reached the EU average, but it is still very low.

The main buyers of books are citizens aged 30 to 50; they have steady purchasing power and strong reading habits. In the medium term, this segment will remain at the centre of the book market. However, coming generations (born after 1990) exhibit different habits in using information and reading: they are more oriented towards new technologies, and value electronic rather than traditionally printed books. Therefore, publishers will be forced to look for new directions in the publishing business.

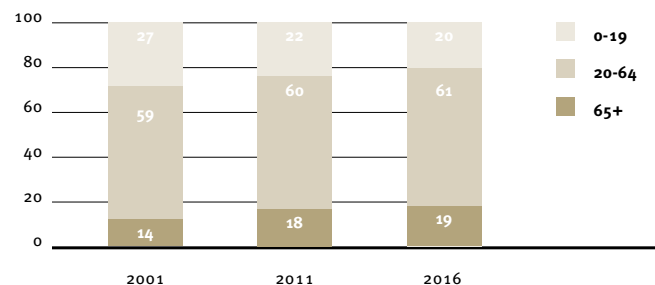
There is no consistent monitoring of how many people read books in Lithuania; but a more general situation is represented by other research available. For instance, Eurobarometer research data from

## The Population of Lithuania

Population, millions



Age structure (in per cent)



2007 reveals that 64% of Lithuania's population read a book at least once every 12 months.

According to research data from 2013, the number reached 66%. In both cases, this percentage is close to but slightly worse than the EU average.

Lithuania's population corresponds with the EU average in terms of reading habits: according to Eurobarometer research from 2013, 17% of the population (19% in the EU) read books once or twice in the last 12 months, 11% did three to five times (12% in the EU), and 38% did more than five times (37% in the EU). These results have remained almost unchanged compared to 2007.

In Lithuania, 74% of females and 58% of males read a book during the last 12 months (the numbers were 64% and 72% respectively in the EU). The most significant difference might be observed among females and males who read books more than five times a year: the numbers reach 47% and 27% respectively (42% and 31% in the EU).

In the case of the biggest readers, there is a clearer division between residents of the countryside and small towns and residents of the city: the number of people in Lithuania who read more than five times a year is 51%, while in the EU it is 43%. People of a lower social status read less or do not read at all.

The main barriers to reading books in Lithuania are the lack of time and the lack of interest. Eurobarometer survey results in 2013 confirm that changes in modern life have more influence on customers, including the faster pace of life, the changing lifestyle and leisure activities, and the use of other media.

The pace of modern life influences the development of entertainment and the spread of media which require less effort than reading books; therefore, reading is being replaced by audio-visual information, which is faster and more convenient to use for people who have weaker reading needs and habits. Comparing barriers to reading identified by residents of Lithuania and residents of the EU, Lithuanian readers suffer less from a lack time than EU residents on average, and their not reading is influenced by various other reasons.

## THE MAIN CHALLENGES

**The main challenges faced by Lithuanian publishers, which are set to increase in influence in the future, are the following:**

- Demographic tendencies: the number of potential readers is declining.
- Changes in modern lifestyles: books have to compete with other media.
- The legal environment: insufficient security of intellectual property.
- Instability and unfavourable tendencies in the tax regime.

## PHENOMENON OF THE INTERNATIONAL VILNIUS BOOK FAIR

The Second Christmas – this is how Lithuanian publishers call Vilnius Book Fair, which awaits its fans every February at the Exhibition and Conference Centre Litexpo. Lithuanian Publishers Association is one of the organizers of the event. Publishers around the globe rush to publish the most interesting and beautiful books by Christmas-time, in time for the gift-buying fever. Vilnius Book Fair that takes place soon after Christmas is an additional opportunity to organize writers' meetings with readers and introduce new books.

What makes this fair famous? The fact that it is the biggest book fair in the Baltic States since 2000. Also, it is one of the most significant cultural events in Lithuania. Vilnius Book Fair is exclusively focused on the reader; its main accent is on books and cultural events, as well as on the possibility for authors to interact with their readers. Another thing that makes the book fair so famous is the usually long and impressive list of its foreign guests. Recently, the fair has been visited by such stars of the literary world as Alessandro Baricco, John Irving, Andrei Makine, Jostein Gaardner, Joanne Harris, Melvin Burgess, Sofi Oksanen, Yuri Slezkine, Mike Gayle, Etgar Keret, David Foenkinos, Yasmina Khadra, and many others.

The cultural program is very broad – more than 400 cultural events each year: seminars for professionals, meetings with authors, book

presentations, discussions, readings, concerts, performances, films, awards, contests and events for children, etc.

One of the core events for children at Vilnius book fair is the creative studio You Can Create a Book. The idea for this was developed in the book fair of 2003 by the graphic artist and book illustrator Sigutė Chlebinskaitė. Studio invites visitors to participate in countless creative workshops, readings, and meetings with children’s literature authors as well as book illustrators from Lithuania and abroad. The main goal of the studio is to familiarize the kids with the development of the book from ancient times till now. In 2011, the studio celebrated its 10th anniversary.

