

LITHUANIA

Trade Union Monitor

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**FRIEDRICH
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POLITICAL, ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL FRAMEWORK

POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT

The 2020 election was won by the centre-right parties, with Homeland Union winning both the popular vote and the highest number of single-member constituency seats in the Parliament (50 seats out of 141). They then formed a coalition with two liberal parties – Lithuanian Liberal Movement (12 seats) and Freedom Party (Laisvės partija) (11 seats). In 2022 the ruling coalition became more unstable. Fractures between the liberal Freedom Party and the conservative Homeland Union started to emerge. This was caused by the ruling coalition failing to gather support for same-sex partnerships and decriminalisation of light drugs in the parliament (Seimas).

During the parliamentary discussions on the budget for the 2023 fiscal year Freedom Party and several individual members of the Homeland Union supported the opposition initiatives to maintain the VAT tax exemptions in the catering sector, which almost caused the fall of the ruling coalition. This weakness is creating significant problems for the implementation of the government agenda, for example a tax reform, which intends the change from payroll taxes towards more capital income taxation. Another item on the agenda in dire straits is the attempt to reform the public administration by giving more powers to the heads of public institutions and dismantling the traditional “Prussian” style of public administration, which is opposed by trade unions.

Late 2022 and the first months of 2023 were dominated by the municipal elections, which took place on March 5, 2023. Municipal politics are dominated by the Lithuanian Social Democratic Party (LSDP) (15 mayors out of 60), with the major cities all governed by non-party political committees (with the sole exception of capital city Vilnius, which is ruled by a political committee which became the basis for the junior coalition partners of the government – Freedom Party).

Currently the polls are split with LSDP, Homeland Union and the Democratic Party (a new party established by former Prime Minister Saulius Skvernelis), each leading different polls with only the margin of error separating these three parties. However, certain events in January 2023 might significantly change this balance of power. The usual political campaigning season was disrupted by the State Prosecutor’s Office announcing that a Seimas member from the Homeland Union’s fraction Kristijonas Bartoševičius was charged with rape and molestation during his time as a member of parliament. This is the most significant political scandal in Lithuania since its independence in 1990, and might cause a significant drop in the support for the Homeland Union in the coming elections, which could lead to more support for the right-wing populist parties. Lithuania so far managed to avoid those parties being successful at the electoral level.

Politics in 2022 were dominated by the Russian aggression against Ukraine, with the Lithuanian state and its society unanimously supporting Ukraine. The war triggered a wave of refugees from Ukraine, with 70–90 thousand Ukrainian refugees relocating to Lithuania. At the same time, another wave of refugees which began in 2021, with refugees coming from mostly Iraq, Syria and Afghanistan, continues, and Lithuania was accused by Amnesty International for applying double standards in the treatment of these refugees opposed to the ones coming from Ukraine. Lithuania significantly increased its defence spending with all major political parties agreeing to increase the spending to 2.5 per cent of the GDP.

Lithuania was affected by a cost of living crisis. The war coincided with the liberalisation of the energy sector, with the majority of Lithuanian households having to choose electricity providers in the summer of 2022. As the country is generally importing electricity, Lithuania’s households were particularly vulnerable to the sudden spike of energy prices, which quadrupled in early 2022, with the inflation exceeding 20 per cent most of the year. Inflation and high energy prices directly affected labour unrest.

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL SITUATION

Lithuania continues to experience chronically high unemployment (9.2 per cent in February 2023, according to the employment office), which is currently not decreasing but is instead expected to rise in the short term. Unemployment continues to be particularly high in the provinces and outside of big cities, where certain structural and social phenomena are preventing people from finding employment. Poor communication, lack of regular public transportation, and the prevalence of informal and seasonal work in agriculture in less economically advanced regions concentrates the unemployment in rural areas. The level of unemployment is highest in the Utena region (10.8 per cent 2022), while it is lower in the Klaipėda region, where industry, marine transportation and tourism dominate the economy (7.4 per cent 2022).

In the medium term (2024–2025), Lithuania will experience a large wave of pensioners, and this trend will particularly affect the public sector, with the education, medical and care sector already experiencing shortages of qualified employees.

In late 2022, the government increased the minimum wage from 720 to 840 EUR (an increase of 16 per cent), with a minimum hourly wage of 5.14 EUR.

