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COMMISSION STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT

2025 Environmental Implementation Review
Country Report - LITHUANIA

Accompanying the document

Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions

2025 Environmental Implementation Review for prosperity and security

{COM(2025) 420 final} - {SWD(2025) 300 final} - {SWD(2025) 301 final} - {SWD(2025) 302 final} - {SWD(2025) 303 final} - {SWD(2025) 304 final} - {SWD(2025) 305 final} - {SWD(2025) 306 final} - {SWD(2025) 307 final} - {SWD(2025) 308 final} - {SWD(2025) 309 final} - {SWD(2025) 310 final} - {SWD(2025) 311 final} - {SWD(2025) 312 final} - {SWD(2025) 313 final} - {SWD(2025) 314 final} - {SWD(2025) 315 final} - {SWD(2025) 317 final} - {SWD(2025) 318 final} - {SWD(2025) 319 final} - {SWD(2025) 320 final} - {SWD(2025) 321 final} - {SWD(2025) 322 final} - {SWD(2025) 323 final} - {SWD(2025) 324 final} - {SWD(2025) 325 final} - {SWD(2025) 326 final}

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Executive summary

In May 2016, the European Commission launched the Environmental Implementation Review, a regular reporting tool based on analysis, dialogue and collaboration with EU Member States to improve the implementation of existing EU environmental policy and legislation[1]. Following previous cycles in 2017, 2019 and 2022, this report assesses the progress made while describing the main outstanding challenges and opportunities regarding environmental legal implementation in Lithuania. The purpose of the report is to provide information on the implementation performance and highlight the most effective ways to address the implementation gaps that impact human health and the environment and hamper the economic development and competitiveness of the country. The report relies on detailed sectoral implementation reports collected or issued by the Commission under specific environmental legislation.

The main challenges set out below have been selected from Part I of this report, 'Thematic areas', taking into consideration factors such as the gravity of the environmental implementation issue in light of the impact on the quality of life of citizens, the distance to target and financial implications.

Lithuania faces significant challenges in transitioning to a **circular economy**, with resource productivity and circular material use rates far below the EU average. The Guidelines for Lithuania's Transition to a Circular Economy by 2035, adopted in 2023, aim to address these issues. Despite **successes like mandatory green public procurement since 2023 and progress toward reducing landfill waste,** Lithuania risks missing 2025 recycling targets for municipal and packaging waste. Key steps to take for improvement involve increasing recycling rates, enhancing collection systems for electric and electronic waste and textiles, promoting waste prevention, and boosting the use of secondary critical raw materials to achieve a sustainable circular economy.

Having two thirds of protected habitats in unfavourable conservation status impacts Lithuania's climate resilience, as the loss of **biodiversity** impairs ecosystems' ability to provide services that help mitigate the effects of climate change, such as regulating water cycles, maintaining soil health, and sequestering carbon. Finalising Natura 2000 site designations as special areas of conservation, setting site-specific conservation objectives and measures for all the sites and securing funding for management and restoration measures are another area of improvement. At the same time, Lithuania also offers notable examples of good practices, such as the wetland restoration project on the Salantas River, the LIFE Integrated Project "Optimising the Management of the Natura 2000 Network in Lithuania," and coordinated work on the national nature restoration plan.

Water pollution remains a challenge, marked by declining ecological status and a sharp drop in surface water bodies meeting good chemical status. Lakes, rivers, and coastal waters in Lithuania are polluted, with less than half achieving good ecological status due to agricultural runoff, urban pollution, and nutrient flows contributing to the Baltic Sea's eutrophication. The required steps include effectively monitoring pollutants in surface water bodies and better integrating environmental considerations into sectoral policies.

In terms of **air pollution**, since 2019, downward emission trends have been reported for all main pollutants. However, Lithuania needs to address the non-compliance with the emission reduction commitments for nitrogen oxide and ammonia.

While Vilnius has been named the European Green Capital 2025, Lithuania continues its efforts to enhance environmental sustainability both within the capital and across the entire country.

The overall environmental investment needs to enable Lithuania to meet its objectives in the main environmental areas is EUR 2.9 billion per year, broken down as follows: circular economy (EUR 751 million); pollution prevention and control (EUR 274 million); water (EUR 439 million); and biodiversity and ecosystems (EUR 1 billion). Lithuania's overall environmental investment gap reaches an estimated EUR 1.6 billion per year, representing around 2.36% of the national GDP, being considerably higher than the EU-average (0.77%).

In terms of **environmental governance**, Lithuania has made good progress on accessibility of spatial data as well as efforts to inform environmental stakeholders about ways to enforce their environmental rights, in particular on compliance, monitoring and participation.

[1] Communication "Delivering the benefits of EU environmental policies through a regular Environmental Implementation Review" (COM/2016/316 final)

Part I: Thematic areas

1. Circular economy and waste management

Transitioning to a circular economy

Advancing the transition to a circular economy in the EU will reduce the environmental and climate impact of our industrial systems by reducing input materials, keeping products and materials in the loop for longer and reducing waste generation, thus decoupling economic growth from resource consumption. A circular economy has considerable potential to increase competitiveness and job creation and will also promote innovation and provide access to new markets. With the 2020 circular economy action plan (CEAP) ([2]) measures either in place or legislatively advanced, EU Member States will now have to focus on a swift and effective implementation.

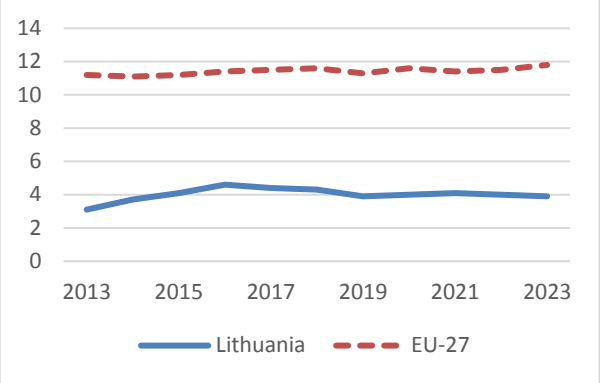
The 2020 CEAP launched the legislative process for a set of initiatives that will now have to be implemented by national governments across the EU. These initiatives were all introduced following a holistic life-cycle approach, with measures addressing the different stages of a product's life cycle, from design through use to end of life.

In the CEAP, the EU sets as its overarching objective the doubling of its circular material use rate (CMUR) by 2030.

The CMUR is a measure of one aspect of circularity: the share of the total amount of material used in the economy that is accounted for by recycled waste. A higher CMUR value means that more secondary materials were used as a substitute for raw materials, thus reducing the environmental impacts of extracting primary material.

Lithuania's circular use of material was 3.9 % in 2023, which is much lower than the EU average of 11.8 % (Figure 1). The rate has been relatively stable over the past 10 years, with rather small changes.

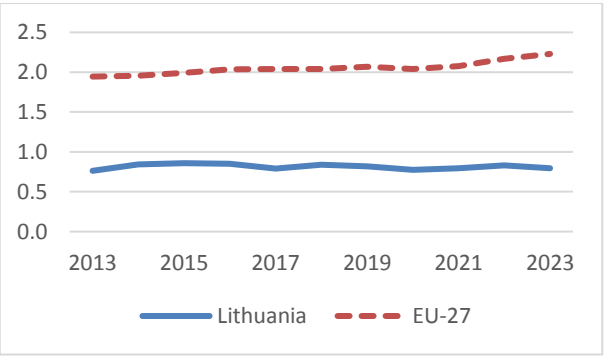
Figure 1: CMUR (%), 2013–2023



Source: Eurostat, 'Circular material use rate', env_ac_cur, last updated 13 November 2024, accessed 9 December 2024, https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/env_ac_cur/default/table?lang=en.

Resource productivity measures the total amount of materials directly used by an economy in relation to gross domestic product (GDP). Improving resource productivity can help to minimise negative impacts on the environment and reduce dependency on volatile raw material markets. In 2023, Lithuania generated EUR 0.79/kg of material, compared with an EU average of EUR 2.23 (Figure 2). This puts Lithuania among the Member States with the lowest resource productivity.

Figure 2: Resource productivity (EUR/kg), 2013–2023



NB: The unit of measure used is EUR/kg chain linked volume (2015). Chain-linked volumes focus on changes on quantities and prices of commodities in previous years, taking account of inflation, and are indexed to the nearest appropriate year, in this case 2015.

Source: Eurostat, 'Resource productivity', last updated 7 August 2024, accessed 9 December 2024, Statistics | Eurostat.

([2]) Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions – A new circular economy action plan for a cleaner and more competitive Europe, COM(2020) 98 final of 11 March 2020, https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/FR/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52020DC0098.

Policies and measures

In parallel with European initiatives under the CEAP, Member States are encouraged to adopt and implement circular strategies at the national, regional and city levels. These should be tailored to each national and local reality, to harness the proximity economy's ([3]) potential, while following the principles of a holistic whole-value-chain approach.

Since the launch of the online European Circular Economy Stakeholder Platform in 2017 ([4]) national, regional and local authorities have used the platform to share their strategies, roadmaps and good practices, for example alternative business models and innovative technologies.

In June 2023, Lithuania adopted the guidelines for Lithuania's transition to a circular economy by 2035. Although the document provides guidelines, it serves as a mandatory action plan for institutions from different sectors contributing to the circular economy.

The guidelines include both measures focused on the circular economy but already planned by existing strategic documents, and new actions. It identifies areas that contribute the most to the goals of the circular economy – namely industry, construction, bioeconomy, transport, waste and consumption – for intervention.

Lithuania has integrated into the guidelines the circular economy aspects of the national waste prevention and waste management plan for 2021–2027, such as life-cycle modelling methodologies for buildings, financing, awareness-raising campaigns and extended producer responsibility (EPR) schemes.

Green public procurement

Public procurement accounts for a large proportion of European consumption, with public authorities' purchasing power representing around 14 % of EU GDP. Public procurement using green or circular criteria (life-cycle analysis, PaaS (platform as a service), second hand) can help drive the demand for sustainable products that meet reparability and recyclability standards.

The Lithuanian national progress plan ([5]) (amended on 9 October 2021) stipulated that 100% of all public procurements by value in 2025 should be green. The government programme ([6]) aligns with the national progress plan and sets the even more ambitious goal of green public procurement (GPP) becoming the dominant type of public procurement in the public sector as of 2023. Indeed, since 2023, GPP has been mandatory in Lithuania. Updated rules have been approved for the application of environmental protection criteria in green public procurement. Mandatory minimum environmental criteria have been set out for 32 product groups. The definition of GPP now not only includes mandatory minimum GPP criteria, but also refers to ecolabels, environmental management systems or standards, and other environmental criteria. In cases in which minimal environmental criteria do not apply, the contracting authority can set them independently in accordance with established principles of circularity and sustainability of a given product. GPP is monitored and statistical data collected by the Public Procurement Office (PPO). The data are published online on the public procurement scoreboard ([7]). All contracting authorities must report on their green procurement procedures to the PPO. In addition, the PPO publishes annual progress reports are published on GPP. To facilitate the development of GPP, the PPO has established a sustainable procurement unit that provides contracting authorities, contracting entities and suppliers with consultations and training on green, socially responsible and innovative procurement. Increasing GPP's share in total public procurement is one of the measures in the Lithuanian recovery and resilience plan (RRP).

The EU Ecolabel and the eco-management and audit scheme

The number of EU Ecolabel product groups and the number of eco-management and audit scheme (EMAS)-licensed organisations in each country provide some indication of the extent to which the private sector and national stakeholders in that country are actively engaged in the transition to a circular economy. The EU Ecolabel is awarded to products with best-in-class environmental performance. EMAS is a voluntary environment management scheme aimed at reducing the environmental impacts of organisations.

As of September 2024, Lithuania had 741 products out of 98 977, and 9 licences out of 2 983, registered in the EU ecolabel scheme, showing a rather low take-up of licences in particular ([8]). Moreover, as of October 2024,

([3]) European Commission, 'Proximity and social economy ecosystem', European Commission website, https://single-market-economy.ec.europa.eu/sectors/proximity-and-social-economy_en.
([4]) https://circulareconomy.europa.eu/platform/en/strategies.
([5]) https://e-seimas.lrs.lt/portal/legalAct/lt/TAD/c1259440f7dd11eab72ddb4a109da1b5/asr.
([6]) https://e-seimas.lrs.lt/portal/legalAct/lt/TAD/973c87403bc311eb8c97e01ffe050e1c.
([7]) https://vpt.lrv.lt/lt/statistika-ir-analize/pirkimu-vykdytoju-zemelapis-svieslente-1.
([8]) European Commission, 'EU Ecolabel facts and figures', European Commission website,

three organisations in Lithuania are currently registered in the EMAS, two less than in October 2021 ([9]).

Previous calls, specifically from the 2019 report, to integrate all stages of the life cycle in measures related to the circular economy in addition to those related to waste have slowly been put into action.

The CMUR of Lithuania slightly decreased, by 0.1 percentage points, in 2023. This does not represent any progress towards the 2022 priority action to take measures to increase the rate.

2025 priority action

- Adopt measures to increase the CMUR.

Waste management

Turning waste into a resource is supported by:

- addressing the full life cycle of products, from conception to end of life, by setting requirements on the design of products to ensure that they are more sustainable;
- fully implementing EU waste legislation, which includes the waste hierarchy, the obligation to ensure separate collection of waste, landfill diversion targets, etc.;
- reducing waste generation per capita and in absolute terms;
- increasing the recycling rates of waste containing critical raw materials (CRMs), with a view to reducing dependencies and building resilient value chains, and stimulating demand for recycled content in all products;
- limiting energy recovery to non-recyclable materials; and
- phasing out landfilling of recyclable or recoverable waste.

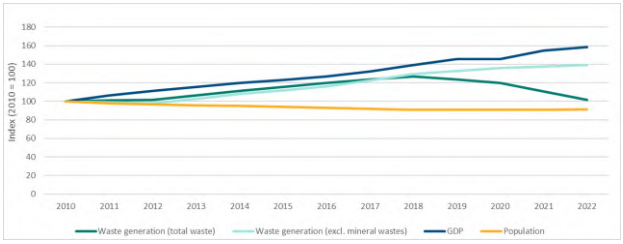
One of the main objectives of the EU Waste Law is to decouple economic growth from its environmental impacts.

The EU's approach to waste management is based on the waste treatment hierarchy: prevention, preparing for reuse, recycling, recovery and, as the least preferred option, disposal (which includes incineration without energy recovery and landfilling).

All legislative proposals in the field of waste management put forward by the Commission since 2021 are intended to encourage Member States to promote better product design, to require producers to cover the costs of managing the waste resulting from their products and to ensure that waste is managed at the higher levels of the waste hierarchy.

In Lithuania, total waste generated increased until 2018 but has decreased since (Figure 3). This trend is primarily driven by the largest waste categories, namely mineral waste from construction and demolition, and other mineral waste (mainly generated in manufacturing activities). When looking at waste excluding major mineral waste, recyclable ferrous metal waste, sorting residues, and household and similar waste are the largest fractions. The amount of sorting residues has increased steadily and influences the overall trend, indicating major changes in the waste management system. Lithuania's GDP increased throughout the time frame considered, with the exception of a drop in 2020, most likely due to the COVID-19 pandemic. While additional data points are required for confirmation, data from the most recent years indicate a potential decoupling between waste generation and economic growth.

Figure 3: Generation of waste (total and excluding major mineral waste), population and GDP, 2010–2022



NB: Waste generation data for odd years are interpolated.

Sources: Eurostat, 'GDP and main components (output, expenditure and income)', nama_10_gdp, accessed 15 October 2024, https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/nama_10_gdp__custom_9301905/default/table; Eurostat, 'Generation of waste by waste category, hazardousness and NACE Rev. 2 activity', env_wasgen, last updated 30 September 2024, accessed 22 October 2024, https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/env_wasgen/default/table?lang=en; Eurostat, 'Population change – Demographic balance and crude rates at national level', demo_grind, accessed 15 October 2024, https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/demo_gind/default/table?lang=en&category=demo.demo_ind.

Critical raw materials

In Lithuanian national legislation, products containing CRMs are integrated by setting requirements to ensure the collection of individual waste streams. In Lithuania, the requirements for the products and waste streams are laid down in 11 pieces of national legislation as well as two national strategies. Accordingly, Lithuania collects waste from batteries, electrical and electronic equipment (including photovoltaic panels), vehicles, slags and ashes; construction and demolition waste

https://environment.ec.europa.eu/topics/circular-economy/eu-ecolabel/businesses/ecolabel-facts-and-figures_en.

([9]) European Commission, 'EMAS Register', European Commission website, https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/emas2/public/registration/list.

(including wind turbines and energy infrastructure); and other flows deemed relevant. However, these do not yet appear to be immediately identifiable as sufficiently specifically intending to increase recycling rates of CRMs in these CRM-containing waste streams or stimulating demand for secondary CRMs.

Notably, however, treated non-hazardous ash and slag waste from incineration and co-incineration plants can be used in the construction of buildings provided that the total metal content of the waste: zinc (Zn), copper (Cu), lead (Pb), barium (Ba), chromium (Cr), mercury (Hg), nickel (Ni), tin (Sn), strontium (Sr), arsenic (As), cadmium (Cd), vanadium (V), molybdenum (Mo), manganese (Mn) and cobalt (Co) in ash and slag wastes shall be no more than 5% by weight of the ash or slag waste. To comply with these requirements, waste managers shall carry out the separation of certain metals from ash and slag during waste treatment, suggesting potential for future policy changes as some of these are CRMs.

Construction and demolition waste

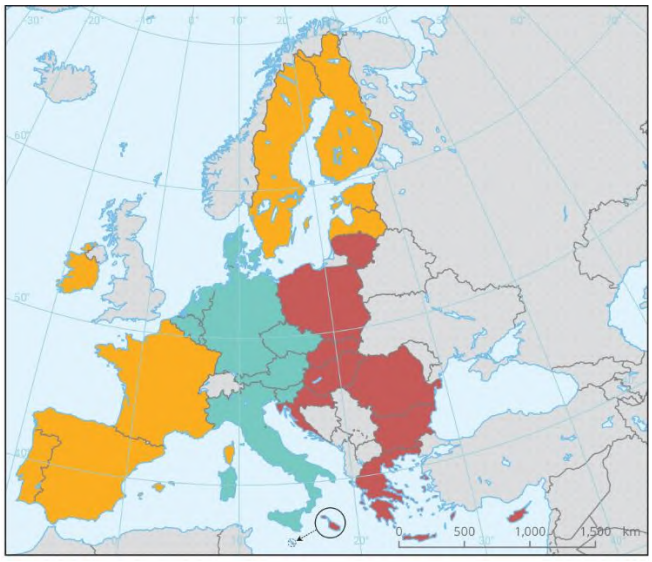
Construction and demolition waste accounts for almost 40 % of all waste generated in the EU. A recent study ([10]) by the European Commission's Joint Research Centre shows that preparing for reuse and recycling is preferred over incineration and landfilling from an environmental perspective for most of the individual fractions of construction and demolition waste. However, the economics are often not in favour of preparing for reuse and recycling over incineration and landfilling. If available technology was to be applied, it is estimated that the increase in preparing for reuse and recycling would lead to an additional 33 Mt of greenhouse gas (GHG) emission savings annually (more than, for example, the combined annual GHG emissions of Estonia, Latvia and Luxembourg).

The rate of preparing for reuse and recycling of mineral construction and demolition waste in Lithuania in 2022 was 81.3 %, compared with the EU average of 79.8 %. Measures to further increase the rate of preparing for reuse and recycling of construction and demolition waste include separate collection at the source, for instance through digitalised pre-demolition audits ([11]) (so-called resource assessments), and EPR and other economic instruments, as well as upstream measures such as increasing the recycled content of construction products and the circular design ([12]) of construction works.

Boosting implementation – the 2023 *Waste Early Warning Report*

This section focuses on the management of municipal waste ([13]), for which EU law sets mandatory recycling targets. In June 2023, the Commission published the *Waste Early Warning Report* ([14]) identifying the general trends in waste management and the Member States at risk of missing 2025 waste targets (see Figure 4). Lithuania is among the countries at risk of missing both the municipal waste and the packaging waste targets.

Figure 4: Member States' prospects of meeting the preparing for reuse and recycling targets for municipal waste and packaging waste



Member States not at risk of missing the 55 % preparing for reuse and recycling target for

([10]) European Commission: Joint Research Centre (JRC), *Techno-economic and environmental assessment of construction and demolition waste management in the European Union*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, 2024, https://publications.jrc.ec.europa.eu/repository/handle/JRC135470.

([11]) European Commission: Directorate-General for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs, *EU construction & demolition waste management protocol including guidelines for pre-demolition and pre-renovation audits of construction works – Updated edition 2024*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, 2024, https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/d63d5a8f-64e8-11ef-a8ba-01aa75ed71a1/language-en.

([12]) European Commission, *Circular Economy – Principles for buildings design*, Brussels, 2020, https://ec.europa.eu/docsroom/documents/39984.

([13]) Municipal waste consists of (i) mixed waste and separately collected waste from households, including paper and cardboard, glass, metals, plastics, biowaste, wood, textiles, packaging, waste electrical and electronic equipment, waste batteries and accumulators, and bulky waste, including mattresses and furniture; and (ii) mixed waste and separately collected waste from other sources, where such waste is similar in nature and composition to waste from households (Directive 2008/98/EC, Article 3.2b).

([14]) https://environment.ec.europa.eu/publications/waste-early-warning-report_en.

municipal waste and the 65 % recycling target for packaging waste

Member States at risk of missing the preparing for reuse and recycling target for municipal waste but not at risk of missing the recycling target for all packaging waste

Member states at risk of missing both targets

Outside coverage

Source: European Environment Agency (EEA), 'Many EU Member States not on track to meet recycling targets for municipal waste and packaging waste', briefing No 28/2022, Copenhagen, 2023. Reference data © ESRI.

Under certain conditions, the EU waste legislation enables some Member States to postpone the deadlines for reaching certain waste management targets for municipal and packaging waste. Member States that want to take this opportunity have to notify the Commission 24 months in advance of the deadline and submit an implementation plan setting out the steps they envisage to reach the postponed targets within a new time frame. Regarding the 2025 targets, 11 Member States, including Lithuania, have used this prerogative.

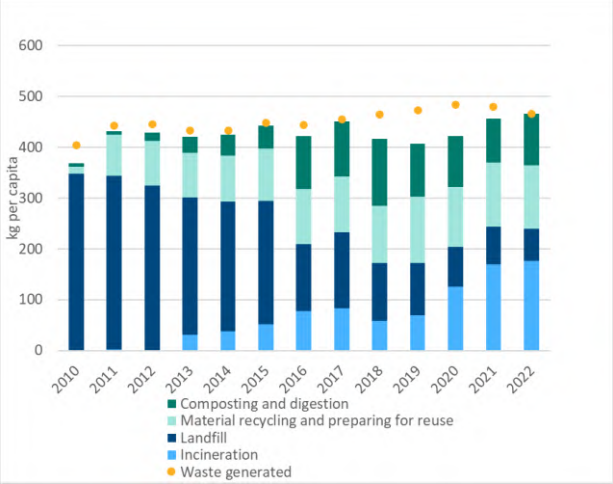
On 27 December 2023, Lithuania notified the Commission of its intention to postpone the attainment of the target for preparing municipal waste for reuse and recycling established by the Waste Framework Directive for 2025. Attached to this notification, Lithuania submitted an implementation plan setting out the measures necessary to attain the target within a postponed time frame (i.e. 2030 instead of 2025). According to the implementation plan, the main measures Lithuania would put in place include the promotion of home composting, the reduction of the use of disposable packaging in the public sector, and the setting up of an EPR scheme for textiles. The Commission found that the plan complies with the requirements set out in the relevant waste legislation.

In the *Waste Early Warning Report*, the Commission recommended that Member States accelerate their efforts to improve their recycling performance. The Commission is, on the one hand, working together with national authorities and stakeholders to speed up the implementation of measures necessary to meet the targets, including through dedicated financing. On the other hand, the Commission is pursuing enforcement actions against those Member States that, based on data submitted to the Commission, do not achieve the targets of Waste Framework Directive ([15]), the Packaging and Packaging Waste Directive ([16]) and the Directive on Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment ([17]).

Municipal waste

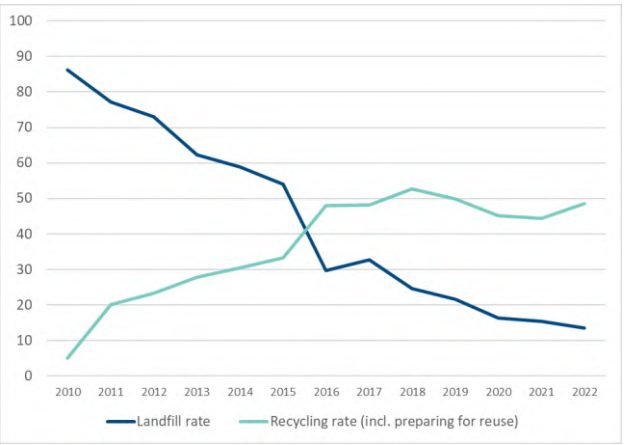
Lithuania's municipal waste generation has remained rather stable over the past decade (Figure 5). In 2022, the country generated 465 kg per capita of municipal waste, which is below the estimated EU-27 average of 513 kg per capita.

Figure 5: Municipal waste management and recycling (including preparation for reuse), 2010–2022



Source: Eurostat, 'Municipal waste by waste management operations', env_wasmun, accessed 22 October 2024, https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/ENV_WASMUN/default/table.

Figure 6: Recycling (including preparation for reuse) and landfill rates (%), 2010–2022



Source: Eurostat, 'Municipal waste by waste management operations', env_wasmun, accessed 22 October 2024,

([15]) Directive 2008/98/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 19 November 2008 on waste and repealing certain Directives, Directive - 2008/98 - EN - Waste framework directive - EUR-Lex.

([16]) Directive 2012/19/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 4 July 2012 on waste electrical and electronic equipment (WEEE) (OJ L 197, 24.7.2012, p. 38), Directive - 2012/19 - EN - EUR-Lex.

([17]) https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A32012L0019.

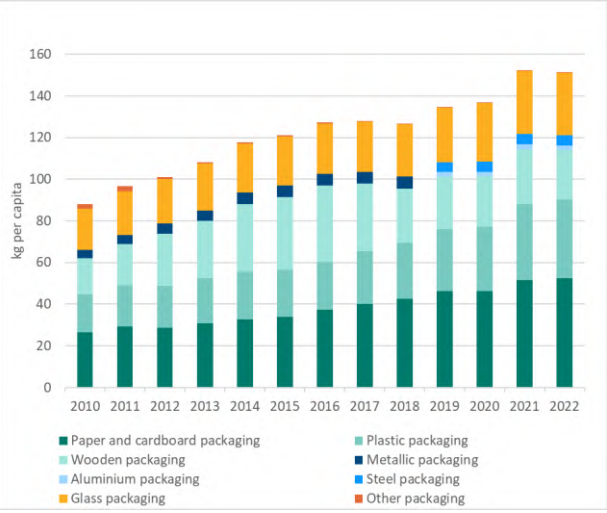
https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/ENV_WASMUN/default/table.

