



MINISTRY OF THE INTERIOR  
OF THE REPUBLIC OF LITHUANIA



## EUROPEAN LABEL OF GOVERNANCE EXCELLENCE



# REPORT

20 December, 2020

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EUROPEAN UNION

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CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

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Implemented  
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## Abbreviations

CoE	Council of Europe
ELoGE	European Label of Governance Excellence
MoI	Ministry of Interior
Dainava	Training centre “Dainava” for civil servants and local administration
ALAL	Association of Local Authorities of Lithuania

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# About the European Label of Governance Excellence in Lithuania

## 1. Introduction

The ELoGE activity was implemented in Lithuania from July 2020 to November 2020. It was run by Dainava, which was accredited to award the Label in Lithuania until 2023, with the support of the MoI and ALAL.

The aim of this action is to identify and certify municipalities, which achieve a certain standard of governance according to the [12 European Principles of Good Democratic Governance](#), that are established in the Strategy of Innovation and Democratic Good Governance:

1. Participation, Representation, Fair Conduct of the Elections
2. Responsiveness
3. Efficiency and Effectiveness
4. Openness and Transparency
5. Rule of Law
6. Ethical Conduct
7. Competency and Capacity
8. Innovation and Openness to Change
9. Sustainability and Long-term Orientation
10. Sound Financial Management
11. Human Rights, Cultural Diversity and Social Cohesion
12. Accountability

Verification of the level of compliance of the municipalities with the 12 Principles of good democratic governance includes:

- self-assessment of the services delivered by municipalities, where they identified their level of maturity with respect to each Principle;
- questionnaire addressed to citizens;
- questionnaire addressed to municipalities' employees and members of local councils.

In order to share ownership of the results and maximise the transfer of know-how, all participants in ELoGE had the possibility to be consulted by the local experts during online meetings held every week.

In the first edition of ELoGE in Lithuania, the following 14 municipalities received the certificates:

- Akmenė district municipality
- Alytus city municipality
- Anykščiai district municipality
- Birštonas municipality
- Druskininkai municipality
- Jonava district municipality

- Joniškis district municipality
- Klaipėda city municipality
- Kupiškis district municipality
- Panevėžys district municipality
- Plungė district municipality
- Šiauliai city municipality
- Tauragė district municipality
- Vilkaviškis district municipality

## 2. Implementation and methodology

**In the initial implementation phase, the accredited organisation was responsible for training of local experts on the ELoGE Programme with the support of CoE international experts, establishment of National stakeholders' platform, organising of introductory event for Lithuanian municipalities.**

During the first workshop for local experts, which took part in June 2020 in Dainava's premises, the group of local experts from the academic community (professors, scientists, practitioners) in cooperation with CoE international expert Daniele del Bianco, director of the Institute of International Sociology Gorizia who joined the activity remotely, discussed about adaptation and preparation for the ELoGE process in Lithuania. After careful examination of the guidelines included in the ELoGE documentation, the evidence for local authorities to be provided after the self-evaluation process were discussed, and the Lithuanian ELoGE Benchmark was prepared. A plan for implementation of ELoGE was prepared as well.

The following research tools were created/adapted:

- online application questionnaire:
  - questionnaire for citizens,
  - questionnaire for employees and members of councils.
- questionnaire of self-assessment
- evidence data collection tool.

In the process of applying for the ELoGE, the Lithuanian municipalities carried out self-assessments, conducted surveys among residents, municipality employees and members of councils, and collected documentation allowing to check whether the self-assessment had been justified. The teams in each local government that decided to participate in the programme undertook a difficult task to self-assess and justify their self-evaluation of the quality of implemented public services. It meant putting a special emphasis on raising the standards of their work in the areas subject to self-assessment.

Promotional ELoGE event for Lithuanian municipalities was held 4-6 August 2020, together with the III stage of the Leadership Academy Programme – another CoE tool implemented in the framework of the project “Delivering Good Governance in Lithuania”.