Yearly inflation was 20 per cent in December 2022. In the third quarter of 2022, the average monthly wage was 1787,1 EUR, an increase of 12.6 per cent, compared to the third quarter of 2021. Due to inflation from the first quarter of 2021 to the third quarter of 2022, the real average wage index decreased by 19 points. The average pension in December 2022 was 512 EUR.

TRADE UNION CONTEXT

Strikes and Labour Discontent

Tense economic conditions in Lithuania with high inflation and the cost of living crisis created conditions for the first successful strike action in Lithuanian history in 2022.

Between 2015–2019, there were 737 strikes (296 in 2015, 242 in 2016, one in 2017, 196 in 2018 and two in 2019). All but one of these strikes were in the educational sector, the only exceptional case was workers in the mining sector in wood-processing companies, who went on a warning strike in 2017. The only real strikes took place in educational sector (6295 workers in 2016 struck for a combined 35 646 working days, 3 684 struck in 2018 for a combined 31,947 working days), where teachers forced the government to negotiate wage increases and changes to the remuneration system as well as additional funding for education.

In late 2021, Achema (a fertiliser producer based in Jonava) union started the process for a formal demand for a collective agreement. The management of Achema refused and the union triggered the procedure to initiate a strike. The workers fi-

nally went on strike on 7 February 2022, with up to 500 union members participating. Strikers received support and solidarity from the entire union movement, the President, Social Democrats and individual members of other parties in the Seimas. Achema's management refused to enter negotiations, and several hundred workers continued to strike. However, the strike was interrupted by the Russian aggression against Ukraine (24 February 2022), when the government declared a state of emergency, which suspended the strike. At that point in time, only a few people remained on strike and this strike action was considered a failure. The strike was complicated by the fact that the company was on the verge of stopping the production due to the high natural gas price, which is the main raw material for a fertiliser factory. The company has not yet resumed regular operations because of the disruption of the war and price instability. Uniquely, this is the first private sector strike in modern Lithuanian history that was deemed lawful by the courts.

If the strike at Achema was considered a failure, then the strike at Vilnius Public Transport (Vilnius Viešasis Transportas, VVT), a municipal public transportation company, in December 2022 was a success. The management of this company refused to sign a collective bargaining agreement, thus creating the conditions for the strike. VVT's trade union demanded a collective bargaining agreement in the late summer of 2021, formal court proceedings then began in October 2021. After a lengthy legal dispute over the right to strike with the Vilnius city government (led by the liberal Freedom Party), the union actively tried to influence public opinion by organising protests against the municipality. When the court finally rejected the claim in October 2022, the VVT employees went on strike in December 2022. The strike continued for three weeks and was overwhelmingly successful. There was general sympathy and support for the strikers from the citizens of Vilnius, and on 22 December 2022 the municipality signed a collective bargaining agreement, which became effective on 1 January 2023. The main issue of the strike were the regulation of wages and the working conditions within the collective bargaining agreement. The municipality had previously attempted to raise wages without a collective agreement, but the strikers insisted on their demands and won.

The importance of the VVT strike should not be underestimated. The strike became one of the main topics of both the municipal elections and the national political discourse. As successful strike and general solidarity with the striking workers is not a usual occurrence in Lithuania's public discourse. This attention is usually reserved for workers with a certain social prestige, such as teachers and doctors. The length of the court proceedings inspired attempts to change the labour code, initiated by LSDP, which passed the first reading of the law in the Seimas in December 2022. If these changes come into force, future strikes will be legal prior to the employer's appeal, as the current requirements for legal strike action already require a court decision on the legality of the strike. The complexity of the current legislation means that any challenge to the court decision is used as a delaying tactic by the employer.

Exploitation of Migrant Workers

In 2021–2022, a discussion arose in public about the exploitation of migrant workers. Lithuania was and still is a significant centre for the provision of road freight services. In 2021, a group of journalists from local online channel Laisvės TV carried out an investigative report on the exploitation of migrant workers in Lithuanian road freight services, called “lorry slaves”. Up to 80 per cent of Lithuanian road freight companies’ employees are foreign workers, mostly from Ukraine, Belarus, Russia and Kazakhstan. The investigative report focused on wage theft, illegal fines for workers and tax evasion by both paying wages in cash and avoiding payroll taxes. As the vast majority of their employees does not understand the Lithuanian language and the legal system, they were easy targets for abuse and exploitation. Freight industry association Linava is one of the most influential lobbying groups in Lithuania, however the public outrage required it to make changes in the way the wages are paid, and after this scandal, a legislation that required wages to be paid into the bank account of the employee was enforced.

