

State of the Internet and Digital Rights in Lithuania (2019–2025)

In the period from 2019 to 2025, Lithuania established itself as a country with one of the most developed internet infrastructures in Europe. The internet penetration rate among the population reached 89.5%, while the technological foundation consisted of fiber-to-the-home (FTTH) networks covering more than 61% of households, and rapidly deployed 5G networks covering 90% of the population already by 2022. Thanks to this, the country consistently demonstrates high access speed indicators, reaching 192 Mbps for fixed and 100 Mbps for mobile internet, which creates a solid technological base for the realization of citizens’ digital rights.

Lithuania’s legislative framework in the field of the internet is largely harmonized with European Union norms and is aimed at protecting users’ rights, ensuring competition, and security. Regulation is carried out through a set of laws and the activities of authorized agencies such as the Communications Regulatory Authority (RRT) and the National Cyber Security Centre (NKSC). At the same time, the country has clearly defined procedures for blocking internet resources and legislation establishing liability for “words on the internet”, including the dissemination of disinformation and incitement of hatred. These mechanisms are applied to combat copyright violations, illegal gambling, and the distribution of unlawful content.

A key factor that influenced the state of digital rights was the geopolitical situation, in particular Russia’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine. In response to increased national security threats, the Lithuanian authorities intensified the blocking of Russian propaganda resources and media. Although no cases of mass internet shutdowns have been recorded in the country, the practice of blocking and isolated cases of criminal prosecution for online statements create tension between the need to protect the information space and compliance with the principles of freedom of speech and access to information. This balance is the central challenge for digital rights in Lithuania at the current stage.

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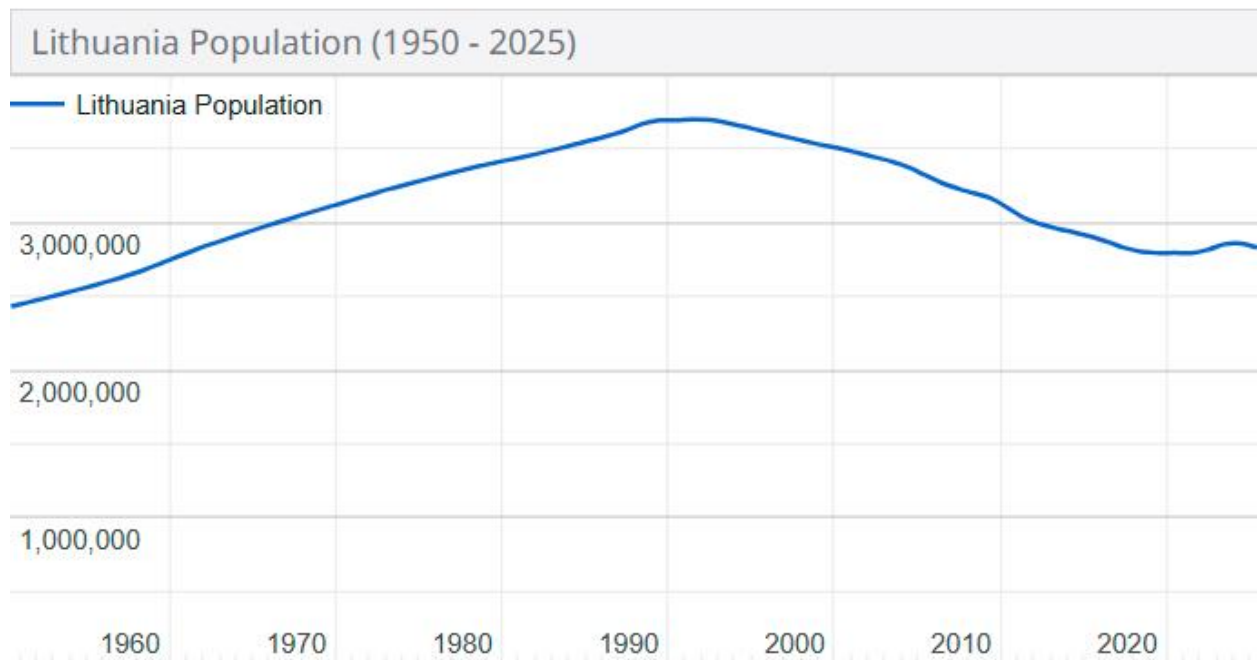
1. General Information

1.1. Geographical Location

Lithuania, a state in Northern Europe, occupies a strategic position on the southeastern coast of the Baltic Sea. The country borders Latvia to the north, Belarus to the southeast, Poland and the Kaliningrad Region of the Russian Federation to the southwest.¹ Lithuania's terrain is predominantly flat, formed by glaciers, with hilly elevations in the west and east not exceeding 300 meters above sea level. A characteristic feature of the landscape is the numerous small lakes and marshes, while mixed forests cover about 30% of the country's territory.¹ The area of protected natural territories is significant and amounts to 9,988 km², or 15.3% of Lithuania's total area, which emphasizes attention to environmental issues.³ The country's geographical position at the junction of various geopolitical and cultural spaces has historically had a significant influence on its development, including the formation of the information environment and approaches to ensuring cybersecurity.

1.2. Population

The demographic situation in Lithuania is characterized by a long-term trend of population decline after the restoration of independence, caused by both emigration and natural decrease. However, in recent years, some stabilization and even a slight increase have been observed, partly related to immigration flows, including from Ukraine and Belarus.⁴ According to preliminary data from the Department of Statistics of Lithuania, as of the beginning of 2025, the number of permanent residents of the country was 2.891 million people.⁵ The share of the urban population is quite high and amounts to about 68%.⁴ The ethnic composition of Lithuania's population is relatively homogeneous: as of the beginning of 2025, Lithuanians made up 86.4%, Poles – 5.7%, Russians – 4.5%, Belarusians – 1.5%, Ukrainians – 1.0%.⁹ The median age of the population is about 42.3 years⁴, which indicates the process of population aging, recognized as one of the serious demographic problems of the country.¹⁰ Forecasts indicate a possible reduction in the working-age population by 30% by 2050, while the old-age dependency ratio may exceed 50%.¹¹

Chart 1: Dynamics of Lithuania's Population (1950–2025)

Source: *worldometers.info*

The slight population growth observed in 2022–2023 is likely related to geopolitical events in the region, in particular the war in Ukraine and the political situation in Belarus, which led to an increase in migration flows to Lithuania.⁶ This factor may temporarily mitigate the problem of workforce reduction. However, long-term forecasts still point to risks of renewed depopulation⁴, which creates challenges for sustainable economic development and may affect demand for digital services and the development of relevant infrastructure. Changes in ethnic composition and the influx of migrants may also influence the country's information space, including content consumption in different languages and the authorities' approaches to regulating information in the context of national security.

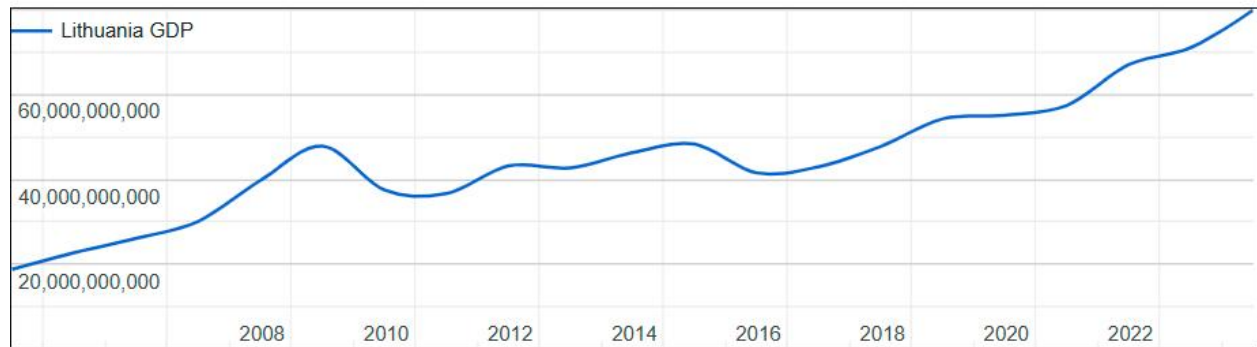
1.3. Gross Domestic Product (GDP)

Lithuania's economy during the period under review demonstrated a certain resilience despite global economic challenges such as the COVID-19 pandemic and the consequences of the war in Ukraine, including a surge in inflation.⁶ In 2023, the country's GDP at current prices reached 72.1 billion euros⁶, equivalent to approximately 79.79 billion US dollars.¹⁴ Real GDP growth in 2023 was about 0.3%.⁶ Forecasts for 2024–2025 indicate a resumption and acceleration of economic growth,

which, according to various estimates, may range from 2.2% to 2.7% in 2024 and from 2.8% to 3.1% in 2025. The drivers of this growth are private consumption and exports of services.¹¹

Chart 2: Dynamics of Lithuania's Nominal GDP (2003–2023)

Lithuania GDP (Nominal, \$USD) 2003-2023



Source: *worldometers.info*

The resilience of Lithuania's economy to external shocks creates an overall favorable background for continuing investments in digital transformation and internet infrastructure development. However, the projected growth of the state budget deficit and public debt¹⁷ may become a constraining factor for state investments in these areas if they are not defined as an unconditional priority. The successful convergence of living standards in Lithuania with OECD standards over the past decades¹¹ and the transition to a growth model based on export competitiveness have formed a more mature economic base. This, in turn, can contribute to the growth of demand for high-quality and diverse internet services, including paid content, e-commerce, and cloud services, stimulating the development of the corresponding segments of the internet market.

1.4. Main Economic Characteristics

Lithuania's economy is classified as industrial-agrarian and is largely export-oriented.²⁴ Key industries include manufacturing (including the chemical industry, mechanical engineering, electronics production, food industry, textiles, oil refining, furniture and wood products), the service sector (especially information technology, financial services, tourism, transport, and logistics), as well as agriculture (grain, vegetable, and dairy production).²⁴ The share of industry and energy in GDP in 2017 was 22.6%, with manufacturing accounting for 19.4%.²⁴ The service sector makes the largest contribution to GDP, amounting to about 60.7% in 2021.¹³ In the period from 2019 to 2025, the country's economy experienced both growth periods and slowdowns associated with global

challenges such as the COVID-19 pandemic and geopolitical tensions in the region, which led to high inflation.⁶ After GDP growth slowed to 0.3% in 2023⁶, its recovery is expected in 2024–2025 at the level of 2.2–3.1%.¹¹

Structural problems of the Lithuanian economy include demographic challenges such as population aging and emigration, especially of qualified specialists, which leads to a reduction in the workforce and creates pressure on the social security system.¹⁰ Despite the growth of average wages, their level remains relatively low compared to more developed EU countries, which is one of the factors stimulating emigration.²⁴ The problem of uneven regional economic development persists, with economic activity concentrated in large cities.²⁴ A significant share of the shadow economy, estimated at 26.4% of GDP in 2023²⁰, limits budget revenues. Dependence on energy imports, despite efforts at diversification, remains a challenge for energy security.¹¹ In addition, current tasks include accelerating the “green transition” and increasing the energy efficiency of the economy.¹¹

Lithuania’s transition to higher-tech industries such as ICT and fintech²⁵ requires modern digital infrastructure and highly qualified personnel. However, structural problems, especially emigration and regional disparities, may contribute to deepening the digital divide within the country. Efforts to ensure energy security and the “green transition”¹¹ may, on the one hand, stimulate innovation in “smart” technologies and digital infrastructure, but, on the other hand, require significant investments, which may affect the financing of other areas of digitalization.