### *Moment from Promotional ELoGE event*



It has to be mentioned that the accredited body took into account wide interests when establishing the National stakeholders' platform, inviting representatives of national institutions, associations, educational institutions, and non-governmental organisations. The members of the National stakeholders' platform were representatives of:

- Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Lithuania
- Association of local authorities
- Training centre "Dainava" for civil servants and local administration
- Mykolas Romeris University
- Network of competencies
- Lithuanian Union of Local Community Organisations
- Youth Council
- Association of Elders' Lithuanian Women's Lobbying Organisation.

The main role of the National stakeholders' platform within this process was to approve the adapted Benchmark, establish the methodology for assessing results, and approve results at the end.

Methodology for counting the final score consisted of the following:

- the self-assessment average score made up for 50 percent of the total final score
- the citizens' evaluation score received through questionnaires made up for 30 percent of the total final score
- the score received from questionnaires submitted by municipality employees and members of councils made up for 20 percent of the total final score.

### *Moment from National stakeholders' platform meeting*



### 2.1. Preparation, workshops and challenges

The MoI launched the registration process for the municipalities to participate in this CoE programme. Willingness to participate in this programme was expressed by 35 municipalities, which filled a web-form by 8 September 2020. That showed a really effective result of the promotional event since more than 50 percent of the Lithuanian municipalities expressed the desire to participate in the ELoGE programme (there are a total of 60 municipalities in Lithuania). Furthermore, 3 out of the 5 big cities-municipalities submitted their interest to participate in the ELoGE process.

The municipalities were asked to form a team of at least four employees working in this process. Usually, they were specialists on strategic planning, lawyers, human resources managers, public procurement specialists, accountants, auditors, advisers to mayors, etc. In 24 municipalities which fully completed the whole ELoGE process, a total of 95 persons were working on this methodology.

Also, it is worth mentioning that during the entire ELoGE implementation period there were strong restrictions due to Covid-19 pandemic. There were some restrictions in Lithuania as well. Hereafter follow some challenges that were met due to the Covid-19:

1. **Citizens survey.** There were limited direct contacts with citizens as they couldn't enter the municipalities without registration in advance, there were some services provided by the municipalities officers only online, etc. Therefore, because of the limited ability to interact directly with citizens, we provided only for online questionnaires. It was really challenging to collect data with regards to the requirements for quantity of answers (see in chapter 2.2. of this report).

2. **Remote work.** Due to Covid-19, it was also challenging to poll municipalities' employees and members of local councils as some of them worked remotely.