In July 2024, a letter of formal notice was addressed to Lithuania, as, having regard to the reports submitted by Lithuania, the Commission considered that it failed to meet 50 % target for 2020 of preparing municipal waste (e.g. paper, metal, plastic and glass) for reuse and recycling. This target was set by the Waste Framework Directive. In addition, Lithuania did not meet the target of 65 % for the minimum collection of the average weight of electrical and electronic equipment placed on the market in the three preceding years set by the WEEE Directive. While for the 50 % target for 2020 of preparing municipal waste for reuse and recycling Lithuania clarified in its reply that the target was not achieved due to its use of the incorrect calculation method, efforts are still needed in order to achieve the minimum collection target for WEEE. In this regard, Lithuania is adopting and planning various incentives and legislative measures that should enable it to reach the minimum collection target for WEEE.

Packaging waste

Lithuania's packaging waste generation has been increasing since 2010. The country generated 151 kg per capita in 2022, which is still significantly below the estimated EU-27 average of 186 kg per capita in the same year ([18]).

Figure 7: Packaging waste generation, 2010–2022



Source: Eurostat, 'Packaging waste by waste management operations', env_waspac, last updated 23 October 2024, accessed 28 October 2024, https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/ENV_WASPAC__custom_842634/default/table?lang=en.

Figure 8: Packaging waste recycling rates (%), 2010–2022

NB: Break in time series in 2020. As of reference year 2020 the rules for calculating recycled packaging waste have changed, pursuant to Article 6a of Directive 94/62/EC. Lithuania is reporting data according to these new reporting rules for reference year 2020 onwards.

Sources: Eurostat, 'Packaging waste by waste management operations', env_waspac, last updated 23 October 2024, accessed 28 October 2024, https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/ENV_WASPAC__custom_842634/default/table?lang=en; Eurostat, *Country-specific notes referring to data on packaging and packaging waste*, Luxembourg, 2024, https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/cache/metadata/Annexes/env_waspac_esms_an_3.pdf.

In 2022, the recycling rate for packaging waste was 58 %, and the trend has stagnated since 2010. The recycling rate is slightly below the estimated EU-27 average of 65 %. Recycling rates for all packaging fractions fluctuate significantly over time, not indicating any clear trends. The recycling rate is mainly driven by paper and cardboard packaging, as it is the largest packaging waste fraction. The decrease in the recycling rate for paper and cardboard packaging from 2018 onwards can be explained by a decrease in demand for paper and cardboard packaging ([19]). Plastics recycling increased considerably overall from 2012 to 2016, with a slight decrease to 2019, and since dropped markedly to 44% in 2022. The drop in glass packaging recycling in 2017 is related to a change in the waste management system ([20]). From the reference year 2020 onwards, it was mandatory to report the recycling of steel and aluminium packaging separately. In 2022, the recycling rates of both fractions exceeded the 2025 target.

([18]) The EU average might have been influenced by not all Member States fully applying the reporting rules for packaging waste set out in Commission Implementing Decision (EU) 2019/665.

([19]) EEA, *Early warning assessment related to the 2025 targets for municipal and packaging waste – Lithuania*, Copenhagen, 2022, https://www.eea.europa.eu/publications/many-eu-member-states/lithuania/view.

([20]) EEA, *Early warning assessment related to the 2025 targets for municipal and packaging waste – Lithuania*, Copenhagen, 2022, https://www.eea.europa.eu/publications/many-eu-member-states/lithuania/view.

Policies to encourage waste prevention

Waste management plans and waste prevention programmes are instrumental to the full implementation of EU waste legislation. They set out key provisions and investments to ensure compliance with existing and new legal requirements (e.g. on waste prevention, on separate collection for certain waste streams, on recycling and on landfill targets).

Lithuania's national waste prevention programme (NWPP) is integrated into the national waste prevention and management plan 2021–2027 in its own chapter ([21]). The long-term goals of the programme are to minimise waste generation, ensure safe waste management, promote the rational use of resources, reduce landfill waste, mitigate environmental pollution and provide local raw materials to industry. Consequently, there is a considerable overlap in the aims of waste prevention and waste management ([22]).

Streams prioritised include food; packaging; electrical and electronic equipment; end-of-life vehicles; oils; batteries; fishing gear containing plastic; textiles; furniture; hazardous waste; waste from manufacturing, construction and demolition, and healthcare; and sewage sludge ([23]). The specific waste prevention goals ([24]) are to avoid the generation of waste and reduce the number of hazardous substances in raw materials and products; encourage users to choose reusable products and repair rather than replace; reduce littering; and promote the ecological design of products.

As part of the reforms in its Recovery and Resilience Plan (RRP), Lithuania approved the "Guidelines for transition to a circular economy by 2035" on 21 July 2023 ([25]).

The NWPP will be evaluated after six years, with several quantitative targets related to waste prevention, such as reducing net waste volume per GDP, reducing municipal waste per capita and increasing CMUR. To monitor the progress of implementation, a set of indicators is used ([26]).

The current NWPP ([27]) does not include any clear evaluation of the previous waste prevention programme or how the results were integrated into the current NWPP. A budget for the implementation of specific measures is included in the plan ([28]).

Policies to encourage separate collection and recycling

Separate collection of recyclable waste is mandatory for households and non-households. Collection from households covers all fractions, and the same fractions are collected from non-households if they are similar to household waste. To ensure separate collection, a warning or a fine of EUR 20 to EUR 80 for non-compliance can be applied as an enforcement mechanism ([29]).

In cities, door-to-door collection is the dominant collection system for residual waste, paper and cardboard, ferrous metals, aluminium, glass, plastic, WEEE, composite packaging and biowaste. For multi-apartment buildings, door-to-door collection is done using collective containers that are usually located very close to the building. In towns and suburbs, 'bring points' are the dominant collection system for all fractions except biowaste and residual waste, which is collected door to door. In rural areas, door-to-door collection of either separate fractions or commingled fractions is dominant. Garden waste is mainly collected at civic amenity sites ([30]). There is also a specific collection

([21]) Ministry of Environment of the Republic of Lithuania, *Dėl Valstybinio atliekų prevencijos ir tvarkymo 2021–2027 metų planas* [National waste prevention and management plan 2021–2027], Document No D1-301, Vilnius, 2023, https://e-seimasx.lrs.lt/portal/legalAct/lt/TAD/73a8e860483511ee8185e4f3ad07094a?jfwid=1hjca036y.

([22]) EEA, *Waste Prevention Country Profile – Lithuania*, Copenhagen, 2023, https://www.eea.europa.eu/themes/waste/waste-prevention/countries/2023-waste-prevention-country-fact-sheets/lithuania_waste_prevention_2023.

([23]) *Dėl Valstybinio atliekų prevencijos ir tvarkymo 2021–2027 metų planas* [National waste prevention and management plan 2021–2027], Document No D1-301, Vilnius, 2023, https://e-seimasx.lrs.lt/portal/legalAct/lt/TAD/73a8e860483511ee8185e4f3ad07094a?jfwid=1hjca036y.

([24]) *Dėl Valstybinio atliekų prevencijos ir tvarkymo 2021–2027 metų planas* [National waste prevention and management plan 2021–2027], Document No D1-301, Vilnius, 2023, https://e-seimasx.lrs.lt/portal/legalAct/lt/TAD/73a8e860483511ee8185e4f3ad07094a?jfwid=1hjca036y.

([25]) Ministry of Environment of the Republic of Lithuania, *Lietuvos perėjimo prie žiedinės ekonomikos iki 2035 m. gairės* (*Guidelines for the Lithuanian transition to a circular economy by 2035*), Vilnius, 2023, https://am.lrv.lt/uploads/am/documents/files/VPA20230621_2%2Bkl_%2Bpriedas(1)(1).pdf.

([26]) EEA, *Waste Prevention Country Profile – Lithuania*, Copenhagen, 2023, https://www.eea.europa.eu/themes/waste/waste-prevention/countries/2023-waste-prevention-country-fact-sheets/lithuania_waste_prevention_2023.

([27]) Ministry of Environment of the Republic of Lithuania, *Dėl Valstybinio atliekų prevencijos ir tvarkymo 2021–2027 metų planas* [National waste prevention and management plan 2021–2027], Document No D1-301, Vilnius, 2023, https://e-seimasx.lrs.lt/portal/legalAct/lt/TAD/73a8e860483511ee8185e4f3ad07094a?jfwid=1hjca036y.

([28]) EEA, *Waste Prevention Country Profile – Lithuania*, Copenhagen, 2023, https://www.eea.europa.eu/themes/waste/waste-prevention/countries/2023-waste-prevention-country-fact-sheets/lithuania_waste_prevention_2023.

([29]) EEA, *Early warning assessment related to the 2025 targets for municipal and packaging waste – Lithuania*, Copenhagen, 2022, https://www.eea.europa.eu/publications/many-eu-member-states/lithuania/view.

([30]) EEA, *Early warning assessment related to the 2025 targets for municipal and packaging waste – Lithuania*, Copenhagen, 2022, https://www.eea.europa.eu/publications/many-eu-member-states/lithuania/view.

service for certain waste streams for residents who do not go to civic amenity sites for green waste composting, with collection being carried out at a scheduled time and picked up from the resident. In order to support sorting at source, Lithuania has implemented a pay-as-you-throw scheme for mixed waste in some regions and municipalities for households served by door-to-door collection.

Lithuania is planning to improve the collection system for textiles and food waste (or combined food and garden waste) ([31]). New requirements for collection point density and potential locations for textile collection systems will come into force in 2025. Similar collection requirements are set for other waste streams ([32]). Lithuania also plans to provide EU grants for municipalities to expand and/or improve their collection systems for biowaste, hazardous waste and textile waste ([33]). Furthermore, Lithuania will consider an amendment to the Waste Management Law, to include a discount on the waste collection fee for residents who practise home composting. This promotes municipal biowaste separation and recycling at source and the availability of data on this waste stream. Additionally, there are plans to incentivise municipalities through tax benefits to achieve set biological waste recycling targets (with a portion of the funds paid into the budget being returned to them upon reaching these targets) ([34]).

In Lithuania, EPR systems apply to all packaging waste. Lithuania has no advanced EPR fee modulation, such as higher fees for difficult-to-recycle plastic types or combinations of materials. However, a packaging tax is levied on producers/importers that fail to meet the Lithuanian targets for packaging reuse or packaging waste management. Since 2022, the tax has been set at a higher level for non-recyclable packaging than for recyclable packaging. The government defines which packaging is considered recyclable or non-recyclable.

New rules are currently being implemented, based on which producer responsibility organisations will have an obligation to finance the development of collection infrastructure by municipalities ([35]).

Lithuania implements mandatory deposit return systems for beverage cans and bottles, and voluntary systems exist for reusable packaging such as cups, plastic crates and wooden packaging ([36]).

Policies to discourage landfilling or incineration

Lithuania had a landfill tax of EUR 10/t in 2021 and EUR 15/t in 2022. As of 2023 the tax increased to EUR 50/t as a basic tariff, but the tax is regularly adjusted in line with the consumer price index, and this adjustment led to an actual rate for the landfill tax of EUR 70.20/t in 2023 ([37]). The tax also covers outputs of mechanical biological treatment plants that are landfilled and is among the highest landfill taxes applied in the EU. Lithuania has a ban in place for the landfilling of untreated waste and of biodegradable waste from gardens, parks and green areas and some other selected waste. Lithuania has no tax on waste incineration ([38]).

Lithuania is on a track to meet the 2035 target to reduce landfill to 10 % of the municipal waste generated. According to national data, in 2023, only 7.7 % of municipal waste was landfilled[39]. Lithuania has to speed up its progress towards reaching the 2025 target for preparing municipal waste for reuse and recycling of 55 % and the 2025 target for packaging recycling of 65 % ([40]). In 2022, Lithuania achieved a preparing for reuse and recycling rate of 49 %, and a recycling rate of 58 % for total packaging waste. Progress since 2019 may be masked by the change to the reporting rules that took place in 2020.

In the 2022 Environmental Implementation Review (EIR), the European Commission recommended introducing new policies for reuse and recycling, and supporting municipalities to organise separate collection and

([31]) Information provided by the Ministry of Environment of the Republic of Lithuania in 2024 during the Eionet review of the draft EEA country profile on waste management for Lithuania.

([32]) Information provided by the Ministry of Environment of the Republic of Lithuania in 2024 during the Eionet review of the draft EEA country profile on waste management for Lithuania .

([33]) Information provided by the Ministry of Environment of the Republic of Lithuania in 2024 during the Eionet review of the draft EEA country profile on waste management for Lithuania .

([34]) Information provided by the Ministry of Environment of the Republic of Lithuania in 2024 during the Eionet review of the draft EEA country profile on waste management for Lithuania .

([35]) Information provided by the Ministry of Environment of the Republic of Lithuania in 2024 during the Eionet review of the draft EEA country profile on waste management for Lithuania .

([36]) EEA, *Early warning assessment related to the 2025 targets for municipal and packaging waste – Lithuania*, Copenhagen, 2022, https://www.eea.europa.eu/publications/many-eu-member-states/lithuania/view.

([37]) Information provided by the Ministry of Environment of the Republic of Lithuania in 2024 during the Eionet review of the draft EEA country profile on waste management for Lithuania.

([38]) EEA, *Early warning assessment related to the 2025 targets for municipal and packaging waste – Lithuania*, Copenhagen, 2022, https://www.eea.europa.eu/publications/many-eu-member-states/lithuania/view; Information provided by the Ministry of Environment of the Republic of Lithuania in 2024 during the Eionet review of the draft EEA country profile on waste management for Lithuania.

39 Lithuanian Ministry of Environment. Municipal waste generation and management dashboard: aaa.lrv.lt/lt/veiklos-sritys/atliekos/komunaliniu-atlieku-susidarymo-ir-tvarkymo-svieslente/

([40]) EEA, *Early warning assessment related to the 2025 targets for municipal and packaging waste – Lithuania*, Copenhagen, 2022, https://www.eea.europa.eu/publications/many-eu-member-states/lithuania/view.

improve the functioning of EPR systems ([41]). The Commission issued a number of policy recommendations to improve Lithuania's waste management performance in its early warning report for Lithuania ([42]):

- support the preparing for reuse of municipal waste and reuse systems for packaging;
- further develop waste treatment infrastructure associated with later steps in the waste hierarchy, in particular to improve performance in separate collection, and increase the treatment capacity for biowaste and food waste and set up a quality management system for compost and digestate from biowaste;
- consider making municipalities responsible for meeting specific mandatory targets on the separate collection of waste – this could be complemented by a system of financial awards and penalties dependent on the performance against such targets by the municipalities;
- develop and promote awareness-raising campaigns specifically tailored to different target groups to increase participation in separate collection.

Lithuania has already implemented several relevant measures to increase the recycling of municipal and packaging waste, including the introduction of the separate collection of food waste from households, increase in the landfill tax, higher taxes on non-recyclable packaging and an obligation for producer responsibility organisations to finance the development of collection infrastructure. Several further measures are planned, including economic incentives and support for municipalities to improve their separate collection systems.

Lithuania has taken identifiable measures to pursue its 2022 priority actions outlined in the 2022 EIR, although more progress is needed.

- Lithuania has made some progress on introducing new policies, including economic instruments, to promote prevention and make reuse and recycling more economically attractive. However, these actions appear to be more indirect, and as such, more concrete steps are needed.
- Lithuania has also made some progress in developing and running implementation support programmes for municipalities to help support their efforts to organise separate collection and further improve their recycling performance.
- Regarding the improvement of the functioning of EPR systems, in line with the general minimum requirements established in the Waste Framework Directive, Lithuania has made some progress on this priority action.
- Finally, Lithuania has made some progress on the priority action of ensuring that a waste management plan in line with the revised Waste Framework Directive is in place; however, its progress is in line with its postponement notification, and more concrete actions will be necessary with realising Lithuania's plans.

2025 priority actions

- Improve municipal waste preparation for reuse and recycling;
- Increase the collection and recycling rate of waste electronic and electric equipment (WEEE);
- Invest in waste prevention measures to reduce the total amount of waste generated.

([41]) Commission staff working document – Environmental implementation review 2022: Country report – Lithuania, SWD(2022) 266 final of 8 September 2022, https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52022SC0266&qid=1710497285402.

([42]) Commission staff working document – The early warning report for Lithuania, SWD(2023) 188 final of 8 June 2023, https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52023SC0188.

2. Biodiversity and natural capital

Global and EU biodiversity frameworks

Biological diversity and healthy ecosystems are critical for our societies, underpin our economies and well-being and are essential for climate change adaptation and mitigation. The Kunming–Montreal global biodiversity framework (GBF), adopted in December 2022, sets comprehensive and measurable targets to tackle biodiversity loss by 2030. To implement this global framework and integrate biodiversity considerations into national decision-making, the EU – as well as all Member States – had to submit national biodiversity strategies and action plans, or to communicate national targets aligned with the global targets, by the end of 2024.

The EU biodiversity strategy for 2030 (BDS) aims to put EU biodiversity on a path to recovery by 2030. It sets quantified targets intended to protect and restore nature and manage ecosystems in a sustainable manner, as well as measures to enable implementation and commitments to support global biodiversity. A BDS actions tracker ([43]) and a dashboard of indicators ([44]) provide information on implementation progress.

The recently adopted EU Nature Restoration Regulation [45] is the first EU-wide, comprehensive law of its kind and a key instrument for the EU to deliver on the global biodiversity targets for 2030. It lays down an overarching objective at the EU level to put in place effective restoration measures on 20 % of EU land and sea by 2030 and for all ecosystems in need of restoration by 2050. To achieve this, it sets binding targets for Member States to restore and maintain ecosystems, as well as an effective implementation framework based on national restoration plans.

The BDS is the main instrument used by the EU to deliver on its obligation under the GBF. The Commission has submitted to the Convention on Biological Diversity its report on GBF-aligned EU targets that stem from the BDS and from other policy instruments under the European Green Deal.

Member States' NBSAPs need to provide coherent frameworks for national delivery on the global and EU 2030 biodiversity targets. In line with the global obligations, NBSAPs should also include a biodiversity financing plan and a capacity-building plan, based on needs assessments, as well as an overview of the national indicators used to measure progress.

Lithuania's national environmental protection strategy ([46]) (updated in 2023) aims to identify priority environmental policy areas, long-term objectives up to 2030 and Lithuania's vision for the environment by 2050. The strategy contains a long-term objective of establishing protected areas and Natura 2000 sites on 17 % of the country's land area and 10 % of its marine area.

Lithuania has not yet submitted to the CBD an updated NBSAP or aligned national targets in view of the adoption of the Kunming–Montreal global biodiversity framework.

The EU aims to allocate to biodiversity objectives at least 7.5 % of annual spending under the EU budget in 2024, rising to 10 % in 2026 and 2027.

For details on biodiversity financing and investments for Lithuania, see the section 'Environmental financing and investments' in Chapter 5.

([43]) https://dopa.jrc.ec.europa.eu/kcbd/actions-tracker/.

([44]) https://dopa.jrc.ec.europa.eu/kcbd/EUBDS2030-dashboard/?version=1.

([45]) Regulation (EU) 2024/1991 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 June 2024 on nature restoration and amending Regulation (EU) 2022/869 (OJ L, 2024/1991, 29.7.2024, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2024/1991/oj); European Commission, 'Nature Restoration Law', European Commission website, https://environment.ec.europa.eu/topics/nature-and-biodiversity/nature-restoration-law_en.

([46]) National Environmental Protection Strategy.pdf

Nature protection and restoration – Natura 2000

Natura 2000 ([47]), the largest coordinated network of protected areas in the world, is key to the achievement of the objectives set out in the Birds and Habitats Directives. These objectives are to ensure the long-term protection, conservation and survival of Europe's most valuable and threatened species and habitats and the ecosystems they underpin. Key milestones towards meeting the objectives of the Birds and Habitats Directives are (i) the setting up of a complete and coherent Natura 2000 network; (ii) the designation of sites of community importance (SCIs) as special areas of conservation (SACs) ([48]); and (iii) effective management of all Natura 2000 sites through the setting of site-specific conservation objectives and measures.

Setting up a complete and coherent network of Natura 2000 sites

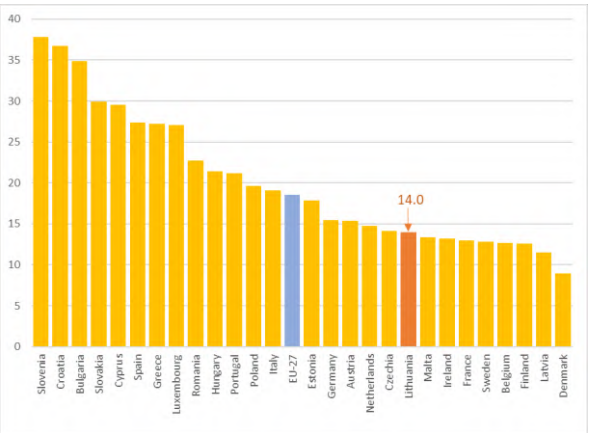
The setting up of a complete and coherent network of Natura 2000 sites is a cornerstone of the EU's international commitments, under the BDS and GBF, to legally protect a minimum of 30 % of its land area and 30 % of its sea area.

Meeting these commitments requires the full implementation of Article 3 of the Habitats Directive. The Natura 2000 network should represent a complete and coherent ecological network composed of sites hosting natural habitat types and species of community interest. The Natura 2000 network enables the natural habitat types and the species' habitats concerned to be maintained or, where appropriate, restored to a favourable conservation status in their natural range.

Lithuania hosts 54 habitat types ([49]) and 98 species ([50]) covered by the Habitats Directive. The country also hosts populations of 83 bird taxa listed in Annex I of the Birds Directive ([51]).

As shown in the Figure 9, in 2023, 14 % of Lithuania's terrestrial area was covered by Natura 2000 (EU average: 18.6 %), with special protection areas classified under the Birds Directive covering 8.5 % (EU average: 12.8 %) and SCIs under the Habitats Directive covering 11.9 % (EU average: 14.3 %) of Lithuania.

Figure 9: Natura 2000 terrestrial protected area coverage per Member State (%), 2023



Source: EEA, 'Natura 2000 Barometer', 2023 data, accessed March 2025, https://www.eea.europa.eu/en/analysis/maps-and-charts/natura-2000-barometer-dashboards.

The latest assessment of the SCIs of the Natura 2000 network reveals that there are insufficiencies in designation. To address these gaps, the Commission took legal action in May 2018. Since then, Lithuania has designated a number of new sites, and the coverage of the terrestrial Natura 2000 network has increased from 12.6 % in 2021 to the current level of 13.8 %. The authorities proposed additional sites in 2023. The Commission closely monitors the progress made towards compliance and is currently assessing the sufficiency of the Lithuanian SCI network.

Taking account of both Natura 2000 and other nationally designated protected areas, Lithuania legally protects 17.8 % of its terrestrial areas (compared with the EU-27 average of 26.1 %) and 22.8 % of marine areas (EU-27 average 12.3 %) ([52]).

([47]) Natura 2000 comprises sites of community importance (SCIs), designated pursuant to the Habitats Directive, as well as special protection areas (SPAs), classified pursuant to the Birds Directive. Numbers of protected areas in Figure 9 do not add up to the total of SCIs plus SPAs, because some SCIs and SPAs overlap. An SAC is an SCI designated by a Member State.

([48]) SCIs are designated pursuant to the Habitats Directive, whereas SPAs are designated pursuant to the Birds Directive. Figures of coverage do not add up because some SCIs and SPAs overlap.

([49]) EEA, 'Number of habitats and species per Member State', Article 17 dashboard, Annex 1 total, 19 December 2019, https://www.eea.europa.eu/themes/biodiversity/state-of-nature-in-the-eu/article-17-national-summary-dashboards/general-information-on-habitats-and-species.

([50]) EEA, 'Number of habitats and species per Member State', Article 17 dashboard, 19 December 2019, https://www.eea.europa.eu/themes/biodiversity/state-of-nature-in-the-eu/article-17-national-summary-dashboards/general-information-on-habitats-and-species.

([51]) EEA, 'Number of bird species/populations per Member State', Article 12 dashboard, Annex I total, last updated 11 May 2023, https://www.eea.europa.eu/themes/biodiversity/state-of-nature-in-the-eu/article-12-national-summary-dashboards/general-information-on-bird-species-populations. This counting only takes into account bird taxa for which information was requested.

([52]) Eurostat dataset env_bio4, protected area percentage for 2022, accessed March 2025, https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/env_bio4/default/table?lang=en.

Designating special areas of conservation and setting site-specific conservation objectives and measures

In order to ensure that SCIs contribute to the objectives of the Habitats Directive, Member States must designate them as SACs, setting site-specific conservation objectives based on the ecological needs of the species and habitats present on the sites. The site-specific conservation objectives must be defined in terms of attributes and targets that cover the properties of the feature of interest that are necessary to describe its condition as either favourable or unfavourable. These objectives must address the key pressures and threats present on the site. Article 6 of the Habitats Directive requires Member States to establish and implement conservation measures for the realisation of the objectives of the site.

In 2019, the six-year deadline set by the Habitats Directive for designating SCIs as SACs, and establishing appropriate conservation objectives and measures, expired for 406 sites in Lithuania.

The Commission concluded that 243 SCIs were not yet designated as SACs. In addition, Lithuania had failed to set sufficiently detailed and quantified site-specific conservation objectives and introduce the necessary conservation measures for all 406 sites. Furthermore, the quality of the objectives and measures in place was considered to be insufficient. For this reason, the Commission initiated an infringement procedure in February 2021. Lithuania committed to addressing the gaps identified by September 2026. In September 2024, Lithuania informed the Commission that it had designated 150 SACs, set site-specific conservation objectives and introduced the necessary conservation measures for those sites, while the remaining sites are to be designated by September 2026. The Commission is closely monitoring progress towards compliance.

Recovery of species

One objective set by the BDS is that, by 2030, there should be no further deterioration in conservation trends or the status of any protected species. The BDS also states that Member States should ensure that at least 30 % of species not currently in favourable conservation status achieve that status or show progress towards doing so (e.g. by exhibiting positive population dynamics or stable or increasing range and habitat size), by 2030. According to the European Environment Agency (EEA), based on reporting required under Article 17 of the Habitats Directive, a quarter of species in the EU were of good conservation status as of 2018 ([53]).

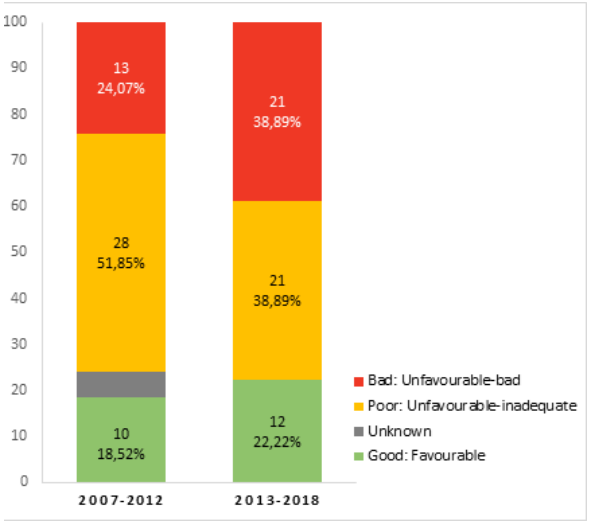
One of the primary objectives of the Habitats Directive is the maintenance of or restoration to favourable conservation status of all species of community interest. Moreover, the Birds Directive also aims to ensure that all wild birds in the EU enjoy a secure status. In order to achieve these objectives, it will be necessary to address key pressures and threats. The Birds Directive and the habitats directive lay down a framework of species protection rules and rules on the conservation of habitats and species in order to combat these threats.

