

THE INFORMATION AND DOCUMENTATION CENTRE OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE IN VILNIUS

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For 45 years the Council of Europe has been working to build a Europe united on the basis of freedom and democracy, human rights and the rule of law. It was set up in 1949 by ten west European states. Since then the European political landscape has changed and today the great majority of central and eastern European countries belong to the Organisation. In 1993 Lithuania has also joined the CoE and became its member state pursuing the main objectives of this organisation: solidarity, peace and human values in Europe.

The Information and documentation centre of the Council of Europe in Vilnius was solemnly inaugurated on October 19, 1994. Lithuania has thereby obtained direct access to information on the results of work of the Council of Europe as well as the majority of its documents. The Vilnius centre has thus become connected with the network of the similar information centres that have been set up in Central and Eastern Europe, to wit, in Bratislava, Budapest, Moscow, Prague, and Sofia.

The centre was opened after a several month of preparation which was started after the Council of Europe has accepted in 1993 a proposal of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania for establishing such a centre. Finally the Vilnius centre was set up by the Council of Europe as an autonomous institution. Through the co-operation between the Lithuanian Government and the Director of the National M. Mažvydas Library it became possible to prepare a worthy environment for this information centre.

The Centre is established within the precincts of the National M. Mažvydas Library, which provides it with an office and a large

reading room, making available to it the LNL collections of encyclopaedia, reference books, dictionaries, juridical documents and legal proceedings, etc. The centre can be reached from the Library catalogue area on the first floor. Just turn to the left from the main staircase. A reading room with 16 places and an area of 100 m² ensures visitors excellent conditions for undisturbed work. Thus the technical facilities are ensured by the Lithuanian National Library, and the operation by the Council of Europe.

The Information and Documentation Centre is located in the prestigious part of Vilnius in the close vicinity of the Lithuanian Seimas. This area is much frequented by those seeking information and is likely to awaken interests of passers-by.

The main tasks of the centre are:

- storage and dissemination of documentation and information concerning goals, activities and achievements of the Council of Europe;
- translation into Lithuanian and publication and dissemination of documents and other materials on the Council of Europe and its activities;
- maintaining contacts and co-operation with corresponding institutions in the areas represented by the Council of Europe in the organisation of conferences and seminars, in establishing and facilitating contacts between them and the Council of Europe with particular regard to secondary and higher education;
- establishment of a modern, well-equipped library and reading room enabling common access to all documents of the Council of Europe.

The Centre is open to all Lithuanian and foreign visitors over the age of 16. We are particularly anxious to provide services to the members of the Parliament, Government, responsible representatives of the Ministries, local and regional administrators, representatives of political parties, social organisations and movements, the staff and students of universities, researchers.

Visits of groups can be arranged on the advance notice.

At present the rules for use of the National Library apply to visitors of the Centre (cloakroom, inscription, etc.).

The Centre has around 3000 books and periodicals. The Council of Europe has provided the library with a complete set of basic documents. In the Centre it is possible to study all the conventions and resolutions of the Council of Europe with explanatory reports, recommendations and resolutions of the Council of Ministers and complete minutes of debates of the Parliamentary sessions. Materials on various international programs carried on by the Council of Europe are also available in the Centre. A significant part of the library stock deals with verdicts or procedures in deliberating over various cases of complaints lodged with the European Court of Human Rights. Almost daily we receive new materials from the Secretariat of the Council of Europe. It helps keeping the Centre up-to-date.

The stock is arranged in the subject order which is used in the Council of Europe. The main subject groups are:

- A Reference and Generalities
- B Conventions
- C Proceedings and adopted texts
- D Political and institutional affairs and democracy
- E Human rights
- F Media
- G Social questions
- H Education, culture, heritage, sport
- I Youth
- J Health
- K Environment
- L Local democracy and regions
- M Legal co-operation

All this material is placed on the open shelves, giving readers direct access.

The stock can only be used on the spot.

The majority of the documents are in English and French. The Centre's staff assist with orientation in the foreign-language materials. Our plans are to make Lithuanian translations of the most important Conventions as soon as possible and to prepare Lithuanian

versions of other selected items. There is also a small reference library in the reading room. It contains dictionaries and encyclopaedias. Visitors of the Centre may also use the stock of the LNL.

Services

Copying: it is possible to copy materials from the stock. Up to 10 pages of copies are provided free of charge. The Centre is unable to copy whole volumes.

Information and consultation: queries made in person, by phone or in written form are answered on the basis of the stock. Questions, which require special search can be forwarded to Strasbourg. Our plan for the future is to install the on-line computer link with the Strasbourg Headquarters.

The centre tries to provide documentary evidence about contacts between the Council of Europe and Lithuania. It gathers materials published in Lithuania regarding the Council of Europe, helps to organise various events and activities sponsored by the Council of Europe in Lithuania.

It is to be hoped that the centre's activities will contribute to the building of the united Europe based on the values of the pluralist democracy, human rights and the rule of law, the three main principles on which the Council of Europe was built fortyfive years ago.

EUROPOS TARYBOS INFORMACIJOS IR DOKUMENTACIJOS CENTRAS VILNIUJE

Reziume

Europos Tarybos informacijos ir dokumentacijos centras veikia nuo 1994 m. spalio mėn. Tai savarankiška institucija, kurią finansuoja Europos Taryba. Centro tikslas – kaupti ir skleisti informaciją bei dokumentus apie Europos Tarybos uždavinius, veiklą ir rezultatus, dalyvauti įvairiuose renginiuose, susijusiuose su ET veikla, publikuoti ir platinti ET dokumentus lietuvių kalba. Centro biblioteka turi maždaug 3000 periodinių leidinių bei knygų fondą anglų ir prancūzų kalbomis, kuris apima visas Europos Tarybos veiklos sferas. Centro paslaugomis nemokamai gali naudotis visi Lietuvos gyventojai bei užsienio valstybių piliečiai nuo 16 metų. Šio Centro patalpos yra Lietuvos nacionalinėje M. Mažvydo bibliotekoje.