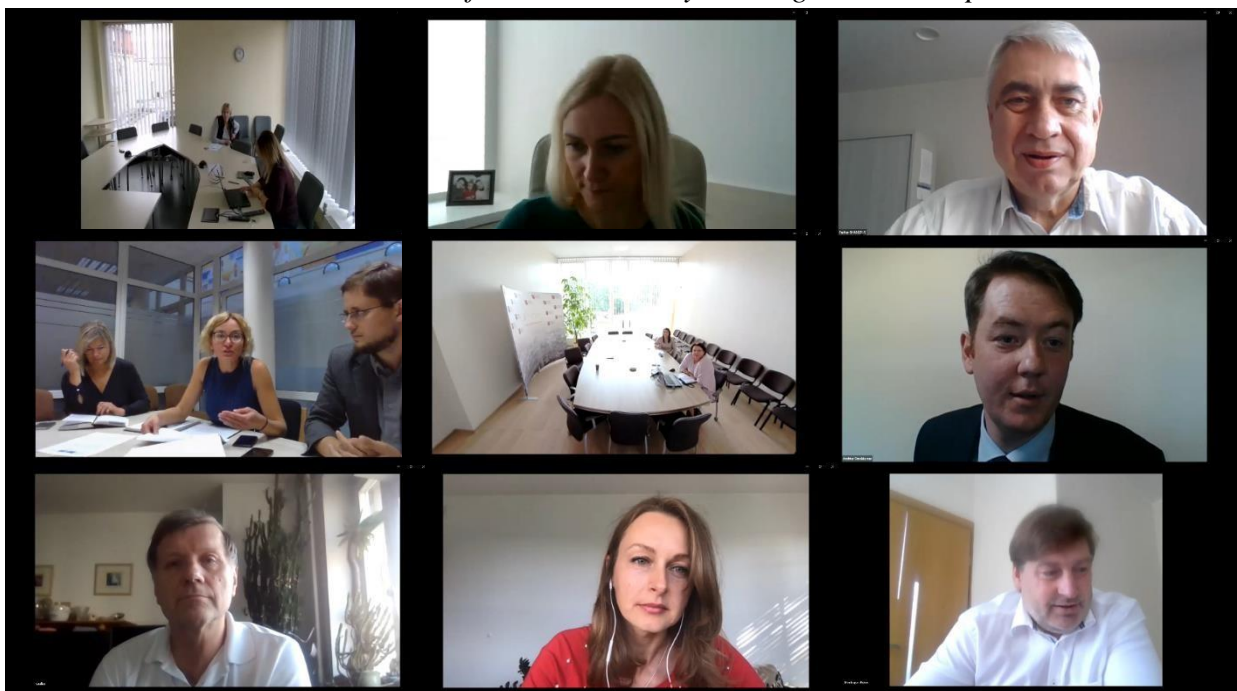
3. **Arousing interest for potential participants of the programme and keeping engagement of participants throughout its duration.** From the early stage of the ELoGE implementation programme, we only had the possibility to arrange meetings with

municipalities remotely. It required more preparation for spreading the news about ELoGE and the advantages of participation in this programme. On the other hand, it was challenging for the municipalities to participate with their full potential, because they had to be concentrated on implementing the Law on Covid-19 control as well.

In addition, there were parliamentary elections held in October 2020 and it had an impact on implementing the ELoGE programme also.

Despite such tense situation, the first introductory online meeting with potential participants in the programme was held on 15 September 2020 by Dainava. During the meeting the MoI, the team of Dainava and local experts presented the 12 Principles of Good Democratic Governance, the European Label of Governance Excellence (ELoGE) Benchmark, the process of applying for the ELoGE and answered questions raised by the municipalities. Since the first online meeting, participants showed great interest in the ELoGE implementation programme.

*Moment from Introductory meeting with municipalities*



Every single week there were meetings with representatives of the municipalities that applied for participating in the ELoGE programme where together with the experts they discussed about evidence, citizens and municipality's feedback, etc. A total of 35 online zoom meetings were held in less than 2 months, and representatives of municipalities were consulted by emails and via telephone calls. Dainava, on its webpage [www.centrasdainava.lt](http://www.centrasdainava.lt) created a separate section - "Frequently asked questions".

## **2.2. Citizens, employees and members of councils' survey**

Local municipalities, which applied to the programme carried out surveys among residents, as well as employees and members of councils. The questionnaires were prepared for each



municipality in advance using on online platform ([www.manoapklausu.lt](http://www.manoapklausu.lt)). The results served as verification of the self-assessment and average scores of both questionnaires (citizens’ and employees and members of councils’) were calculated into the final score. The questionnaires contained 12 questions concerning the 12 Principles of Good Democratic Governance from the ELoGE Benchmark.

The required thresholds regarding citizens’ feedback in the surveys have been determined as follows:

<b>Number of residents in the municipality</b>	<b>Minimum number of participants in the research</b>
up to 10 000	100
10 000 – 30 000	200
30000-60000	300
More than 60 000	350

We had 1 municipality with up to 10 000 inhabitants participating in the ELoGE programme, 15 municipalities had between 10 000 - 30 000 inhabitants, 15 municipalities had between 30 000 - 60 000 inhabitants, and 4 municipalities had above 60 000 inhabitants.