Under Article 17 of the Habitats Directive, Member States are required to report on the conservation status of habitats and species every six years. The current reporting cycle, covering 2019–2024, is due for submission in July 2025. Figures 10 and 11 show the latest conservation status data reported by Lithuania.

According to the report submitted by Lithuania on the conservation status of habitats and species covered by Article 17 of the Habitats Directive for 2013–2018, 22 % of habitats had a good conservation status in 2018 and the conservation status of 37 % of protected species was rated as good. As far as birds are concerned, 19 % of breeding species showed short-term increasing or stable population trends.

The main pressures are invasive alien species, forestry and agriculture.

Figure 10: Assessments of conservation status of habitats for the 2007–2012 and 2013–2018 reporting periods



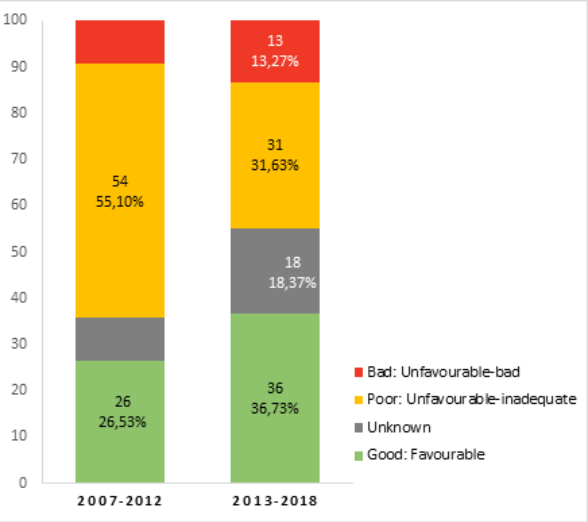
NB: The values shown for 2007–2012 and 2013–2018 are not necessarily directly comparable because changes in area conservation

([53]) EEA, *State of Nature in the EU: Results from reporting under the Nature Directives* (2013–2018), Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, 2020.

status in a Member State may result from changes to methods or use of better data, rather than reflecting genuine changes.

Source: EEA, 'Conservation status and trends of habitats and species', 19 December 2019, accessed February 2025, https://www.eea.europa.eu/en/analysis/maps-and-charts/conservation-status-and-trends-article-17-national-summary-dashboards-archived.

Figure 11: Assessments of conservation status of species for the 2007–2012 and 2013–2018 reporting periods



NB: The values shown for 2007–2012 and 2013–2018 are not necessarily directly comparable because changes in area conservation status in a Member State may result from changes to methods or use of better data, rather than reflecting genuine changes.

Source: EEA, 'Conservation status and trends of habitats and species', EEA website, 19 December 2019, accessed December 2021, https://www.eea.europa.eu/en/analysis/maps-and-charts/conservation-status-and-trends-article-17-national-summary-dashboards-archived.

Lithuania is currently implementing the financial instrument for the environment (LIFE)-integrated project 'Optimising the management of Natura 2000 network in Lithuania' ([54]). The project, which will invest EUR 17.2 million until 2027, was launched in 2018. It will encourage the development of the Natura 2000 network in the country, promote environmentally friendly farming and the sustainable use of forests in Natura 2000 sites, and raise public awareness of ecological issues. Among other initiatives, the LIFE-integrated project includes a results-based agri-environmental measure to save and protect species-rich natural meadows ([55]).

In view of implementing national Law on Special Land Use Conditions, in 2023 maps of natural grasslands and wetlands were approved providing legal protection for 75 700 ha of grasslands and grazing land and 110 600 ha of wetlands.

According to the Lithuanian authorities protected grassland areas account for 2.2 % of all agricultural land in the country.

The 2022 EIR identified a number of priority actions for Lithuania, such as completing the Natura 2000 designation process, setting clear conservation objectives, providing adequate resources for implementation, and improving the incentives for foresters and farmers to better protect forest and grassland habitats. Lithuania made some progress in designating missing Natura 2000 sites and setting out site-specific conservation objectives and measures.

2025 priority actions

- Complete the Natura 2000 site designation process;
- Finalise the establishment of site-specific conservation objectives and measures for all Natura 2000 sites (including by adopting their management plans) and ensure their effective implementation;
- Reinforce action for habitats and species in unfavourable conservation status, for example through restoration measures, increased connectivity, better policy coordination and integration, and increased funding.

Recovery of ecosystems

Agricultural ecosystems

The BDS works alongside the common agricultural policy (CAP) to support the transition to sustainable agriculture.

The strategy has set five common agriculture-related targets for 2030, namely to:

— reduce by 50 % the overall use of – and risk from – chemical pesticides;
— reduce by 50 % the use of more hazardous pesticides;
— reduce by 50 % losses of nutrients from fertilisers (which will result in a 20 % reduction in the use of fertilisers) while ensuring that there is no deterioration of soil fertility;
— restore at least 10 % of agricultural area to have high-diversity landscape features; and
— increase the area under organic farming to at least 25 %.

The "Vision for agriculture and food" ([56]), adopted by the European Commission in February 2025, sets a roadmap to an agri-food system that is attractive, competitive,

([54]) https://naturalit.lt/en/home/.
([55]) https://naturalit.lt/en/a-pilot-agro-environmental-measure-has-been-started-in-lithuania/.
([56]) https://agriculture.ec.europa.eu/overview-vision-agriculture-food/vision-agriculture-and-food_en

sustainable and fair for current and future generations. To ensure a sustainable future for EU agriculture, it is crucial that these four priority areas are pursued together, and that public and private support are adequately targeted toward this objective.

The CAP and national CAP strategic plans are key instruments to facilitate and strengthen the efforts of European farmers to protect biodiversity and the environment at large. The Commission approved Member States' CAP strategic plans in 2022 for the programming period 2023-2027. The CAP is the largest source of funding dedicated to supporting biodiversity and plays a significant role in implementing EU environmental policy. Strategic plans should continue to support the protection of soil, water, air quality and biodiversity.

While certain CAP result indicators focus on interventions favouring sustainable agriculture practices that regenerate ecosystems, the impact of these measures is difficult to assess. The uptake of eco-schemes is voluntary for farmers.

Approximately 45% of the total area of the country is used for agriculture ([57]). The utilised agricultural area in Lithuania was 2 872 410 ha in 2023 ([58]).

Landscape features are small fragments of non-productive and typically, but not only, semi-natural vegetation present in, or adjacent to, agricultural land. They provide ecosystem services and support for biodiversity. The indicator 'share of agricultural land covered with landscape features' is the ratio between the area covered by landscape features and the area covered by agricultural land. Based on the Land Use/Cover Area Frame Survey landscape features' estimates[59], the share of agricultural land covered with non-productive landscape features in Lithuania is 3.6 %, below the EU average. At the EU level, landscape features cover 5.6 % of agricultural land.

In 2024, the CAP basic regulations were amended ([60]), inter alia, regarding the standards for the good agricultural and environmental condition (GAEC) of land. These changes removed the obligation for farmers benefiting from CAP area-related support to have a minimum share of 3–4 % of non-productive areas or landscape features in their farms. However, the amended regulation does not remove the obligation under the GAEC 8 to maintain existing landscape features and sets out an obligation for Member States to establish and provide support for eco-schemes covering practices for the maintenance of non-productive areas, such as land lying fallow, and for the establishment of new landscape features on arable land.

The recently adopted Nature Restoration Regulation ([61]) focuses on the restoration of agricultural ecosystems and requires Member States to put in place measures that aim to achieve an increasing trend at the national level in at least two out of three indicators for agricultural ecosystems ([62]). One of these indicators is the 'share of agricultural land with high-diversity landscape features'.

Organic farming practices are highly beneficial to biodiversity. As shown in Figure 12, it is estimated that in 2022, 9.32 % of Lithuania's land area was used for organic farming. This is lower than the EU average of 10.50 % ([63]). Lithuania could do more to contribute to achieving the target of using 25 % of the EU's agricultural land for organic farming by 2030. Thematic chapter 12 "Environmental Protection and Sustainable Agriculture Development" of the Lithuanian government programme adopted in December 2024 includes an initiative to halt the decline of organic farming (Article 777) ([64]).

([57]) Lithuania - European Commission

([58]) Eurostat dataset apro_cpsh1 Utilised agricultural area by categories, 31 March 2025

([59]) Landscape features in agricultural land: what is the extent? - European Commission

([60]) Regulation (EU) 2024/1468 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 May 2024 amending Regulations (EU) 2021/2115 and (EU) 2021/2116 as regards good agricultural and environmental condition standards, schemes for climate, environment and animal welfare, amendment of the CAP strategic plans, review of the CAP strategic plans and exemptions from controls and penalties (OJ L, 2024/1468, 24.5.2024, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2024/1468/oj).

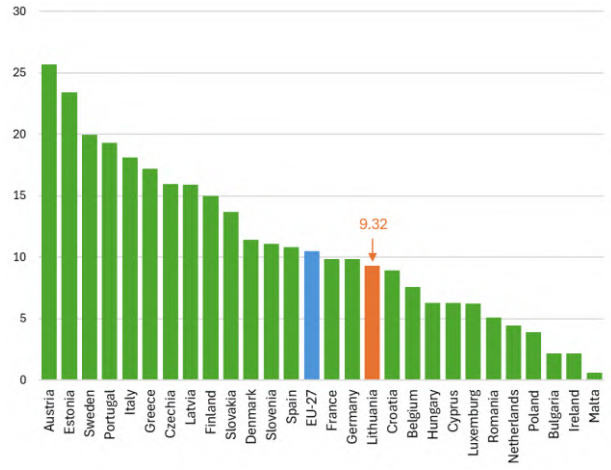
([61]) Regulation (EU) 2024/1991 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 June 2024 on nature restoration and amending Regulation (EU) 2022/869 (OJ L, 2024/1991, 29.7.2024, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2024/1991/oj).

([62]) The three indicators are 'grassland butterfly index'; 'stock of organic carbon in cropland mineral soils' and 'share of agricultural land with high-diversity landscape features'.

([63]) This is based on the latest available information from Eurostat, which is currently under review; European Commission, *Agriculture biologique au sein de l'union européenne*, factsheet, Brussels, 2024, https://agriculture.ec.europa.eu/document/download/c67458ed-ec50-4762-ae68-341763ab93c2_fr?filename=factsheet-organic-farming_fr.pdf&prefLang=en.

([64]) XV-54 Dėl Devynioliktosios Lietuvos Respublikos Vyriausybės programos.

Figure 12: Share of total utilised agricultural area occupied by organic farming per Member State (%), 2022



Source: Eurostat, 'Area under organic farming', sdg_02_40, accessed 5 December 2024, https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/sdg_02_40/default/table?lang=en.

2025 priority actions

- Implement eco-schemes and agri-environmental measures and practices to address the environmental needs of Lithuania;
- Implement and scale-up the uptake of organic farming practices.

Soil ecosystems

Soil is an essential, finite and extremely fragile resource. Its increasing degradation poses a threat to EU food security and climate resilience, adaptation and mitigation.

The EU soil strategy, adopted in November 2021, aims to support soil protection, sustainable soil management and the restoration of degraded soils to achieve the Green Deal objectives as well as land degradation neutrality by 2030.

This entails:

— preventing further soil degradation;
— making sustainable soil management the new normal;
— taking action for ecosystem restoration

The proposed directive on soil monitoring and resilience ([65]) aims to introduce the first comprehensive legislation on the protection of all soils in the EU. Should the Directive be adopted, Member States will have to transpose it into national legislation and implement it, starting with putting in place the governance systems and a sound monitoring framework building on existing national soil monitoring frameworks. The objective of the proposed directive is to provide better and more comparable soil health data with the view of attaining healthy soils by 2050.

Degradation of soil ecosystems encompasses several aspects. The proposed Directive requires Member States to assess soil health according to a set of common indicators and to define the necessary regeneration measures. The area of soil that is sealed is an important factor in monitoring land-use change and represents an important pressure on nature and biodiversity. Other soil issues related to land degradation are soil erosion, soil compaction, loss of soil organic carbon, soil contamination, soil salinisation and the presence in soil of nitrogen and phosphorus in excess. The impact assessment accompanying the proposal, which builds on the data available in the EU Soil Observatory, points to the following soil degradation issues in Lithuania ([66]).The greatest contributor to Lithuania's unhealthy soils is loss of soil organic carbon in mineral soils ([67]), which affects 11 % of land and 29 % of cropland and grassland areas. 9% of the national territory experiences unsustainable soil erosion by water, wind, tillage and harvest; and 9 % of the land is considered peatland area experiencing degradation, of which 98 % is on agricultural land.

Grasslands

Grasslands are among the most diverse ecosystems in the EU; they can contain as many as 80 different plant species per square metre and are home to a large variety of animals, ranging from small insects, birds and rodents to large herbivores. Grasslands are essential for agriculture and livestock herding. Natural grasslands also play an important role in storing carbon. However, changes in agricultural practices and land uses have caused grasslands to disappear at an alarming rate, making them one of Europe's most threatened

([65]) Proposal for a directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on soil monitoring and resilience (Soil Monitoring Law), COM(2023) 416 final of 5 July 2023, https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex:52023PC0416.

([66]) Commission staff working document – Impact assessment report: Annexes – Accompanying the proposal for a directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on soil monitoring and resilience (Soil Monitoring Law), SWD(2023) 417 final of 5 July 2023, https://environment.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2023-07/IMPACT ASSESSMENT REPORT ANNEXES SWD 2023 417 part4.pdf.https://environment.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2023-07/IMPACT ASSESSMENT REPORT ANNEXES SWD 2023 417 part4.pdf

([67]) De Rosa, D., Ballabio, C., Lugato, E. et al., 'Soil organic carbon stocks in European croplands and grasslands: How much have we lost in the past decade?, *Global Change Biology*, Vol. 30, No 1, 2023, e16992, https://doi.org/10.1111/gcb.16992.

ecosystems.

All grassland habitat types in Lithuania have an unfavourable conservation status. Grasslands have been subject to multiple pressures. They have been particularly negatively affected by changes in agricultural practices (intensification of some areas and abandonment of others). Increased fertilisation and mowing frequency typically weaken the plant and animal diversity of grasslands. However, when grasslands are abandoned, they become overgrown with trees and shrubs. The loss of traditionally managed grasslands has also led to declines in the populations of many bird species, including waders such as the Eurasian curlew.

Wetlands/peatlands

Wetlands act as water sources and purifiers; they are the planet's greatest natural carbon stores and they are crucial to agriculture and fisheries. Peatlands are a special type of wetland dominated by peat-forming plants such as *Sphagnum* mosses. Nearly all peatlands in the EU are habitat types listed in Annex I to the Habitats Directive. Drained peatlands under intensive agricultural use constitute only 3 % of the EU's utilised agricultural area. At the same time, they are responsible for 25 % of the GHG emissions from the EU's agricultural sector. Restoring peatlands brings multiple benefits, as peatlands improve water retention and quality, store carbon, reduce GHG emissions and increase biodiversity.

Most wetlands in Lithuania have an unfavourable conservation status. A significant proportion of bogs, mires and fens in Lithuania have been drained for peat extraction and land reclamation. Some bog habitat types have also been negatively affected by the encroachment of woody vegetation. Restoration of wetlands is, however, possible and should be promoted, among others, as a measure to mitigate and adapt to climate change.

Peatlands are unique and rare ecosystems that, despite only covering around 3-4% of the planet's land surface, contain up to one-third of the world's soil carbon, which is twice the amount of carbon as found in the world's forests. Peatland restoration and sustainable management is highly important to both combat climate change and preserve biodiversity. Living peatlands not only sequester carbon dioxide (CO_2) but also provide a healthy habitat for valuable species and remove nitrates from polluted agricultural run-off through denitrification. Peatland loss also means biodiversity loss, more floods and droughts, degraded drinking water for local communities and eutrophication of open waters. This last impact should be avoided, especially around the Baltic Sea, which is affected by eutrophication at a level of 97 %. Damage is caused when peatlands are drained for agriculture and tree planting, with peat extracted for fuel or horticulture.

The Lithuanian RRP was initially set to contribute to restore 8 000 ha of degraded peatlands, but this target was later reduced to 6 000 ha. While this could have been a good starting point for wider peatland restoration efforts required under the Nature Restoration Regulation, Lithuania *ultimately did not use EUR 16 million of the Recovery and resilience facility (RRF) funds for this purpose. Instead, it requested their transfer to other priorities, with EUR 14 million directed toward the acquisition and installation of renewable energy storage facilities and EUR 2 million for the acquisition of privately-owned, biodiversity-rich forest land*.

A good example of wetland restoration is a project that was selected as one of the finalists for the Natura 2000 Award 2024. The project 'Restoring connectivity on the Salantas River in Lithuania' has led to the return of several fish and invertebrate species to an important Natura 2000 site ([68]) Its single largest action consisted of the removal of a dam to allow the free upstream migration of fish species. Additional restoration activities included the removal of invasive species and the planting of native species. Artificial spawning grounds for fish were established, and a small wetland area was created, which has also become popular as a recreational area for the local community. Furthermore, a stretch of the river below the dam was cleaned of fine bottom sediment, and native water plants were reintroduced.

Forest ecosystems

Forests are important carbon sinks, and conserving them is vital if the EU is to achieve climate neutrality by 2050. The EU forest strategy for 2030, adopted in July 2021, is a plan of actions to promote the many services that forests provide. Its key objective is to ensure healthy, diverse and resilient EU forests that contribute significantly to the achievement of the EU's biodiversity and climate ambitions. About 27 % of the forest area in the EU is covered by habitat types listed in Annex I to the Habitats Directive. Moreover, forests host several species protected under the Birds and Habitats Directives, including those for which there is a requirement to designate Natura 2000 sites and to

([68]) State Service for Protected Areas, 'Projektas „Žuvų migracijos kliūčių pašalinimas ties Salantų miesto užtvanka ir vandens telkinio būklės gerinimas, siekiant atkurti Salanto upės vagą"', LRV.LT, last updated 11 September 2023, https://zemaitijosstd.lrv.lt/lt/veiklos-sritys/projektai/projektas-zuvu-migracijos-kliuciu-pasalinimas-ties-salantu-miesto-uztvanka-ir-vandens-telkinio-bukles-gerinimas-siekiant-atkurti-salanto-upes-vaga/.

protect breeding sites and resting places.

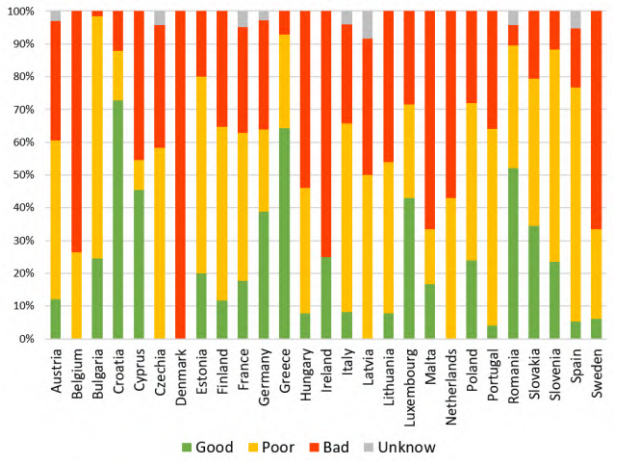
Several guidelines on forestry management were published in 2023. They covered biodiversity-friendly afforestation, reforestation and tree planting; closer-to-nature forest management; and defining, mapping, monitoring and strictly protecting primary and old-growth forests. Further guidance on payment schemes for ecosystems services has also been published.

In 2023, the Commission proposed a new forest monitoring law that aims to create a comprehensive forest knowledge base, address information gaps and enable a better response to growing pressures on forests.

Assessments show that, of the 27 % of EU forest area protected under the Habitats Directive, less than 15 % is of favourable conservation status ([69]). The share of forested areas in the EU with a bad conservation status increased from 27 % in 2015 to 31 % in 2018.

In Lithuania, forests covered 32.5 % of the territory in 2020 ([70]) and more than 90 % of assessments of forest habitats of EU interest reveal a bad to poor conservation status ([71]). Primary forests covered 27 000 ha in Lithuania ([72]).

Figure 13: Conservation status of forests protected under the Habitats Directive per Member State (% of assessments), 2013–2018



Source: Commission staff working document – New EU forest strategy for 2030, SWD(2021) 652 final of 16 July 2021, p. 24, eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52021SC0652.

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Among forest disturbances contributing to loss of forest integrity and related biodiversity loss, wildfires constitute a particular reason for concern. In 2022, the EU saw a record number (2 700) of wildfires affecting more than 30 ha, which led to the destruction of 785 605 ha of forest, the second highest annual figure recorded. Recent years have also witnessed the occurrence of widespread uncontrollable fires (so-called megafires), which are associated with loss of life and an enormous cost in terms of damage to the environment, businesses and society (over EUR 2 billion annually) and CO2 emissions. Megafires are practically beyond suppression capacity and can be prevented only by an integrated risk management approach. Wildfires prevention is also essential to preserve resources for the bioeconomy.

In Lithuania, the State Forest Enterprise submits annual wildfire reports to the Ministry of the Environment and the State Forest Service ([73]). In 2023, 167 wildfires affected 60 hectares. While some forests already have wildfire monitoring systems, a unified system is being implemented across all Lithuanian forests. This system

([69]) EEA, *State of Nature in the EU*: Results from reporting under the *N*ature *D*irectives 2013–2018, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, 2020, https://www.eea.europa.eu/publications/state-of-nature-in-the-eu-2020.

([70]) EEA, forest information system for Europe, 'Countries – FISE country factsheets', forest information system for Europe website, https://forest.eea.europa.eu/countries.

([71]) Commission staff working document – Stakeholder consultation and evidence base: Accompanying the document Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions – New EU forest strategy for 2030, SWD(2021) 652 final of 16 July 2021, https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/NL/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52021SC0652.https://ec.europa.eu/environment/pdf/forests/swd_forest_strategy.pdf

([72]) Barredo, J., Brailescu, C., Teller, A. et al. , *Mapping and assessment of primary and old-growth forests in Europe*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, 2021, p. 13, https://publications.jrc.ec.europa.eu/repository/handle/JRC124671.

([73]) https://amvmt.lrv.lt/lt/veiklos-sritys/misko-naudojimas-ir-statistika/misku-gaisrai/

will ensure reliable detection and prompt management of wildfires.

The EU Timber Regulation (EUTR) ([74]) prohibits the placing on the EU market of illegally harvested timber. According to the EUTR, Member States' competent authorities must conduct regular checks on operators and traders and apply penalties for non-compliance.

On 29 June 2023, the Regulation on Deforestation-free Products (EUDR) ([75]) entered into force ([76]). The regulation seeks to guarantee that products in the EU that come from a list of seven commodities have no links to deforestation. The Regulation on Deforestation-free Products repeals the EU Timber Regulation.

Marine ecosystems

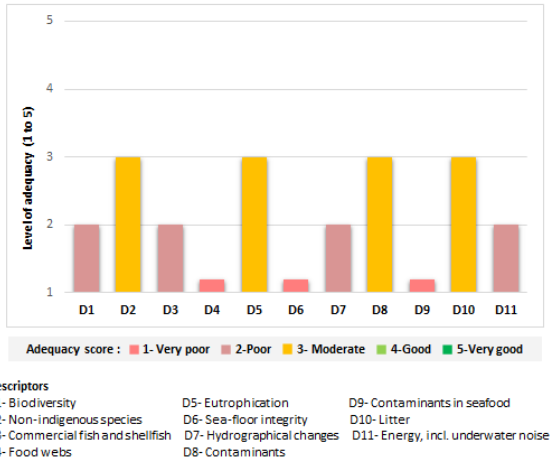
The Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD) requires Member States to achieve good environmental status (GES) for their marine waters. To that end, Member States must draw up marine strategies for their marine waters and cooperate with other Member States sharing the same marine region or subregion. These marine strategies comprise different steps to be developed and implemented over six-year cycles.

Since the 2022 EIR report, no additional data regarding Member States' set of GES characteristics for each descriptor in the MSFD have become available. Nevertheless, Member States had to report updates by October 2024, and these are being assessed by the Commission. In the context of this next round of reporting, in accordance with the MSFD and the Commission GES decision ([77]), Member States must include as part of their set of GES characteristics any threshold values for the descriptors in the MSFD that may have been established in cooperation with other Member States at the EU or regional level ([78]).

The Commission assessed the updated monitoring programme reported by Member States in 2020 ([79]). At that time their updates on the elements, features and parameters identified monitoring gaps. The Commission recommended that Member States should prioritise work to address those gaps at all levels of implementation of the MSFD.

Member States also reported their updated programmes of measures, which are required under Article 13 of the MSFD and which must be updated every six years. The Commission has assessed Member States' programmes of measures.

Figure 14: Level of adequacy of Lithuania's updated programme of measures under Article 13 of the MSFD (2022 reporting exercise)



NB: Technical assessment carried out by the European Commission, pursuant to Article 16 of the MSFD, based on the data reported by Lithuania in May and June 2023.

The assessment of Lithuania's programme of measures reveals persisting gaps across most descriptors in terms of addressing pressures adequately.

For food webs (D4), while measures addressing pressures on fish and marine mammals have been reported, they fail to include other species, like non-commercial fish,

([74]) Regulation (EU) No 995/2010 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 October 2010 laying down the obligations of operators who place timber and timber products on the market (OJ L 295, 12.11.2010, p. 23), https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32010R0995.

([75]) European Commission, 'Regulation on deforestation-free products', European Commission website, https://environment.ec.europa.eu/topics/forests/deforestation/regulation-deforestation-free-products_en.

([76]) The law will apply to large and medium-sized companies starting on December 30, 2025, and to micro and small enterprises starting on June 30, 2026.

([77]) Commission Decision (EU) 2017/848 of 17 May 2017 laying down criteria and methodological standards on good environmental status of marine waters and specifications and standardised methods for monitoring and assessment, and repealing Decision 2010/477/EU (OJ L 125, 18.5.2017, p. 43), http://data.europa.eu/eli/dec/2017/848/oj.

([78]) Communication from the Commission – Commission notice on the threshold values set under the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (Directive 2008/56/EC) and Commission Decision (EU) 2017/848 (OJ C, 2024/2078, 11.3.2024), http://data.europa.eu/eli/C/2024/2078/oj.

([79]) Communication from the Commission – Commission notice on recommendations on the 2020 updated reports for Article 11 of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive, C(2023) 2203 final of 4 April 2023, https://environment.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2023-04/C_2023_2203_F1_COMMUNICATION_FROM_COMMISSION_EN_V5_P1_2532109.PDF.

and are in themselves insufficient to ensure the overall health of food webs. Measures regarding commercial fish and shellfish (D3) were similarly found to be lacking, and the updated measure on recreational fishing focuses on monitoring rather than directly managing the activity.

In addition, Lithuania did not report any new measures for sea-floor integrity (D6), hydrographical changes (D7) and contaminants in seafood (D9), leaving pressures on these descriptors unaddressed.

2025 priority action

- Report updates on the assessment of the state of Lithuania's marine waters, its target and its determinations of GES ([80]), which are expected to include any threshold values for the descriptors in the MSFD that may have been established in cooperation with other Member States at the EU or regional level.