1.5. General Political Situation

Lithuania is a parliamentary republic with elements of a semi-presidential system.²⁸ The head of state is the president, elected by popular vote for a five-year term. During the period under review, since July 12, 2019, the post of president has been held by Gitanas Nausėda.³¹ Executive power in the country is exercised by the Government of the Republic of Lithuania, headed by the prime minister. The prime minister is appointed by the president with the approval of the Seimas (the unicameral parliament of the country).²⁹ Since December 12, 2024, the government has been headed by Gintautas Paluckas.³³ His predecessor in this post from December 2020 to December 2024 was Ingrida Šimonytė.³⁷ Legislative power belongs to the Seimas (Lietuvos Respublikos Seimas), which consists of 141 members elected for a four-year term through mixed voting (single-mandate constituencies and party lists).³⁰ The Speaker of the Seimas since November 14, 2024, is Saulius Skvernelis.⁴⁰

Lithuania's political system is multi-party.³⁰ As of March 2019, 24 political parties were operating in the country.⁴² According to the results of the 2024 parliamentary elections and the subsequent formation of the government, the ruling coalition consisted of the Social Democratic Party of Lithuania (LSDP), the Political Party "Nemuno Aušra" and the Democratic Union "For Lithuania" (DSVL).³³ The largest opposition parties and factions in the Seimas of the current convocation are the Homeland Union – Lithuanian Christian Democrats (TS-LKD), the Liberal Movement (LRLS), the Lithuanian Farmers and Greens Union (LVŽS), and others.⁴³ The political situation in the country is characterized by commitment to democratic principles and values, membership in the European Union and NATO, which has a significant influence on domestic and foreign policy. Important factors shaping the political agenda in recent years are national security issues, especially in the context of Russian aggression against Ukraine, energy independence, socio-economic problems including inflation and income inequality, as well as human rights and the rule of law issues.⁴⁵ In 2023–2024, there was some decline in socio-political cohesion and criticism of the previous government, but the war in Ukraine contributed to the "rally around the flag" effect.⁴⁵

The administrative-territorial division of Lithuania includes 10 counties (apskritis) and 60 municipalities (savivaldybės), which consist of cities and districts.² Counties are the highest administrative units, but since July 1, 2010, county governor administrations were abolished, and most local government functions were transferred to the municipal level.⁵¹

Lithuania's membership in the EU and NATO sets the main directions of foreign policy and standards in the field of human rights and democracy, which should contribute to the observance of citizens' digital rights. However, increased attention to national security issues in light of the geopolitical situation⁴⁵ may lead to tightening of legislation in the information sphere, potentially affecting digital rights, for example, through strengthening measures to combat disinformation or expanding surveillance practices. Frequent changes of ruling coalitions, as occurred at the end of 2024³³, may affect the consistency of implementing long-term strategies in the field of digitalization and internet regulation, as well as the stability of the work of institutions responsible for this sphere. The new left-center government³³ may pay more attention to the social aspects of digitalization, such as digital accessibility and combating digital inequality.

2. Internet

2.1. National Domain

The national top-level domain (ccTLD) of Lithuania is .lt.⁵³ It was officially registered and put into operation on June 3, 1992.⁵⁴ The initiator of the creation and the initial administrator was Kaunas University of Technology (KTU)⁵⁴, although the initial request for domain delegation was made by the University of Oslo on behalf of Lithuania.⁵⁶ In 1994, the functions of administering the .lt domain were fully transferred from the University of Oslo to Kaunas University of Technology.⁵⁴ Currently, the administration of the .lt domain is carried out by a specialized subdivision of KTU – the Internet Services Center DOMREG (KTU ITPI).⁵⁴ Initially, registration of domain names in the .lt zone was limited to the academic community, state institutions, and companies. The first second-level domains such as mii.lt, ktu.lt, and vu.lt were registered in 1993.⁵⁴

The conditions for using the .lt domain are quite open. Registration of domain names is available to both individuals and legal entities, regardless of their residency or location.⁵³ The length of a domain name must be between 2⁵⁷ and 63 characters.⁵⁷ Names may use Latin alphabet letters, numbers, and hyphens, but a hyphen cannot be at the beginning or end of the name.⁵⁷ An important feature is the support for internationalized domain names (IDN) since 2004, which allows registration of domains using specific Lithuanian diacritical marks (ą, č, ę, è, į, š, ū, ū, ž).⁵³ Registration of domains is carried out directly at the second level. The DOMREG registry requires mandatory indication of registrant data during registration, and subsequent changes to this data are a paid procedure known as “Trade Order”.⁵³ The .lt domain zone supports DNSSEC (Domain Name System Security Extensions) technology for increased security.⁵³ As of May 2025, the total number of registered .lt domains exceeded 243 thousand, of which about 2,138 domains used Lithuanian diacritical marks (IDN).⁵⁹

Despite many years of IDN support, their share remains insignificant (less than 1% of the total number of .lt domains⁵⁹). This may indicate several factors: insufficient user awareness of this possibility, preference for more universal ASCII names for international compatibility, or the established practice of using transliterated names without diacritics. The transfer of .lt domain administration to a national institution (KTU) in 1994⁵⁴ became an important stage in the formation of the national internet segment and contributed to the development of local expertise in the management of internet resources.

2.2. Number of Users

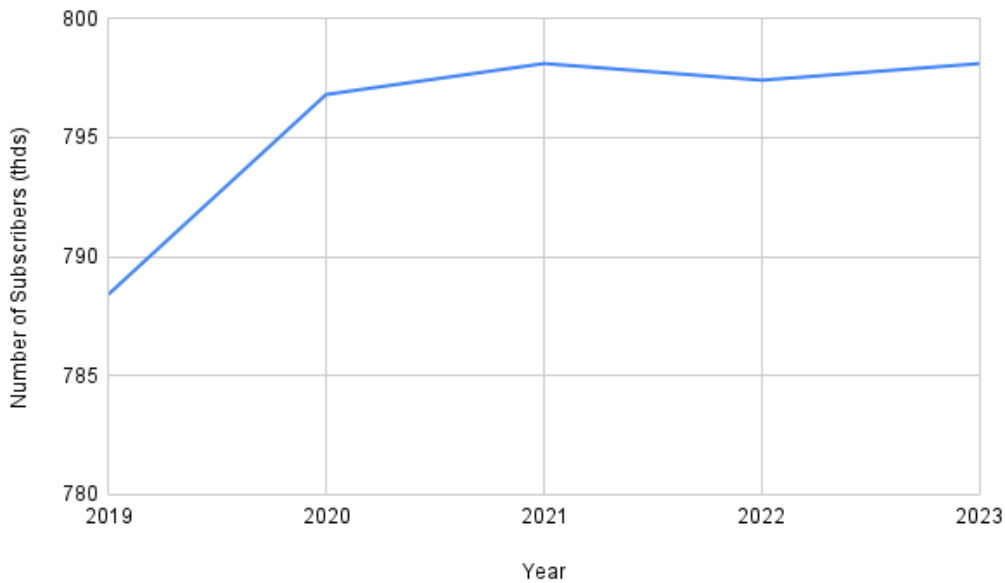
As of the beginning of 2025, there were 2.55 million internet users in Lithuania, which amounted to 89.5% of the total population.⁶¹ The International Telecommunication Union (ITU) also provides high figures: 83.1% in 2020⁶², 86.93% in 2021, 87.72% in 2022⁶³, and 83.8% in 2023.⁶⁴ According to the data of the Department of Statistics of Lithuania for 2023, 89% of residents aged 16 to 74 used the internet⁶⁵, with the penetration rate in cities at 91.4% and in rural areas at 82.2%.⁶⁶ Internet Society Pulse estimates the share of internet users in Lithuania at approximately 88%.⁶⁷

The high and steadily growing level of internet penetration indicates a mature digital society in Lithuania. However, despite the generally high indicators, a certain digital divide remains. Data indicate differences in internet usage levels between urban and rural populations⁶⁷, as well as between different age groups, where the older generation uses the internet less actively.⁶⁵ This emphasizes the need to continue efforts to improve digital literacy and ensure equal access to digital technologies for all segments of the population. A slight decrease in the absolute number of internet users noted by DataReportal from January 2024 to January 2025 (by 14 thousand, or -0.5%) with an unchanged overall penetration level⁶¹ is likely related to the general demographic dynamics in the country, such as emigration or natural population decline, rather than a decrease in accessibility or interest in the internet.

2.2.1. Fixed Internet

The fixed broadband (ŠPD) market in Lithuania is characterized by a high level of development, where the dominant technology is fiber (FTTP/FTTH), providing high data transmission speeds to a significant part of the population.⁶⁸ In 2023, fiber-optic lines covered 61.1% of residential premises⁶⁸, and the overall coverage of households by fixed networks (including satellite communications) was 77.2%, with a total number of users of 798.1 thousand.⁶⁸ According to Statistics Lithuania, in 2023, 88.6% of households had broadband internet access.⁶⁶

The largest player in the fixed internet market is Telia Lietuva, AB, whose share by network coverage in 2023 was 75.0%.⁶⁸ The company also holds a dominant position in the fixed telephony sector.⁶⁷ Other notable providers are UAB “Cgates” (coverage share 31.1%), UAB “Init” (21.0%), and UAB “Balticum TV” (18.8%).⁶⁸ It is important to note that the sum of coverage shares exceeds 100%, as the networks of different operators may overlap, and one household may be in the coverage area of several providers.

Chart 3: Dynamics of the Number of Fixed Broadband Users in Lithuania (2019–2023)

- **Telia Lietuva, AB:** 75.0% (<https://www.telia.lt>)⁷²
- **UAB "Cgates":** 31.1% (<https://www.cgates.lt>)⁷⁹
- **UAB "Init":** 21.0% (<https://www.init.lt>)
- **UAB "Balticum TV":** 18.8% (<https://www.balticum.lt>)
- **UAB "Splus":** 10.5% (<https://www.splus.lt>)
- **UAB "Penkių kontinentų komunikacijų centras":** 10.0% (<https://www.penki.lt>)

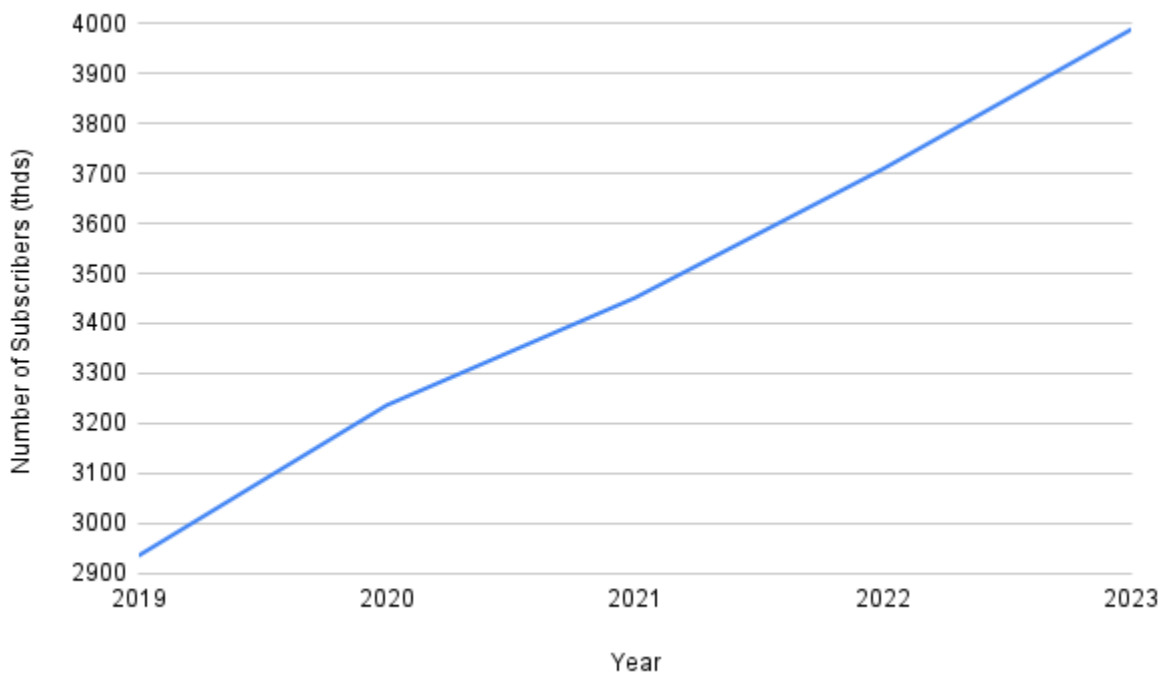
The fixed broadband market in Lithuania is saturated, with high penetration of fiber-optic technologies, which ensures high quality and access speed for most users. The dominant position of Telia Lietuva⁶⁸ in the market, despite the presence of other players, may raise questions about the real level of competition. However, Cgates' leadership in some speed indicators⁸⁰ indicates the presence of competition in quality aspects. The slowdown in the development of fiber-optic networks and the need to pay more attention to remote areas⁶⁸ emphasize the "last mile" problem and potential digital divide. State initiatives such as Plačiajuostis Internetas⁸² and investments from EU funds⁸² play an important role in overcoming this divide.