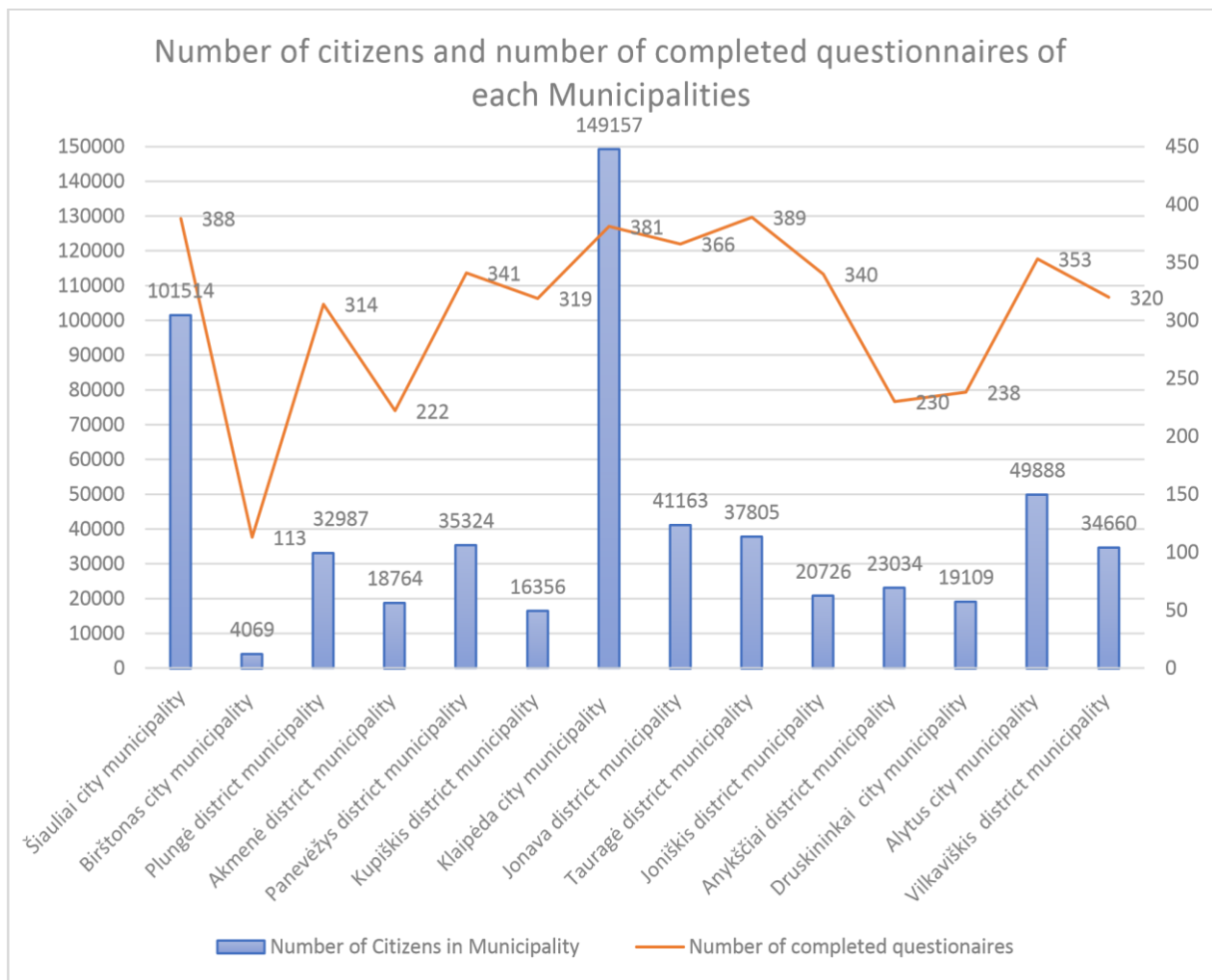
The required thresholds regarding feedback by employees and members of councils were determined as follows:

- At least 50 percent of the members of the local councils
- At least 25 percent employees

Each municipality received an email with a dedicated link to the surveys intended for their residents, employees and members of councils. The surveys were completed on-line and collected in the system - [www.manoapklausu.lt](http://www.manoapklausu.lt).