Prevention and management of invasive alien species

Invasive alien species (IAS) are a major cause of biodiversity loss in the EU. Besides inflicting direct and indirect damage on nature and the economy, some IAS also carry and spread infectious diseases, posing a threat to humans and wildlife. Regulation (EU) No 1143/2014 (the IAS Regulation) aims to prevent, minimise and mitigate the adverse impacts of IAS on biodiversity. It focuses action on a list of IAS of EU concern (the 'Union list'), which is regularly updated ([81]).

The third update of the Union list ([82]) entered into force on 2 August 2022. The fourth update is in preparation.

The IAS Regulation ([83]) currently lists 88 species subject to restrictions on keeping, importing, selling, breeding, growing and releasing into the environment. Member States are required to take measures to (i) prevent the introduction of IAS, (ii) ensure early detection and rapid eradication of IAS and (iii) manage species that are already widespread on their territory.

Preventing the introduction and spread of IAS, and managing them, including through eradication and control, can result in a substantial cost saving. Studies estimate that the total cost of IAS in Europe (damages and management) amounted to EUR 116.61 billion between 1960 and 2020 ([84]). More recent studies have put this cost at USD 28 billion per year in the EU, increasing to USD 148.2 billion by 2040 ([85]), and at USD 423 billion annually at the global level ([86]).

The total number of invasive alien species of EU concern in the country is 18.

This includes the 14 species recorded in the previous EIR (2021) and 4 new additions. Of these new additions, two were already on the list of EU concern in 2021, and two were added later under Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2022/1203.

The spread can be seen in Figure 15.

([80]) In accordance with Article 17 of Directive 2008/56/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 June 2008 establishing a framework for community action in the field of marine environmental policy (Marine Strategy Framework Directive) (OJ L 164, 25.6.2008, p. 19), https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dir/2008/56/oj/eng.

([81]) Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2016/1141 of 13 July 2016 adopting a list of invasive alien species of Union concern pursuant to Regulation (EU) No 1143/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council (OJ L 189, 14.7.2016, p. 4), as amended by Commission Implementing Regulations (EU) 2017/1263, (EU) 2019/1262 and (EU) 2022/1203, https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:02016R1141-20220802&from=EN.

([82]) Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2022/1203 of 12 July 2022 amending Implementing Regulation (EU) 2016/1141 to update the list of invasive alien species of Union concern (OJ L 186, 13.7.2022, p. 10), https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32022R1203.

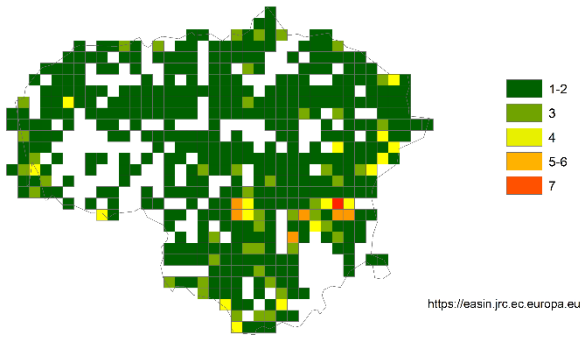
([83]) Regulation (EU) No 1143/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 22 October 2014 on the prevention and management of the introduction and spread of invasive alien species (OJ L 317, 4.11.2014, p. 35).

([84]) Haubrock, P. J., Turbelin, A. J., Cuthbert, R. N. et al., 'Economic costs of invasive alien species across Europe', *NeoBiota*, Vol. 67, 2021, pp. 153–190.

([85]) Henry, M., Leung, B., Cuthbert, R. N. et al., 'Unveiling the hidden economic toll of biological invasions in the European Union', *Environmental Sciences Europe*, Vol. 35, No 1, 2023, p. 43.

([86]) Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), *Summary for Policymakers – Invasive alien species assessment*, Bonn, 2023, https://www.ipbes.net/document-library-catalogue/summary-policymakers-invasive-alien-species-assessment.

Figure 15: Number of IAS of EU concern, based on available georeferenced information for Lithuania, 2024



With regard to the 2022 priority actions of invasive alien species, Lithuania has stepped up action and now complies with the requirements of Article 13 of the IAS Regulation.

2025 priority actions

- Step up implementation of the IAS Regulation, including with regard to enforcement and the capacity of inspection authorities.
- Ratify the Offshore Protocol to the Barcelona Convention and ICZM Protocol to the Barcelona Convention.

Ecosystem assessment and accounting

The BDS calls on Member States to better integrate biodiversity considerations into public and business decision-making at all levels and to develop natural capital accounting.

Similarly, target 14 of the GBF ([87]) aims to ensure the full integration of biodiversity and its multiple values into policy and planning and, as appropriate, national accounting. This requires effective and coherent biodiversity observation and reporting on ecosystem condition in the EU ([88]).

The amended Regulation (EU) No 691/2011 on European environmental economic accounts ([89]) introduces new requirements for Member States to report on the condition of ecosystems including urban ecosystems, croplands, grasslands, forest and woodlands, coastal beaches, dunes and wetlands. Data reported by the Member States will feed into the second European ecosystem assessment, due in 2027, and can also be used to support policy decisions.

An ecosystem assessment is an analysis of the condition of ecosystems and the pressures acting on them, as well as the benefits that they provide to people, either directly or indirectly through the economy.

An increasing number of platforms, networks and communities of practice involve businesses in protecting biodiversity, including the EU Business & Biodiversity Platform ([90]). These platforms and communities are key tools for promoting and facilitating natural capital assessments among businesses and financial services providers.

Natural capital assessments help private businesses to better understand both the negative and positive impacts that they have on nature, and to appreciate how nature contributes to their success. Such understanding contributes to the implementation of the EU's BDS.

Between 2021 and 2023, the Lithuanian Ministry of Environment developed the "National Study on Ecosystem and Ecosystem Service Assessment Integration into Decision-Making Processes."([91]) The study provides recommendations to protect, restore, and enhance ecosystems and their services by integrating ecosystem service assessments into sectors such as biodiversity, forestry, agriculture, spatial planning, and water management. Key proposals include updating ecosystem service inventories, creating

([87]) Decision 15/4 adopted by the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity: Kunming–Montreal global biodiversity framework (https://www.cbd.int/doc/decisions/cop-15/cop-15-dec-04-en.pdf).

([88]) European Commission: JRC, *EU Ecosystem Assessment – Summary for policymakers*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, 2021, https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/81ff1498-b91d-11eb-8aca-01aa75ed71a1/language-en.

([89]) Proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Regulation (EU) No 691/2011 as regards introducing new environmental economic accounts modules, COM(2022) 329 final of 11 July 2022, https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=COM:2022:329:FIN.

([90]) The EU Business & Biodiversity Platform (https://green-business.ec.europa.eu/business-and-biodiversity_en) aims to promote the business case for biodiversity to businesses and financial institutions through workshops, seminars, reports and a cross-media communication strategy.

([91]) Aplinkos ministerijos vykdomas Ekosisteminių paslaugų vertinimo integravimo į sprendimų priėmimo procesus viešojo administravimo ir ūkio sektoriuose projektas - Lietuvos Respublikos aplinkos ministerija.

assessment methodologies, and conducting economic valuations. It also examines best practices, economic impacts, and potential regulatory changes to guide future policymaking.

In 2022, Lithuania had prioritised actions to support the mapping and assessment of ecosystems and ecosystem services, and ecosystem accounting development, as well as to support the development of national business and biodiversity platforms. There was some progress on the first part of the priority action. However, no progress was recorded on supporting the development of national business and biodiversity networks – and no Lithuanian business or biodiversity networks were members of the EU Business & Biodiversity Platform; hence, the related priority action is reiterated in this report.

2025 priority actions

- Support the development of national business and biodiversity networks.
- Ratify the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization (ABS) to the Convention on Biological Diversity.

3. Zero pollution

Clean air

EU clean air policies and legislation have successfully reduced emissions of key air pollutants and significantly improved air quality, which is now moving towards the levels recommended by the World Health Organization (WHO). This has resulted in clear health benefits and reduced adverse impacts on ecosystems and biodiversity. However, to achieve the WHO-recommended levels, more efforts are needed, including full compliance with EU legislation. To guide these efforts, the EU zero pollution action plan sets targets for 2030 relative to. 2005. These are to reduce the health impacts of air pollution by 55 % and to reduce the EU ecosystems threatened by air pollution by 25 %.

The EU has developed a comprehensive suite of air quality policies ([92]). These set health-based EU air quality standards ([93]) and stipulate Member States' national emission reduction commitments ([94]) for several air pollutants.

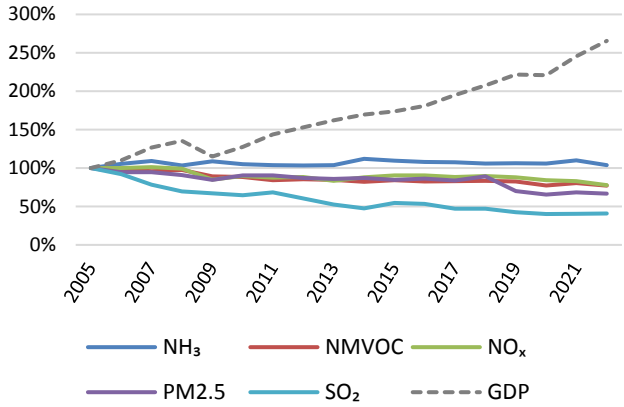
Air quality in Lithuania is generally good, with some exceptions.

The latest available annual estimates (for 2022) by the European Environment Agency ([95]) for Lithuania attribute 1 500 deaths each year (or 14 500 years of life lost (YLL)) to fine particulate matter ($PM_{2.5}$) ([96]), 180 deaths each year (or 1 800 YLL) to nitrogen dioxide (NO_2) ([97]) and 320 deaths each year (or 3 200 YLL) to ozone ([98]).

The emissions of several air pollutants have decreased significantly in Lithuania since 2005, while GDP growth has continued (see Figure 16). According to the inventories submitted under Article 10(2) of the National Emission Reduction Commitments Directive (NECD) ([99]), in 2024 Lithuania fulfilled its emission reduction commitments for 2020–2029 for the air pollutants sulphur dioxide (SO_2) and $PM_{2.5}$, and did not fulfil them for NO_x, non-methane volatile organic compounds (NMVOC) and ammonia (NH_3). According to the latest projections submitted under Article 10(2) of the NECD, Lithuania projects that it will fulfil its emission reduction commitments from 2030 onwards for NO_x, NMVOC, SO_2, NH_3 and $PM_{2.5}$.

Lithuania submitted its updated national air pollution control programme (NAPCP) to the Commission on 10 September 2024.

Figure 16: Emission trends of main pollutants / GDP in Lithuania (%), 2005–2022



Source: EEA, 'National air pollutant emissions data viewer 2005–2022', 25 June 2024, https://www.eea.europa.eu/en/topics/in-depth/air-pollution/national-air-pollutant-emissions-data-viewer-2005-2022.

([92]) European Commission, 'Air', European Commission website, https://environment.ec.europa.eu/topics/air_en.

([93]) European Commission, 'EU air quality standards', European Commission website, https://environment.ec.europa.eu/topics/air/air-quality/eu-air-quality-standards_en.

([94]) European Commission, 'Reducing emissions of air pollutants', European Commission website, https://environment.ec.europa.eu/topics/air/reducing-emissions-air-pollutants_en.

([95]) EEA, *Harm to human health from air pollution in Europe: Burden of disease 2024*, briefing No 21/2024, Copenhagen, 2024, https://www.eea.europa.eu/en/analysis/publications/harm-to-human-health-from-air-pollution-2024.

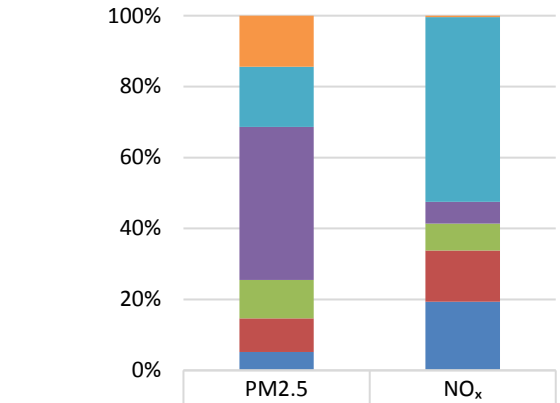
([96]) Particulate matter (PM) is a mixture of aerosol particles (solid and liquid) covering a wide range of sizes and chemical compositions. PM_{10} refers to particles with a diameter of 10 µm or less. $PM_{2.5}$ refers to particles with a diameter of 2.5 µm or less. PM is emitted from many human sources, including combustion.

([97]) Nitrogen dioxide (NO_2) here pertains to a group of gases called NO_x, which also comprises nitrogen monoxide (NO). NO_x is emitted during fuel combustion – for example, from industrial facilities and the road transport sector.

([98]) Low-level ozone is produced by photochemical action on pollution. This year, for the first time, the impact of long-term exposure to ozone has also been taken into account. In previous analyses by the EEA, only the impact of short-term exposure was estimated.

([99]) Directive (EU) 2016/2284 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 December 2016 on the reduction of national emissions of certain atmospheric pollutants, amending Directive 2003/35/EC and repealing Directive 2001/81/EC (OJ L 344, 17.12.2016, p. 1), https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=uriserv:OJ.L_.2016.344.01.0001.01.ENG.

Figure 17: $PM_{2.5}$ and NO_x emissions by sector in Lithuania (%), 2022



	PM2.5	NO_x
Waste	14.37%	0.38%
Transport	17.03%	52.06%
Residential, commercial & institutional	43.12%	6.16%
Manufacturing and extractive industry	10.82%	7.61%
Energy supply	9.43%	14.46%
Agriculture	5.23%	19.33%

Source: EEA, 'National air pollutant emissions data viewer 2005–2022', 25 June 2024, https://www.eea.europa.eu/en/topics/in-depth/air-pollution/national-air-pollutant-emissions-data-viewer-2005-2022.

In 2023, no exceedances above the limit values established by the Ambient Air Quality Directive (AAQD) ([100]) were registered in Lithuania ([101]).

Infringement procedures have been opened for Member States not fulfilling their emission reduction commitments for 2020–2029, including Lithuania for NH_3, NMVOC, NO_x and $PM_{2.5}$. In November 2023, the Commission addressed a reasoned opinion to Lithuania as it continued to fail to fulfil its national emission reduction commitments under the NECD for NO_x, NMVOC and NH_3.

In the 2022 EIR, Lithuania received two priority actions. The first priority action was to further reduce emissions in the context of the NAPCP. Lithuania has not progressed on this, as despite slight reductions for NOx and NMVOC compared to 2020, the latest data reported show continued non-compliance with the 2020–2029 emission reduction commitments for NO_x, NMVOC and NH_3. The second priority action was to ensure full compliance with EU air quality standards and maintain downward emission trends. Based on the latest data, Lithuania has made substantial progress in this regard. Full compliance has been ensured with all limit values and target values. Since 2019, downward emission trends have been reported for all main pollutants. However, for NH_3 emissions are above 2005 levels, requiring further action.

2025 priority actions

- As part of the NAPCP, take action to reduce emissions of air pollutants.
- Ensure full compliance with the current AAQD standards, also in light of future stricter requirements under the revised AAQD.

Industrial emissions

The main objectives of EU policy on industrial emissions are to:

— protect air, water and soil and to prevent harmful effects on human health and the environment;
— prevent and manage waste;
— improve energy and resource efficiency, including water;
— contribute to decarbonisation.

The cornerstone of the policy is the Industrial Emissions Directive (IED), which was revised in 2024 ([102]). The revision improves the directive's contribution to the zero pollution objective. It has a strong focus on innovation, and builds solid links between depollution, decarbonisation and circularity, making it a key regulatory tool to accompany the green transformation of EU industry by 2050.

The overview of industrial activities regulated by the IED below is based on data reported to the EU Registry in 2022 ([103]).

In Lithuania, about 300 installations were covered by the IED in 2022, with one third of them (33 %) being installations for intensive rearing of poultry or pigs. The other main sectors are waste management (26 %), energy (13 %), food and drink (7 %) and chemicals (5 %).

([100]) Directive 2008/50/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 21 May 2008 on ambient air quality and cleaner air for Europe (OJ L 152, 11.6.2008, p. 1), https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32008L0050.

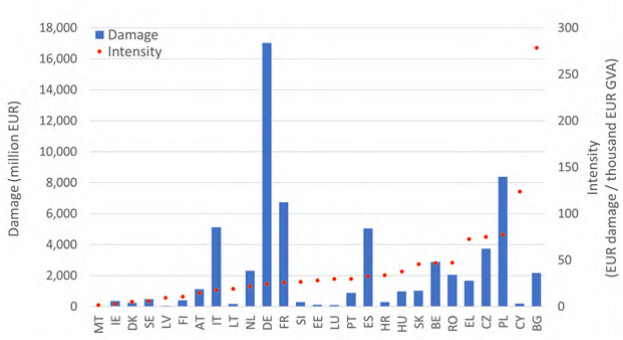
([101]) EEA, Eionet Central Data Repository (https://cdr.eionet.europa.eu/).

([102]) Directive 2010/75/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 November 2010 on industrial and livestock rearing emissions (integrated pollution prevention and control) (OJ L 334, 17.12.2010, p. 17), as amended by Directive (EU) 2024/1785 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 April 2024, https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A02010L0075-20240804&qid=1725983863299.

([103]) EEA, European Industrial Emissions Portal, https://industry.eea.europa.eu/, 2022 being the baseline year for all reports.

Figure 18 shows the damage to health and the environment due to the main industrial air pollutants. As this depends, among other factors, on the size of the industrial sector in each Member State, the figure also shows the ratio between the damage and industrial activity (expressed in gross value added (GVA)), which gives an indication of the emissions 'intensity'. Lithuania has one of the lowest levels of damage in the EU; it ranks 19th in terms of emissions intensity, which is below the EU average of EUR 27.5 / EUR 1 000 GVA. The main industrial contributors to emissions to air ([104]) are the energy sector and the mineral industry for NO_x and SO_2 emissions, and the waste management and energy sector for dust and heavy metal emissions.

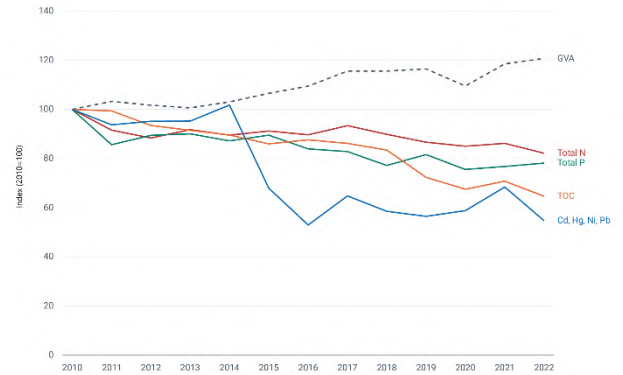
Figure 18: Industrial air pollution damage and intensity per Member State, 2021



Source: EEA, 'Industrial pollution intensity indicators – EU large industry air pollution damage costs intensity', European Industrial Emissions Portal, 2024, https://industry.eea.europa.eu/analyse/industrial-emissions-indicator.

Overall, the industrial emissions to water in the EU have decreased over time for all the main pollutants. On average in the EU, they appear to be decoupled from industrial activity (expressed in GVA), which has increased over the same period, as shown in Figure 19.

Figure 19: Industrial releases of pollutants to water and industrial activity in the EU-27

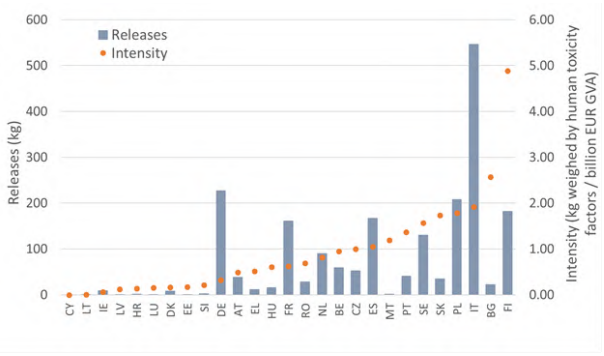


NB: Cd, cadmium; Hg, mercury; Ni, nickel; Pb, lead; TOC, total organic carbon; total N, total nitrogen; total P, total phosphorous.

Source: EEA, 'Industrial pollutant releases to water in Europe', 30 May 2024, https://www.eea.europa.eu/en/analysis/indicators/industrial-pollutant-releases-to-water.

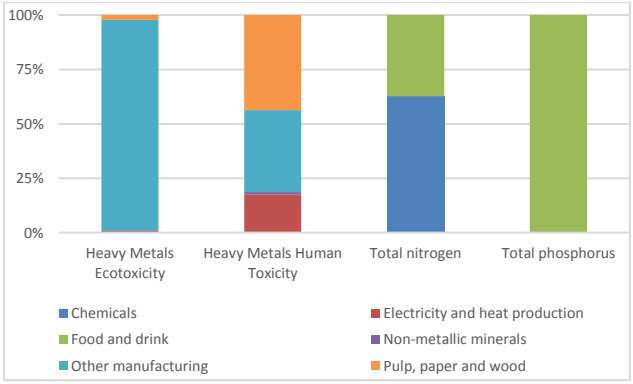
Concerning Lithuania in particular, Figure 20 shows the industrial emissions of heavy metals to water, taking into account the human toxicity of each metal, and the emissions intensity, based on the ratio of emissions to industrial activity (expressed in GVA). Lithuania has the second-lowest level of emissions of heavy metals to water (weighted by human toxicity), and the second lowest emissions intensity (well below the EU average intensity of 0.864 kg per billion EUR GVA). As shown in Figure 21, the main industrial contributors to emissions to water in Lithuania are the pulp and paper industry and 'other manufacturing' (mainly textiles) for heavy metals, the chemicals industry for nitrogen, and the production of food and drink for phosphorous.

Figure 20: Industrial releases and intensity of heavy metals to water per Member State, 2022



Source: EEA, 'Industrial pollution intensity indicators – EU large industry water pollution intensity', European Industrial Emissions Portal, 2024, https://industry.eea.europa.eu/analyse/industrial-emissions-indicator.

Figure 21: Relative releases to water from industry in Lithuania (%), 2022([105])



([104]) European Environment Agency, LRTAP, Air pollutant emissions data viewer (Gothenburg Protocol, LRTAP Convention) 1990-2022, https://www.eea.europa.eu/en/topics/in-depth/air-pollution/air-pollutant-emissions-data-viewer-1990-2022.

([105]) Industrial Reporting under the Industrial Emissions Directive 2010/75/EU and European Pollutant Release and Transfer Register Regulation (EC) No 166/2006 - ver. 12.0 Sep. 2024 (Tabular data).

Source: EEA, 'Industrial reporting under the Industrial Emissions Directive 2010/75/EU and European Pollutant Release and Transfer Register Regulation (EC) No 166/2006 – ver. 12.0 Sep. 2024 (tabular data)', EEA Geospatial Data Catalogue, 13 September 2024, https://doi.org/10.2909/cf5e54c1-be99-4426-bcad-baa26c4f27a0.

IED provisions on public information and participation require Member States to adopt transposition legislation enabling members of the public to have access to relevant information and participate in the approval process for potentially polluting installations. Thus, the public and non-governmental organisations (NGOs), alongside competent authorities, play a role in ensuring compliance of these permits with EU legislation. The IED contains mandatory requirements on environmental inspections, requiring a site visit to take place at least every 1–3 years, using risk-based criteria. In addition, IED enforcement provisions require Member States to determine effective, proportionate, and dissuasive penalties applicable to infringements of IED-based national provisions. In the revised directive, the provisions set that worst infringements can be sanctioned by fines of at least 3% of the annual EU turnover of the legal person. The revised IED also introduces a right to compensation for people whose health has been harmed by such infringements.

The development of best available techniques (BATs), BAT reference documents and BAT conclusions ensures effective collaboration between stakeholders and enables better implementation of the IED.

Since the 2022 EIR, the Commission has adopted BAT conclusions for (i) ferrous metal processing; (ii) the textiles industry; (iii) common waste gas management and treatment systems in the chemical sector; and (iv) smitheries and foundries.

The Commission relies on the efforts of national competent authorities to implement the legally binding BAT conclusions and associated BAT emission levels in environmental permits. This should result in considerable and continuous reductions in pollution.

In 2022, Lithuania received the priority action to improve reporting to the European Pollutant Release and Transfer Register, an action which has been fulfilled.

2025 priority actions

- Reduce industrial air pollution damage and intensity.
- Engage with industry and environmental NGOs to ensure proper contribution to and implementation of BAT conclusions and ensure timely updates to permits following the publication of BAT conclusions.
- Ensure effective public participation and access to justice in relation to the IED.

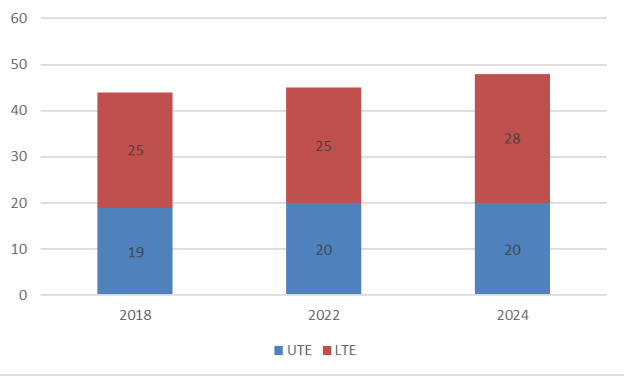
Major industrial accidents prevention – Seveso

The main objectives of EU policy on the prevention of major industrial accidents are to:
— control major-accident hazards involving dangerous substances, especially chemicals;
— limit the consequences of such accidents for human health and the environment;
— continuously improve the prevention of, preparedness for and response to major accidents.
The cornerstone of the policy is Directive 2012/18/EU (the Seveso III Directive) ([106]).

The overview below of industrial plants regulated by the Seveso III Directive ('Seveso establishments') is based on data reported on eSPIRS (e-Seveso Plants Information Retrieval System) for 2022–2024 ([107]) and the report by Lithuania on the implementation of the Seveso III Directive for 2019–2022 ([108]).

In 2024, of the 48 Seveso establishments in Lithuania, 28 were categorised as lower-tier establishments and 20 as upper-tier establishments (UTE) – based on the quantity of hazardous substances likely to be present. The UTEs are subject to more stringent requirements. The increase in the number of Seveso establishments is presented in Figure 22.

Figure 22: Number of Seveso establishments in Lithuania, 2018, 2022 and 2024



NB: LTE, lower-tier establishment.

Sources: European Commission: Directorate-General for Environment, *Assessment and summary of Member States' implementation reports for Implementing Decision 2014/896/EU (implementing Directive 2012/18/EU on the control of major accident hazards involving dangerous substances)*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, 2022, https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-

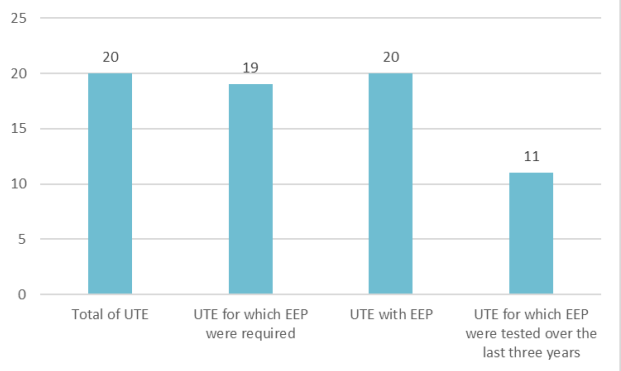
([106]) Directive 2012/18/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 4 July 2012 on the control of major-accident hazards involving dangerous substances, amending and subsequently repealing Council Directive 96/82/EC (OJ L 197, 24.7.2012, p. 1), https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dir/2012/18/oj.