2.2.2. Mobile Internet

The mobile internet market in Lithuania is characterized by a high level of penetration and active competition. As of the beginning of 2025, there were 3.90 million active mobile connections in the country, equivalent to 137% of the total population.⁶¹ Of these connections, 96.8% are classified as “broadband” (3G, 4G, or 5G).⁶¹ The number of active SIM cards used to provide internet access services in 2023 reached 3.988 million, which is 7.5% more than in 2022.⁶⁸ The average monthly volume of data transmitted per mobile internet user in 2023 was 30.1 GB.⁶⁸

The development of 5G networks is active: already in 2022, 5G coverage reached 90% of the population⁸³, and by March 2023, Telia provided 95% population coverage with its 5G network.⁶⁹ The main players in the mobile communications and mobile internet market are **Telia Lietuva, AB, UAB “Tele2”, and UAB “Bitė Lietuva”**.⁶⁸ The operator **UAB “Mezon”** is also present in the market.⁶⁸

Chart 4: Dynamics of the Number of Mobile Broadband Subscribers in Lithuania (2019–2023)



Largest mobile internet providers and their market shares (by total volume of transmitted and received data, 2023⁶⁸):

- **Telia Lietuva, AB:** 475.6 PB (approximately 37.3%) (<https://www.telia.lt>)⁸⁷

- **UAB “Tele2”:** 446.2 PB (approximately 35.0%) (<https://tele2.lt>)⁸⁸
- **UAB “Bitė Lietuva”:** 426.4 PB (approximately 33.4%) (<https://www.bite.lt>)⁸⁶
- **UAB “Mezon”:** 23.7 PB (approximately 1.9%) (<https://www.mezon.lt>)

Note: Percentage shares are calculated based on traffic data from⁶⁸ for the four listed operators and the “others” category.

The mobile internet market in Lithuania is highly competitive, with three main players (Telia, Tele2, Bitė) having comparable shares in terms of data volume. This competition stimulates the rapid introduction of new technologies such as 5G and improvement of service quality. The high level of mobile broadband penetration and active 5G deployment create the basis for the development of innovative mobile services but simultaneously increase the importance of mobile network cybersecurity and user data protection issues. The high indicator of the number of mobile connections per capita (137% in 2025⁶¹) may indicate not only widespread use of mobile devices but also the prevalence of using multiple SIM cards by one user or a significant number of M2M connections, which complicates the accurate assessment of the number of unique mobile internet users.

2.3. Internet Access Speed and Quality of Services Provided

Lithuania consistently demonstrates high indicators of both fixed and mobile internet speed, often occupying leading positions in international rankings. According to the Ookla Speedtest Global Index, in Q4 2023, the median mobile network download speed in Lithuania was 100.89 Mbps, which is 22.2% higher than a year earlier. At the same time, the median download speed via fixed broadband networks reached 192.38 Mbps, showing an increase of 86.7% over the year.⁶¹ Among mobile operators in Q4 2023, Telia led in median download speed (116.58 Mbps) and had the lowest latency (32 ms).⁸⁹ In the fixed internet segment, according to Speedtest Awards, the company Cgates was recognized as the leader in overall speed indicator (Speed Score) in Q1–Q2 and Q3–Q4 2024, demonstrating peak download speeds up to 717.57 Mbps.⁸⁰ The nPerf report for 2023 also highlights Telia as the leader in download (140.22 Mbps) and upload (75.6 Mbps) speeds in fixed networks.⁷⁴ According to Cable.co.uk for 2024, the average download speed in Lithuania was 111 Mbps⁹⁰, which is an improvement compared to 87.09 Mbps in 2023.⁹¹

The high quality and availability of broadband internet in Lithuania are confirmed by reports of the Communications Regulatory Authority (RRT) and European institutions, largely due to the widespread use of fiber-optic networks.⁶⁸ For example, in 2022, 5G network coverage reached 90% of the population, exceeding the EU average.⁸³ The Ministry of Transport and Communications of

Lithuania has set a goal to ensure internet access speeds of at least 100 Mbps for households and state institutions in both urban and rural areas by 2027.⁸²

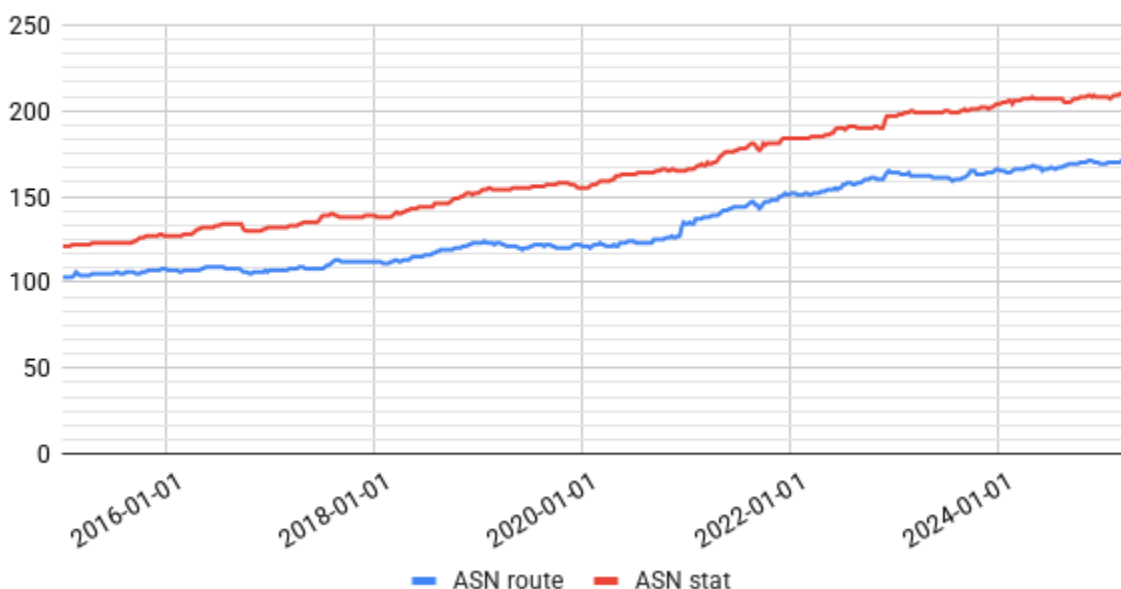
Different speed measurement methodologies (Ookla, nPerf, Cable.co.uk) may lead to different absolute values and highlight different market leaders. This emphasizes the importance of a comprehensive analysis of data from several sources and understanding their methodological features when assessing the quality of internet services. Nevertheless, all sources agree that Lithuania has high access speeds, especially in the fixed connection segment, thanks to the developed fiber-optic infrastructure. Despite the generally high indicators, there may be differences in service quality between different providers and regions, which requires constant monitoring by RRT and attention to infrastructure development in less densely populated areas. High internet speeds and wide penetration create favorable conditions for the development of the digital economy and society but simultaneously increase the importance of ensuring cybersecurity, data protection, and media literacy of the population.

2.4. Development of Providers and Autonomous Systems

Autonomous Systems (AS) are fundamental components of the global internet infrastructure, representing IP address networks under a single administrative management with a common routing policy to external networks. The development of the number of AS in a country reflects the growth and diversification of its internet ecosystem. According to the Regional Internet Registry RIPE NCC, responsible for the allocation of internet resources in the European region, as of May 2025, 209 Autonomous Systems (ASN) were allocated for Lithuania.⁹⁶ At the same time, according to the IPinfo service for the same period, there were 231 AS in Lithuania.⁹⁷ These discrepancies may be due to differences in counting methodologies and the timing of database updates by different services.

Chart 5: Dynamics of Autonomous Systems in Lithuania (2015–2025)

ASN Stat



The chart of the number of AS demonstrates a stable and confident growth in the number of autonomous systems in Lithuania from 2016 to 2024.

Total number of AS (ASN stat): The line shows almost linear growth, increasing from approximately 125 to 211. This indicates the constant emergence of new players in the internet services market, including providers, hosting companies, and large organizations seeking independent network policies.

Number of routable AS (ASN route): This line also shows confident growth, rising from approximately 100 to 168. It is important that the growth in the number of active, routable systems is almost parallel to the growth in the total number of registered AS.

Ratio: The gap between the total number and the number of routable AS (211 versus 168) remains relatively constant. This is a normal situation, as not all registered AS are announced in the global network; some may be used for internal needs, be in the process of configuration, or be reserved for the future.

Stable growth without sharp jumps or drops indicates the maturity and sustainability of the country's internet ecosystem.

One of the key indicators of internet development is the number of autonomous systems relative to the population size. This speaks to the degree of decentralization, competition, and connectivity of the internet infrastructure.

According to 2024 data, Lithuania's population is approximately 2.87 million people, thus there are currently 211 autonomous systems / 2.87 million people $\approx$ 73.5 AS per 1 million inhabitants.

Table 1: Top 10 Largest Autonomous Systems in Lithuania

#	Number of AS	Name	Web Site	Foreign neighbour count	Local neighbour count	Total neighbour count	Foreign neighbours share
1	28917	Fiord-AS	https://www.fiord.net/	841	22	863	97%
2	56630	Melbikomas	https://melbicom.net	166	8	174	95%
3	13194	Bite Lietuva	http://www.bite.lt	119	38	157	76%
4	8764	Telia-Lietuva	https://www.telia.lt/eng	88	47	135	65%
5	8849	Melbicom	https://www.melbicom.net	94	10	104	90%
6	33922	Nacionalinis Telekomunikacijų Tinklas	http://www.ntt.lt	53	15	68	78%
7	15440	Baltnet	http://www.balt.net	11	35	46	24%
8	44358	Kauno Technologijos Universitetas	https://domreg.lt	22	5	27	81%
9	51247	Skystark - serveriotechnologijos	http://skystark.net	17	0	17	100%
10	49287	SWIFTYCDN		12	2	14	86%

The stable or growing trend in the number of AS, especially those actively participating in global routing, usually indicates a healthy and developing internet ecosystem. This also implies the complication of tasks for managing IP addressing and routing at the national level, which requires

high qualifications of specialists and effective coordination between market participants and regulatory bodies such as RRT and DOMREG. The composition of autonomous systems, including internet providers (ISP), hosting providers, educational institutions, and large enterprises, reflects the structure of demand for direct internet connection and the degree of development of various segments of the digital economy. For example, a significant number of AS belonging to hosting providers may indicate a developed market for web hosting and cloud services in the country.

The data in the table of the largest autonomous systems indicate a high degree of concentration at the level of backbone connectivity. A key position is occupied by AS28917 (Fiord-AS), which has 863 peering neighbors. This indicator is more than five times higher than that of the nearest competitor (AS56630, Melbikomas, 174 neighbors), which allows classifying Fiord-AS as the dominant operator of internet traffic transit in the country.

The most important characteristic of the presented autonomous systems is their strategic orientation toward international connectivity. In eight out of the ten leading systems, the share of foreign peering connections (Foreign neighbours share) ranges from 76% to 100%.

- Systems such as **AS28917 (Fiord-AS, 97%)**, **AS56630 (Melbikomas, 95%)**, and **AS51247 (Skystark, 100%)** function primarily as providers of international transit, providing access to the global network for national operators.
- Large providers of internet services to end users, **AS13194 (Bite Lietuva, 76%)** and **AS8764 (Telia-Lietuva, 65%)**, also demonstrate a predominance of external connections. This indicates that providing broad and diversified access to foreign resources is a critically important component of their network strategy.

Heterogeneity and maturity of the internet ecosystem

Despite the concentration at the transit level, the composition of the top-10 actors demonstrates heterogeneity and maturity of the national internet ecosystem.

- **Operators focused on the domestic market:** **AS15440 (Baltnet)** is an exception, where the share of foreign neighbors is only 24%. This peering structure is typical for operators oriented toward the domestic market, such as large data centers or providers of national cloud services, for which priority is given to domestic traffic exchange.
- **Participation of the academic sector:** The presence in the list of **AS44358 (Kaunas University of Technology)** confirms the significant role of scientific and educational institutions in the formation and maintenance of the national network infrastructure.

- **Presence of specialized providers:** The inclusion in the rating of companies providing content delivery network (CDN) services and other server technologies, in particular **AS49287 (SWIFTCDN) and AS51247 (Skystark)**, indicates a high level of development of the digital services market that goes beyond simple internet access provision.

