



European
Social
Charter

Charte
Sociale
Européenne



COUNCIL
OF EUROPE

CONSEIL
DE L'EUROPE

27/08/2012

RAP/RCha/LIT/IX(2012)Add2

EUROPEAN SOCIAL CHARTER
REPLIES TO SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTIONS

9th National Report on the implementation of
the European Social Charter

submitted by

THE GOVERNMENT OF LITHUANIA

(Article 10§5
for the period 01/01/2007 – 31/12/2010)

Report registered by the Secretariat on 27 August 2012

CYCLE 2012

ECSR question in respect of the 9th report of Lithuania
Article 10§5

Please describe the forms and amounts of financial assistance – universal, means-tested or merits based – available to students enrolled in vocational training or higher education (not continuous training or training for the unemployed) to support themselves while studying. Please give examples of the minimum level of assistance granted to students in need.

The financial assistance available to the students enrolled in vocational training (during the period of 2007-2010).

The general rules of financial assistance available to the students enrolled in vocational training are defined in Article 32 of the **Law on vocational education** of the Republic of Lithuania (Published in Official Gazette, 1997, No 98-2478; 2007, No 43-1627). Article 32 “Material Assistance”:

1. Students who study according to vocational training programmes seeking to acquire the primary qualification, as well as students of internal affairs vocational training establishments may be paid a scholarships and receive any other material support as prescribed by the Government.

2. Students with special needs seeking to acquire the primary qualification and do not receiving scholarships may be provided with meals and any other material support in accordance with the procedure laid down by legal acts.

3. Students whose education is carried out under the Law on Support for Unemployment or the Law on Social Integration of the Disabled shall be provided with material support in accordance with the procedure laid down by these Laws and the legal acts implementing them.

III chapter of the **Rules on the payment of scholarships and financial assistance for students enrolled in vocational training and seeking to acquire the primary qualification**, approved by the Government (Published in Official Gazette, 2005, No 98-3708; 2007, No 137-5612; 2011, Nr. 91-4340) states:

“6. The minimum scholarship assigned to the student, who is enrolled in vocational training and seeking to acquire the primary qualification is 0,27 of basic social payment, the maximum scholarship is 0,76 of basic social payment.”¹

7. The exact amount of the scholarship depends on training attainments. In regard to the Regulation on the assigning the scholarship and material assistance, scholarships are granted following the order of the school’s executive.

8. For foreigners – persons of Lithuanian descent, who are enrolled in vocational training and seeking to acquire the primary qualification, after providing the proving documents could be assigned of 70 percents higher scholarship than scholarship equal 0,76 of basic social payment.”

12. In regard to the Regulation on the Assigning the Scholarship and material assistance, material assistance which does not exceed the approved scholarship fund, could be assigned following the order of the school’s executive not often than once in a half year to following persons:

¹ According to the statistics, the basic social payment is LTL 130, therefore the minimal scholarship is LTL 21 and maximum LTL 58.

12.1 Students who have right to receive material social assistance according to the Law on material social assistance for families and persons in need (Published in Official Gazette, 2003, No 73-3352; 2006, No 130-4889);

12.2. Vocational school's student who has lost one of parents (caretakers) or comes from family raising 3 or more children under 18 years old;

12.3. students having their own children;

12.4. other cases regulated by the Regulation on the assigning the scholarship and material assistance.

13. The minimum financial assistance assigned to the student, who is enrolled in vocational training and seeking to acquire the primary qualification could not exceed 2 maximum scholarships assigned to regular students.²

Until 2009, financial assistance to students was more oriented to their study results. Implementing the Development Plan of the Higher Education System of Lithuania 2006-2010 (which was based on Bergen (2005) and London communiques (2007), the system was socially oriented. In 2008 the value of the social grant was raised from 1 to 3 Minimum Standards of Living, thereby significantly raising the assistance to students from low-income families according to the criteria set in the Law on Financial Social Assistance for Low-income Families and Single Residents.

Loans for students of Lithuania's higher education institutions are allocated and administered by the State Study Foundation. From 1998 to 2002 state loans could be allocated only to full-time students of state higher education institutions and there was only one type of loans: to cover living expenses. However, the rules of loan allocation were revised in 2002 and since 2003 students could choose from three types of loans: a loan to cover tuition fees (for students in state higher education institutions, when the state only partially financed their studies), a loan to cover living expenses (both for students in state and in private higher education institutions), a loan for periods of study based on international treaties and agreements. The loan to cover tuition fees was tied in with the reform of study funding: the newly-set criterion of good study results and rotation according to the study results of the term (on the basis of the said criteria, it was decided, what kind of state funding – full or partial – the student would receive).

Since the reform of the higher education system which began in 2009, the system of study funding from the state budget and the rules of loan allocation have changed. In order to fund studies from the state budget, the principle of a student voucher (a state-funded student place) has been introduced – state funding goes to those higher education institutions and those study programmes, which are chosen by the entrants with best learning results. With the number of students rising, the need for loans has grown too (prior to the reform, loans to cover living expenses and loans for periods of study abroad were too low, they did not cover the expenses and not all the students willing to get these loans, received them; moreover, students who did not receive state funding were not eligible to receive a loan to cover tuition fees). After the system reform, private credit institutions have been involved in the process and students can

² The maximum financial assistance is LTL 116 Lt.

get state-supported loans, not state loans. The function of the State Study Foundation has become more of an administrative nature.