([107]) https://espirs.jrc.ec.europa.eu/en/espirs/content; data extracted in September 2024.

([108]) As provided for by Article 21(2) of the Seveso III Directive.

/publication/94d57d74-735b-11ec-9136-01aa75ed71a1/language-en/format-PDF/source-search; eSPIRS data, extractions from 2022 and 2024; Analysis and summary of Member States' reports on implementation of Directive 2012/18/EU on the control of major accident hazards involving dangerous substances according to the format established by Commission Implementing Decision 2014/896/EU - Publications Office of the EU, https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/9bd73087-e9b8-11ef-b5e9-01aa75ed71a1/language-en.Member States are required to draw up external emergency plans (EEPs). These plans are essential to allow the proper preparation and effective implementation of the necessary actions to protect the environment and the population should a major industrial accident occur. According to Lithuania, in 2022, all UTEs had an EEP and 11 of the EEPs had been tested over the previous three years. The summary is shown in Figure 23.

Figure 23: Situation regarding EEPs in Lithuania, 2022

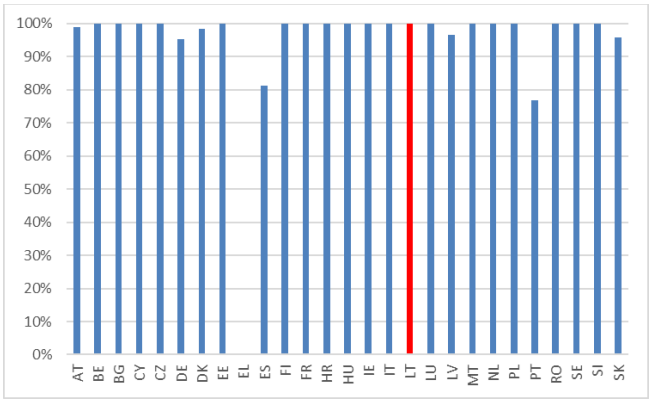


Sources: European Commission: Directorate-General for Environment, *Assessment and summary of Member States' implementation reports for Implementing Decision 2014/896/EU (implementing Directive 2012/18/EU on the control of major accident hazards involving dangerous substances)*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, 2022, https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/94d57d74-735b-11ec-9136-01aa75ed71a1/language-en/format-PDF/source-search; eSPIRS data, extractions from 2022 and 2024; Analysis and summary of Member States' reports on implementation of Directive 2012/18/EU on the control of major accident hazards involving dangerous substances according to the format established by Commission Implementing Decision 2014/896/EU - Publications Office of the EU, https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/9bd73087-e9b8-11ef-b5e9-01aa75ed71a1/language-en.

The public information referred to in Annex V to the Seveso III Directive – especially about how the public affected will be warned in the event of a major accident, the appropriate behaviour in the event of a major accident and the date of the last site visit – is permanently available for all UTE establishments in Lithuania.

The share of UTEs for which information on safety measures and requisite behaviours were actively made available to the public in 2022 in all Member States is presented in Figure 24. This is an important provision of the Seveso III Directive, as public knowledge of this information could reduce the consequences of a major industrial accident.

Figure 24: Share of UTEs for which information on safety measures and requisite behaviours was actively made available to the public per Member State (%), 2022



NB: No data available for Greece.

Sources: European Commission: Directorate-General for Environment, *Assessment and summary of Member States' implementation reports for Implementing Decision 2014/896/EU (implementing Directive 2012/18/EU on the control of major accident hazards involving dangerous substances)*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, 2022, https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/94d57d74-735b-11ec-9136-01aa75ed71a1/language-en/format-PDF/source-search; eSPIRS data, extractions from 2022 and 2024; Analysis and summary of Member States' reports on implementation of Directive 2012/18/EU on the control of major accident hazards involving dangerous substances according to the format established by Commission Implementing Decision 2014/896/EU - Publications Office of the EU, https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/9bd73087-e9b8-11ef-b5e9-01aa75ed71a1/language-en. No data available for Greece.

In 2022, Lithuania was given priority actions to strengthen monitoring and enforcement to ensure compliance with the Seveso III Directive, especially its provisions on information for the public and the external emergency plan. Substantial progress was made on both those aspects; however, the testing of EEPs could still be improved.

2025 priority actions

- Strengthen compliance with requirements on safety measures to prevent major accidents and ensure appropriate preparedness and response in relation to UTEs, in particular as regards reviewing, testing and updating EEPs, at intervals of no more than three years.
- Ensure access to transparent and clear information for citizens on risks and behaviour in the event of an accident.

Mercury Regulation

The Mercury Regulation establishes measures and conditions concerning the use and storage of and trade in mercury, mercury compounds and mixtures of mercury, the manufacture and use of and trade in mercury-added products and the management of mercury waste, in order

to ensure a high level of protection of human health and the environment from anthropogenic emissions and releases of mercury and mercury compounds. The revision of the Mercury Regulation adopted in 2024 sets out rules to address the last intentional uses of mercury in the EU by phasing out the use of dental amalgam by 1 January 2025 except when deemed strictly necessary by the dental practitioner based on the specific medical needs of the patient, and prohibiting the manufacture and export of additional mercury-containing lamps from 1 January 2026 or 1 January 2027 (depending on the lamp category).

Measures should have been put in place in Lithuania to ensure socially and economically sound phasing out, including the adequate reimbursement of alternatives to dental amalgam through the national health insurance scheme and the training of dental practitioners. The Commission is monitoring whether the phasing out of dental amalgam has taken place under the terms and conditions of the regulation. Lithuania will also need to ensure that the manufacture and export of mercury-containing lamps are prohibited by the deadlines required by the Mercury Regulation.

Noise

The Environmental Noise Directive ([109]) requires a common approach to avoid, prevent and reduce the harmful effects of noise. The designated authorities are responsible for making and approving noise maps and action plans for agglomerations, major roads, major railways and major airports. Member States decide on noise limits that are not set at the EU level. Nevertheless, the zero pollution action plan sets as a 2030 target a 30 % reduction compared with 2017 in the share of people chronically disturbed by transport noise.

Excessive noise from aircraft, railways and roads is one of the main causes of environmental health-related issues in the EU. It can cause ischaemic heart disease, stroke, interrupted sleep, cognitive impairment and stress ([110]).

In Lithuania, environmental noise is estimated to cause at least around 150 cases of ischaemic heart disease annually ([111]) and some 11 000 people to suffer from disturbed sleep([112]).

Based on the latest set of information analysed, Lithuania has completed its noise mapping of agglomerations, roads, railways and airports.

Action plans for noise management for agglomerations, roads, railways and airports must be updated and submitted to the Commission every five years. The deadline for reporting on noise action plans under the most recent reporting cycle was 18 January 2025; the reports have not been assessed yet.

Lithuania received no priority actions in the 2022 EIR.

2025 priority action

- Complete and implement action plans on noise management.

Water quality and management

EU legislation and policy requires that the impact of pressures on transitional, coastal and fresh water (including surface waters and groundwater) be significantly reduced. Achieving, maintaining or enhancing a good status of waterbodies as defined by the Water Framework Directive will ensure that EU citizens benefit from good-quality and safe drinking and bathing water. It will further ensure that the nutrient cycle (nitrogen and phosphorus) is managed in a more sustainable and resource-efficient way.

Water Framework Directive

The Water Framework Directive ([113]) is the cornerstone of EU water policy in the 21st century ([114]). The Water Framework Directive and other water-related

([109]) Directive 2002/49/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 June 2002 relating to the assessment and management of environmental noise – Declaration by the Commission in the Conciliation Committee on the directive relating to the assessment and management of environmental noise (OJ L 189, 18.7.2002, p. 12), https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32002L0049.

([110]) WHO, Environmental Noise Guidelines for the European Region, Copenhagen, 2018, https://www.who.int/europe/publications/i/item/9789289053563.

([111]) These figures are an estimation by the EEA based on (i) the data reported by Member States on noise exposure covered by Directive 2002/49/EC for the round of noise mapping of 2022; (ii) European Topic Centre on Air Pollution, Transport, Noise and Industrial Pollution (ETC/ATNI), *Noise indicators under the Environmental Noise Directive 2021: Methodology for estimating missing data*, Eionet report ETC/ATNI No 2021/06, Kjeller, 2021; and (iii) the methodology for health impact calculations in European Topic Centre on Air Pollution and Climate Change Mitigation (ETC/ACM), *Implications of environmental noise on health and wellbeing in Europe*, Eionet report ETC/ACM No 2018/10, Bilthoven, 2018, https://www.eionet.europa.eu/etcs/etc-atni/products/etc-atni-reports/eionet_rep_etcacm_2018_10_healthimplicationsnoise.

([112]) More information on the adverse health effects of noise pollution is available at: https://www.eea.europa.eu/themes/human/noise/noise-2

([113]) https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32000L0060.

([114]) https://environment.ec.europa.eu/topics/water_en.

directives ([115]) form the basis of sustainable and integrated water management in the EU. They aim to achieve a high level of protection of water resources, prevention of further deterioration and restoration to good status. These objectives are very important for the EU's competitiveness, strategic autonomy and security, yet have become even more challenging in the face of climate change affecting our precious water resources.

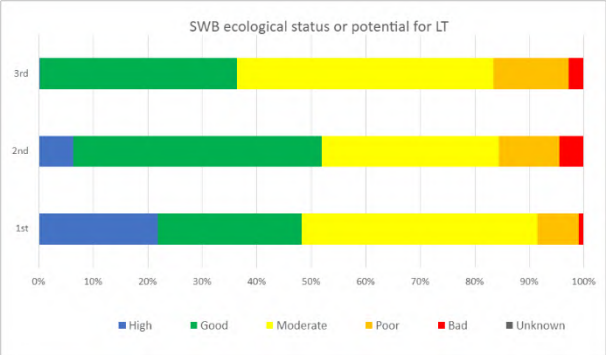
The Water Framework Directive establishes a procedural framework for reaching good surface water ecological and chemical status and good groundwater quantitative and chemical status. This implies monitoring and classification of all waterbodies, assessment of pressures and impacts and identification of the most cost-effective measures to achieve the objectives of the directive. The directive dates from 2000 and set an initial deadline of 2015 for achieving its objectives, with the option to extend the deadline to the end of 2027. Every six years, Member States must report their river basin management plans (RBMPs) to the Commission. They should cover river basin districts (RBDs) in their countries, some of which may be shared with other countries. The Commission has assessed the third cycle of RBMPs, which were to be submitted by March 2022, and will report its findings to the European Parliament and to the Council in the course of 2024.

Lithuania has 1 194 surface waterbodies and 20 groundwater bodies, divided between four RBDs (Nemunas, Venta, Lielupe and Dauguva). Approximately 26 % of surface waters are designated as 'heavily modified' and almost none as 'artificial'. Heavily modified and artificial waterbodies must reach good ecological potential rather than good ecological status, which means that measures must be taken to mitigate the adverse impact of the sustainable human development activities causing the waterbodies to be heavily modified/artificial, while not significantly affecting the activities.

These findings follow from the assessment of the third RBMPs that there has been a deterioration in the ecological status/potential of surface waterbodies, and a steep reduction in the percentage of surface waterbodies with a good chemical status, compared with the second RBMPs (covering 2015–2021). There has been no deterioration in the quantitative status and in the chemical status of groundwater bodies, which are all reported to have a good status.

Figures 25–28 show the changes in the ecological status/potential and the chemical status of surface waters, and in the quantitative and chemical status of groundwaters in 2010, 2015 and 2021.

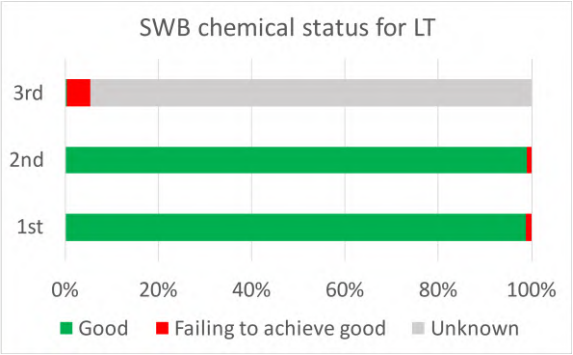
Figure 25: Ecological status/potential of surface waterbodies in each RBMP cycle (%)



Only 36.4 % of surface waterbodies have a good (or better) ecological status/potential, representing a significant deterioration compared with the second RBMPs. All coastal and transitional waterbodies fail to meet the objective of having a good ecological status. 50.8 % of surface waterbodies are expected to achieve good ecological status/potential by 2027.

The most significant pressure on surface water is diffuse agricultural pollution, followed by morphological changes. The most significant impact on the ecological status is nutrient pollution.

Figure 26: Chemical status of surface waterbodies in each RBMP cycle (%)

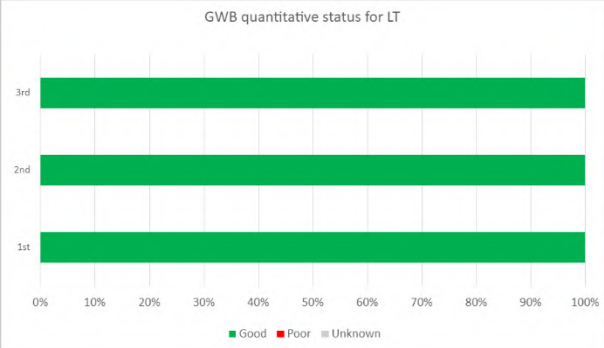


([115]) These include the Groundwater Directive (https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A32006L0118), the Environmental Quality Standards Directive (https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dir/2008/105/oj), the Floods Directive (https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32007L0060), the Bathing Water Directive (https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A32006L0007), the Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive (https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A31991L0271), the new Drinking Water Directive (https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32020L2184), the Nitrates Directive (https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=celex%3A31991L0676), the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/en/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32008L0056) and the IED (https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32010L0075).

94 % of surface waterbodies are reported to have an unknown status, while 5 % of waterbodies have a poor chemical status and fewer than 1 % have a good chemical status. Only 0.6 % of surface waterbodies are expected to achieve a good chemical status by 2027.

In the 1st and 2nd RBMPs, Lithuania reverted to grouping and extrapolations to assume that almost 100% of surface water bodies were in good chemical status. The steep reduction in surface waterbodies with a good chemical status in the 3rd RBMPs seems to be mainly due to a steep increase in surface waterbodies being reported to have an 'unknown' status. Information about the amounts of hazardous substances released into the water environment and their sources remains insufficient. The specific sources of pollution hampering the good chemical status of waterbodies remain unidentified and Lithuania failed to compile a complete inventory of pollution loads for priority substances. Furthermore, Lithuania did not replace expert judgement and grouping with actual monitored data. Instead, no assessment has been made for 94.6% of the SWBs at all.

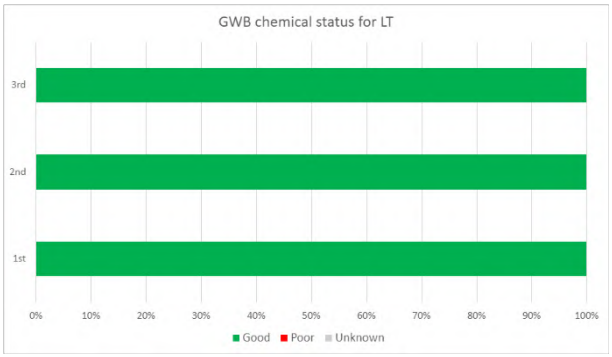
Figure 27: Quantitative status of groundwater bodies in each RBMP cycle (%)



All groundwater bodies are reported to have a good quantitative status, as in the previous two RBMPs.

This assessment is, however, subject to doubt, as 25 % of groundwater bodies are affected by saline intrusions, and groundwater-associated aquatic ecosystems and/or groundwater-dependent terrestrial ecosystems are not considered in three of four RBMPs in establishing quantitative status. Furthermore, 70 % of all classifications are conducted with high confidence, whereas there was 100 % high confidence in the previous RBMPs. No justification for this change was provided.

Figure 28: Chemical status of groundwater bodies in each RBMP cycle (%)



All groundwater bodies are reported have a good chemical status, as in the previous two RBMPs, despite 25 % of groundwater bodies being affected by saline intrusions.

Regrettably, the number of surveillance monitoring sites decreased from 278 (2015) to 189 (2021). Only 70 % of classifications are still conducted with high confidence, down from 100 % (2015). There are also gaps in the assessment methodology and implementation, including the monitoring of pharmaceuticals carbamazepine, sulfamethoxazole and primidone.

Until the end of 2027, Member States can still apply time-related exemptions, subject to providing evidence of compliance with the strict criteria set out in the Water Framework Directive.

After 2027, the possibilities for applying exemptions will be much more limited.

The 2022 EIR identified the following priority actions:

- assess new physical modifications to waterbodies in line with Article 4(7) of the Water Framework Directive, considering alternative options and appropriate mitigation measures;
- facilitate the implementation of measures (in particular on restoring river hydromorphology) aimed at achieving the Water Framework Directive objectives.

Some progress has been made in following up on these priority actions. The 3rd RBMPs include measures to improve longitudinal connectivity (fish ladders, by-pass channels, fish friendly turbines and fish screens), as well as other measures to prevent or reduce hydromoprphological pressures, though clear evidence on the degree of progress was not found in the revised documents although they are linked to implementation deadlines. Lithuania's third RBMP programme of measures, for 2022–2027, suggests that the prioritisation of measures in the RBMP has taken place based on a cost-effectiveness analysis. Reducing sources of diffuse

pollution ranks highest and is tackled through the regulation of fertilisers to reduce the leaching of phosphorus and nitrogen into surface waterbodies and groundwater bodies. Lithuania has mapped supplementary measures against key types of measures in all four RBDs. Their application varies across RBDs.

2025 priority actions

Without prejudice to the list of recommended actions in the Commission's report to the European Parliament and to the Council on the assessment of the third RBMPs, the following priority actions can be highlighted:

- Ensure periodic reviews of permits for discharges, abstractions and other water uses, including hydropower pressures;
- Reduce pollution from nutrients, chemicals, metals and saline discharges;
- Better justify exemptions to the achievement of good status;
- Improve the classification of water bodies and strengthen monitoring systems;
- Develop more robust programmes of measures, tackle obstacles identified in the implementation of measures and ensure adequate financing for implementation, including through better use of the cost recovery and polluter pays principle.

Floods Directive

Every six years, following the same reporting cycle as the RBMPs, all Member States also report their flood risk management plans (FRMPs), based on the flood risk hazard maps and the preliminary flood risk assessments drawn up during the second cycle (2016–2021).

The Commission assessed the FRMPs and reported its findings to the European Parliament and to the Council on 4th February 2025, together with the assessment of the RBMPs.

The main progress resulting from the assessment of the second FRMP is that the achievement of its objective is linked to quantitative indicators, making it more measurable. Links to measures are now provided more clearly. Furthermore, the second FRMP has a simpler structure than the previous one. The FRMP considers nature-based solutions and measures related to cultural heritage protection. Reference is made to adaptation to climate change, but climate change issues are only discussed briefly.

2025 priority actions

- Make the FRMP a self-standing document, with clear links and references, where relevant, to other national planning documents, and vice versa.
- Provide more detail on how flood risk hazard maps were used in the choice of objectives and measures in the FRMP.
- Clearly set out the number of measures/actions being implemented, their cost, the methods used to prioritise them and how they will be monitored.
- Provide more detail on public consultation and stakeholder involvement.

Drinking Water Directive

The recast Drinking Water Directive is now applicable, and Member States were required to transpose its provisions into their national legal systems by 12 January 2023. Since the entry into force of the recast directive, the Commission has adopted several delegated and implementing acts establishing (i) a watch list of substances and compounds of concern for drinking water ([116]), (ii) a methodology for measuring microplastics in drinking water ([117]) and (iii) an EU system for testing and approving materials that will be allowed to be in contact with drinking water ([118]). Member States will have to take these various Commission acts into account when implementing the recast directive.

Finally, the Commission has now received data from Member States on the quality of drinking water in 2017–2019. The quality of drinking water (supplied by large water suppliers) in Lithuania does not give rise to concern ([119]).
From January 2026, the European quality standards for per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances in drinking water will apply, ensuring harmonised reporting of data from the monitoring of these substances across Member States in the future.

Bathing Water Directive

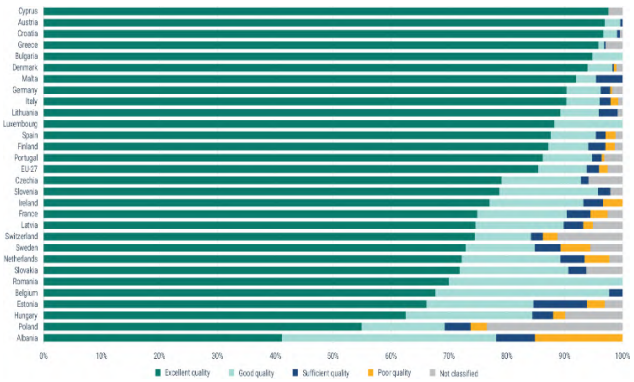
The Bathing Water Directive requires Member States to monitor and assess bathing water. It requires that, during the bathing season, Member States disseminate to the public information on bathing water quality actively and

([116]) https://environment.ec.europa.eu/publications/implementing-decision-drinking-water-directive-watch-list_en.
([117]) OJ L, 2024/1441, 21.5.2024
([118]) OJ L, 2024/365, 23.4.2024, http://data.europa.eu/eli/dec_impl/2024/365/oj; OJ L, 2024/367, 23.4.2024, http://data.europa.eu/eli/dec_impl/2024/367/oj; OJ L, 2024/369, 23.4.2024, http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg_del/2024/369/oj; OJ L, 2024/368, 23.4.2024, http://data.europa.eu/eli/dec_impl/2024/368/oj; OJ L, 2024/370, 23.4.2024, http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg_del/2024/370/oj; OJ L, 2024/371, 23.4.2024, http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg_del/2024/371/oj.
([119]) In summary, the compliance for all parameter groups in Lithuania was at least 99.46 % in 2017, 99.50 % in 2018 and 99.19 % in 2019.

promptly. In particular, notices banning or advising against bathing should be rapidly and easily identifiable.

Figure 29 shows that in 2023, out of the 121 Lithuanian bathing waters, 108 (89.3%) were of excellent quality, 8 (6.6%) were of good quality and 4 (3.3%) were of sufficient quality. No bathing waters were found to be of poor quality.

Figure 29: Bathing water quality per Member State (%), 2023



Source: EEA, *European Bathing Water Quality in 2023*, briefing No 04/2024, Copenhagen, 2024, https://www.eea.europa.eu/publications/european-bathing-water-quality-in-2023/.

Nitrates Directive

The Nitrates Directive ([120]) aims to protect water quality across Europe by preventing nitrates from agricultural sources polluting ground and surface waters and by promoting the use of good farming practices.

The latest Commission report on the implementation of the Nitrates Directive ([121]), dating to 2021, warns that nitrates are still causing harmful pollution to water in the EU. Excessive nitrates in water are harmful to both human health and ecosystems, causing oxygen depletion and eutrophication. Cleaning of waters by national authorities or farmers, where it has been undertaken, has had a positive impact on the drinking water supply and on biodiversity. It has also benefited the sectors – such as fisheries and tourism – that depend on biodiversity and on a good supply of drinking water. Nevertheless, excessive fertilisation remains a problem in many parts of the EU.

The analysis of the 3rd RBMPs of Lithuania identified nutrients from agriculture as an important pressure on surface water, impacting their good status, and one of the main reasons the Water Framework Directive objectives have not been met.

Since the report on the implementation of the Nitrates Directive covering 2020–2023 will be available in 2025, the 2022 priority action could not be assessed and has to be repeated.

2025 priority action

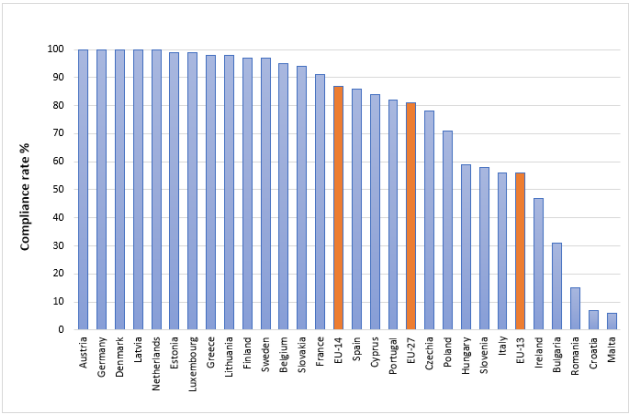
- Tackle nutrient pollution, especially nitrates from agriculture, through the implementation of the Nitrates Directive.

Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive

The Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive (UWWTD) aims to protect human health and the environment from the effects of untreated urban waste water. It therefore requires Member States to collect and treat (secondary or biological treatment) waste water in all urban areas of more than 2 000 people, and to apply a more stringent treatment than secondary, with nitrogen and/or phosphorus removal, to the waste water generated in urban areas, also known as agglomerations, of more than 10 000 people, before they are discharged into waters and their catchments, when they are sensitive to nitrogen and/or phosphorus (i.e. eutrophic or tending to become eutrophic).

Overall, in Lithuania, the compliance rate was 99.3 % in 2020.

Figure 30: Proportion of urban waste water that fully complies with the UWWTD (%), 2020



Source: European Commission: Directorate-General for Environment, Fribourg-Blanc, B., Dhuygelaere, N., Berland, J. and Imbert, F., *12th technical assessment of UWWTD implementation – Final version*, Publications Office of the European Union, 2024, https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2779/318637.

The directive has been revised. The revised directive builds on the current *acquis*, strengthens existing treatment standards and establishes a new additional treatment for micropollutants in urban wastewater. Other new

([120]) https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?qid=1561542776070&uri=CELEX:01991L0676-20081211.

([121]) https://environment.ec.europa.eu/topics/water/nitrates_en.

requirements relate to the sector moving towards energy neutrality, establishing an EPR system to ensure the sustainable financing of micropollutant treatment by the most polluting industries and ensuring access to sanitation, especially for vulnerable and marginalised groups. Lithuania has until 31 July 2027 to transpose the new directive into its national legal system.

2025 priority action

- Ensure the correct transposition of the recast Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive.

Chemicals

The EU seeks to ensure that chemicals are produced and used in a way that minimises any significant adverse effects on human health and the environment. In October 2020, the Commission published its chemicals strategy for sustainability towards a toxic-free environment ([122]), which led to some systemic changes in EU chemicals legislation. The strategy is part of the EU's zero pollution ambition – a key commitment of the European Green Deal.

The EU's chemicals legislation ([123]) provides a baseline protection for human health and the environment. It also ensures stability and predictability for businesses operating in the internal market.

Since 2007, the Commission has gathered information on the enforcement of the Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemicals (REACH) Regulation and the Classification, Labelling and Packaging (CLP) Regulation. In December 2020, the Commission assessed the Member States' reports ([124]) on the implementation and enforcement of these regulations ([125]). It is apparent from the Commission's report that there are still many disparities in the implementation of the REACH and CLP Regulations, notably in the area of law enforcement. Recorded compliance levels in Member States, generally quite stable over time, appear to be getting slightly worse. This may be because (i) enforcement authorities are becoming more effective in detecting non-compliant products/companies and (ii) more non-compliant products are being placed on the EU market.