Conclusion

The analysis of the connectivity topology of Lithuania's leading autonomous systems reveals a two-tier market structure. At the upper level, there is domination by several operators providing the main volume of international transit. At lower levels, there is a diversified and competitive environment that includes large retail providers, operators focused on domestic traffic, academic networks, and providers of high-tech services. Such a structure is a sign of a mature, resilient, and deeply integrated national internet infrastructure into the global network.

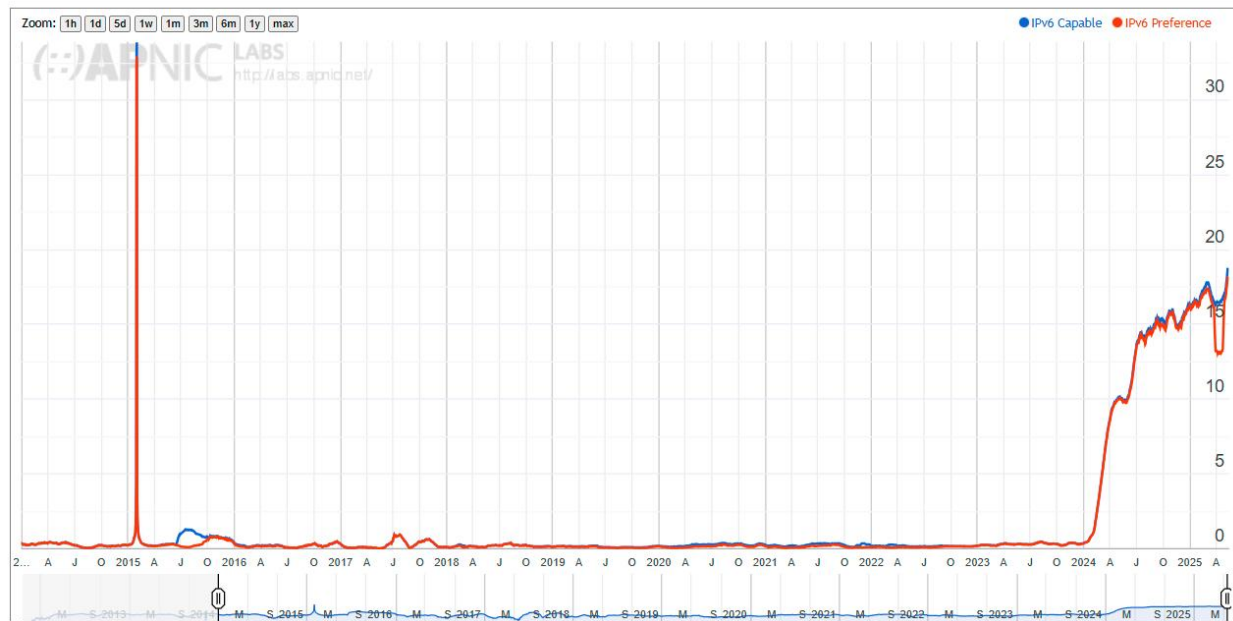
2.5. IPv6 Penetration

The transition to the new version of the internet protocol IPv6 is a global task aimed at solving the problem of IPv4 address exhaustion and ensuring further internet growth. In Lithuania, gradual implementation of IPv6 is observed. According to Google as of May 2025, the level of IPv6 adoption (the share of users accessing the internet via IPv6) in Lithuania was 21.76%.¹⁰⁹ APNIC statistics at the beginning of 2025 show similar but slightly lower figures for IPv6-capable users – about 14–16%, while noting a noticeable increase since 2021.¹¹⁰ According to Internet Society Pulse for 2025, the level of IPv6 adoption in Lithuania is 14%, which is below the European average (33%).⁶⁷

Analysis of the .lt domain name infrastructure shows that a significant part of DNS servers is ready for IPv6: 78.12% of second-level .lt domains have at least one name server supporting IPv6. However, the actual use of IPv6 at the level of end services is still limited: only 11.14% of delegated .lt domains have an AAAA record (web server address in IPv6), and 11.45% have a mail server with IPv6 support (MX record pointing to an IPv6-compatible server).¹¹¹ This indicates that although the basic infrastructure (DNS, provider networks) is largely ready for IPv6, content and services are not always available via the new protocol. According to RIPE NCC, about 28% of networks in Lithuania are announced via IPv6, which is higher than in Latvia (20%) and Poland (16%), but lower than, for example, in Germany (57%).¹¹¹

Chart 6: Dynamics of IPv6 Penetration in Lithuania (2015–2025)

Use of IPv6 for Lithuania (LT)



Source: stats.labs.apnic.net

IPv6 penetration in Lithuania, although showing positive dynamics, has not yet reached the level of many leading European countries. The slow transition may be related to a sufficient number of IPv4 addresses among providers (thanks to the use of NAT and other technologies), the high cost and complexity of a full infrastructure update, as well as the lack of immediate commercial incentives for accelerated IPv6 implementation for all services.¹¹¹ Nevertheless, the further growth of the Internet of Things (IoT), the development of 5G networks, and the need to ensure global connectivity will inevitably stimulate a more active transition to IPv6.

2.6. Connectivity Index

To assess the level of integration of the internet segment, two key indicators are used, based on the analysis of pairwise connections (peerings) between Autonomous Systems (ASN).

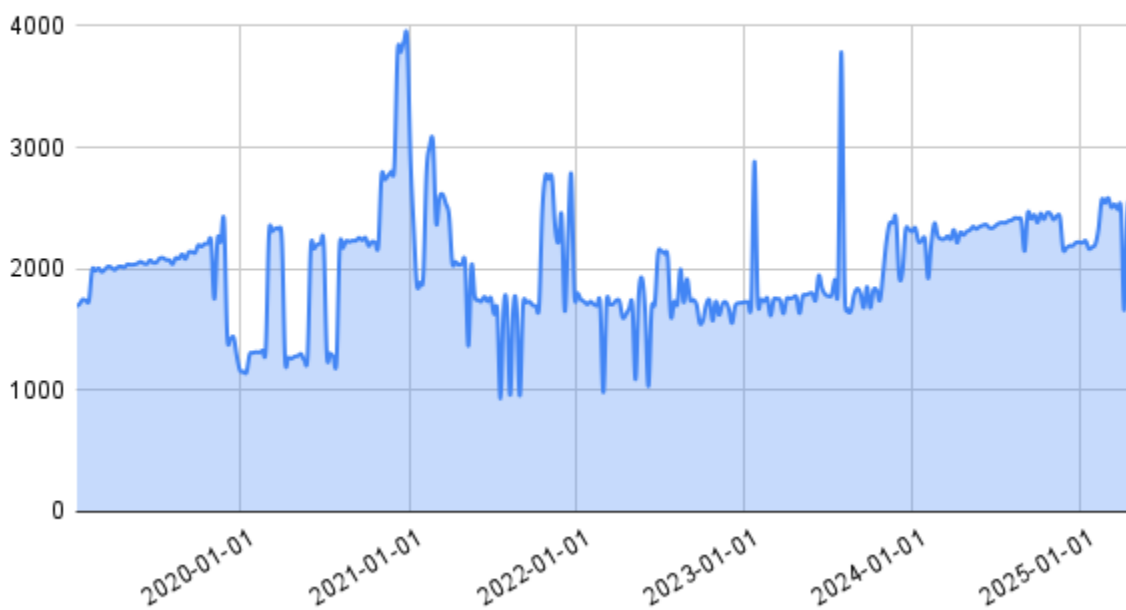
Global Connectivity Index: This index represents the total number of unique connections between each local ASN and each external (foreign) ASN. In essence, it measures how widely and diversely the internet segment is connected to the rest of the world. The higher this indicator, the more “windows” the country has to the global network.

Local Connectivity Index: This index is calculated as the total number of unique connections between different local Lithuanian ASNs. It reflects the intensity and complexity of the domestic internet market, in particular the activity at internet exchange points (IXP). A high indicator indicates a developed internal ecosystem that allows efficient domestic traffic exchange, minimizing delays and dependence on external channels for local data.

Analysis of the ratio of these two indices allows understanding the strategic orientation of the national network: whether it is predominantly self-sufficient or deeply integrated into the global infrastructure.

Chart 7: Dynamics of Global Connectivity of Lithuanian Autonomous Systems (2019–2025)

Global connectivity statistics

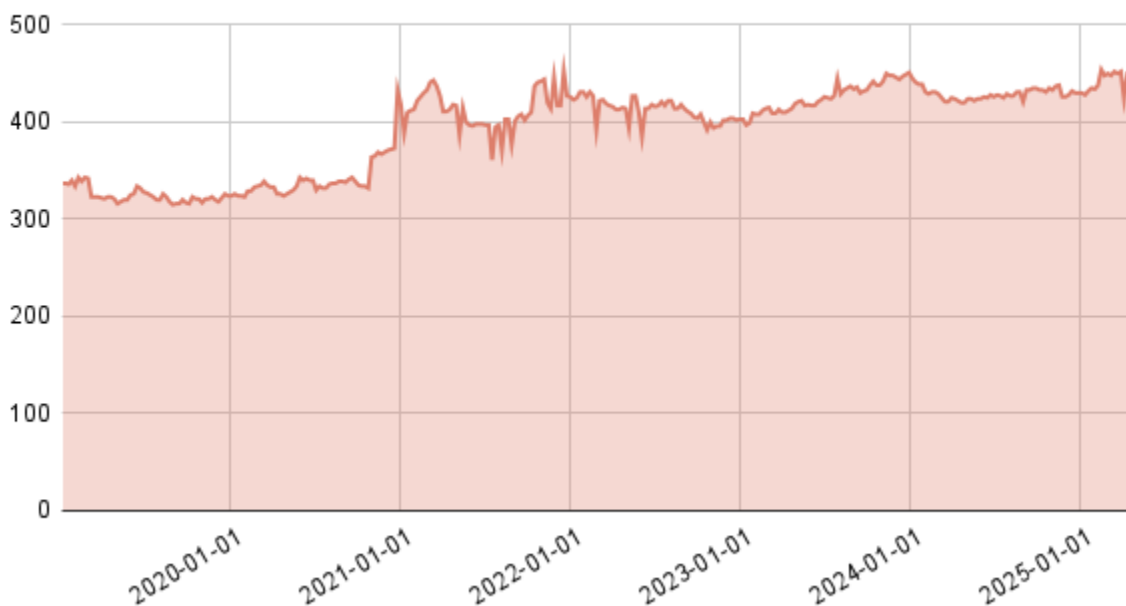


The Global Connectivity Index demonstrates an overall growth trend but is characterized by a high degree of volatility. At the beginning of the studied period (2020), the baseline connectivity level was around 2000 unique connections. During 2021–2023, there were periods of extreme variability with peak values reaching 4000 connections, which may indicate temporary connections to large transit operators, changes in routing, or test peering sessions. By 2024–2025, the indicator stabilized at a higher level, around 2500 connections, which indicates an increase in the number of permanent international connections and the expansion of the integration of the Lithuanian internet segment into the global network.

This dynamic reflects the active process of establishing and reconfiguring external connections. High volatility indicates a dynamic market where operators constantly optimize routes and seek new partners for traffic exchange. The higher baseline level established by the end of the period confirms the strategic build-up of international connectivity and increased resilience of the national segment through diversification of external channels.