Of the 35 municipalities that registered for ELoGE, 26 collected the required amount of questionnaires.

Municipalities were responsible for collecting data of each survey and sharing the link of online surveys. The municipalities shared the link of the survey for their employees and members of councils mostly by placing it on their web page, intranet or through emails. The link of the survey for their citizens, was shared by municipalities also on social media (for example Facebook, etc.) and the local press. It is worth mentioning that in order to increase the engagement to fulfil citizens’ survey, one municipality as a good practice established a symbolic award for those citizens who shared the link of the survey on social media. The results of citizens’ survey fulfilment is shown in the diagram below.



### 2.3. Evidence data collection and self-assessment

Each municipality that registered to participate in the programme had to collect evidence for each of the twelve principles. More than 154 evidence were submitted. For better assimilation (absorption) of the requirements for provision of evidence for each of the twelve principles, each municipality was asked to select a group of people as a team that would have the ability to discuss about collection of data of evidence. The group of people working as a team in each municipality discussed about different possibilities, how to improve their score of the self-assessment not only at the current time but in the future as well. While filling the questionnaire and collecting data, many questions arose from the local teams. Therefore, every two weeks or more often, municipality officers were meeting with experts to discuss about the issues. Furthermore, after each meeting the special section of frequently asked questions was updated on Dainava’s webpage in order to share common information for all municipalities that participated in the programme.

A total of 24 municipalities provided fully completed lists of evidence and self-evaluation forms.

### 3. Results

The results of the surveys of citizens, municipality employees and members of councils were collected in the [www.manoapklausu.lt](http://www.manoapklausu.lt) system and prepared for analysis in the form of tables.

The results of the self- evaluation and lists of evidence for each principle were sent by email. The final average scores of each survey were calculated according to the methodology and their proportion mentioned in chapter 2 of this report.

According to the agreed methodology, it was decided to award the ELoGE to the municipalities scoring 3 and more. The awarded municipalities are presented below:

<b>Municipality</b>	<b>Self-assessment average score</b>	<b>Citizens' survey average score</b>	<b>Employees and members of councils average score</b>	<b>Final score</b>
Druskininkai municipality	3,85	2,77	3,39	3,44
Panevėžys district municipality	3,92	2,32	2,95	3,24
Joniškis district municipality	3,83	2,39	2,98	3,22
Kupiškis district municipality	3,61	2,49	3,25	3,2
Tauragė district municipality	3,76	2,31	3,02	3,17
Alytus city municipality	3,88	2,09	2,76	3,12
Birštonas municipality	3,77	2,11	3,01	3,12
Jonava district municipality	3,77	2,2	2,67	3,07
Klaipėda city municipality	4	1,85	2,61	3,07
Akmenė district municipality	3,67	2,11	2,99	3,06
Anykščiai district municipality	3,81	1,96	2,78	3,05
Vilkaviškis district municipality	3,68	2,29	2,66	3,05
Plungė district municipality	3,81	2	2,62	3,03
Šiauliai city municipality	3,66	2	2,83	3

It is worth also mentioning that while comparing the self-assessments of each municipality it was noticed that the most common principle which is most successfully implemented in Lithuanian municipalities is the Principle of Rule of Law. That means that the local authorities abide by the law and judicial decisions and that all Rules and regulations are adopted in