The situation in the freight sector was dramatically altered by the war in Ukraine, as many lorry drivers from Ukraine returned to their country to fight and in 2022, Lithuania applied restrictions against Russian citizens migrating into the country for work. Thus, the sector was temporarily experiencing a shortage of manpower. The industry interest group began pushing for laxer rules on work migration, especially for the freight sector.

TRADE UNIONS IN LITHUANIA – FACTS AND FIGURES

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

During the Twentieth century, the discontinuity of the status of trade unions was a constant. During the First Republic, trade unions were recognised as non-governmental organisations and strikes and collective bargaining were mostly not recognised. During the Authoritarian period (1926–1940), trade unions were gradually centralised and put under state control (1936). The Soviet Union, after it occupied Lithuania (in 1940 and 1944), transformed the trade unions into state-controlled arms of the government which ensured loyalty to the Communist Party (controlled and provided access to various privileges, for example coveted goods like cars and better accommodation, holiday packages, etc.). During the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1990 many state-controlled trade unions transformed into “free trade unions” and because they had significant assets from the Soviet period, there was a lot of controversy as certain trade unions privatised said properties (holiday homes, hotels etc.), which was perceived as graft.

Due to the competition in the 1990s, parts of the old industry (mostly manufacturing) collapsed after failing to compete with Western European products and the emerging cheaper Asian goods. The economic blockade by the Soviet Union (1990–1991) and the Russian economic crisis and default

(1997) and constant banking crises destabilised the economy and caused hardship to the old manufacturing industry. Most of the old manufacturing industry had large trade unions and the decline in union membership was correspondingly high.

The only advantage for the labour force was the Lithuanian integration into the European Union (the process ended in May 2004), which forced the Lithuanian government to improve certain labour conditions and standards to the minimum required by the European Union.

In 2016, a new Social Model was introduced, emphasising flexicurity (Danish model), which reformed taxation, transferred social security taxes to the employee, and increased the length and the amount of the unemployment benefits. The new Labour Code was controversial and unpopular as it reduced the power of workers and the unions. The discussions around the new Labour Code were accompanied by protests of the trade unions and left-wing activists.

In parallel, there were new trends in labour organisation. In the late 2000s, there was a wave of sporadic organisation among the previously non-unionised supermarket and service employees, which created the League of Supermarket Employees. In the mid-2010s new forms of organisation for public workers emerged due to the decreasing public sector wages (some of these were organised outside of traditional unions – Doctors’ Movement, Teachers’ Movement).

Teachers are the only organised group to strike constantly and deliver results via industrial action. The last teachers’ strike took place in late 2018, when a more militant teachers’ union Lietuvos Švietimo Darbuotojų Profesinė Sąjunga (Lithuanian Education Workers Trade Union) started a strike, which received widespread support from society.

There is a new phenomenon, a more politicised left-wing union Gegužės Pirmosios Profesinė Sąjunga (May 1st Labour Union), which models itself on the IWW model of trade union organising. It receives constant attention as it organises migrant workers (in 2019 there was a widely publicised case of Turkish construction workers stranded in Lithuania and left without wages) and workers which usually are not easily organised. Currently, this union is striving to organise food couriers, who are platform workers, and are thus not considered employees.

In 2021, with the help of the May 1st Labor Union, food couriers created an association to bargain for their rights. It is a divisive issue for the trade unions as they are hesitant to support any changes to the Labour Code, which would create an intermediate type of labour contract, which would fit the needs of gig-economy workers, as they are afraid that it would be used to degrade the working conditions of wage workers. The food courier association, which was established by left-wing activists and includes many migrant workers and students, who might not otherwise be eligible for wage labour due to their migrant status, was especially active in 2020–2021.

TRADE UNION LANDSCAPE

In recent years, Lithuania experienced a wave of increased unionisation. In late 2020, the number of trade union members was 99 300, an increase of 10,8 per cent compared to 2019 (89,600 trade union members). This number increased by 22 per cent in 2021 to 121 000 trade union members (Department of Statistics). This increase reflects the serious effects of inflation, supply chain disruptions and the increased uncertainty about working conditions during the COVID-19 pandemic.

There are unions on a national level, sectoral trade unions and company-level trade unions. Presently, there are three recognised national-level trade unions – the Lithuanian Trade Union Confederation, Solidarumas and Sandrauga. Considering the fact that not all unions are affiliated with the national-level unions, the Lithuanian Trade Union Confederation (~50,000 members) is most vocal and visible amongst the trade unions. Solidarumas attempts to unionise on a regional level and attempts to establish city-wide or district-wide organisations.