Graph 8: Dynamics of Local Connectivity of Lithuanian Autonomous Systems (2019–2025)

Local connectivity statistics

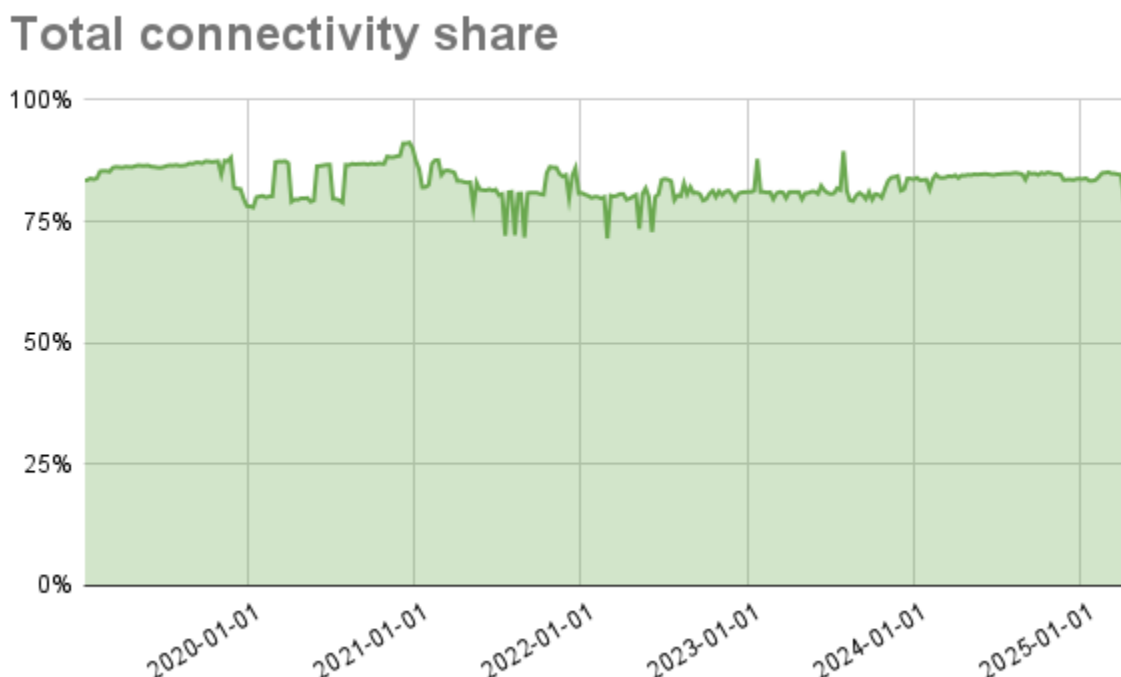


Unlike global connectivity on a global scale, the Local Connectivity Index shows consistent and stable growth throughout the entire period. Starting from approximately 320 connections in 2020, the indicator demonstrates a noticeable jump at the beginning of 2021 to over 400. After this period of rapid consolidation, growth continued more smoothly, reaching approximately 450 unique internal connections by 2025. The absence of sharp fluctuations characteristic of the global index indicates sustainable development of the domestic internet ecosystem.

This dynamic evidences a systematic strengthening of interconnections between national autonomous systems. The increase in the number of local peering points to the development of internet exchange points (IXP) and the desire of operators to optimise the routing of domestic

traffic, reducing latency and dependence on foreign channels for data exchange within the country. This is a sign of maturity of the domestic market and increased efficiency of its functioning.

Graph 9: Dynamics of the Ratio of Global and Local Connectivity of Lithuanian Autonomous Systems (2019–2025)



The connectivity ratio graph (Total connectivity share) shows that the share of global connections steadily predominates, accounting on average for 80–85% of the total number of peering links. Despite significant volatility in the absolute number of global connections (Graph 7), their share remains relatively constant. This indicates that the growth of local connectivity occurred proportionally or with a slight lag behind the growth of global connectivity, preserving the overall structure of network orientation.

The consistently high share of global connections is a key indicator of the strategic orientation of the Lithuanian internet segment. The network is deeply integrated into the global infrastructure and is largely focused on international transit. Although domestic connectivity is strengthening, the primary priority of operators is to ensure broad and diverse access to global internet resources, which confirms the conclusions previously drawn based on the analysis of the peering structure of leading autonomous systems.

3. Internet Legislation

3.1. Principles of Internet Governance

Internet governance in Lithuania is based on principles common to European Union countries and is aimed at ensuring openness, security, protection of user rights and the development of the digital economy. The key aspects are promoting competition, protecting consumer rights, ensuring the security of networks and information, as well as protecting fundamental rights and freedoms such as freedom of expression and the right to privacy in the digital environment.⁸³ Lithuanian legislation in this area is largely harmonised with EU directives and regulations, including the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), the Electronic Communications Code (EECC), the Digital Services Act (DSA) and the Digital Markets Act (DMA).⁸³

State policy is aimed at developing digital infrastructure, including high-speed broadband access and 5G networks, in order to ensure universal access to modern digital services.⁸² At the same time, attention is paid to cybersecurity issues, as reflected in the National Cybersecurity Strategy.¹¹⁶ The multi-stakeholder model also finds reflection in the processes of discussion and policy formation in the field of the internet, although the degree of its real influence may vary.¹¹⁸

3.1.1. Regulation

Internet regulation in Lithuania is carried out through a set of legislative acts and the activities of authorised state bodies. The main law regulating the electronic communications sector is the Law of the Republic of Lithuania on Electronic Communications.⁸² This law establishes the legal framework for the activities of providers of electronic communications networks and services, management of the radio frequency spectrum, ensuring access and interconnection of networks, protection of user rights, and also defines the powers of regulatory authorities. An important role is also played by the Law on Public Information¹³³, which regulates the dissemination of information, including the fight against disinformation and the protection of minors, and the Criminal Code¹¹⁷, which establishes liability for cybercrimes and crimes related to illegal content (e.g. incitement to hatred).

Regulation is aimed at ensuring competition in the market, protecting consumer rights, ensuring the security and integrity of networks, as well as implementing national and European strategic objectives in the field of digitalisation. In particular, the Communications Regulatory Authority (RRT) conducts market analyses of electronic communications, identifies operators with significant

market power (SMP) and may impose specific obligations on them to prevent anti-competitive behaviour.⁶⁹ Procedures for blocking illegal content are also regulated and can be carried out by court decision or authorised administrative bodies in cases provided for by law.¹³⁸

3.1.2. Regulatory Authorities and Responsible Persons

Several authorities play a key role in regulating the internet and electronic communications in Lithuania:

1. **Ministry of Transport and Communications of the Republic of Lithuania (Susisiekimo ministerija):** Responsible for forming state policy in the field of development of digital communications, coordination and control of its implementation, especially in areas where there is no infrastructure or competition.⁸²
 - Minister (as of December 2024): **Eugenijus Sabutis**.¹⁷⁶ Official profile: <https://sumin.lrv.lt/en/structure-and-contacts/the-management/eugenijus-sabutis/>.¹⁷⁷
2. **Communications Regulatory Authority of the Republic of Lithuania (Ryšų reguliavimo tarnyba, RRT):** Independent state body that regulates and supervises the markets of electronic communications, postal and railway services, as well as supervision of trust service providers.⁸² RRT is responsible for managing the radio frequency spectrum, ensuring competition, protecting consumer rights, monitoring the quality of services and performing other functions provided for by the Law on Electronic Communications.
 - RRT management: RRT Council consisting of five members, including the chairman. The chairman and members of the Council are appointed by the President of the Republic on the proposal of the Prime Minister for a term of 5 years.¹¹⁹
 - Chairman of the RRT Council: **Jūratė Šovienė**.¹⁸³ Profile: <https://www.rrt.lt/en/structure-and-contacts/rrt-council/>
3. **State Digital Solutions Agency (Valstybės skaitmeninių sprendimų agentūra, VSSA)** (formerly – Information Society Development Committee, IVPK): Institution under the Ministry of Economy and Innovation that coordinates the processes of information society development, manages the central e-government gateway and issues of document reuse.¹⁸⁵
 - Director of VSSA: **Tomas Misevičius**.¹⁸⁷ Official contacts: <https://vssa.lrv.lt/en/structure-and-contacts/contacts/>¹⁸⁷
4. **National Cyber Security Centre under the Ministry of National Defence (Nacionalinis kibernetinio saugumo centras prie Krašto apsaugos ministerijos, NKSC):** The main institution for cybersecurity, responsible for unified management of cyber incidents,

monitoring and control of compliance with cybersecurity requirements, accreditation of information resources.¹¹⁷

- Acting Director of NKSC (as of March 2025): **Antanas Aleknavičius**.¹⁹² Official website: <https://www.nksc.lt/en/>¹⁸⁹

5. **State Data Protection Inspectorate (Valstybinė duomenų apsaugos inspekcija, VDAI):** Supervisory authority responsible for monitoring the application of GDPR and national data protection legislation.¹⁶⁰
6. **Inspector of Journalist Ethics (Žurnalistų etikos inspektorius tarnyba):** Considers complaints related to media ethics, including issues of defamation and violation of the right to privacy.¹³⁷
7. **Competition Council of the Republic of Lithuania (Konkurencijos taryba):** Responsible for supervising compliance with competition legislation, including antitrust regulation in the electronic communications market.¹³¹
8. **Lithuanian Radio and Television Commission (Lietuvos radijo ir televizijos komisija, LRTK):** Regulates and supervises the activities of radio and television broadcasters as well as on-demand audiovisual media service providers, has the authority to block content that violates copyright or distributes prohibited information.¹³³

3.2. Market Monopolisation

Lithuanian legislation in the field of communications and the internet is aimed at promoting competition and preventing market monopolisation, which corresponds to the general principles of the European Union. The key acts in this area are the Law of the Republic of Lithuania on Electronic Communications⁸² and the Law of the Republic of Lithuania on Competition.¹³¹ The Law on Electronic Communications provides mechanisms for regulating operators with significant market power (Significant Market Power, SMP). The Communications Regulatory Authority (RRT) is authorised to conduct analyses of relevant markets, identify SMP operators and impose specific obligations on them such as ensuring network access, non-discrimination, transparency and price control in order to prevent abuse of dominant position and stimulate competition.⁶⁹ The Law on Competition prohibits anti-competitive agreements and abuse of dominant position in general and also establishes control over concentration (mergers and acquisitions).²⁰⁵

Despite the existence of a legislative framework aimed at preventing monopolisation, in practice certain segments of the electronic communications market may have operators with a very high market share. For example, Telia Lietuva, AB historically holds a dominant position in the fixed telephony market⁹⁴ and has a significant share in the fixed broadband access market.⁶⁸ In such

cases, RRT and the Competition Council (Konkurencijos taryba) exercise supervision and may intervene to ensure equal conditions for all market participants.¹⁵⁴ Regulation of SMP operators is the main tool for preventing actual monopolisation and its negative consequences for consumers and competition.

Although the legislation seeks to prevent legal monopolies, the historically established positions of former state monopolists (e.g. Telia Lietuva as the successor of Lietuvos Telekomas²⁰⁰) may lead to de facto dominance in certain markets. Management of such situations is carried out through the imposition of regulatory obligations on dominant operators rather than through forced division or restriction of their activities if they do not abuse their position. It is important to note that the mobile communications market in Lithuania is characterised by the presence of three major competing operators⁶⁸, which indicates the absence of monopoly in this segment.

3.3. Internet Shutdowns on Government Orders

Lithuanian legislation provides for the possibility of restricting or suspending the provision of electronic communications services, including internet access, in certain strictly regulated cases, usually related to emergency situations, ensuring national security or enforcement of court decisions. The Law of the Republic of Lithuania on Electronic Communications⁸² and the Law of the Republic of Lithuania on State of Emergency²¹⁵ contain provisions that can be applied for such restrictions.

In accordance with the Law on State of Emergency, during a state of emergency certain rights and freedoms may be temporarily restricted, including the right to freely receive and disseminate information.²¹⁵ This may include the introduction of control over mass media and communications networks. The procedure for introducing such restrictions is determined by the government. Amendments to the Law on Electronic Communications adopted in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic also expanded the authorities' possibilities to obtain location and communication data of private individuals in "emergency situations" without judicial authorisation, which caused concern among human rights defenders.²¹⁶

In addition, the legislation provides for the possibility of blocking access to internet resources that distribute illegal content (e.g. child pornography, incitement to hatred, terrorist propaganda, information related to illegal drug trafficking, copyright infringement, illegal gambling, disinformation threatening national security).¹³³ Such blocking is usually carried out by internet providers on the instruction of an authorised state body (e.g. RRT, LRTK, Police) and, as a rule, requires court sanction except in certain cases related to a clear threat to public safety or the

protection of minors.¹⁵⁵ An order to restrict access may be issued by a competent state authority in accordance with the procedure established by law.