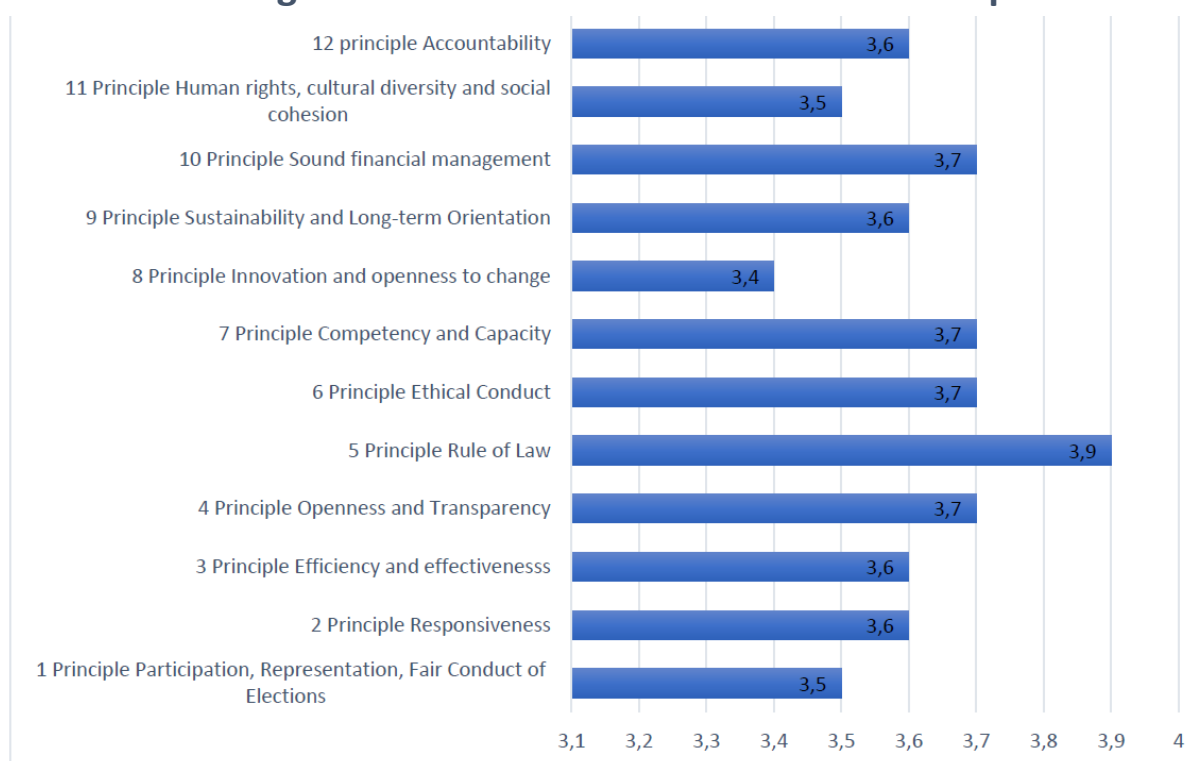
accordance with procedures provided for by law and are enforced impartially. As it is shown in the table below almost all Municipalities (11 of 14) scored themselves with the maximum possible - 4 points.

<b>Municipality</b>	<b>Participation, Fair Representation, Fair Conduct of Elections</b>	<b>Responsiveness</b>	<b>Efficiency and effectiveness</b>	<b>Openness and Transparency</b>	<b>Rule of Law</b>	<b>Ethical Conduct</b>	<b>Competency and Capacity</b>	<b>Innovation and openness to change</b>	<b>Sustainability and Long-term Orientation</b>	<b>Sound financial management</b>	<b>Human rights, cultural diversity and social cohesion</b>	<b>Accountability</b>
Akmenė district municipality	3,3	3,8	3,7	3,8	4	3,6	3,6	3,5	3,8	3,9	3,3	3,8
Alytus city municipality	3,7	3,8	4	4	4	4	4	4	3,8	3,5	4	4
Ankščiūnai district municipality	3,7	4	4	3,7	4	3,7	4	4	3,8	3,8	3,8	3,5
Birštonas municipality	3,9	3,8	3,77	3,9	3,7	3,8	3,8	3,75	4	3,76	4	4
Druskininkai municipality	3,8	3,8	4	4	4	3,7	3,8	3,7	3,7	4	4	4
Jonava district municipality	3,6	3,8	4	3,6	4	3,5	4	3,7	4	4	4	3,3
Joniškis district municipality	4	3,8	4	3,8	4	4	4	3,5	3,7	3,9	3,8	3,8
Klaipėda city municipality	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Kupiškis district municipality	3,4	4	3,4	4	4	3,6	3,6	3,5	3	3,6	3	4
Panevėžys district municipality	3,8	4	3,8	4	4	3,8	4	4	4	4	4	4
Plungė district municipality	3,6	3,6	3,6	3,7	4	3,8	3,8	4	4	3,9	4	4
Šiauliai city municipality	3,5	3,83	3,4	3,82	3,6	3,56	3,67	3,6	3,67	3,71	3,29	3,57