Trade Union Confederations represent organised workers at the Tripartite level and are lobbying at the level of the government and Parliament. The Tripartite Council has to give approval to changes in labour law and significant social and economic reforms. Sectoral trade unions exist as coalitions of unions, which work for a collective bargaining agreement on a national level. These started to be negotiated after 2016, and they now exist in the public sector – school system, higher education, medical system. Sectoral-wide agreements provide additional benefits and certain deviations from the Labour Code, which is allowed if there is a collective bargaining agreement.

Recently, there was a trend for certain sectoral trade unions to leave the Trade Union Confederations, for example, road freight sector union Lithuanian Carrier’s Trade Union left LPSK and became more vocal in their work. This is sometimes motivated by personal disagreements amongst trade union leadership.

Company-level trade unions tend to vary a lot – more recently established unions operate without national or sectoral affiliation. Larger companies and institutions tend to have several active trade unions, which can sometimes compete or be pitted one against another.

WORKING CONDITIONS OF TRADE UNIONS

The constitution of the Republic of Lithuania stipulates the right to freely from trade unions and states that persecution of union members is against the law.

Currently, the Labour Code and the Law on Trade Unions regulate the rights and duties of trade unions. The Labour Code was significantly updated in 2016–2017. Changes to the Labour Code liberalised labour contracts, allowed flexible work contracts (e. g. gig-economy jobs), legalised lockouts, made work councils in companies over 50 employees mandatory, and positioned these work councils as a direct competition to trade unions.

The minimum requirements for setting up a union is having three members in a company or an organisation. In practice, employers usually recognise trade unions.

Trade unions have certain tools to achieve the goals for their members. On a national level, they work as a lobbying group and are some of the most active lobbyists in social affairs, labour conditions, and economic questions. Three main national trade unions participate in the Tripartite Council of the Republic of Lithuania. This council was set up on 5 May 1995 following an agreement on the tripartite partnership between the Government of the Republic of Lithuania, trade unions and employers’ organisations to negotiate social, economic and labour issues and promote social harmony. As a rule, trade unions are the minority within the Tripartite Council, as the government tends to side with the employers’ organisations. The Tripartite Council present consensus opinions on matters such as minimum wage, changes to the Labour Code, and wages for public employees.

Table 1
Main trade unions confederations in Lithuania

| Trade Union Confederation | Chair and Vice Chair | Members | International memberships |
|--|---|---------|---|
| Lietuvos profesinių sąjungų konfederacija, LPSK (Lithuanian Trade Union Confederation) | Chair: Inga Ruginienė Vice Chair: Janina Matuizienė | 50 000 | ITUC, ETUC, BASTUN (Baltisches Gewerkschaftsnetzwerk) |
| Lietuvos profesinė sąjunga “Solidarumas”, LPSS (Lithuanian Trade Union SOLIDARUMAS) | Chair: Kristina Krupavičienė Vice Chair: Jovita Pretsch, Rimtautas Ramanauskas | 20 000 | ITUC, ETUC, BASTUN |
| Profesinė sąjunga SANDRAUGA, (Trade Union Sandrauga) | Chair: Kestutis Juknis | 5 000 | CESI |