3.4. Legislation on “Words on the Internet”

Lithuanian legislation provides for liability for the dissemination of certain information on the internet, including “fakes” (although the term “fake” may not be used in the laws – it refers to the dissemination of false information), disinformation, incitement to hatred and other types of illegal content. The main regulatory acts in this area are the Law of the Republic of Lithuania on Public Information¹³³ and the Criminal Code of the Republic of Lithuania.¹¹⁷

The Law on Public Information prohibits the publication in the media (including internet resources) of information that spreads disinformation, war propaganda, incites war, national, racial, religious, social or gender hatred, incites discrimination, violence, physical retribution.¹³³ The dissemination of false information that defames a person’s honour and dignity or damages their business reputation is also grounds for liability (civil and, in some cases, criminal – defamation).²¹⁸ Although the term “fake” or “fake news” is not always used directly in the legislation, the concept of “disinformation” (dezinformacija) is present and is defined as deliberately false information disseminated with the aim of misleading.¹³³

The Criminal Code of Lithuania (Article 170) provides for liability for public incitement to violence, discrimination or hatred against a group of persons or a person belonging to it on grounds of age, sex, sexual orientation, disability, race, skin colour, nationality, language, descent, ethnic origin, social status, religion, convictions or views.¹¹⁷ Penalties range from community service and fines to imprisonment for up to three years depending on the severity of the act.¹⁴⁵ Liability is also provided for publicly approving, denying or grossly belittling genocide, crimes against humanity or war crimes.¹³³

Administrative liability may arise for the dissemination or display of Nazi, communist symbols or symbols of totalitarian or authoritarian regimes used or being used for war propaganda.¹³³ The Lithuanian Radio and Television Commission (LRTK) has the right to impose fines on entities that distribute propaganda and disinformation.¹³³

Law enforcement practice shows that Lithuanian authorities actively respond to cases of dissemination of disinformation and incitement to hatred, especially in the context of geopolitical tensions and the war in Ukraine.⁴⁸ However, there are also challenges related to ensuring a balance

between combating harmful content and protecting freedom of speech, as well as the effectiveness of investigation and prosecution in such cases.¹⁴²

3.5. Internet Blocking Legislation

Lithuanian legislation provides mechanisms for blocking access to internet resources that distribute illegal content. These measures are aimed at protecting public interests, citizens' rights (including minors), intellectual property and ensuring national security. Blocking can be carried out on the basis of court decisions or, in some cases, on the instruction of authorised state bodies.¹³⁸

The main reasons for blocking are the dissemination of child pornography, content inciting hatred, terrorist propaganda, information related to illegal drug trafficking, copyright infringement, as well as illegal gambling and disinformation threatening national security.¹³³ In recent years particular attention has been paid to blocking resources that distribute pro-Russian propaganda and disinformation in the context of the war in Ukraine.¹³³

3.5.1. Legislation

The legal basis for blocking internet resources in Lithuania consists of several key laws. The Law of the Republic of Lithuania on Electronic Communications⁸² establishes general principles for regulating the activities of electronic communications service providers and may contain provisions concerning their obligations to restrict access to information in certain cases (e.g. Article 98 mentioned in the context of blocking illegal gambling¹⁶¹). The Law of the Republic of Lithuania on Public Information¹³³ prohibits the dissemination of certain types of information (disinformation, war propaganda, incitement to hatred, etc.) and provides for the possibility of restricting access to it.

The Law of the Republic of Lithuania on Copyright and Related Rights (Article 78) allows rightholders to apply to the court for an injunction against internet intermediaries to stop copyright infringements, which may include blocking access to infringing sites.¹⁵⁵ The Law of the Republic of Lithuania on Gambling provides for the procedure for blocking access to sites illegally organising gambling by decision of the Gambling Supervisory Authority (LPT) with the sanction of an administrative court.¹⁶¹ The Law on the Protection of Minors from the Detrimental Effect of Public Information is also a legal basis for filtering content harmful to children.¹³⁷ In a state of emergency, restrictions on the dissemination of information may be introduced in accordance with the Law on State of Emergency.²¹⁵

3.5.2. Blocking Procedures

The procedures for blocking internet resources in Lithuania vary depending on the grounds for blocking and the authorised body. In general, to block content that violates copyright, rightholders apply to the court, which may issue an order to internet providers to restrict access to the relevant resource.¹⁵⁵ The Lithuanian Radio and Television Commission (LRTK) is also authorised to issue binding instructions to internet providers to block access to websites that illegally distribute copyright-protected content or other prohibited content (e.g. Russian propaganda channels).¹³³ As a rule, LRTK requires prior permission from the Vilnius District Administrative Court for such actions²¹¹, although in some cases (e.g. threat to public and national security) temporary blocking without immediate court decision is possible.¹³⁸

In the case of illegal gambling, the Gambling Supervisory Authority (LPT), after investigation and establishing the fact of illegal organisation of gambling on the internet, applies to the administrative court of first instance for permission to issue a binding instruction to internet providers to delete information or block access to it (pursuant to Article 98 of the Law on Electronic Communications).¹⁶¹ The court must consider such an application within three days. The court decision may be appealed to the Supreme Administrative Court of Lithuania.¹⁶¹ To combat the dissemination of disinformation, war propaganda and other prohibited content, especially in the context of national security, blocking is also applied. For example, LRTK blocked IP addresses providing access to banned Russian television channels.¹³⁸

There is also the “VASARIS” system coordinated by the National Cyber Security Centre (NKSC), which centralises lists of domains for blocking by internet providers on the basis of decisions of various competent authorities.¹⁶⁹

3.5.3. Registries of Blocked Internet Resources

In Lithuania, there are both official and unofficial lists of blocked Internet resources. The Lithuanian Radio and Television Commission (LRTK) publishes on its official website (www.rtk.lt) a list of Internet sites access to which is restricted based on its decisions.¹⁷⁰ These decisions concern, in particular, sites that illegally distribute content protected by copyright or prohibited television programmes. The Gambling Supervisory Authority (LPT) also maintains and publishes a list of illegal remote gambling operators whose websites must be blocked.¹⁶¹

The National Cybersecurity Centre (NKSC) under the Ministry of National Defence coordinates the “VASARIS” system, which is a centralized list of domains subject to blocking by Internet service

providers.¹⁶⁹ This list is formed on the basis of decisions of various competent state authorities, including the Bank of Lithuania, the Gambling Supervisory Authority, LRTK, the State Consumer Rights Protection Authority, the Police Department, the Drug, Tobacco and Alcohol Control Department, the Office of the Inspector of Journalist Ethics, the NKSC itself, and the State Tax Inspectorate.¹⁶⁹ Links to text files containing these lists (.txt) are posted on the NKSC website,¹⁶⁹ making them publicly available.

Thus, the main registries of blocked resources are open and maintained by authorized state bodies. This ensures a certain level of transparency regarding which resources are blocked and on what grounds. However, the completeness and detail of the information in these public lists may vary.

Official registries (or lists) of blocked Internet resources are maintained by several state institutions of Lithuania and are, as a rule, publicly available:

1. **Lithuanian Radio and Television Commission (LRTK):** Publishes on its official website (www.rtk.lt) a list of Internet sites access to which is restricted by its decisions. These blockings mainly concern sites that illegally distribute content protected by copyright or television programmes prohibited for retransmission (for example, Russian propaganda channels).¹⁷⁰ When attempting to access such sites, users may be redirected to an LRTK information page.¹⁷⁰
 - Link to the section with information on blockings on the LRTK website (may change, but usually found in news or decisions sections): <https://www.rtk.lt/> (specific decisions or lists need to be searched for).
2. **Gambling Supervisory Authority (Lošimų priežiūros tarnyba, LPT):** Maintains and publishes a list of illegal remote gambling operators whose websites are subject to blocking by Internet providers based on LPT decisions sanctioned by a court.¹⁶¹
 - Link to the list (usually published on the official LPT website): <https://lpt.lrv.lt/> (the section dedicated to illegal operators or blockings needs to be found).
3. **State Consumer Rights Protection Authority (Valstybinė vartotojų teisių apsaugos tarnyba, VVTAT):** Also has the authority to initiate the blocking of websites that violate consumer rights. The list of such websites is published on the official VVTAT website.²²⁶
 - Link to the list: <https://vvtat.lrv.lt/lt/blokuojami-tinklapi-646/>.²²⁶
4. **National Cybersecurity Centre (NKSC) – "VASARIS" system:** NKSC coordinates the centralized domain blocking system "VASARIS". On the NKSC website¹⁶⁹ links are provided to text files (.txt) containing lists of domains blocked on the initiative of various state authorities, including:
 - Bank of Lithuania (siena-lb.txt)

- Gambling Supervisory Authority (siena-lpt.txt)
- Lithuanian Radio and Television Commission (siena-lrtk.txt, siena-lrtk-2.txt)
- State Consumer Rights Protection Authority (siena-vvtat.txt)
- Police Department (siena-policija.txt)
- Drug, Tobacco and Alcohol Control Department (siena-ntakd.txt)
- Office of the Inspector of Journalist Ethics (siena-zeit.txt)
- NKSC itself (siena-nksc.txt)
- State Tax Inspectorate (siena-vmi.txt). These lists are intended for use by Internet service providers to carry out blockings. The content of these files is updated by the respective authorities. The reasons for blocking may include fraud, distribution of malicious software, copyright infringements, illegal gambling, dissemination of prohibited information, and other violations.¹⁶⁹

No unofficial, civil-society-maintained, comprehensive and regularly updated public registries of blocked resources in Lithuania, similar for example to "Roskomsvoboda" in Russia, have been identified in the provided materials. Monitoring of blockings is mainly carried out through official channels and reports of international organizations such as OONI.

3.5.4. Development of Blocking

The dynamics of internet resource blocking in Lithuania in the period 2019–2025 reflects increased attention of the authorities to control over online content, especially in the areas of intellectual property protection, combating illegal gambling and countering disinformation and propaganda emanating from hostile states.

In 2019 the Lithuanian Radio and Television Commission (LRTK) began actively using its powers to block sites distributing pirated content after receiving corresponding court permissions.²¹¹ For example, in September 2019 several sites illegally broadcasting TV content were blocked.²¹¹ This practice continued in subsequent years, when LRTK regularly made decisions to block mirror sites and new domains used to circumvent previously imposed restrictions.¹⁷⁰ In 2021 the powers of LRTK were expanded: it was given the right to issue instructions to financial institutions to stop payments to persons engaged in illegal activities on the internet related to copyright infringement.¹⁵⁷

With the beginning of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022, measures to block Russian propaganda resources were significantly intensified. In September 2022 the Seimas adopted amendments to the Law on Public Information temporarily prohibiting the retransmission and distribution on the internet of programmes created or financed by persons from Russia or Belarus if

this threatens national security.¹³⁸ On the basis of these amendments and EU Council decisions, LRTK blocked access to dozens of IP addresses and websites providing access to banned Russian television channels and propaganda resources.¹³⁸ Google also removed links to blocked sites from search results at the request of LRTK.¹⁷²

The Gambling Supervisory Authority (LPT) also actively applies measures to block sites of illegal gambling operators, the number of which is constantly growing.¹⁶¹ By 2024 more than 1,800 such sites had been blocked.¹⁶⁶ The National Cyber Security Centre (NKSC) through the “VASARIS” system coordinates the blocking of malicious sites (phishing, fraud, malware) based on information from various authorities.¹⁶⁹

OONI (Open Observatory of Network Interference) data: OONI Probe users in Lithuania collected more than 2.39 million measurements from 79 local networks in the period 2014–2025.²²⁷ These measurements are aimed at detecting network anomalies that may indicate censorship or blocking of websites and applications. OONI Explorer contains data for Lithuania, including information on the availability of websites (based on Citizen Lab lists), messengers (WhatsApp, Facebook Messenger, Telegram, Signal) and circumvention tools (Tor, Psiphon).²²⁷ However, the provided fragments do not contain specific OONI reports dedicated exclusively to Lithuania for 2019–2025 or a detailed list of blocked resources with dates and categories detected by OONI.

Conclusion: The development of blocking in Lithuania in 2019–2025 demonstrates a clear trend towards strengthening state control over online space. This is due to several factors: the desire to protect intellectual property rights, the fight against illegal gambling and, especially after 2022, the need to counter foreign disinformation and propaganda perceived as a threat to national security. Although blocking procedures in most cases provide for judicial or administrative oversight, the expansion of grounds for blocking and the powers of regulators (LRTK, LPT, NKSC) requires careful monitoring by human rights organisations to ensure compliance with the principles of freedom of speech and access to information and to prevent unjustified restrictions. OONI data can serve as an important tool for independent assessment of the situation with internet censorship in the country.