Adults, who enjoy discussions and intelligent conversations, may visit Discussion Club. Club adds a more intellectual content to the fair. Its events are not associated with any particular publishing house or new publication. Prominent intellectuals from Lithuania and abroad, artists and scientists take part in the Discussions Club.

Art, film and music fans will not feel left out either. Book fair features exhibitions of famous Lithuanian and foreign artists, illustrators, and photographers, as well as video and sound installations. Most of them are being held in Lithuania for the first time. Poetry read to jazz is a special feature of the so-called Long Friday (on Friday the fair is open till 9PM!).

Visitors also have the opportunity to see screenings of the latest movies made after well-known novels, and documentary films about writers, poets and artists.

### Facts and figures of Vilnius Book Fair

	2016	2017
Participating companies /from countries	300/8	303/9
Number of visits	67.820	62.840
Number of cultural events + art exhibitions	466 + 13	388 + 12
Visits of foreign writers /from countries	35/13	29/12
Total exhibition area (sq m)	12.091	—
Total area of Vilnius Book Fair (sq m)	15.000	12.000

Source: [www.litexpo.lt](http://www.litexpo.lt)

Every year, since 2008, the Vilnius Book Fair attracts more and more visitors. It wouldn’t be an overstatement to call the Book Fair a cultural feast at the end of the cold and unpredictable Lithuanian winter.

### LITHUANIAN PUBLISHERS ASSOCIATION PROMOTES READING

#### Christmas of Books

Christmas of Books is a national reading promotion campaign initiated by President of Lithuania Dalia Grybauskaitė. It is carried out using the funds of the publishers, booksellers and readers. In 2016 this campaign has brought together the whole country and helped collect 50 thousand new books for public and school libraries.

Celebrating its fifth year, the Christmas of Books travelled across Lithuania, inviting people to read and donate books for children and young people. Local libraries held more than 1700 events. The initiative Volunteering for the Christmas of Books was joined by several thousand lovers of books and staged book readings in children’s care homes, socialization centres, and local communities.

The first ever Christmas of Books minibus visited towns and villages throughout Lithuania. The Writers Club and the Bookland team organized book readings and creative workshops in Varėna, Biržai, Kelmė, Šalčininkai, Švenčionys, Kaunas, Palanga, and Vilnius.

The Christmas of Books campaign engaged over 2300 public and school libraries across the country. Local people, communities, business and social organizations, publishers and writers contributed many books. The campaign was traditionally supported by the embassies of Ireland, Azerbaijan, Japan, the United States of America, Poland, Norway, and other countries.

The books collected will be distributed to all Lithuania’s public and school libraries. New books will also reach Lithuanian schools in Belarus, Poland, Latvia, and the Kaliningrad region; they will be sent to Lithuanian communities in Scotland and Australia.

The national Christmas of Books campaign is conducted together with friends, and LLA is one of them.

**Bookstore visitors buy books  
with special prices and donate them  
for campaign (libraries):**

- In 2012 – 17 000 books for Public libraries
- In 2013 – 25 000 books for School libraries
- In 2014 – over 40 000 books for Village/Small town libraries
- In 2015 – over 42 000 books for libraries
- In 2016 – over 48 000 books for libraries

**Lithuania Reads!**

In 2015 LLA brought together publishing houses, booksellers, book stores and authors for reading promotion action Lithuania Reads! to encourage children, youth and adults to read books and cherish Lithuanian language.

On May 7th Lithuanians celebrate the Freedom of the Lithuanian press, Language and Book. This date marks 40-years of struggle against the Russian tsarist empire to repeal Lithuanian language press ban. This is one of our greatest victories, which we remember without any official and governmental declaration. Perhaps it is because the whole nation mobilized, fought, and won victory and freedom to use Mother Language.

To honour this celebration LLA organized national reading promotion action Lithuania Reads! On May 7th there were readings held in 27 bookstores located in 8 cities, where 29 authors met their readers. As well audio readings were broadcasted in public areas, actors made improvised flash-mob type readings in restaurants and cafes. Medias showed huge interest to broadcast events live, about 20 articles were published in most popular news portals.

In 2016 this reading promotion action was even more successful. 45 cities joined this celebration and there were held 91 reading events in bookstores, libraries, parks, cafeterias, bars and even in the market. 103 authors presented their works. Lithuanian communities in Oslo, Glasgow, Prague, Rome and Israel organized their readings too.

Such a huge number of participants and great interest from media have shown that this kind of reading promotion action is attractive

idea for readers and book lovers. This action will take place each year and geographically will expand to all countries and continents where Lithuanians read in Lithuanian language. We will pick up a book at the same time and read it to get united through Lithuanian language – foundation stone of our nation.

**The European Union Prize for Literature**

In 2015 Lithuania nominated third author for EUPL.