Tauragė district municipality	3,6	3,6	3,5	4	4	3,7	3,4	4	3,8	3,9	4	4
Vilkaviškis district municipality	3,7	3,4	3,3	3,5	3,7	3,7	3,6	3,7	4	4	4	3,5

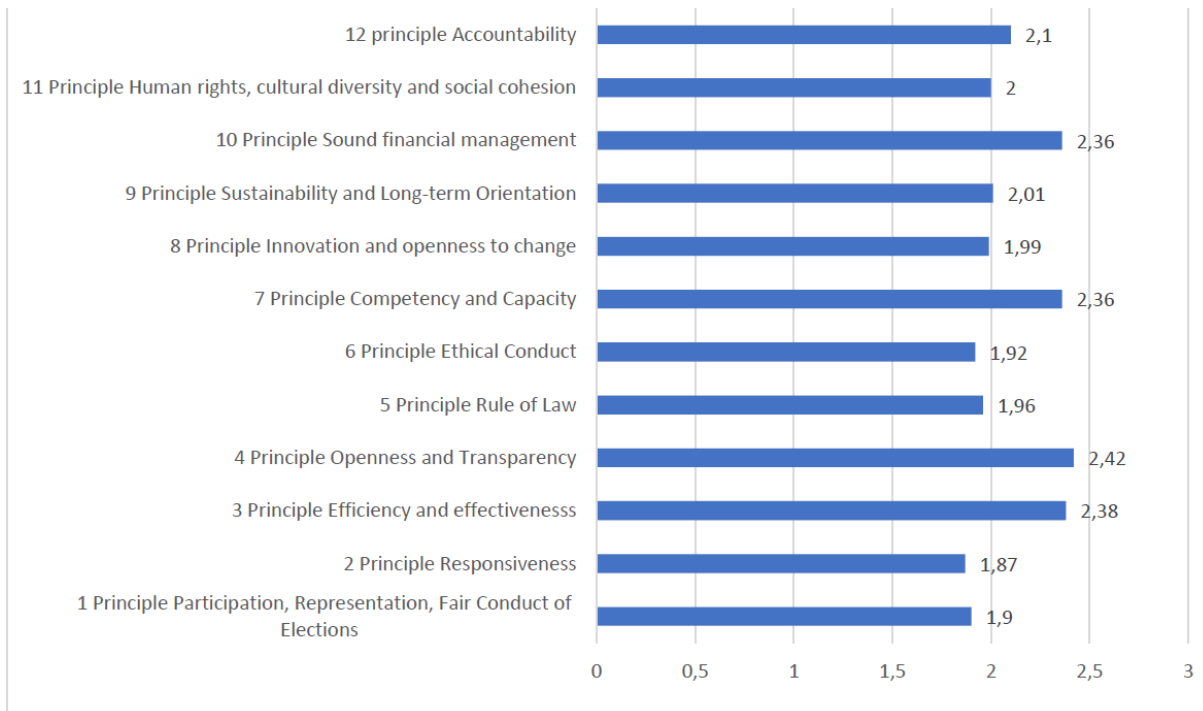
While exploring the results of the self- assessment of each ELoGE winning municipality, it is significantly noticeable that one common principle of the 12 Principles of Good Democratic Governance could be more developed. That principle is called - Participation, Representation, Fair Conduct of Elections. Almost all these municipalities have space for developing this issue, for example: how to improve local regulations and practical arrangements concerning citizen participation in local public life, how to engage citizens in decision-making, how to ensure the best way for consulting with the public in the initial phase of the decision-making process, or how to engage NGOs, businesses, local media, citizens and other groups to comment on the municipality plans.