In August 2021, the Commission published a measurable assessment of the enforcement ([126]) of the two main EU regulations on chemicals using a set of indicators on different aspects of enforcement. Since 2021, the list of chemicals subject to restrictions has been expanded as new entries have been added to Annex XVII to the REACH Regulation ([127]).

In 2023, new hazard classes were added to the CLP Regulation, and the revision of the regulation was tabled (published on 20 November 2024) ([128]). The new hazard classes cover endocrine disruptors and persistence-related hazards while the revision of the regulation encompasses new rules on online sales to better tackle non-compliances observed over the years. Also in 2023, the Conference of the Parties of the Stockholm

([122]) Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions – Chemicals strategy for sustainability: Towards a toxic-free environment, COM(2020) 667 final of 14 October 2020, https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=COM%3A2020%3A667%3AFIN; Regulation (EC) No 1272/2008 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 December 2008 on classification, labelling and packaging of substances and mixtures, amending and repealing Directives 67/548/EEC and 1999/45/EC, and amending Regulation (EC) No 1907/2006 (OJ L 353, 31.12.2008, p. 1), https://publications.europa.eu/resource/cellar/c6b6a31d-8359-11ee-99ba-01aa75ed71a1.0004.02/DOC_2.

([123]) Namely, Regulation (EC) No 1907/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006 concerning the registration, evaluation, authorisation and restriction of chemicals (REACH), establishing a European Chemicals Agency, amending Directive 1999/45/EC and repealing Council Regulation (EEC) No 793/93 and Commission Regulation (EC) No 1488/94 as well as Council Directive 76/769/EEC and Commission Directives 91/155/EEC, 93/67/EEC, 93/105/EC and 2000/21/EC (OJ L 396, 30/12/2006, p. 1), https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/en/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32006R1907; and Regulation (EC) No 1272/2008 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 December 2008 on classification, labelling and packaging of substances and mixtures, amending and repealing Directives 67/548/EEC and 1999/45/EC, and amending Regulation (EC) No 1907/2006 (OJ L 353, 31.12.2008, p. 1), https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A02008R1272-20221217.

([124]) European Commission, *Technical assistance to review the existing Member States reporting questionnaire under Articles 117(1) of REACH and 46(2) of CLP – Final report*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, 2020, https://circabc.europa.eu/ui/group/8ee3c69a-bccb-4f22-89ca-277e35de7c63/library/a4abce8c-8425-455f-b7e6-0ead917bde6b/details.

([125]) In line with Article 117(1) of the REACH Regulation and Article 46(2) of the CLP Regulation.

([126]) European Commission: Directorate-General for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs, *REACH and CLP Enforcement: EU-level enforcement indicators*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, 2021, https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/e5c3e461-0f85-11ec-9151-01aa75ed71a1/.

([127]) These are substances in tattoo inks and permanent make-up, *N*,*N*-dimethylformamide, formaldehyde (and formaldehyde releasers), lead in PVC (polyvinyl chloride), siloxanes (D4, D5, D6) and, finally, microplastics.

([128]) Regulation (EU) 2024/2865 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2024 amending Regulation (EC) No 1272/2008 on classification, labelling and packaging of substances and mixtures, OJ L, 2024/2865, 20.11.2024, p.1 (Regulation - EU - 2024/2865 - EN - EUR-Lex)

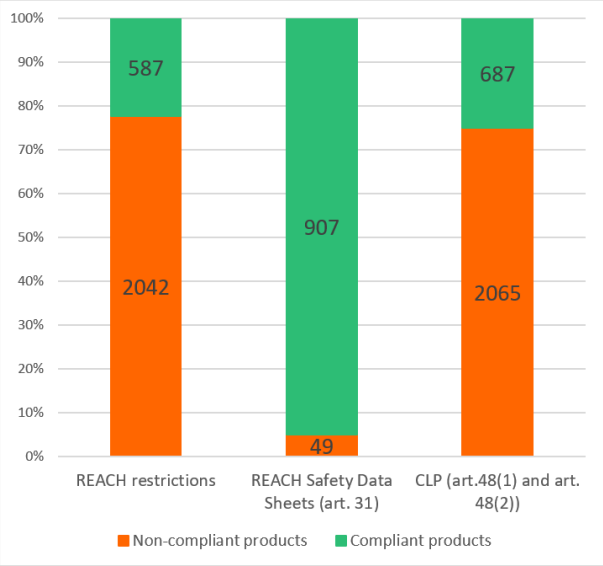
Convention (COP) decided to include, in its Annex A (which lists banned substances), three new chemicals ([129]). The Commission is working on the delegated acts to include these substances in Annex I to the Persistent Organic Pollutants Regulation by 2025 at the latest.

Member States conduct a reporting exercise set out in Article 117 of the REACH Regulation and Article 46 of the CLP Regulation every five years. The results of the current exercise are expected to be published in 2025; hence, new country-specific data on enforcement since 2022 is not yet available.

In 2022, Lithuania devised and implemented both the REACH and CLP Regulation enforcement strategies ([130]). A total of 74 staff members (coordinators and territorial or regional inspectors) were allocated to REACH and CLP Regulation enforcement ([131]).

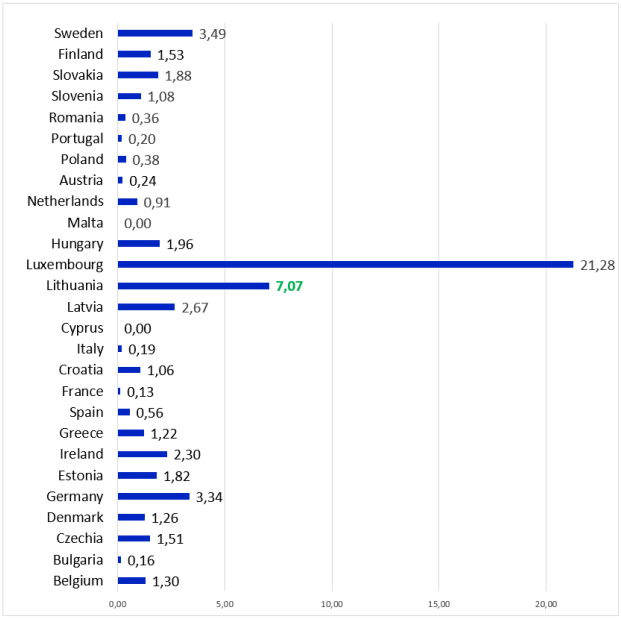
In 2020, Lithuania participated in an EU coordinated enforcement project on products sold online, called the REACH-EN-FORCE (REF-8) project ([132]). The associated report was adopted in November 2021, so it could not be taken into account in the previous EIR.

Figure 31: Compliances of imported products – results of the REF-8 project (%)



A risk approach was used for the targeting of controls in order to maximise the chances of finding non-compliance. Therefore, the non-compliance rates presented above cannot be considered the average non-compliance rates of products in the EU. However, the proportion of non-compliance cases found in the REF-8 project are of concern.

Figure 32: Number of REF-8 checks performed per 100 000 inhabitants (EU average = 1.24)



Lithuania's participation to the coordinated enforcement project (REF-8) was well above the EU average.

As a result of this project and others conducted with the help of the European Chemicals Agency in recent years, online sales have proven to correspond consistently to higher non-compliance rates in controls performed across the EU, in particular when related to imported products.

In 2022, Lithuania received a priority action related to the upgrade of its implementation and enforcement administrative capacities towards the zero tolerance of non-compliance. In the absence of reporting since 2022, no progress has been reported and this priority action remains valid in 2025.

([129]) These are methoxychlor, dechlorane plus and UV-328. In the case of the pesticide methoxychlor, there are no exemptions from the ban. However, for the two plastic additives, dechlorane plus and UV-328, the COP decision lists some time-limited specific exemptions.

([130]) European Commission, *Technical assistance to review the existing Member States reporting questionnaire under Articles 117(1) of REACH and 46(2) of CLP – Final report*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, 2020, p. 76, https://circabc.europa.eu/ui/group/8ee3c69a-bccb-4f22-89ca-277e35de7c63/library/a4abce8c-8425-455f-b7e6-0ead917bde6b/details.

([131]) European Commission, *Technical assistance to review the existing Member States reporting questionnaire under Articles 117(1) of REACH and 46(2) of CLP – Final report*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, 2020, p. 75, https://circabc.europa.eu/ui/group/8ee3c69a-bccb-4f22-89ca-277e35de7c63/library/a4abce8c-8425-455f-b7e6-0ead917bde6b/details.

([132]) European Chemicals Agency, *REF-8 project report on enforcement of the CLP, REACH and BPR duties related to substances, mixtures and articles sold online*, Helsinki, 2021, p. 20, https://echa.europa.eu/documents/10162/17088/project_report_ref-8_en.pdf/ccf2c453-da0e-c185-908e-3a0343b25802?t=1638885422475.

2025 priority actions

- Upgrade the administrative capacities in implementation and enforcement to move towards a policy of zero tolerance of non-compliance.
- Increase customs checks and checks of products sold online with regard to compliance with chemicals legislation.

4. Climate action

The impacts of climate change have continued to increase in recent years, inflicting damage and suffering in the EU and around the world. Globally, 2023 was the hottest year on record, while Europe has been warming twice as quickly as the global average, and is now the fastest-warming continent. The frequency and severity of extreme climate events are also increasing. Against this backdrop, the EU has demonstrated its determination to implement the European Green Deal and to become climate neutral and resilient by 2050, ensuring sustainable competitiveness and supporting EU industry in the net-zero transition. The European Climate Law is the EU's response to the need for action. It sets the objective of achieving climate neutrality by 2050 and a midterm target of a reduction in GHG emissions of at least 55 % by 2030, and outlines the adaptation efforts necessary to adjust to climate change's present and future impacts. Almost all the 'Fit for 55' proposals set out in the European Green Deal have been agreed in law, and the European Commission recommended a new intermediate climate target of a 90 % reduction in emissions by 2040. In 2024, the Member States submitted updated national energy and climate plans for 2021–2030, reflecting the increased ambition of the revised EU legislation. In 2024, the European Commission also released, jointly with the EEA, the first-ever European climate risk assessment.

Since 1990, the EU has seen a steady decreases in its emissions, reaching a running total in 2022 of – 32.5 % ([133]). However, the EU and its Member States need to step up their implementation efforts and accelerate emissions reduction to stay on track to reaching their targets of achieving a 55 % reduction in net GHG emissions by 2030 and climate neutrality by 2050. Between 1990 and 2022, the net GHG emissions of Lithuania decreased by 71%, placing it among the countries with an above-average decrease.

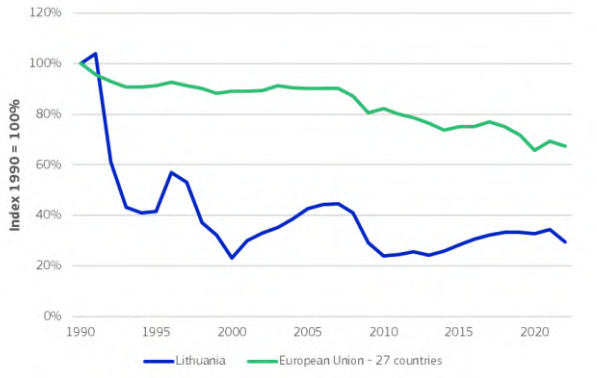
The 'Fit for 55' legislative package reflects the need to speed up the green transition. It includes (i) strengthening and expanding the EU emissions trading system (ETS), with the creation of a new, second, ETS for transport and buildings together with a dedicated Social Climate Fund to help citizens during the transition; (ii) increasing targets under the Effort Sharing Regulation; and (iii) a revised Regulation for Land Use, Land-Use Change and Forestry ([134]). The package has been fully adopted, and the Member States have been implementing the legislation.

The key strategic document at the country level is the national energy and climate plan ([135]). Lithuania submitted its final plan in October 2024, after the deadline set by the regulation. The European Commission assessed the updated plan and the extent to which Lithuania has followed the recommendations for the draft version. The findings from the assessment are:

- Emissions under the Effort Sharing Regulation will decrease by 21% in 2030 compared to 2005, and Lithuania will meet its target of 21%.
- Lithuania is in line with its LULUCF target.
- Lithuania is in line with its target for the share of renewable energy.
- There are still gaps in energy efficiency targets that must be closed.

To minimise the impacts of climate policies on vulnerable people and sectors, Lithuania is using the Just Transition Fund and Modernisation Fund, and will use the Social Climate Fund from 2026 (for more information, see Chapter 5, on finance).

Figure 33: Total GHG emissions (excluding international aviation) (%), 1990–2022



The EU emissions trading system

The EU ETS is the key tool for reducing GHG emissions cost-effectively across all Member States. It is the world's biggest carbon market, covering around 40 % of the EU's total GHG emissions from electricity and heat

([133]) EU net domestic emissions, including the land use, land-use change and forestry sector and excluding international aviation.

([134]) A full overview of the Fit for 55 package is available at https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal/delivering-european-green-deal/fit-55-delivering-proposals_en.

([135]) More information about the national energy and climate plan is on the dedicated website https://energy.ec.europa.eu/topics/energy-strategy/national-energy-and-climate-plans-necps_en.

generation, the manufacturing industry, aviation within Europe ([136]) and, from 2024, maritime transport also.

The system sets a limit or cap on the total amount of GHGs that can be emitted at the EU level. Within this limit, companies buy emissions allowances (one allowance gives the right to emit 1 t of CO_2 eq (carbon dioxide equivalent)), in auctions or through trading allowances with others. The cap is reduced annually to ensure that overall emissions in the sectors covered decrease over time.

The emissions under the ETS decreased by 58% from 2005 to 2023.

In 2023, almost 88 % of the GHGs emitted by Lithuania's ETS installations came from three installations (around 35 % from a refinery, around 29 % from a chemical plant, and around 19 % from a cement and lime plant). Power and heat generation were responsible for 12 %, and 9 % came from industry sectors classified as 'other'. Between 2019 and 2023, the power sector slightly increased its emissions, by 3 %, and the industry sectors decreased theirs by 24 %. GHG emissions in the chemicals industry decreased significantly, by 49 %, between 2013 and 2023, and GHG emissions in the industry sectors declined by 23 %.

From 2027, a new ETS, called ETS2, for buildings, road transport and additional sectors (mainly industry sectors not covered by the current ETS) will become fully operational ([137]). Member States should have reported the full incorporation of the provisions of the revised EU ETS Directive related to the new ETS2 into national law by 30 June 2024.

Lithuania did not communicate full incorporation into national law by this deadline. The Commission therefore opened an infringement procedure against Lithuania on 25 July 2024, by sending a letter of formal notice for failing to fully incorporate the provisions into national law.

Lithuania has since reported the incorporation of the relevant provisions of the revised ETS Directive to the Commission. The monitoring and reporting requirements and the obligation to hold a permit to carry out activities under ETS2 will commence on 1 January 2025.

The Commission also opened infringement procedures against Lithuania on 25 January 2024, by sending a letter of formal notice for failing to fully transpose previous revisions of the ETS Directive ([138]) into national law. Lithuania has since reported the full incorporation of the abovementioned directives to the Commission.

Effort sharing

The Effort Sharing Regulation (ESR) ([139]) covers GHG emissions from domestic transport (excluding CO_2 emissions from aviation), buildings, agriculture, small industry and waste. Emissions from these sectors account for around 60 % of the EU's domestic emissions. The regulation sets the EU-wide target to reduce emissions from the effort sharing sectors by 40 % by 2030 compared to 2005 levels. This overall target for the EU translates to binding national emission reduction targets for each Member State. Lithuania's target is – 21 %.

In addition to the 2030 targets, Member States have annual GHG emissions limits (annual emission allocations), reducing every year until 2030.

There is some flexibility to take account of annual fluctuations in emissions, by trading emissions and transfers from the ETS and land use, land-use change and forestry.

Based on historical emissions and the most up-to-date projections, Lithuania is on track to achieve its 2030 ESR target. Emissions are projected to reduce to 0.3 percentage points above the 2030 target.

The largest contributor is the domestic transport sector, which accounted for 43 % of all effort sharing emissions in 2022.

Sustainable transport has yet to take off in Lithuania, where electric rail transport has high potential. At 0.4 % in 2022, the share of battery electric vehicles in its passenger car fleet is comparatively low (EU average: 1.2 %). A total of 1 070 publicly accessible charging points in 2023 provided 1 charging point for every 11 electric vehicles (EU average: 1 for every 10). Nearly all passenger transport (93 %) in Lithuania is by passenger car. However, only 37 % of freight is transported by road and the remainder (62 %) is transported by rail, far above the EU average (16 %). By contrast, only 8 % of the rail network is electrified, a very low share (EU average: 56 %).

Agriculture accounted for 29 % of effort sharing emissions. Its emissions remain stable and at the same level as in 2005.

Buildings accounted for 11 % of effort sharing emissions but remain a great concern for Lithuania. Lithuania's efforts in buildings renovation will probably not contribute meaningfully to its 2030 reduction target for energy consumption by buildings. Residential final

([136]) Flights between the EU Member States including departing flights to Norway, Iceland, Switzerland and the United Kingdom.

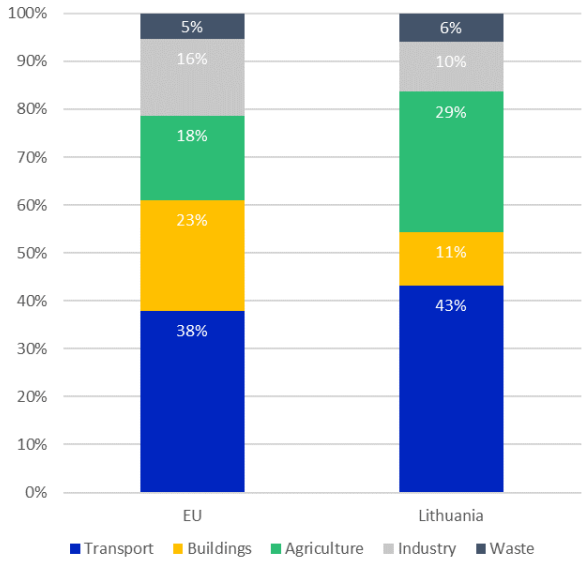
([137]) Directive (EU) 2023/959 (https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=uriserv:OJ.L_.2023.130.01.0134.01.ENG)

([138]) Directive - 2023/959 - EN - EUR-Lex and Directive - 2023/958 - EN - EUR-Lex

([139]) Regulation (EU) 2018/842 (https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2018/842).

energy consumption increased by 7 % between 2015 and 2022, while the long-term Lithuanian renovation strategy sets out a target of reducing building primary energy consumption by 15 % by 2030 compared with 2015. The total emissions of buildings have increased by 12 % since 2005.

Figure 34: Effort-sharing emissions by sector (%), 2022



Land use, land-use change and forestry

The land use, land-use change and forestry (LULUCF) sector plays a significant role in achieving the EU's climate neutrality goal. In the EU, this sector absorbs more GHGs than it emits, removing significant volumes of carbon from the atmosphere. Thus, it is the only sector with negative emissions.

Over the last 10 years, Lithuania's land-use sector has maintained a consistent level of carbon removal. To increase its ability to absorb carbon, Lithuania had measures in its RRP to restore degraded peatlands. However, Lithuania is experiencing difficulties with implementation of these measures.

Lithuania's target for 2030 is to enhance CO_2 removal by an additional −0.6 Mt of CO_2 eq compared with the yearly average for 2016–2018. The latest available projections show a surplus to target of −0.3 Mt of CO_2 eq in 2030. Therefore, Lithuania is on track to meet its 2030 target.

Adaptation to climate change

Halting all GHG emissions would not prevent climate impacts that are already occurring. Therefore, adaptation to climate change is also a key component of climate policy.

In Lithuania, one out of three regions are identified as hotspots for climate risks (i.e. most affected by climate change): low-lying coastal regions ([140]).

Climate change is affecting several sectors and ecosystems in Lithuania, particularly in the coastal region. The highest climate-related risks relate to (coastal) flooding and windstorms in the western part of the country. The most climate-sensitive sectors are agriculture, public health, energy, industry, transport and communication infrastructure. The rising number of heatwaves is projected to affect heat-related mortality and morbidity and the transport system. Heatwaves are also likely to exacerbate problems with electricity and water supply, especially in urban areas such as Vilnius. During winter, frequent temperature fluctuations around 0 °C intensify frost heave and corrosion.

Lithuania adopted its national adaptation strategy in 2012 and updated it in 2021. Lithuania has also had a national adaptation plan since 2013, which was updated in 2019. It has no regional or sectoral adaptation plans.

Lithuania received five priority actions regarding climate action in the 2022 EIR.

Lithuania has made significant steps in implementing reforms to accelerate renewable development, but the share of renewables remains low in the transport sector.

The sustainability of transport, especially passenger transport, is still at a low level.

There has been no progress in improving the energy efficiency of buildings. Final energy consumption and emissions have increased since 2015.

There has been no progress in increasing environmental taxes. The share of environmental taxes in GDP was 1.5 % in 2022 (EU average: 2.0 %) and there has been no positive development.

2025 priority action

- Implement all polices and measures that are needed to achieve targets laid down in the Effort Sharing Regulation (ESR) and the Land Use and Land-Use Change and Forestry (LULUCF) Regulation. More detailed priority actions are set out in the assessment of the final National Energy and Climate Plan (NECP)([141]).

([140]) European Climate Risk Assessment (EUCRA). 2024. Available at European Climate Risk Assessment (europa.eu)

([141]) National energy and climate plans

Part II: Enabling framework – implementation tools

5. Financing

The EU budget supports climate investment in Lithuania with significant amounts in 2021–2027, with revenues from the ETS also feeding into the national budget. During 2020–2022, Lithuania's revenues from auctioning reached EUR 277million in total, with all of that spent on climate and energy.

In addition, the annual investment needed to meet its environmental objectives in the areas of pollution prevention and control, the circular economy and waste, water protection and management, and biodiversity and ecosystems is estimated to be EUR 2.9 billion per year in Lithuania.

These four environmental areas currently receive total funding of around EUR 1.3 billion per year; thus, there is a gap of EUR 1.6 billion per year.

Of the annual environmental investment gap, EUR 0.8 billion concerns biodiversity and ecosystems, 0.3–0.4 billion pollution prevention and control and water (each) and around 0.1 billion the circular economy objective.

Climate finance landmarks

EU funding for climate action

The EU budget supports climate action in the EU-27 with EUR 657.8 billion in the 2021–2027 budgetary period across the various programmes and funds, representing an overall 34.3 % contribution level. Of this, cohesion policy provides EUR 120 billion (over half of it through the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)), the RRF EUR 275.7 billion and CAP EUR 145.9 billion ([142]).

In Lithuania, the EU cohesion policy (considering EU contribution amounts) provides EUR 2 billion for climate action in 2021–2027 (with around half of this via the ERDF), with a further 35 million from the European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund ([143]).

The RRF contributes to climate finance in Lithuania with EUR 1.4 billion up to 2026, representing 37.3 % of the RRP ([144]).

The European Investment Bank (EIB) provided EUR 109.9 billion financing across the EU-27 between 2021 and mid-2024 to support energy, transport and industry projects that are aligned with the EU's climate objectives. Of this amount, EUR 520 million was assigned to Lithuania in the reference period ([145]).

National financing, including EU emissions trading system revenues

Revenues from the auctioning of emission allowances under the EU ETS, which feed directly into national budgets, amounted to EUR 87 million in 2020, EUR 86 million in 2021 and EUR 104 million in 2022 in Lithuania, totalling EUR 277 million in the three-year period. In Lithuania, revenues are put in a climate change fund that is only funded by auctioning revenues, and used for climate and energy purposes ([146]).

From the remaining part of the EU ETS revenues that feed into the Innovation Fund and the Modernisation Fund, further support is available to climate action at the EU level.

It should be noted that investment in climate action also supports the environment and, therefore, the environmental investments described in the following sections cannot be regarded as entirely additional to climate investment ([147]).

Environmental financing and investments

This section describes Lithuania's investment needs, current financing and gaps as they relate to the four environmental objectives beyond climate objectives, namely tackling pollution, the circular economy and

([142]) European Commission, *Statement of Estimates of the European Commission – For the financial year 2025*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, 2024, pp. 94–96, https://commission.europa.eu/document/download/7a0420e1-599e-4246-9131-ccb7d505d6d9_en?filename=DB2025-Statement-of-Estimates_1.pdf.

([143]) See the Cohesion Open Data Platform (https://cohesiondata.ec.europa.eu/).

([144]) European Commission datasets and the Recovery and Resilience Scoreboard (https://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/recovery-and-resilience-scoreboard/index.html).

([145]) A list of financed projects is provided by the EIB (https://www.eib.org/en/projects/loans/index.htm).

([146]) European Commission: Directorate-General for Climate Action, *Progress Report 2023 – Climate action*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, 2023, https://climate.ec.europa.eu/news-your-voice/news/climate-action-progress-report-2023-2023-10-24_en.

([147]) Indirect investments (from climate and other policies) in support of the environment are accounted for via the tracking.

waste, water protection and management, and biodiversity and ecosystems ([148]).

The environment overall

Investment needs

The overall environmental investment needs to be sufficient to enable Lithuania to meet its objectives in the areas of pollution prevention and control, the circular economy and waste, water protection and management, and biodiversity and ecosystems. The required investment is estimated to be EUR 2.9 billion per year (in 2022 prices).

A significant part of the estimated requirement, around EUR 1 billion per year, can be attributed to the need to support biodiversity and ecosystems. For pollution prevention and control, the annual investment needs are estimated to be EUR 652 million; for water, they are EUR 439 billion, and for the circular economy they are EUR 751 million (in 2022 prices).

Current investments

To implement the environmental investments needed, the available financing is estimated to currently reach an annual EUR 1.3 billion in Lithuania from EU and national sources combined (in 2022 prices).

Total environmental funding from the multiannual financial framework (MFF) is estimated to reach around EUR 2.4 billion for Lithuania in total, during 2021–2027 (or EUR 341.9 million per year).

Table 1: Key environmental allocations from EU funds to Lithuania (million EUR), 2021–2027

Instrument	Allocations
Cohesion policy	**1 378.1** ([a])
ERDF	604.7
Cohesion Fund	678.0
Just Transition Fund	95.4
CAP	**851.8** ([b])
European Agricultural Guarantee Fund	614.5
European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development	237.3
European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund	**37.5**
Other MFF sources	126.1 ([c])
RRF ([d]) (2021–2026)	**589**

([a]) European Commission, 2021-2027 cohesion policy (planned) allocations in *EU amount* excluding national co-financing, based on the tracking in the Common Provisions Regulation (CPR, 2021) Annex I. Please note potential data changes that may have arisen between the EIR preparation cut-off date (31 October 2024) and its publication date. Source and further information: https://cohesiondata.ec.europa.eu/2021-2027-Categorisation/2021-2027-Planned-finances-detailed-categorisation/hgyj-gyin/about_data.

([b]) Regulation (EU) 2021/2115 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 2 December 2021 establishing rules on support for strategic plans to be drawn up by Member States under the common agricultural policy (CAP strategic plans) and financed by the European Agricultural Guarantee Fund (EAGF) and by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) and repealing Regulations (EU) No 1305/2013 and (EU) No 1307/2013 (OJ L 435 6.12.2021, p. 1), Annex XI, https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2021/2115.