Undinė Radzevičiūtė with a book awarded *Žuvys ir drakonai* (*Fishes and Dragons*, published in 2013 by Baltos lankos). Her first short novel was published in 2003 and was favourably reviewed. *Fishes and Dragons* is her fourth and biggest book so far. Two of her novels have been translated into Russian, and one into Estonian. The title of the book symbolically refers to two cultures: Christian European and traditional Chinese. Two different stories are interwoven here: one depicts the life of a Jesuit painter in 18th century China, the other mostly takes place in an old-town flat of a present-day European city. The flat is inhabited by an old woman, her daughter and two adult granddaughters; it eventually turns out that one of them is writing the Chinese line of the book. The novel is suffused with dialogue that can be seen through the prism of Zen principles. With her signature lapidary style, Radzevičiūtė has written a novel where the texture of the modern European storyline is coloured with oblique reflections of traditional Chinese culture and mentality.

As well in 2012 Lithuania nominated for EUPL Giedra Radvilavičiūtė with a book awarded *Šiqrakt aš miegosiu prie sienos* (*Tonight I Shall Sleep by the Wall*, published in 2010 by Baltos lankos) and in 2009 EUPL received Lithuanian author Laura Sintija Černiauskaitė for the book *Kvėpavimas į marmurą* (*Breathing into Marble*, published in 2006 by Alma littera).

EUPL is announced by the European Commission, the European Booksellers Federation, the European Writers' Council and the Federation of European Publishers. The aim of the prize is to put the spotlight on the creativity and diverse wealth of Europe's contemporary literature, to promote the circulation of literature within Europe and encourage greater interest in non-national literary works.

### **Vilnius Club Prize**

In 2015 Vilnius Club and LLA established Prize for a book about Vilnius, capital of Lithuania. Competition invites authors and publishers to apply with fiction, nonfiction, educational, art and photo albums published in the previous three years. The main goal is to encourage Lithuanian and foreign authors to write and publishers to publish books about Vilnius and raise awareness about traditions and culture of the city. Such criteria as history, heritage, exclusivity of Vilnius city are taken into account.

27 books of different genres entered the first contest in 2016. Vilnius Club Prize was awarded to Gražina Mareckaitė for the book *Šiapus ir anapus Vilniaus vartų* (published in 2013 by R. Paknys publishing house, designed by Jokūbas Jacovskis).

In 2017, it was awarded to authors collective for the book *Vilnius 1900–2016. Architektūros gidas* (published in 2016 by Lapas publishing house).

### **LITHUANIAN PUBLISHERS ASSOCIATION**

**(Lietuvos leidėjų asociacija, LLA)**

LLA was founded in 1989. Its functions include the representation of the public opinion of its members on the national level and the introduction of their production on the international level. At the moment the Association unites private publishing houses as well as non-governmental organizations mostly concentrating on specialized publishing. The membership of the LLA includes 39 members operating in the publishing sector. It equals about 1/3 of all active publishing houses that publish about 80 per cent of books.

LLA believes that publishing is a very important sector as it directly influences and introduces the national culture, politics, education, art, leisure, tourism, etc.

**LLA is a non-governmental organization not seeking to make any profit. The main aims of LLA encompass:**

- Protect and represent the interests of its members in the national and international area.

- Stimulate the development of highly cultivated publishing culture.
- Increase the competence level of the publishers.
- Collaborate with the national and EU institutions in preparing standard acts related to the publishing sector.
- Stimulate the reading of valuable literature.
- Initiate scientific researches.
- Organize cultural, literacy and reading promotion events
- Coordinate, organize and support the participation of Lithuanian publishers in the international book fairs.

Since 2004 the LLA has been a full and equal member of the Federation of European Publishers.

The supreme body of the LLA is the General Meeting of all members. It is convened at least once a year. The General Electoral Meeting is convened once in three years. LLA is managed by the President, Board and Administration. It is directly accountable to the General Meeting.

#### **PRESIDENT**

Remigijus Jokubauskas, Justitia publishing house

#### **BOARD**

Arvydas Andrijauskas, Alma Littera publishing house  
Danguolė Kandrotienė, Terra Publica publishing house  
Vytautas Vincas Petrošius, Vaga publishing house  
Saulius Petrulis, Eugrimas publishing house  
Lolita Varanavičienė, Tyto Alba publishing house  
Saulius Žukas, Baltos Lankos publishing house

#### **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

Aida V. Dobkevičiūtė



**Capital of Lithuania**

Vilnius

**Official language**

Lithuanian

**Area**

65,300 km<sup>2</sup>

**Population**

2.850.000

**National currency**

Euro since 1 January 2015

**Independence**

Announced on 16 February 1918

Restored on 11 March 1990

**Form of government**

Parliamentary democracy

**International membership**

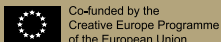
NATO member since 29 March 2004

EU member since 1 May 2004





**Literary** —  
— **market**



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