Students of all cycles receive public financial support in the form of **grants/scholarships**. The following groups of students receive grants/scholarships:

✓ Need-based: **Social grants** from the state budget funds may be granted to socially-disadvantaged students. The following persons may receive a social grant:

- those having a right to social support;
- persons with disabilities;
- persons under 25 years orphaned prior to coming of age (18 years).

Social grants are state-regulated. The size of a social grant is LTL 390 (three Basic Social Benefits, formerly - Minimum Standard of Living). Beneficiaries of social grants are students in both public and private HEI, both full-time and part-time students. In 2011, the number of the beneficiaries of social grants has increased by 19 percent in comparison to the year 2010.

✓ Merit-based: **Incentive grants** from the funds of higher education institutions or other funds may be granted to the best students taking into consideration their study results or other academic achievements. Incentive scholarships are not regulated by the state. The size of incentive scholarships is within the discretion of each higher education institution.

✓ Fields of study: education, public safety, maritime engineering and technology. With a view to enhancing the attractiveness of study fields which are of special importance to the State, best performing students in the respective study fields additionally receive **targeted grants**. Targeted grants are a type of incentive grants which are regulated by the state. The size of a targeted grant for students in education is LTL 400, and that for students of public safety and maritime engineering and technology, LTL 375. Also, students in the said study fields receiving a targeted grant may in addition receive an incentive grant which is at the discretion of the higher education school.

Students of all cycles may receive **state-supported loans** (loans with a state guarantee): decisions on loan allocation are made by the State Studies Foundation, but loans are paid by credit institutions selected through a public procurement procedure and using money of the credit institutions. There are three types of state-guaranteed loans:

✓ State-supported loan to cover tuition fees – no more than the normative cost of study set by the minister of education and science per year;

✓ State-supported loan to cover living expenses - up to LTL 6500 (EUR 1882) per year;

✓ State-supported loan for periods of study abroad (Erasmus) – up to LTL 7800 (approx. EUR 2260) per year.

Students have to pay only interests while they study. The repayment of the loan begins one year after the graduation or termination of the studies and the loan should be repaid within 15 years. For students who take loans to cover tuition fees, the state pays the interest that exceeds 5 %.

Self-financing students of all cycles studying for their first respective degree may receive an annual **income tax refund**, i.e. the amount of the tuition fee may be deducted from his/her income during the tax period. In the case when a student is not

a payer of income tax or has no possibility to exercise his/her right to deduct amounts of tuition fees from his/her income, the said expenses may be deducted from their income by one of his/her parents (adoptive parents), guardians and/or the spouse.

Third-cycle (doctoral) students in state-funded places receive **state grants**. The size of the grant for a first-year third-cycle student is 764 LTL per month, for a second-, third- and fourth- year student, 884 LTL per month. In addition, doctoral students actively engaged in academic research may receive a grant the size of which is not more than 390 LTL per month.

Non-cash support

Full-time students of all cycles are eligible for and covered by **compulsory health insurance**.

Full-time students of all cycles have a right to obtain with **transport discounts** for long-distance travel, local (suburban) travel and local (urban) regular travel.

SECRETARIAT GENERAL

DIRECTORATE GENERAL
HUMAN RIGHTS AND RULE OF LAW

DIRECTORATE OF HUMAN RIGHTS

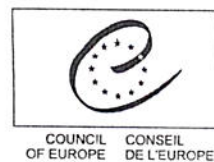
HEAD OF THE DEPARTMENT
OF THE EUROPEAN SOCIAL CHARTER
AND THE EUROPEAN CODE OF SOCIAL SECURITY,
EXECUTIVE SECRETARY
OF THE EUROPEAN COMMITTEE OF SOCIAL RIGHTS

ESC 237
RD/SF



European
Social
Charter

Charte
Sociale
Européenne



Ms Kristina Vysniauskaite-Radinskiene
Deputy Head, International Law Division
International Affairs Department
Ministry of Social Security and Labour
A. Vivulskio st.
03610 Vilnius
Lithuania

Strasbourg, 11 July 2012

Dear Ms Vysniauskaite-Radinskiene,

The European Committee of Social Rights is currently examining the ninth report from the Government of Lithuania on the European Social Charter and has instructed me to forward to you the enclosed questions concerning Article 10.

The Committee would be grateful if you could reply to this question before 10 August 2012 in order to allow the information to be taken into account in Conclusions 2012.

Yours sincerely,

Régis Brillat



11 July 2012

Question in respect of the 9th report of Lithuania

Articles 10§5

Please describe the forms and amounts of financial assistance – universal, means-tested or merits based - available to students enrolled in vocational training or higher education (not continuous training or training for the employed) to support themselves while studying. Please give examples of the minimum level of assistance granted to students in need.