Note that 2021-2027 combines factual data for 2021 and 2022 and expenditure under the relevant specific objectives (SOs) of the CAP strategic plans from 2023, using the EU biodiversity tracking methodology (https://commission.europa.eu/system/files/2023-06/Biodiversity%20tracking%20methodology%20for%20each%20programme%202023.pdf). Source: European Commission.

([c]) Space Fund, Horizon Europe, financial instrument for the environment and the Connecting Europe Facility.

([d]) Outside the MFF. Note that the RRF applies a similar environmental tracking scheme (set in the RRF Regulation, Annex VI) as the EU's cohesion policy. RRF dataset version used: July 2024, prior to 2025 revisions. Data source: European Commission.

Lithuania, in addition to receiving EU funds earmarked specifically for it in 2021–2027, can also benefit from funding programmes that can be accessed at the EU level and which are open to all Member States. These include the LIFE programme (EUR 5.4 billion) ([149]), Horizon Europe (EUR 95.5 billion) ([150]), the Connecting Europe Facility (EUR 33.7 billion) ([151]) and funds that can be mobilised through the InvestEU programme ([152]).

Lithuania's RRP supports climate objectives through funding of EUR 1.4 billion (37.3 % of total), with no additional amount for the environment.

The EIB provided around EUR 283.1 million in environment-related financial contributions to Lithuania from 2021 to mid-2024, most of which, EUR 180.8 million (64 %), was in the area of sustainable energy, transport and industrial projects, which provides significant co-

([148]) Research, development and innovation is accounted for under each environmental objective. The financing needs, baselines and gaps estimates are based on the Directorate-General for Environment's internal analysis (of 2024). Throughout this chapter, specific references are provided to the most important data sources used.

([149]) https://cinea.ec.europa.eu/programmes/life_en.

([150]) European Commission, Horizon Europe, https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/funding/funding-opportunities/funding-programmes-and-open-calls/horizon-europe_en.

([151]) The Connecting Europe Facility Transport part also includes EUR 11.3 billion transferred from the Cohesion Fund, of which 30 % will be made available, on a competitive basis, to all Member States eligible for the Cohesion Fund. The remaining 70 % will respect the national envelopes until 31 December 2023.

([152]) The InvestEU Fund is set to mobilise over EUR 372 billion of investment through an EU budget guarantee of EUR 26.2 billion to back the investment of financial partners such as the EIB group and others.

benefits to reducing air pollution, environmental noise and other pollution.

The EU's total national expenditure on environmental protection (operating plus capital expenditure) was EUR 298 billion in 2020 and EUR 321 billion in 2021, representing around 2.2 % of EU-27 GDP. In Lithuania, the total national environmental protection expenditure was EUR 773 million in 2020 and 1 046 billion in 2021, representing 1.5 % and 1.9 % of GDP, respectively.

Of the total environmental expenditure, the national capital expenditure (investment) on environmental protection amounted to EUR 54.5 billion in 2020 and EUR 59.9 billion in 2021 in the EU-27, representing around 0.4 % of the EU's GDP. In Lithuania, the national environmental protection investment reached EUR 207 million in 2020, rising to EUR 297 million in 2021, representing around 0.4–0.5 % of GDP.

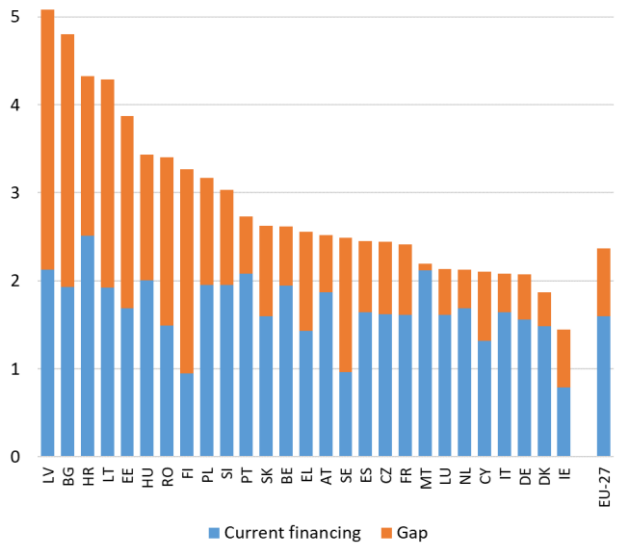
Splitting by institutional sector, 20 % of Lithuania's national environmental protection investment (capital expenditure) comes from the general government budget, with 63 % coming from specialist private-sector producers (of environmental protection services, such as waste and water companies) and 17 % from the general business sector, whose environmental activities are usually ancillary to its main activities. At the EU level, 38 % of environmental protection investment comes from governments, 40 % from specialist private-sector producers and 22 % from the general business sector ([153]).

Lithuania's total financing for environmental investment reaches an estimated EUR 1.3 billion per year (in 2022 prices), including EU funding and national public and national private expenditure. Of the total, the share of EU funds (including EIB funds) reaches 34 %, with around 66 % national financing. The total public financing (EU plus national public) represents 47 % of the total.

The gap

To meet its four environmental objectives beyond climate change, the additional investment need over the current levels (i.e. the gap) reaches an estimated EUR 1.6 billion per year in Lithuania, representing around 2.36 % of the national GDP, being considerably higher than the EU average (0.77 %).

Figure 35: Environmental financing, needs and gaps per Member State (% of GDP)



Source: Analysis of Directorate-General for Environment.

The following table provides the distributions of Lithuania's environmental investment gap (expressed in various forms) by environmental objective.

Table 2: Summary of environmental investment gaps in Lithuania per year, 2021–2027

Environmental objective	Investment gap, per year		
	Million EUR (2022 prices)	% of total	% of GDP
Pollution prevention and control	378	24.0	0.57
Circular economy and waste	122	7.8	0.18
Water management and water industries	259	16.4	0.39
Biodiversity and ecosystems	820	51.9	1.23
Total	**1 579**	**100.0**	**2.36**

Source: Directorate-General for Environment analysis.

([153]) Eurostat, 'Environmental protection expenditure accounts', env_ac_epea.

Pollution prevention and control

Investment needs

In pollution prevention and control, Lithuania's investment needs are estimated to reach EUR 652 billion per year (including baseline investments) in 2021–2027. Most of this, EUR 473 billion, relates to air pollution control, to comply with the clean air requirements for the five main air pollutants under the NECD by 2030. The estimated needs to reduce environmental noise reach EUR 101 million per year, most of which is delivered by the (same) sustainable energy and transport investments that also benefit clean air ([154]). Industrial site remediation requires an estimated EUR 12 million per year. Microplastics pollution and the chemicals strategy require around EUR 7–10 million per year (each) ([155]).

Current investments

The current investment levels supporting pollution prevention and control reach an estimated EUR 274 million per year in Lithuania in 2021–2027. Most of the financing concerns clean air (EUR 222 million per year). Protection from environmental noise receives around EUR 70 million per year, with a further 4 million for site remediation.

In Lithuania, the EU MFF provides an estimated 37.8 % of the clean air financing (mostly via cohesion policy), with a further 28.5 % from the RRF, adding up to 66.3 % of the total. EIB financing contributes 9 % and national sources reach 24.7 % ([156]).

The gap

To meet its environmental objectives concerning pollution prevention and control (towards zero pollution), Lithuania needs to provide an additional EUR 378 million per year (0.57 % of GDP), mostly related to clean air and noise. The adequate implementation of the national climate and energy plan with the investments included for sustainable energy and transport would largely deliver this, while in many Member States additional measures and investments may be required to comply with the NH_3 reduction requirements.

According to the latest (2023) NAPCP review report ([157]), Lithuania did not comply with a range of air pollution reduction requirements in 2020 and 2021 (NO_x, NMVOC, NH_3), while it is not at risk of non-compliance with NH_3 and other air pollutants concerning the NECD's 2030 emission reduction commitments, based on the policies and measures in its NAPCP that take into account climate, energy and CAP plans and financing baselines.

Circular economy and waste

Investment needs

Lithuania's investment needs in circular economy and waste reach EUR 751 million per year (including baseline investments). Most of this, around EUR 626 million per year, relates to circular economy measures in the mobility, food and built environment systems, with a further EUR 125 million necessary for waste management (municipal and packaging waste), covering waste collection, biowaste treatment, recycling reprocessors, waste-sorting facilities and digitalisation of the waste registry. The amount for waste excludes the investments needed for the uptake of circularity and waste prevention across the economy ([158]).

Current investments

Circular economy investments across the economy reach around EUR 527 million per year in Lithuania in 2021-2027, with a further EUR 102 million provided for waste management that does not constitute the circular economy.

([154]) 2021 Phenomena project assessment (https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/f4cd7465-a95d-11eb-9585-01aa75ed71a1) and the Commission's 2023 Environmental Noise Directive implementation report (https://environment.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2023-03/COM_2023_139_1_EN_ACT_part1_v3.pdf).

([155]) European Commission, *Third Clean Air Outlook*, Brussels, 2022, https://environment.ec.europa.eu/topics/air/clean-air-outlook_en. See also the impact assessment for the revision of the AAQD, available from the Commission web page on the proposed revision (https://environment.ec.europa.eu/publications/revision-eu-ambient-air-quality-legislation_en).

([156]) Through the tracking of EU funds, EIB projects and national expenditure (EPEA accounts, Eurostat). Note that the bulk of clean air financing is provided as a contribution from climate (energy and transport) measures, as per the tracking schemes in the Common Provisions Regulation Annex I and the RRF Regulation Annex VI. Further information on clean air tracking: https://commission.europa.eu/document/download/0a80484e-2409-4749-94c6-3b23bc6bae8f_en?filename=Clean%20air%20methodology_0.pdf

([157]) European Commission, 'National air pollution control programmes and projections', European Commission website, https://environment.ec.europa.eu/topics/air/reducing-emissions-air-pollutants/national-air-pollution-control-programmes-and-projections_en.https://environment.ec.europa.eu/topics/air/reducing-emissions-air-pollutants/national-air-pollution-control-programmes-and-projections_en

([158]) See Systemiq and Ellen MacArthur Foundation, *Achieving 'Growth Within'*, 2017, https://www.ellenmacarthurfoundation.org/achieving-growth-within; and European Commission: Directorate-General for Environment, *Study on investment needs in the waste sector and on the financing of municipal waste management in Member States*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, 2019, https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/4d5f8355-bcad-11e9-9d01-01aa75ed71a1.

Around 6 % of this combined financing for circularity and waste comes from the EU MFF, with no further contribution from the RRF. EIB loans identified in support of circularity and waste represent 0.5 % of the total. The share of national sources is absolutely overwhelming, reaching 94 % of the total financing ([159]).

The gap

To meet its environmental objectives concerning the circular economy and waste, Lithuania needs to increase circular economy investments by an estimated EUR 100 million per year, with an additional EUR 23 million concerning waste management action, not belonging to circular economy. Combined, this amounts to EUR 122 million per year, representing 0.18 % of Lithuania's GDP.

Of the circular economy gap, EUR 26 million relates to recent initiatives, such as the eco-design for sustainable products, packaging and packaging waste, labelling and digital tools, CRM recycling, and measures proposed under the amendment of the Waste Framework Directive, and EUR 73 million constitutes further investment need to unlock Lithuania's circular economy potential.

Water protection and management

Investment needs

The annual water investment needs reach an estimated EUR 439 million (in 2022 prices) in Lithuania. This comprises investment needs both for the water industry and for the protection and the management of water. Of the total annual need, EUR 186 million relates to the management of waste water (also including additional costs associated with the revised UWWTD). A further EUR 54 million is necessary for drinking-water-related investments and around EUR 194 million for the protection and management of water ([160]).

Current investments

Water investments in Lithuania are estimated to be around EUR 180 million per year (in 2022 prices) in 2021–2027. Of this, EUR 133 million supports wastewater management, EUR 38 million drinking water and around EUR 7 million the other aspects of the Water Framework Directive (water management and protection).

Of the total financing, 14.7 % is provided by the EU MFF (mostly through cohesion policy), with further 0.5% support from the RRF. EIB financing is around 5.7 % of the total, while the bulk of financing comes from national sources (.79.1 %) ([161]).

The gap

To meet the various environmental targets under the Water Framework Directive and the Floods Directive, Lithuania's water investment gap reaches EUR 259 million per year (0.39 % of GDP), with EUR 53 million linked to waste water. Drinking water measures require an additional EUR 16 million per year and the other aspects of the Water Framework Directive around EUR 188 million per year over the existing levels of financing.

Biodiversity and ecosystems

Investment needs

The investment needs for biodiversity and ecosystems are estimated to be EUR 1 billion per year (in 2022 prices) in Lithuania in 2021–2027. This includes the following financing needs:

(i) Lithuania's prioritised action framework ([162]) concerning the Natura 2000 areas: EUR 122 million per year, mostly running costs;
(ii) additional BDS ([163]) costs: EUR 632 million per year on top of the framework;
(iii) sustainable soil management ([164]) costs: EUR 269 million per year.

Current investments

The current level of biodiversity financing is estimated to be EUR 203 million per year (in 2022 prices) in 2021–2027. 69.4 % of this is considered direct financing to biodiversity and ecosystems, with a 100 % coefficient in the tracking schemes.

([159]) Waste management and circular economy expenditure tracking in the EU funds, EIB projects and in the national expenditure (Eurostat). Datasets: EPEA accounts (env_epi) and circular economy private investments (cei_cie012).

([160]) See European Commission, 'Estimating investment needs and financing capacities for water-related investment in EU Member States', 28 May 2020, https://commission.europa.eu/news/estimating-investment-needs-and-financing-capacities-water-related-investment-eu-member-states-2020-05-28_en; and OECD, *Financing Water Supply, Sanitation and Flood Protection: Challenges in EU Member States and policy options*, OECD Publishing, Paris, 2020, https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/environment/financing-water-supply-sanitation-and-flood-protection_6893cdac-en.

([161]) Water investment levels are estimated through tracking EU funds, EIB projects and national expenditure (EPEA accounts, Eurostat).

([162]) European Commission, 'Financing Natura 2000 – Prioritised action frameworks', European Commission website, https://environment.ec.europa.eu/topics/nature-and-biodiversity/natura-2000/financing-natura-2000_en.

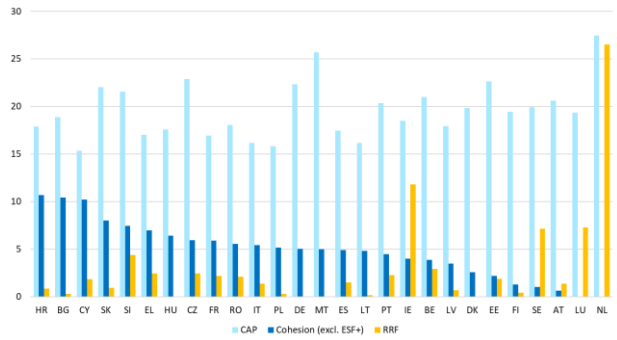
([163]) European Commission: Directorate-General for Environment, *Biodiversity Financing and Tracking – Final report*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, 2022, https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/793eb6ec-dbd6-11ec-a534-01aa75ed71a1/language-en.

([164]) Proposal for a directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on soil monitoring and resilience (Soil Monitoring Law) COM(2023) 416 final of 5 July 2023, https://environment.ec.europa.eu/publications/proposal-directive-soil-monitoring-and-resilience_en.

12 % of the total financing is estimated to come from EU cohesion policy, 56 % from CAP, 3.9 % from Horizon Europe, and around 1.5 % from LIFE and 1.5 % from the European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund. The EU MFF altogether accounts for 76 % of the financing and the RRF for 0.4 %, adding up to a total of 76 % from the EU budget. The rest, 24 %, comes from national sources ([165]).

Lithuania has programmed 16.2 % of its CAP budget in 2021–2027, 4.8 % of its cohesion policy EU contribution amount (disregarding ESF+) and 0.2 % of RRF funds for investments in biodiversity. This is below the EU average share. Furthermore, the Commission has received a request to transfer the total amount envisaged for biodiversity in the Lithuanian RRP to other priorities.

Figure 36: 2021–2027 contributions to biodiversity from the main EU instruments per Member State (% of policy total)



NB: ESF+, European Social Fund Plus.

The gap

To meet the environmental objectives concerning the protection and restoration of biodiversity and ecosystems and other relevant cross-cutting measures, Lithuania's investment gap is estimated to be around EUR 0.8 billion per year, corresponding to 1.23 % of its GDP.

Public financial management

Green budgeting practices

Green budgeting refers to the use of budgetary tools to achieve climate and environmental goals. Some Member States already use green budgeting tools for identifying and tracking green expenditures and/or revenues ([166]). Green budgeting practices provide increased transparency on the environmental implications of budgetary policies.

The Commission has developed a non-mandatory green budgeting reference framework that brings together methodologies for assessing the impacts of budgets on climate and environmental goals ([167]).

To help Member States develop national green budgeting and thereby improve policy coherence and support the green transition, the Commission facilitated a technical support instrument (TSI) project on green budgeting from 2021 to 2024 ([168]), in which Lithuania participated.

Beyond green budgeting, to improve policy outcomes, the Commission has also drawn up climate-proofing and sustainability-proofing guidance ([169]), as tools to assess project eligibility and compliance with environmental legislation and criteria.

Green taxation and tax reform

Total environmental taxes amounted to EUR 1 billion in Lithuania in 2022, representing 1.5 % of its GDP (EU average: 2.0 %). Energy taxes formed the largest component of environmental taxes, accounting for 1.3 % of GDP, which is lower than the EU average of 1.6 %. Transport taxes, at 0.1 % of GDP, were under the EU average (0.4 %), while taxes on pollution and resources, at 0.12 %, were slightly above the EU average (0.08 %). In 2022, environmental taxes in Lithuania accounted for

([165]) Based on biodiversity tracking in the EU budget (https://circabc.europa.eu/ui/group/3f466d71-92a7-49eb-9c63-6cb0fadf29dc/library/8e44293a-d97f-496d-8769-50365780acde), and national expenditure into biodiversity from the Classification of the Functions of Government accounts.

([166]) European Commission, *Green Budgeting in the EU. Key Insights from the 2023 European Commission Survey of Green Budgeting Practices*, 2023, https://economy-finance.ec.europa.eu/economic-and-fiscal-governance/national-fiscal-frameworks-eu-member-states/green-budgeting-eu_en#:~:text=European%20Commission%20Green%20Budgeting%20Survey%C2%A0..

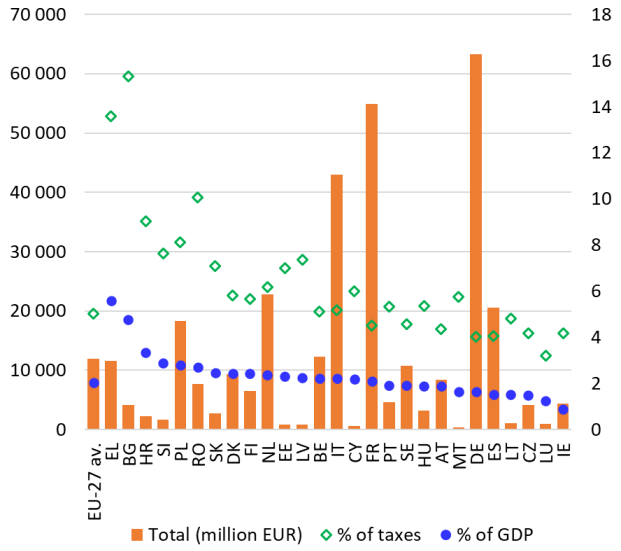
([167]) European Commission, 'European Union green budgeting reference framework', 2022, https://economy-finance.ec.europa.eu/economic-and-fiscal-governance/green-budgeting-eu_en.

([168]) https://reform-support.ec.europa.eu/what-we-do/revenue-administration-and-public-financial-management/supporting-implementation-green-budgeting-practices-eu_en.

([169]) Commission notice – Technical guidance on the climate proofing of infrastructure in the period 2021–2027 (OJ C 373, 16.09.2021, p. 1), https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/23a24b21-16d0-11ec-b4fe-01aa75ed71a1/language-en.

4.8 % of total revenues from taxes and social security contributions (slightly under the EU average of 5.0 %) ([170]).

Figure 37: Environmental taxes per Member State, 2022



The EU Green Deal emphasises the role of well-designed tax reforms (e.g. shifts from taxing labour to taxing pollution) to boost economic growth and resilience, and to foster a fairer society and a just transition through the right price signals. The Green Deal promotes the 'polluter-pays principle', which makes polluters bear the costs to prevent, control and remedy pollution.

According to a 2024 study ([171]), Lithuania applies charges on emissions to water and on solid waste disposal (landfilling fee), with further charges on plastics, for tree protection, for water disposal and for mineral extraction.

Green bonds and sustainable bonds

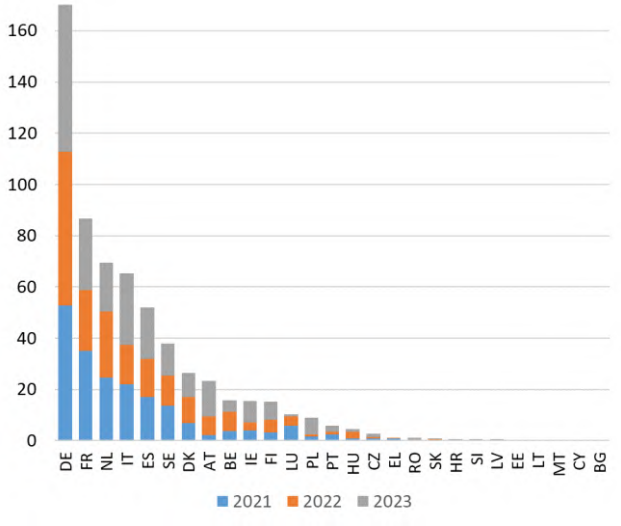
In 2023, the total value of green bonds issued by Member States was USD 245 billion (EUR 227 billion), up from USD 234 billion (EUR 198 billion) in 2021 ([172]).

During 2021–2023 combined, Lithuania issued green bonds worth USD 95.3 million (EUR 80.6 million). Of this, the issuance in 2023 amounted to USD 42.2 million (EUR 39 billion).

During 2014–2023, 83 % of the green bonds issued by European countries (excluding supranational entities) served objectives in energy, buildings or transport, while 5 % supported objectives in water, 5.1 % related to land use (with links to nature and ecosystems) and 3.8 % applied to waste management. By 2023, the combined share of energy, buildings and transport had decreased to 73 %, the shares of waste management and land use had increased (to 5.9 % and 8.4 %, respectively) and the share of water had remained around 5 %.

In 2021–2023, 31.7 % of European green bonds (excluding supranational issuances) were issued by financial corporates, 29.1 % by sovereign governments and 23.1 % by non-financial corporates. 8.3 % of the issuances was linked to government-backed entities, 6.4 % to developments banks and 1.4 % to local governments.

Figure 38: Value of green bonds issued per Member State (billion EUR), 2021, 2022 and 2023



Data source: Climatebonds.net, with some additional data from national sources (e.g. Croatia, Slovenia).

Environmentally harmful subsidies

Addressing and phasing out environmentally harmful subsidies, in particular fossil fuel subsidies (FFS) is a further step towards achieving the eighth environment action programme objectives and the enabling conditions ([173]). FFS are costly for public budgets and make it difficult to achieve European Green Deal objectives.

([170]) Eurostat, 'Environmental taxes accounts', env_eta.

([171]) European Commission: Directorate-General for Environment, *Candidates for Taxing Environmental Bads at National Level*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, 2024, Annexes 1 and 2, https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/35c1bbdf-2931-11ef-9290-01aa75ed71a1/language-en.

([172]) Climate bonds initiative (https://www.climatebonds.net/). NB. Additionally (and not included in this), national sources indicated EUR 544.8 million issuance for Croatia, in 2022-2023, and a slightly higher amount for Slovenia (+0.27 billion) during 2021-2023 in total.

([173]) Article 3(h) and 3(v) of the eighth environment action plan.

The overall downward trend of FFS mentioned in past EIRs was disrupted from 2022 due to the European response to the 2021 energy crisis and subsequent increase in energy prices.

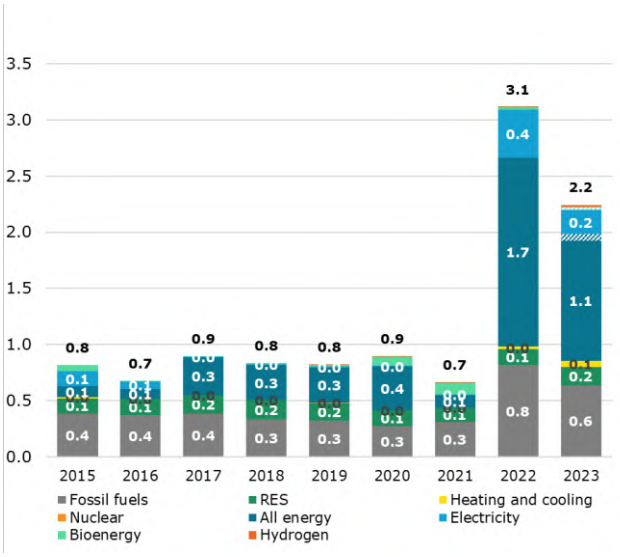
As a direct consequence, annual FFS in the EU have increased to EUR 109 billion in 2023 from EUR 57 billion in 2020. From 2021 to 2023, there was a marked increase in annual FFS of 72 % in the EU ([174]).

For the majority of the Member States (16), the year 2022 saw a peak in the amount of overall FFS. A decline was then observed in 2023 ([175]). In particular, FFS for coal and lignite, natural gas and oil increased in 2022 and a strong increase was observed for natural gas subsidies.

In Lithuania, the energy subsidies ranged between EUR 0.7 billion and EUR 0.9 billion per year during 2015 and 2021, with FFS also being stable, at EUR 0.3–0.4 billion per year. In 2022 and 2023, energy subsidies increased overall; FFS was also higher, at EUR 0.8 billion and EUR 0.6 billion, respectively.

As a share of GDP, fossil fuel subsidies in 2022 ranged from 1.8 % in Croatia to less than 0.1 % in Denmark and Sweden. Lithuania's value reached 1.2 %, above the EU average (0.8 %) ([176]).

Figure 39: Energy subsidies by energy carrier (billion EUR), 2015–2023



NB: RES, renewable energy source.

Source: analysis of Directorate-General Energy

The 2022 recommendations for Lithuania included the following.

- Devise an environmental financing strategy to maximise opportunities for closing environmental implementation gaps, bringing together all relevant administrative levels.
- Increased level of financing for the environment, in particular from private sources (currently around 33 %), to cover the high level of investment needs across the environmental objectives by closing the investment gaps.

Lithuania has a similar level of overall environmental investment gap to that observed in 2022 (2.4 % of GDP in 2025 – above the EU average), most of which relates to biodiversity and ecosystems.

2025 priority action

In light of similar levels of investment gaps to those observed in 2022, a general recommendation is maintained for Lithuania.

- Use more national funding (for instance by increasing taxes in favour of the environment and reducing environmentally harmful subsidies), EU funding and private funding to help close the investment gap.