Table 2
Main sector federations and individual trade unions in Lithuania

| Sector federation / trade union | Confederation | Chair and Vice Chair | Members | International memberships |
|--|---------------|--|---------|--|
| Lietuvos Švietimo ir mokslo profesinė sąjunga, LŠMPS (Union Education and Science) | LPSK | Chair: Egidijus Milešinas Vice Chair: Audrius Jurgelevičius, Ramūnas Znutas | 11 613 | ETUCE, EI |
| Regioninių profsąjungų konfederacija, RPF (Federation of Rural Workers' Unions) | LPSK | Chair: Audrius Gelžinis | 8 000 | EFFAT, IUF |
| Lietuvos Švietimo darbuotojų profesinė sąjunga, LSDPS (Union of Education Workers) | LPSK | Chair: Andrius Nacvickas Vice Chair: Erika Leiputė-Stundžienė, Vytautas Silvanavičius | 6 000 | ETUCE, EI |
| Lietuvos pramonės profesinių sąjungų federacija, LPPSF (Industrial Workers' Union) | LPSK | Chair: Dalia Jakutavičė Vice Chair: Jurga Subačiūtė-Žemaitienė | 2 785 | EPSU, PSI, IndustriAll Europe, IndustriAll |
| Lietuvos maistininkų profesinė sąjunga, LMP (Food Producers Union) | LPSK | Chair: Raimondas Tamošauskas | 1 500 | EFFAT, IUF |
| Lietuvos valstybės tarnautojų, biudžetinių ir viešųjų įstaigų darbuotojų profesinė sąjunga, LVDPS (Union of Lithuanian civil servants, household and public employees) | LPSK | Chair: Irena Petraitiienė Vice Chair: Rima Kisieliienė, Jonas Katinauskas, Virginija Gražinienė | 2 150 | EPSU, PSI |
| Lietuvos miško ir miško pramonės darbuotojų profesinių sąjungų federacija, LMPF (Union Federation of Wood and Forestry Workers) | LPSK | Chair: Diana Raitelaitienė Vice Chair: Juozas Ūsas | 1 700 | EFBWW, BWI |
| Lietuvos teisėsaugos pareigūnų federacija, LTPF (Lithuanian Federation of Law Enforcement Officers) | LPSK | Chair: Loreta Soščekienė Vice Chair: Roma Katiniienė, Darius Čekvičius, Vytautas Aleksandravičius, Rimantas Liepa | 4 000 | EPU, EUROCCOP, EPSU |
| Lietuvos Metalistų profesinių sąjungų susivienijimas, LMPSS (Metal Union Federation) | LPSK | Chair: Marija Varasimavičienė | n/a | IndustriAll Europe, IndustriAll Global |
| Lietuvos sveikatos apsaugos darbuotojų profesinė sąjunga, LPSDPS (Union of Service Employees) | LPSK | Chair: Aleksandras Posochovas | 4 250 | UNI Europa, UNI Global |
| Lietuvos ryšių darbuotojų profesinė sąjunga, LRDP (Union of Communications Workers) | LPSK | Chair: Regina Dvaržekytė | 2 000 | UNI Europa, UNI Global |
| Lietuvos sveikatos apsaugos darbuotojų profesinė sąjunga, LSADPS (Health Care Workers' Union) | LPSK | Chair: Rūta Kiršienė Vice Chair: Živilė Mikalauskiene; Artūras Šalaševičius | n/a | EPSU, PSI |
| Lietuvos sveikatos apsaugos darbuotojų profesinė sąjunga, LSADPS (Health Care Workers' Union) | LPSK | Chair: Rūta Kiršienė Vice Chair: Živilė Mikalauskiene; Artūras Šalaševičius | n/a | EPSU, PSI |

Trade Union Federations, especially LPSK are increasingly vocal on social and economic policies, which is sometimes outside of the traditional scope of trade union activities and veers into social policy. For example, in 2022 it provided harsh criticism of the current private pension system (the so-called “second pillar”), which transfers money from the state social security system to private pension funds, calling for its reform.

The State Labour Inspection supervises labour disputes and implementation of the Labour Code. In the recent years, it, however, takes a “hands-off” approach and barely uses the instruments provided for this in the Labour Code (fines, sanctions etc.).

On a local level, trade unions are active participants in Labour Dispute Commissions, where trade unions and workers tend to win a significant numbers of cases when labour rights are violated. Labour Dispute Commissions are considered one of the most successful tools by workers and trade unions as they overwhelmingly rule in favour of the employee (up to 80 per cent), especially in cases where the remuneration and wages are concerned.

Usually, the union membership fee equals one per cent of the employee’s wage/income, and unions can have income from property and a portion of the collected income tax (0.6 per cent of the income tax can be dedicated to a trade union of choice). Unions provide legal defence for their members in labour and similar disputes. Most trade unions are collecting strike funds, although strikes are rare.

TRADE UNIONS AND THEIR CORE TASKS

After regaining state independence, the legislation on trade union work was largely based on a model that is also practiced in Germany. In principle, the interests of organised workers should be interlinked at local, regional and national levels. Due to the Soviet past of the Lithuanian trade unions, there is an unofficial system that prioritises individual gain rather than the achievement of common interests through union membership. This has an immediate effect in the form of privileges, grants or special rights. The trade union leaders are only gradually succeeding in pushing back this view. However, there are always examples in which the traditional view is reflected and advantages are directly and exclusively linked to union membership.