4. Human Rights Violations on the Internet

In Lithuania, as in other democratic countries, there are certain challenges in the field of human rights protection on the internet, despite the generally high level of freedoms. The main concerns relate to the balance between protecting national security, combating disinformation and illegal

content on the one hand, and freedom of expression, the right to access to information and privacy on the other. In the period 2019–2025 cases of blocking of internet resources were noted, mainly related to the dissemination of pro-Russian propaganda, copyright infringement and illegal gambling.¹³⁸ The legislation provides for liability for incitement to hatred and dissemination of disinformation on the internet, and there have been cases of prosecution for online statements.¹⁰⁶

Human rights organisations such as Freedom House generally assess the situation with freedoms in Lithuania as “free”.⁴⁵ However, certain problems are also noted. For example, Amnesty International points to problems with the rights of refugees and migrants and the lack of legalisation of same-sex unions, which may indirectly affect the online space in the context of discussions and expression of opinions on these issues.⁴⁷ U.S. State Department reports also note that the Lithuanian government generally respects freedom of expression, but mention legislative restrictions related to defamation, disinformation and incitement to hatred, as well as cases of blocking pro-Russian propaganda.¹³⁸ In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, the adoption of amendments to the Law on Electronic Communications that expand surveillance capabilities raised concerns about the right to privacy.²¹⁶

4.1. Internet Shutdowns on Government Orders

In the period under review (2019–2025) no large-scale internet or communications service shutdowns (shutdowns) affecting the entire country or significant parts thereof by direct order of the authorities have been recorded in Lithuania, except for targeted blocking of specific web resources. Lithuanian legislation, in particular the Law on State of Emergency²¹⁵, theoretically allows the introduction of restrictions on the operation of communications networks and dissemination of information in a state of emergency to ensure national security or public order. Amendments to the Law on Electronic Communications adopted in 2020 in connection with the COVID-19 pandemic granted the authorities broader powers to access citizens’ location and communication data in “emergency situations”, which raised concerns among human rights defenders about possible abuse and violation of privacy.²¹⁶

The only incident related to disruption of communications mentioned in the provided materials concerns damage to the underwater communications cable between Lithuania and Sweden in the Baltic Sea.²⁴¹ This event caused concern among the authorities of both countries against the background of the deteriorating security situation in the region and possible hybrid threats, however it was not the result of a direct government order to shut down, but was investigated as a potential act of sabotage.²⁴¹ No other cases of deliberate large-scale internet or mobile

communications shutdowns on the order of the Lithuanian authorities have been found in the provided sources. The main restrictive measures concerned the blocking of access to certain websites and online content rather than complete cessation of network operation.

4.2. Criminalisation of Online Speech

In Lithuania there are legislative norms providing for criminal and administrative liability for certain statements on the internet. First of all, this concerns incitement to hatred, discrimination, public calls for violence, as well as denial or gross belittling of international crimes. Article 170 of the Criminal Code of the Republic of Lithuania provides for punishment for public incitement to hatred, violence or discrimination against a group of persons or a person belonging to it on grounds of sex, sexual orientation, race, nationality, language, descent, social status, religion, convictions or views.¹¹⁷ Penalties may range from fines to imprisonment for up to three years.¹⁴⁵

In the period 2019–2025 cases of prosecution of citizens for statements on the internet have been recorded in Lithuania:

- **Beizaras and Levickas v. Lithuania (European Court of Human Rights, judgment of 14 January 2020):** The ECtHR found a violation of Article 14 (prohibition of discrimination) in conjunction with Article 8 (right to respect for private and family life) of the European Convention on Human Rights. The case concerned the refusal of Lithuanian authorities to initiate pre-trial investigation into numerous homophobic comments and calls for violence left on Facebook under a photograph of the kissing applicants in 2014. The Court noted that the authorities failed to fulfil their positive obligations to effectively investigate possible hate crimes effectively.¹⁴² This case highlighted problems in law enforcement practice in cases of online hate speech and led to subsequent changes in the approaches of law enforcement agencies and judicial practice in Lithuania.²³¹
- **Macaté v. Lithuania (European Court of Human Rights, judgment of 23 January 2023):** Although this case is not directly related to prosecution for statements, it concerns restrictions on the dissemination of information. The ECtHR found a violation of Article 10 (freedom of expression) of the Convention in connection with a one-year ban on the distribution of a children's fairy tale book, two of which depicted same-sex marriages, and the subsequent requirement to label the book as potentially harmful to children under 14. The Court considered that these measures pursued the aim of restricting children's access to information about same-sex relationships and had no legitimate aim.²²⁹ This case is also relevant in the context of determining the limits of permissible restrictions on online content.

- **Fines for comments on the internet:** There have been cases of fines for offensive or hate-inciting comments on social networks. For example, in 2021 the Tauragė District Court fined a man €2,000 for a comment on Facebook that insulted homosexual people.²³⁹ In December 2022 another case was reported in which a fine and compensation for moral damage were imposed for an offensive comment against homosexuals.²³⁶
- **Warnings from law enforcement agencies:** Lithuanian police, including the “virtual patrol” unit, monitor social networks and issue public warnings to users about the inadmissibility of incitement to hatred and possible liability.²³¹ In the period 2021 to June 2023 204 such preventive comments were left on Facebook.¹⁴³
- **Investigations into disinformation and support for aggression:** In the context of Russia’s war against Ukraine, Lithuanian special services warned of possible administrative or criminal consequences for participation in provocations and dissemination of disinformation aimed at inciting enmity.²³⁰ In 2022 Laurynas Ragelskis, known for his pro-Russian position, appeared in court on charges of incitement and desecration of a place of public respect in connection with his actions at the Belarusian embassy in Vilnius.²²²

Statistics show that the number of registered crimes under Article 170 of the Criminal Code (incitement to hatred) in recent years has varied: 28 cases in 2019, 8 in 2020 (the decrease may have been related to the pandemic), 31 in 2021, 34 in 2022 and 25 in 2023.¹⁵⁰ The majority of these cases are related to statements on the internet.¹⁴³ Despite the existence of legislation and certain law enforcement practice, human rights organisations note that the investigation and prosecution of hate speech cases is not always effective, and many cases remain without due response.¹⁴²

4.3. Persecution of Media and NGOs

In Lithuania, no systematic cases of direct state persecution of mass media (media outlets) or non-governmental organisations (NGOs) for their statements or activities on the internet comparable to practices in authoritarian countries have been recorded. Freedom of speech and media activity are generally respected, as confirmed by reports of international organisations such as Freedom House, which rates Lithuania as a “free” country.⁴⁵

However, certain problems and points of tension exist:

1. **Blocking of foreign media and combating disinformation:** In the context of countering foreign propaganda, especially Russian, after 2022 the Lithuanian authorities, in particular the Lithuanian Radio and Television Commission (LRTK), actively blocked access to Russian and Belarusian state media and related internet resources on grounds of threat to national

security and dissemination of disinformation.¹³⁸ These measures, although aimed at protecting the information space, provoke discussions about maintaining the balance between security and freedom of access to information.

2. **Pressure and criticism directed at the public broadcaster (LRT):** In 2024–2025 a situation arose around the Lithuanian National Radio and Television (LRT) when the LRT Council initiated an audit of the “political neutrality” of journalists and broadcaster content. This caused concern among international media freedom organisations (such as IPI, ECPMF, RSF) and the Lithuanian journalistic community, who saw in this a risk of political interference in LRT editorial independence.²⁴² Media representatives pointed to the politicisation of LRT management as one of the problems.²⁴²
3. **Problems with access to state information:** Journalists and organisations sometimes face difficulties in obtaining information from state institutions, which may refuse to provide it without sufficient explanation.²⁴² This hinders journalistic investigations and public oversight.
4. **Financial difficulties of regional media:** A systemic lack of funding for local and regional media is noted, which makes them more vulnerable and may limit their ability to perform their public function.²⁴²
5. **Defamation lawsuits:** Although the provided materials contain no specific examples of mass or politically motivated defamation lawsuits against Lithuanian media or NGOs for online publications in the period 2019–2025, defamation legislation exists.²²⁰ In the global context, the problem of using such lawsuits being used to pressure journalists (SLAPP lawsuits)²⁴⁶ is noted, but no specific data for Lithuania in this regard are provided. One of the cases mentioned by the ECtHR (Pavel Zarubin a.o. v. Lithuania) concerned the expulsion of Russian journalists for their provocative actions, not for the content of their publications.²⁴⁷
6. **Foreign influence and threats to NGOs:** Some NGOs and activists, especially those working with the Belarusian opposition or dealing with issues sensitive for Russia and Belarus, may face pressure and threats from foreign intelligence services, including disinformation campaigns and recruitment attempts.⁴⁸ This is not direct persecution by the Lithuanian authorities but creates a difficult working environment.

Overall, cases of direct state persecution of Lithuanian media and NGOs for their online content are rare. The main challenges are related to ensuring the editorial independence of the public broadcaster, access to information, the financial sustainability of independent media, and countering external information influence, which may also indirectly affect NGO activities.

5. Civil Society in Internet Governance

Civil society in Lithuania plays a certain role in issues related to internet governance and the protection of digital rights, although its activity and influence may be less pronounced compared to some other European countries. There are non-governmental organisations (NGOs) dealing with human rights in general, including aspects of freedom of expression and privacy in the digital environment, as well as organisations specialising in media literacy, cybersecurity and child protection on the internet.¹⁴⁴

These organisations participate in public consultations on draft laws, monitor violations of rights, conduct educational campaigns and provide legal assistance. For example, the Lithuanian Centre for Human Rights and the Human Rights Monitoring Institute prepare reports and analytical materials on the human rights situation, including digital aspects.¹⁴⁴ There are also initiatives aimed at combating disinformation, such as the “Lithuanian Elves” – civic activists who counter propaganda on social media.¹³³ State bodies such as RRT and the Ministry of Transport and Communications also cooperate with NGOs within projects to increase internet safety and digital literacy.²⁴⁸

5.1. Organisations

A number of civil society organisations operate in Lithuania that deal with protecting citizens’ rights on the internet, media literacy, cybersecurity and countering disinformation. These include:

1. **Lithuanian Centre for Human Rights (Lietuvos žmogaus teisių centras):** One of the oldest human rights organisations in Lithuania, dealing with a wide range of human rights issues, including freedom of expression and the right to privacy, which are directly related to digital rights. The organisation conducts monitoring, advocacy and educational activities.
 - Website: <https://www.lchr.lt/>²²⁹
2. **Human Rights Monitoring Institute (Žmogaus teisių stebėjimo institutas, ŽTSI):** A non-governmental organisation that conducts research, prepares reports and carries out advocacy activities on various aspects of human rights in Lithuania, including freedom of speech, the right to privacy and combating hate speech, including in the online environment.¹⁴⁴
 - Website: <https://hrmi.lt/>¹⁵⁰ (listed in the context of reports)
3. **Lithuanian National Safer Internet Centre (Safer Internet Centre Lithuania Consortium):** A consortium of four organisations, including the National Agency for

Education (coordinator), the Communications Regulatory Authority (RRT), the “Child Line” organisation (Vaikų linija) and the “Window into the Future” association (Langas į ateitį).²⁴⁸ The Centre works to raise awareness of safe internet use among children, parents and teachers, operates a hotline for reporting illegal content (Svarusinternetas.lt) and a helpline for children experiencing problems on the internet.¹⁶⁸

- Websites: <https://www.draugiskasinternetas.lt/>, <https://www.svarusinternetas.lt/>, <https://www.esaugumas.lt/>¹⁶⁸

4. **European Foundation of Human Rights (Europos žmogaus teisių fondas, EFHR):** An organisation based in Lithuania that deals with the protection of human rights, including combating hate speech and discrimination on the internet. EFHR provides legal assistance and conducts educational campaigns.¹⁵²
 - Website: <https://lt.efhr.eu/> or <https://en.efhr.eu/>¹⁵²
5. **“Lithuanian Elves” initiative (Lithuanian Elves):** An informal civic movement that identifies and counters disinformation and propaganda on social media and the online space, especially originating from Russia.¹³³ They have no formal website as it is a decentralised network of activists.
6. **Other NGOs:** There are many other NGOs working in related areas such as information society development, media literacy, consumer rights protection in the digital environment. Some of them may cooperate with state institutions or participate in EU-funded projects.²⁴⁹

These organisations contribute to creating a safer and more rights-based internet space in Lithuania, although their resources and influence may be limited compared to state regulators.