([174]) European Commission, 2024 Report on Energy Subsidies in the European Union, COM(2025). https://ec.europa.eu/transparency/documents-register/detail?ref=COM(2025)17&lang=en

([175]) 16 Member States: BE, EE, IE, EL, ES, FR, HR, IT, CY, LT, HU, NL, AT, PT, RO and SE.

([176]) European Commission, 2024 Report on Energy Subsidies in the European Union, COM(2025). https://ec.europa.eu/transparency/documents-register/detail?ref=COM(2025)17&lang=en

6. Environmental governance

Information, public participation and access to justice

Citizens can more effectively protect the environment if they rely on the three 'pillars' of the Aarhus Convention: (i) access to information, (ii) public participation in decision-making and (iii) access to justice in environmental matters. It is of crucial importance to public authorities, the public and businesses that environmental information is shared efficiently and effectively ([177]). Public participation allows authorities to make decisions that take public concerns into account. Access to justice is a set of guarantees that allows citizens and NGOs to use national courts to protect the environment, safeguard the rights of citizens and ensure accountability of authorities ([178]). It includes the right to bring legal challenges ('legal standing') ([179]).

Environmental information

This section focuses on the implementation of the Infrastructure for Spatial Information in the European Community (Inspire) Directive. The Inspire Directive aims to set up a European spatial-data infrastructure for sharing environmental spatial information between public authorities across Europe. It is expected that this will help policymaking across boundaries and facilitate public access to this information. Geographic information is needed for good governance at all levels and should be readily and transparently available.

Lithuania's performance in implementing the Inspire Directive is substantial and has been reviewed based on its 2023 country fiche ([180]) (see Table 3).

In 2022, Lithuania received a priority action to make spatial data more widely accessible. Lithuania has made good progress on improving the accessibility of spatial data, but more effort is needed to prioritise environmental datasets ([181]).

Table 3: Lithuania dashboard on the implementation of the Inspire Directive, 2016–2023

	2016	2023	Legend
Effective coordination and data sharing			Implementation of this provision is well advanced or (nearly) completed. Outstanding issues are minor and can be addressed easily. Percentage > 89 %
Ensure effective coordination	■	■	
Data sharing without obstacle	■	■	
Inspire performance indicators			Implementation of this provision has started and made some or substantial progress but is still not close to being completed. Percentage = 31–89 %
(i) Conformity of metadata	■	■	
(ii) Conformity of spatial datasets	■	■	
(iii) Accessibility of spatial datasets through view and download services	■	■	
(iv) Conformity of network services	■	■	Implementation of this provision is falling significantly behind or has not even started. Serious efforts are necessary to close the implementation gap. Percentage < 31 %

Source: European Commission, 'Lithuania', Inspire Knowledge Base, https://knowledge-base.inspire.ec.europa.eu/lithuania_en.

Public participation

Public involvement at both the planning and the project phase maximises transparency and social acceptance of programmes and projects. Consultation with the public (including NGOs) and environmental, local and regional

([177]) The Aarhus Convention (https://unece.org/environment-policy/public-participation/aarhus-convention/text), the Access to Environmental Information Directive (Directive 2003/4/EC) (https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32003L0004) and the Inspire Directive (Directive 2007/2/EC) (https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=CELEX:32007L0002) together create a legal foundation for the sharing of environmental information between public authorities and with the public.

([178]) These guarantees are explained in the European Commission's 2017 notice on access to justice in environmental matters (https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=CELEX:52017XC0818(02)) and a related 2018 citizen's guide (https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/2b362f0a-bfe4-11e8-99ee-01aa75ed71a1/language-en/format-PDF).

([179]) This EIR focuses on the means used by Member States to guarantee rights of access to justice and legal standing and to overcome other major barriers to bringing cases on environmental protection.

([180]) European Commission, 'Lithuania', Inspire Knowledge Base, https://knowledge-base.inspire.ec.europa.eu/lithuania_en.

([181]) See the European Commission's list of high-value spatial datasets (https://github.com/INSPIRE-MIF/need-driven-data-prioritisation/blob/main/documents/eReporting_PriorityDataList_V2.1_final_20201008.xlsx).

authorities is a key feature of an effective impact assessment procedure. Such consultation also provides an opportunity for public authorities and project promoters to engage with the public actively and meaningfully by making information on the likely significant effects widely available. If carried out with due diligence and taking into consideration useful public input, this process leads to better-informed decision-making and can promote public acceptance. Making information available increases stakeholder involvement, thus lessening resistance and preventing (or minimising) litigation. On the other hand, it is paramount that the procedure is effective.

This section examines how public involvement and transparency are ensured under two instruments, namely the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Directive ([182]) and the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive ([183]).

EU law provides for a flexible framework concerning EIAs. The aim of this framework is to ensure the application of the necessary environmental safeguards, while enabling the speedy approval of projects. The Commission has contributed to simplifying and accelerating permitting for renewable energy projects and continues to support the Member States in this regard ([184]). Lithuania has already taken steps aimed at accelerating permitting procedures, taking advantages of the broad flexibility offered by the EU legal framework, such as the establishment of a 'one-stop shop' and accelerated short deadlines for permitting renewable energy projects.

The average time taken in the EU to permit projects involving an EIA is 20.6 months, with a minimum duration of 11.4 months and a maximum duration of 75.7 months ([185]). The duration of each step in the EIA process (screening, scoping, formulating an EIA report, conducting a public consultation, providing an reasoned conclusion, obtaining development consent) varies considerably between Member States and projects. The available data for Lithuania show that, on average, screening takes between 0.7 and 10.2 months, formulating an EIA report 3–57 months and public consultation 1.4 months. The screening stage is completed considerably faster than the EU average. The effective use of EU procedures can positively influence the timely approval of activities underpinning the decarbonisation of the economy on the way to net zero by 2050.

A new report is not yet available on the application and effectiveness of the SEA Directive in the EU. Nevertheless, a support study has been published with information by Member State ([186]).

In 2022, Lithuania received the priority action to assess the level of public engagement in the EIA and SEA processes and considering ways to improve public participation.

Lithuania has made some progress in and efforts to raise public awareness and information. The Ministry of Environment and the Environmental Protection Agency have information on their websites and dedicated brochures ([187]). In 2024, the Ministry of Environment started a project on the digitalisation of EIAs and the issuance of pollution permits. One of the main objectives of this project is to improve the public's access to information and ability to become more actively involved in environmental decision-making. The project is expected to be finalised in 2027.

Access to justice

Access to justice, guaranteed by Article 19(1) of the Treaty on European Union and Article 47 of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights, is a fundamental right and part of the

([182]) Directive 2011/92/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 December 2011 on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment (OJ L 26, 28.1.2012, p. 1), https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32011L0092.

([183]) Directive 2001/42/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 June 2001 on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment (OJ L 197, 21.7.2001, p. 30), https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=CELEX:32001L0042.

([184]) Commission Staff Working Document (SWD/2022/0149 final), 18 May 2022, (https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52022SC0149&qid=1653034229953).

([185]) European Commission: Directorate-General for Environment, *Collection of information and data on the implementation of the revised Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Directive (2011/92/EU) as amended by 2014/52/EU)*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, 2024, Tables 5 and 6, https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/8349a857-2936-11ef-9290-01aa75ed71a1/.

([186]) European Commission: Directorate-General for Environment, Lundberg, P., McNeill, A., McGuinn, J., Cantarelli, A. et al., *Study supporting the preparation of the report on the application and effectiveness of the SEA Directive (Directive 2001/42/EC) – Final study*, Publications Office of the European Union, 2025, https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2779/1615072

([187]) Ministry of Environment of the Republic of Lithuania, 'Kaip užtikrinti visuomenės teisę į švarią aplinką?', Environmental Protection Agency website, last updated 11 October 2023, Visuomenės dalyvavimas planuojamos ūkinės veiklos poveikio aplinkai vertinimo (PAV) ir atrankos dėl PAV procesuose - Lietuvos Respublikos aplinkos ministerija.

democratic process. It is vital to ensure the full application of EU law in all Member States and the legal protection of the rights of individuals, including in environmental matters. Access to justice is essential to enable judicial review of the decisions of public authorities and to allow the correction of any wrongdoing committed by these authorities.

This section provides a snapshot of the state of play of access to courts by the public, particularly when it comes to challenging plans, or the non-adoption of plans, under EU law, in the areas of water, waste, air quality and noise, irrespective of the form of the legal act (i.e. regulatory act or administrative decision).

As mentioned in the 2022 EIR, both individuals and NGOs can challenge environmental administrative decisions, including plans and programmes.

The website of the Ministry of Environment contains a dedicated section on how the public can exercise their access to justice rights ([188]), providing a link to the Commission's e-justice factsheets ([189]). There is also a publicly available report of the Ombudsperson of the Lithuanian parliament on the right of the public to access to justice in environmental matters ([190]).

In 2022, Lithuania received the priority actions to provide better public information on the right to access justice and to make a greater effort to inform environmental stakeholders about ways to enforce their environmental rights. Both of these actions have been fulfilled.

2025 priority action

- Make spatial data more widely accessible and prioritise environmental datasets in implementing the Inspire Directive, especially those identified as high-value spatial datasets for implementing environmental legislation ([191]).

Compliance assurance

Environmental compliance assurance covers all work undertaken by public authorities to ensure that industries, farmers and others fulfil their obligations to protect water, air and nature, to manage waste ([192]) and to remedy any environmental damage. It includes measures such as (i) compliance promotion, (ii) compliance monitoring (i.e. inspections and other checks), (iii) enforcement, that is, steps taken to stop breaches and impose sanctions, and (iv) ensuring damage prevention and remediation in line with the polluter-pays principle.

Compliance promotion, monitoring and enforcement

Non-compliance with environmental obligations may occur for different reasons, including poor understanding or lack of acceptance of the rules, opportunism or even criminality. Compliance promotion activities help duty-holders to comply by providing information, guidance and other support. This is particularly important in areas where new and complex legislation is put in place.

When inspections and other control activities identify problems, a range of responses may be appropriate, including the use of administrative and criminal enforcement tools.

As mentioned in the 2022 EIR, The Lithuanian National Courts Administration publishes annual statistics on civil, criminal and administrative court cases ([193]), including environmental cases. As regards administrative procedures, only general statistics are available, without detail on the specific environmental issues concerned. Data on criminal cases are provided for each article of the Criminal Code. Information is also available on the Environmental Protection Department's website on how the public can report infringements of environmental law ([194]).

The project 'Establishment of the Information System for State Control of Environmental Protection', in place from September 2024 to December 2026, aims to establish an effective information system for the state control of environmental protection based on the more efficient identification and supervision of the most at-risk entities,

([188]) Ministry of Environment of the Republic of Lithuania, 'Visuomenės teisės ir jų realizavimo tvarka Lietuvoje', LRV.LT, last updated 3 October 2023, https://am.lrv.lt/lt/orhuso-konvencija/visuomenes-teises-ir-ju-realizavimo-tvarka-lietuvoje/.

([189]) https://www.teismai.lt/lt/nacionaline-teismu-administracija/nuorodos/101.

([190]) https://www.lrski.lt/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/SK-ataskaita-Orhuso_galutine-2023-01-30.pdf.

([191]) See the European Commission's list of high-value spatial datasets (https://github.com/INSPIRE-MIF/need-driven-data-prioritisation/blob/main/documents/eReporting_PriorityDataList_V2.1_final_20201008.xlsx).

([192]) The concept is explained in detail in the European Commission's 2018 communication on EU actions to improve environmental compliance and governance (https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52018DC0010) and the related Commission staff working document (https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52018SC0010).

([193]) https://www.teismai.lt/lt/visuomenei-ir-ziniasklaidai/statistika/106.

([194]) https://aad.lrv.lt/lt/pranesk-apie-aplinkosaugos-pazeidimus/.

analysis and forecasting of the results of controls, and reduction of the potential for human error and corruption ([195]). One of the activities of the project is to set up a unified channel to register all forms of complaints and notifications in a single information system in order to make the receipt of complaints and notifications and the subsequent handling of complaints or notifications more efficient.

This project has the potential to strengthen enforcement; however, as mentioned in the 2022 EIR, so far the lack of systematic information on the outcomes of cases, combined with the lack of detailed information on the outcomes of inspections, makes it difficult to track the effectiveness of enforcement actions in the field of the environment.

The 2022 EIR recommended that Lithuania (i) provides better public information on how to make complaints about environmental damage and compliance issues and how to enforce their environmental rights; (ii) develops and implements a systematic approach towards handling existing environmental data that would not only link various types of environmental data with each other or with other types of data (e.g. geospatial data), but also give environmental stakeholders easier access to the data; and (iii) publishes detailed and structured information on the outcomes of enforcement actions. However, such actions concerning compliance promotion, monitoring and criminal and administrative enforcement are not assessed here due to a lack of systematic information.

The new EU Environmental Crime Directive

The EU has recently strengthened its legal framework on tackling the most serious breaches of environmental obligations, notably by the adoption of the new Environmental Crime Directive (ECD) (Directive (EU) 2024/1203) ([196]) and new sectoral legislation with stronger provisions on compliance monitoring, enforcement and penalties. Issues important for the transposition and the implementation of the relevant new instruments are highlighted below; a detailed assessment of these topics will be included in the next EIR once more implementation measures are put in place and more systematic information is available.

The new ECD replaced the 2008 ECD and introduced several new offence categories, such as unlawful ship recycling, unlawful water abstraction, and serious breaches of EU legislation on chemicals, mercury, fluorinated GHG and IAS of EU concern. It also covered the establishment of qualified offences, subject to more severe penalties where one of the offences defined in the Directive leads to serious widespread and substantial damage or destruction of the environment. Concrete provisions on the types and levels of penalties for natural and legal persons who commit an offence were also introduced. Other provisions will help considerably to improve the effectiveness in combating environmental crime of all actors along the enforcement chain. These include obligations to ensure adequate resources and investigative tools, specialised regular training and the establishment of cooperation mechanisms within and between Member States as well as national strategies on combating environmental crime.

Member States are required to transpose the new ECD into national law by 21 May 2026 and to take additional measures to more effectively combat environmental crime, in particular through training, coordination, cooperation and strategic approaches. The Commission will provide support, including by facilitating the identification and sharing of good practices. Member States are expected to ensure the necessary resources and specialised skills required and they are invited to encourage their authorities to support and cooperate with the recognised EU-level networks of environmental enforcement practitioners, such as the EU Network for the Implementation and Enforcement of Environmental Law ([197]), EnviCrimeNet ([198]), the European Network of Prosecutors for the Environment ([199]) and the EU Forum of Judges for the Environment ([200]). The European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation and European Union Agency for Criminal Justice Cooperation mechanisms for cooperation on cross-border cases should be used more systematically for environmental offences.

([195]) https://aad.lrv.lt/lt/administracine-informacija/igyvendinami-projektai/projektas-aplinkos-apsaugos-valstybines-kontroles-informacines-sistemos-aavkis-sukurimas/.

([196]) Directive 2024/1203/EU on the protection of the environment through criminal law https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dir/2024/1203/oj/eng

([197]) https://www.impel.eu/en.

([198]) LIFE+SATEC project (https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/life/publicWebsite/project/LIFE20-PRE-ES-000001/fight-against-environmental-crime-at-a-strategic-level-through-the-strengthening-of-envicrimenet-network-of-experts-in-environmental-criminal-investigations).

([199]) https://www.environmentalprosecutors.eu.

([200]) https://www.eufje.org/index.php?lang=en.

On 2 July 2024, amendments to the Lithuanian Code of Administrative Offences and the Law on Environmental Protection came into force, strengthening penalties for violations of the requirements for the management of fluorinated GHGs and their mixtures, and of the products and equipment containing them, and reinforcing the liability of individuals and legal entities for the illegal use of invasive species and for failure to implement management measures. In addition, the penalties for natural persons for a number of other environmental infringements have been revised and increased, and penalties for legal persons for these infringements have been introduced.

Environmental Liability Directive

The Environmental Liability Directive (ELD) ([201]) aims to ensure that environmental damage is remediated in kind at the expense of those who have caused it, in line with the polluter-pays principle. It helps to halt the net loss in biodiversity, as well as reducing the number of contaminated sites and protecting the environmental quality of groundwater and surface waters. The ELD is a cross-cutting tool and a key enabler for better implementation of EU environmental law.

The ELD addresses cases of significant environmental damage to protected species and natural habitats, and, when caused by operators carrying out certain potentially hazardous activities, damage to water and to soil. The Commission has the legal obligation to periodically evaluate the ELD. The ELD has undergone its second evaluation ([202]), which will be finalised in 2025 and supported by an external study ([203]). The evaluation consisted of evidence, views, reports and other relevant information gathered from different stakeholder groups, including Member States.

One of the most relevant indicators in assessing the implementation and enforcement of the ELD is the number of cases of environmental damage handled under the ELD, especially when this number is compared with the previous reporting period. Fewer ELD cases were reported in the second reporting period (2013–2022) than in the first one (2007–2013). However, the downward trend in the number of ELD occurrences and their overall low number do not necessarily mean that the ELD has achieved its objectives, as these findings needs to be compared with the overall number of and trend in environmental damage cases, some of which may have been handled under other liability instruments.

The ELD has not always been effective in ensuring that the polluter pays, because the liable operators often lack the financial capacity to carry out remediation measures. While the ELD does not provide for a mandatory financial security system, it explicitly calls for Member States to encourage the development of financial security instruments and markets, with the aim of enabling operators to use financial guarantees to cover their responsibilities under this directive.

From 1 May 2013 to 31 December 2021, Lithuania reported only one occurrence of environmental damage under the ELD (a case of land and water damage), whereas five occurrences were reported in the previous reporting period.

The environmental insurance market in Lithuania is at an early stage of development. This excludes insurance that provides cover for businesses that carry out operations to recover or dispose of waste, for which Lithuania has introduced mandatory financial security actions for waste management activities.

The 2022 EIR recommended that Lithuania makes information more available on the follow-up of environmental incidents, including cases under the ELD. There is no information available about the progress on 2022 priority actions in relation to the ELD. Efforts to implement 2022 priority actions should continue along with the 2025 priority action.

2025 priority action

- Encourage the use of training programmes provided by the Commission (or developed at the national level) and covering the ELD and its interactions with the other national liability-related instruments, to ensure more efficient ELD implementation, improve the expertise of the competent authorities and raise awareness among all stakeholder groups.

([201]) Directive 2004/35/EC on environmental liability with regard to the prevention and remedying of environmental damage, https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A02004L0035-20190626.

([202]) Commission staff working document - Evaluation of the Environmental Liability Directive, forthcoming 2025.

([203]) European Commission: Directorate-General for Environment and Fogleman, V., *Study in support of the evaluation of the Environmental Liability Directive and its implementation – Final report*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, 2024, https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/006d90e5-980a-11ef-a130-01aa75ed71a1/language-en.

EU-supported environmental capacity building

The Commission's 2023 Compact ([204]) initiative to enhance the administrative space identifies the capacity to lead the green transition as one of three key pillars, along with the public administration skills agenda and the capacity for Europe's Digital Decade. Compact also recognises the role of the EIR reporting tool in improving environmental governance. The two main capacity-building opportunities for the environment provided by the European Commission are the TSI ([205]) and the TAIEX-EIR PEER 2 PEER tool ([206]). The technical assistance available through the cohesion policy is subject to shared management and is not dealt with in this subsection.

The Commission's technical support instrument

The TSI provides Member States with tailor-made technical expertise on the design and implementation of reforms. The support is demand driven and does not require national co-financing.

With the TSI 2023, 2024 and 2025, the Commission's TSI supported four environment-related projects in Lithuania:

- 'Accelerating permitting for renewable energy', conducted by the National Energy Regulatory Council (2023);
- 'Strengthening of institutional and administrative capacities for the improvement of energy efficiency of buildings renovation and the organic renovation', conducted by the Environmental Projects Management Agency under the Ministry of Environment (2023);
- 'GPP monitoring in Lithuania and Latvia', conducted by the Ministry of the Economy and Innovation of the Republic of Lithuania and the PPO (2024);
- 'Support for the preparation of Social Climate Plans' (2024), a multi-country project benefiting nine Member States: Belgium, Czechia, Denmark, Croatia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia and Finland.

The Commission's TAIEX-EIR PEER 2 PEER tool

The Commission launched the TAIEX-EIR PEER 2 PEER tool in 2017. It aims to facilitate peer-to-peer learning among Member States' environmental authorities through workshops (single or multi-country), expert missions (where a delegation of experts travels to the requesting institution) and study visits (where a delegation from the requesting institution travels to a host country). Flagship multi-country workshops are those requested by the European Commission to present new and upcoming environmental legislation and policy in all Member States ([207]).

Workshops involving Lithuania are as follows:

- future challenges for air protection (24 November 2022), with the Czech Presidency of the Council of the European Union;
- decentralised biowaste recycling in Austria (9 October –11 October 2023);
- reducing air pollution from the transport and residential energy sectors (11–13 June 2024);
- online platforms for the EU Batteries Regulation, and Packaging and Packaging Waste Regulation (28–29 October 2023).

([204]) See the European Commission web page on Compact (https://reform-support.ec.europa.eu/public-administration-and-governance-coordination/enhancing-european-administrative-space-compact_en).

([205]) See the European Commission web page on the TSI (https://commission.europa.eu/funding-tenders/find-funding/eu-funding-programmes/technical-support-instrument/technical-support-instrument-tsi_en).

([206]) See the European Commission web page on the TAIEX-EIR PEER 2 PEER tool (https://environment.ec.europa.eu/law-and-governance/environmental-implementation-review/peer-2-peer_en).TAIEX: Technical Assistance and Information Exchange.

([207]) Flagship multi-country workshops in the reporting period are: Recast Drinking Water Directive (3 April 2025); Environmental compliance and governance (18 March 2025); Planning of Renewable Energy Projects (20 February 2025); Air Quality: Implementation of the revised Air Quality Directive (16 January 2025); Industrial safety: awareness raising of emerging risks linked with climate change and decarbonation (12 December 2024); Air quality: implementation of the NEC Directive to further mainstream air and broader pollution reduction in agricultural policy (25 September 2024); Industrial emissions transposition and implementation of the revised directive (12 September 2024); Noise: progress towards meeting Member States' noise limit values and EU reduction targets (5 June 2024); Best practice use of environmental footprint methods on the EU market (30 May 2024); Sustainable finance (9 November 2023); Textile waste separate collection, treatment and markets (3 October 2023); EU environmental funding and support (13 June 2023); Advisory service for businesses to go circular (24 April 2023); Digital product passport implementation (6 December 2022); Public involvement in planning and approval of renewable energy projects (17 November 2022); Environmental compliance and governance (14 November 2022); Biowaste management (19–20 September 2022); and Renewable energy projects: permit granting processes (13 June 2022). NB: The first flagship workshop on zero pollution for air, water and soil took place 9 February 2022.

Lithuania hosted an expert mission on air emission inventories and assessment of the impacts of policies and measures on emissions (15–17 May 2023).

2025 priority action

- Improve overall national environmental governance, in particular administrative capacity to support the green transition and coordination at the regional and local levels.

Annex

2025 priority actions

Circular economy and waste management

Transitioning to a circular economy

- Adopt measures to increase the circular material use rate.

Waste management

- Improve municipal waste preparation for reuse and recycling.
- Increase the collection and recycling rate of waste electronic and electric equipment (WEEE).
- Invest in waste prevention measures to reduce the total amount of waste generated.
- Ensure the achievement of the 2025 waste targets, following the recommendations made by the Commission in the Early Warning Report.

Biodiversity and natural capital

Global and EU biodiversity frameworks

- Submit to the CBD an updated NBSAP or national targets following the adoption of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.

Nature protection and restoration – Natura 2000

- Complete the Natura 2000 site designation process.
- Finalise the establishment of site-specific conservation objectives and measures for all Natura 2000 sites (including by adopting their management plans) and ensure their effective implementation.

Recovery of species

- Reinforce action for habitats and species in unfavourable conservation status, for example through restoration measures, increased connectivity, better policy coordination and integration, and increased funding.

Recovery of ecosystems

- Implement eco-schemes and agri-environmental measures and practices to address the environmental needs of Lithuania.
- Implement and scale-up the uptake of organic farming practices.
- Promote active management of grasslands through extensive grazing to maintain the condition of these semi-natural habitats.
- Implement peatland conservation and restoration measures and include such measures and objectives in the national restoration plans
- Report its updates on the assessment of the state of its marine waters, its targets, and its determinations of GES which are expected to include any threshold values for the descriptors in the MSFD that may have been established in cooperation with other Member States at the EU or regional level

Prevention and management of invasive alien species

- Step up implementation of the IAS Regulation, including with regard to enforcement and capacity of inspection authorities.

Ecosystem assessment and accounting

- Support development of national business and biodiversity network.
- Ratify the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization (ABS) to the Convention on Biological Diversity.

Zero pollution

Clean air

- As part of the NAPCP, take action towards reducing emissions of air pollutants.
- Ensure full compliance with the current AAQD standards, also in light of future stricter requirements under the revised AAQD.

Industrial emissions

- Reduce industrial air pollution damage and intensity.
- Engage with industry and environmental NGOs to ensure proper contribution to and implementation of BAT conclusions and ensure timely update of permits following publication of BAT conclusions.
- Ensure effective public participation and access to justice in relation with the IED.

Major industrial accidents prevention – Seveso

- Strengthen compliance with requirements on safety measures to prevent major accidents and ensure appropriate preparedness and response in relation to UTEs, in particular as regards reviewing, testing and updating EEPs, at intervals of no more than three years.
- Ensure access to transparent and clear information towards citizens on risks and behaviour in case of accidents.

Noise

- Complete and implement action plans on noise management.

Water quality and management

- Ensure periodic reviews of permits for discharges, abstractions and other water uses, including hydropower pressures.
- Reduce pollution from nutrients, chemicals, metals and saline discharges.
- Better justify exemptions to the achievement of good status.
- Improve the classification of water bodies and strengthen monitoring systems.
- Develop more robust programmes of measures, tackle obstacles identified in the implementation of measures and ensure adequate financing for implementation, including through better use of the cost recovery and polluter pays principle.
- FRMPs should provide details on how the FHRMs were used in the choice of measures and how to consider pluvial flooding.
- Consider future climate scenarios in FRMPs.
- Better explain the choice and implementation of flood prevention and protection measures (prioritisation, monitoring, costs of measures).
- Improve public consultation and stakeholder involvement.

- Tackle nutrients pollution, especially nitrates from agriculture through the implementation of the Nitrates Directive.

Chemicals

- Upgrade the administrative capacities in implementation and enforcement towards a policy of zero tolerance for non-compliance.
- Increase customs controls and controls of products sold online with regard to compliance with chemicals legislations.

Climate action

- Implement all polices and measures that are needed to achieve targets laid down in the Effort Sharing Regulation (ESR) and the Land Use and Land-Use Change and Forestry (LULUCF) Regulation. More detailed priority actions are set out in the assessment of the final National Energy and Climate Plan (NECP).

Financing

- Use more national funding (for instance by increasing taxes in favour of the environment and reducing environmentally harmful subsidies), EU funding and private funding to help close the investment gap.

Environmental governance

- Encourage the use of training programmes provided by the Commission (or developed at the national level) covering the ELD and its interactions with the other national liability related instruments, to ensure more efficient ELD implementation, improve the expertise of the competent authorities and raise awareness among all stakeholder groups.
- Improve overall national environmental governance, in particular administrative capacity to support the green transition and coordination at the regional and local levels.