### The average score of self-assessment of all Municipalities



It is noticeable that Principle 8 - Innovation and openness to change, according to the average score of self-assessment of all 24 Municipalities has the lowest score. In order to find out what kind of improvements have to be done to better implement this or other principles, a deeper research on in each of the municipalities should be performed. Each municipality took into account what they have to improve in order to implement the twelve principles of Good Governance.

## The average score of citizens' surveys in all municipalities



### 4. Conclusions on Lithuania's ELoGE and feedback from municipalities' officers

In general, the participation in this programme has been impressive, with 35 municipalities participating and 14 being awarded with the Label. The ELoGE award ceremony due to Covid-19 restrictions was held online and took place on 30 November 2020 via the Zoom platform.

*Moment from ELoGE award ceremony*





The Acting Prime Minister of Lithuania, Saulius Skvernelis, opened the ELoGE award ceremony - *“Lithuania is becoming more beautiful and people are happy about it.”* The acting Minister of Interior, Rita Tamašunienė, emphasised the importance of good governance and the advantages of ELoGE: *“The 12 Principles have magical power and ELoGE is the perfect way to demonstrate the good work of municipalities. The results of this ELoGE round will surely encourage other municipalities to participate in the future”*.

The awarded municipalities were also congratulated by Snežana Samardžić-Marković, Director General of Democracy, Council of Europe, who took part in the ceremony.

The approach provided in Lithuania to find out the views of citizens and employees and members of councils has been very effective. With 11 100 questionnaires completed (2722 employees and members of councils and 8378 citizens) the study is representative.

Participating municipalities kindly shared their opinions and feelings about participation in this ELoGE programme. Most of the municipalities said that participating in the ELoGE programme helped them to look as if from aside and evaluate what they have already done:

**Joniškis district municipality:** *“The ability to participate in such a programme we met very enthusiastic. It was really worth seeing how our staff and citizens evaluate quality of services of municipality. Even more, we are happy for having the possibility to examine ourselves. Of course, we met some challenges in finding evidences of each principle, but when we worked as a team and discussed, we found out how many good things we already have. It was also difficult to get feedback from citizens and staff because of Covid-19 situation, as they worked remotely. But at the very end we are proud and happy to have participated in the ELoGE programme. We already know what we have to improve next”*.

**Klaipėda city municipality:** *“While participating in the ELoGE programme we had the opportunity to see how many good things we have already done in our services. It’s like a self-audit of our services. Of course, the period for participating in the ELoGE programme was really difficult, because of the Covid-19. We have had also some challenges while collecting answers through citizens’ surveys as well, but we solved this situation creatively - we arranged a teaser for our citizens who would share the link of the survey on Facebook. We were amazed how many people were engaged in answering the survey. Also we are really thankful for having access to the experts, that we had the possibility to be consulted, because we have had lots of questions”.*

**Kupiškis district municipality:** *“We appreciate we had the possibility to participate in this programme. It was really worth participating in it. While examining all evidence we have noticed our weakest sides and we know what we have to improve in our services. Also, meeting with other colleagues from other municipalities during the Zoom meetings helped us see that not only we have such questions and difficult situations with collecting feedback, and that encouraged us to go until the end of the ELoGE programme”.*

Summarizing the feedback about the ELoGE programme, all participants, even those who did not receive the Label, confirmed that it was really worth participating in it and that it encouraged them to think about improvements of services.