According to the law, unions are constrained by their economic and social objectives, allowing them to negotiate wages and working conditions at the local level, and socio-economic bargaining at the macroeconomic level for minimum wages and wages in the public sector. They also engage in bargaining at the regional level, especially trade unions in the transport sector, which accounts for about 10 per cent of the Lithuanian economy.

This puts the unions in a strategic dilemma. While they can often generate little negotiating power at the local and company level in view of their low degree of organisation, they lack

the support to develop strategic resources and policy recommendations at the regional and especially at the national level if these are not linked to an immediate goal. This has led to an overemphasis on wage developments in the recent past. Companies represented by trade unions also had a certain obligation to those represented by independent employee representatives. Of course, there is a conflict of objectives between the wage development of one’s own membership and the general design of working conditions for employees by means of regulatory influence, in principle everywhere. But in all three Baltic states it leads to a dilemma that can hardly be resolved: Without visible negotiation success in wage determination, the rapid loss of members will continue. However, successes here are usually bought with concessions in other areas. Again, this is not likely to improve the reputation of trade unions in society in general and thus attract new members. In addition, trade unions are prohibited by law from explicitly pursuing political demands, for example by organising solidarity strikes.

It has to be noted, that the intended tasks do not necessarily correspond to the actual core tasks of the trade unions. However, the problem has been recognised and is being dealt with by the trade unions. In the past, trade unions and independent works councils perceived each other as competitors and all too often worked against each other. In small and medium-sized companies, the establishment of a union-independent works council is usually the method of choice, since wage determination is located at company level, apart from area-wide collective agreements. It is up to the trade unions to work out better cooperation offers and, if possible, to organise more works councils.

The law prohibits trade unions from explicitly pursuing political goals, and solidarity strikes, for example, are prohibited. Politically, the Lithuanian trade unions are (partisan) independent, but work together with left-wing parties whenever possible. Union representatives maintain close contact with individual MPs and the parliamentary groups of the Seimas. All labour market policy issues must be discussed in the Tripartite Council with the involvement of the trade unions. Only then are questions dealt with in Parliament. Although the resolutions of the council are only recommendatory, they nevertheless make an important contribution to the formation of opinion.

Trade unions are relatively passive on questions like mobbing or harassment at work, but these issues become increasingly important.

TRADE UNIONS AND THEIR (POLITICAL) WEIGHT

Trade unions have a mixed reception in Lithuania. Old industry trade unions are relatively stable albeit with declining membership. Previously, trade unions were associated with the Soviet Era, and due to the neoliberal stance of the media they tend to be presented as a relic of the past. However, there is a slow and gradual change when new professions that previously were not organised are slowly beginning to

become unionised. There is a trend of more acceptance of unions, in certain ways influenced by the large Lithuanian migrant diaspora in countries where unionism is a respected sphere, especially Scandinavia.

Trade unions are unmistakably associated with the left-wing spectrum in Lithuania. Until 2016, trade union leaders were selected into electoral lists of the Lithuanian Social Democratic Party. However, there are other, either populist or nationalist parties, which also had trade union leaders included in their ranks (many members of the Solidarumas union associate themselves with right-wing populist parties). Christian Democratic labour unions existed until 2016 when Lietuvos Darbo Federacija (Lithuanian Labour Federation) collapsed. There were attempts to re-establish specifically religious trade unions (Lietuvos Krikščionių Darbininkų Profesinė Sąjunga, established in 2021), which concentrate on social issues related to Christian beliefs, for example, the right to refuse an abortion in the medical sphere

Liberal parties (Freedom Party, Lithuanian Liberal Movement) are openly hostile to unions and unionisation, while the centre-right Homeland Union only cooperates with certain unions in the education and health spheres. Overall, the Lithuanian Social Democrats remain the only party with a pro-union stance, while the Lithuanian Farmers Union is sometimes supportive, however in an opportunistic manner. Trade unions have a national holiday, International Labour Day (May 1), which is a bank holiday. The right-wing politicians attack this holiday due to its association with the Soviet era. The last attempt to replace this holiday was made in 2022 when the Liberal Union Party attempted to remove this day as a public holiday, but did not get enough support from the conservative Homeland Union.

Dr. Laurynas Šedvydis, *Political Scientist, Institute of History, Vytautas Magnus University, Kaunas*

CONTACT

Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung | Global and European Politics
Hiroshimastr. 28 | 10785 Berlin

Responsible:
Dr Marc Meinardus
Trade Union Programmes Europe and North America
marc.meinardus@fes.de

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