5.2. VPN and Circumvention Tools

The use of VPNs (virtual private networks) and other circumvention tools in Lithuania is a common practice, as in many other countries. The main reasons for using VPNs are to increase online privacy and security, especially when using public Wi-Fi networks, and to bypass geographical restrictions to access content (e.g. streaming services, news sites blocked in certain regions).²⁶⁵

In Lithuania, where the internet is generally free, VPNs may also be used to access resources blocked at the national level by decision of the authorities (e.g. sites with pirated content, illegal gambling or prohibited propaganda).²⁶⁹ Regulatory bodies such as the Lithuanian Radio and Television Commission (LRTK) note that users resort to VPNs to circumvent blocking.²⁷¹

5.2.1. Status of VPN Services

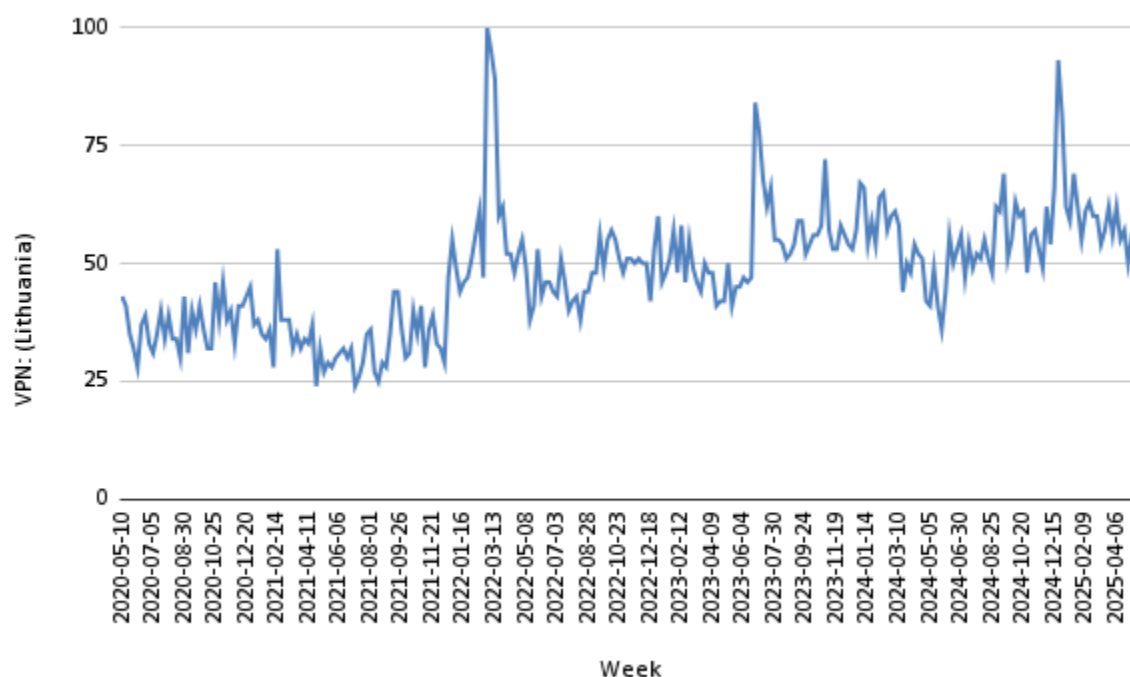
The use of VPN services in Lithuania **is legal**.²⁶⁶ The country respects the principles of internet freedom and the right to privacy, and the mere use of a VPN does not entail legal consequences for users. Citizens and residents are free to choose and use VPN services to protect their data, anonymise internet activity and bypass geo-blocking.

The provided materials contain **no specific laws that would directly prohibit or restrict the use, advertising or sale of VPN services in Lithuania for ordinary citizens**. Regulation mainly concerns providers of electronic communications services and their obligations, as well as liability for illegal activities carried out using any means, including VPNs. For example, if a VPN is used to commit cybercrimes or other illegal activities, liability arises for that activity itself, not for the use of the VPN as such.²⁶⁹

The Lithuanian Radio and Television Commission (LRTK), in the context of combating illegal streaming, noted that the increase in the number of users using VPNs to bypass blocking is a problem and that VPN service providers should also be involved in solving this problem.²⁷¹ However, this rather indicates the concern of rightholders and regulators about the effectiveness of blocking than a desire to ban VPN as a technology. International law enforcement operations aimed at stopping the operation of VPN services used predominantly for criminal activity (e.g. VPNLab.net²⁷⁴) affected infrastructure in different countries but were not directed against ordinary VPN users in Lithuania.

5.2.2. Number of VPN Users

Exact statistical data on the number of VPN users in Lithuania and their dynamics by year (2019–2025) are absent from the provided materials. Global studies indicate a growth in VPN popularity, especially among young people and remote workers, as well as during periods of increased privacy concerns such as the COVID-19 pandemic.²⁶⁷ The main reasons for using VPNs worldwide are increased security (43%), access to streaming services (26%) and privacy protection (12%).²⁶⁷

Graph 10: Dynamics of VPN-related search queries in Lithuania (2020–2025)

Source: *trends.google.com*

The graph illustrates the dynamics of public interest in VPN technology in Lithuania for the period from 2020 to 2025. The analysis of the data allows two qualitatively different periods to be distinguished, separated by the events of February 2022. In the interval from 2020 to early 2022, a stable, relatively low level of search queries is observed, characterising the baseline interest in VPNs driven by standard use cases: ensuring privacy, access to geo-restricted content and corporate use. This stage reflects the perception of VPN as a niche technological tool.

The situation changes dramatically at the end of February 2022, coinciding with the start of the full-scale war in Ukraine. At that moment, a sharp, maximum peak in interest for the entire period under review is recorded, reaching a peak value of 100 conditional units. This surge, according to the given condition, directly correlates with the geopolitical crisis, indicating a population reaction to increased cybersecurity risks as well as possible changes in the information environment.

The most important conclusion is not the peak itself, but the subsequent dynamics. After the surge, interest does not return to the previous baseline values but stabilises at a new, sustainably high level (on average 50–60 conditional units). This indicates a fundamental shift in public perception:

the VPN has transformed from a narrowly specialised tool into a mass-demand means of ensuring digital security and information sovereignty in the context of regional instability. Subsequent, less pronounced peaks probably correspond to new stages of escalation or specific information events, maintaining the constant relevance of this technology in users' minds.

Blocking of VPN services:

The provided materials contain no information about targeted blocking of VPN services or VPN protocols themselves at the national level in Lithuania. Authorities and regulators express concern about the use of VPNs to circumvent blocking of illegal content, but this has not led to a ban or blocking of VPN as a technology. International operations to shut down VPN services such as VPNLab.net were aimed at infrastructure used by cybercriminals and were carried out in coordination with law enforcement agencies of many countries but do not indicate a general policy of blocking VPNs in Lithuania.

5.2.3. Cases of Prosecution for Using VPN

The provided materials contain **no information about cases of criminal or administrative prosecution of Lithuanian citizens solely for the fact of using VPN services** in the period 2019–2025. As noted earlier, the use of VPNs in Lithuania is legal.²⁶⁶

Prosecution may occur if a VPN is used to commit illegal acts such as cybercrimes, dissemination of prohibited content (e.g. child pornography, incitement to hatred), copyright infringement or other illegal activity. In such cases, liability arises for the offence itself, and the VPN acts only as a tool.²⁶⁹

International law enforcement agencies, including Europol, have conducted operations to shut down VPN services that were predominantly used for criminal activity (e.g. VPNLab.net²⁷⁴). In the framework of such operations, organisers and operators of these criminal VPN services, as well as their users, could be prosecuted if their participation in illegal activity was proven. However, this does not mean prosecution for ordinary use of VPN for privacy or bypassing geo-blocking. In the Windscribe case, where a VPN user committed illegal actions, the founder of the VPN service was prosecuted, but not for providing VPN, but in an attempt to obtain user data that the service did not have due to a no-logs policy.²⁷⁶ This case did not occur in Lithuania but illustrates the general approach to liability.

5.2.4. Monitoring of Blocking

Monitoring of internet resource blocking in Lithuania is carried out in several ways:

1. Official state registries and regulator announcements:

- **Lithuanian Radio and Television Commission (LRTK):** Publishes on its website (www.rtk.lt) information about decisions on blocking sites, mainly for copyright infringement or dissemination of prohibited information (e.g. Russian propaganda).¹³⁸ Since 2019 LRTK has repeatedly made decisions to block sites, especially after February 2022 regarding resources related to Russian disinformation.¹³⁸ For example, in March 2022 57 sites were blocked for illegal distribution of TV content.¹⁷¹ In December 2024/January 2025 Google, at LRTK's request, removed from search results 201 sites providing access to sanctioned Russian TV programmes.¹⁷²
- **Gambling Supervisory Authority (LPT):** Maintains a list of illegal gambling sites subject to blocking. By 2024 more than 1,800 such sites had been blocked.¹⁶¹
- **State Consumer Rights Protection Authority (VVTAT):** Publishes a list of sites violating consumer rights.²²⁶
- **National Cyber Security Centre (NKSC):** Coordinates the "VASARIS" system, providing internet providers with consolidated lists of domains for blocking from various agencies (including sites related to fraud, malware, and those blocked by court decision).¹⁶⁹ These lists are publicly available as text files on the NKSC website.
- **Communications Regulatory Authority (RRT):** Publishes reports on its activities, including information about the work of the "Švarus internetas" ("Clean Internet") hotline for receiving reports of illegal or harmful content. In 2020 RRT received 1,373 reports, of which 460 led to further actions, including forwarding information to providers, law enforcement and foreign hotlines.¹⁶⁸ In the first quarter of 2020 383 reports were received.²²⁵

2. International and non-governmental organisations:

- **OONI (Open Observatory of Network Interference):** Collects data on network anomalies and blocking worldwide, including Lithuania. OONI Probe users in Lithuania have collected a significant amount of measurements.²²⁷ OONI Explorer data allow tracking the availability of sites and applications. However, no specific OONI reports on Lithuania for the last 5 years are found in the provided materials.²²⁷
- **Freedom House:** In its annual "Freedom on the Net" and "Freedom in the World" reports analyses the state of internet freedoms, including cases of censorship and blocking. Reports on Lithuania noted blocking of pro-Russian propaganda after 2022.⁴⁵

- **Reporters Without Borders (RSF):** Assesses press freedom, which may indirectly affect issues of blocking affecting media access to information.²⁴²
- **Other tools and initiatives:** Various civil society tools and projects aimed at monitoring internet censorship in a broader sense exist, such as those supported by IRI (International Republican Institute)²⁷⁷ or ICLab²⁷⁸, but no direct reports of these initiatives on Lithuania for the last 5 years are present in the materials.

Digest of blocking reports over the last 5 years:

- **2019:** LRTK began blocking pirated sites by court decision.²¹¹
- **2020:** RRT actively processed reports of illegal content through the “Švarus internetas” hotline, forwarding information to providers and law enforcement.¹⁶⁸
- **2021:** LRTK received expanded powers to combat copyright infringement, including the ability to demand cessation of financial operations in favour of infringers.¹⁵⁷
- **2022:** After the start of the war in Ukraine LRTK massively blocked Russian propaganda TV channels and related sites.¹³⁸ The Seimas adopted amendments tightening liability for dissemination of disinformation and war propaganda.¹³⁸
- **2023–2024:** Blocking of illegal gambling sites continued (more than 1,800 by 2024¹⁶⁶) and resources violating copyright or disseminating prohibited information. Google, at LRTK’s request, removed links to blocked sites from search.¹⁷² NKSC continues to coordinate blocking through the “VASARIS” system.¹⁶⁹

Overall, monitoring of blocking in Lithuania is carried out both by state bodies, which publish relevant lists and decisions, and, to a lesser extent, through data from international NGOs. In recent years the main focus has shifted to blocking content related to disinformation and national security threats, in addition to traditional grounds such as copyright infringement and illegal content.

6. Conclusion

Lithuania demonstrates a high level of technological development of internet infrastructure, which creates a solid foundation for the realisation of citizens’ right to access information. Internet penetration in the country is approaching 90%, and fixed and mobile access speed indicators are among the highest in Europe. The legislative framework, largely harmonised with European Union norms, formally enshrines freedom of speech and information.

Nevertheless, in the field of observance of digital rights there are a number of challenges caused primarily by the geopolitical situation. The main restrictive measures are related to countering

disinformation and propaganda, primarily emanating from Russia and Belarus. After 2022 the Lithuanian Radio and Television Commission (LRTK) actively blocked access to Russian state media and related internet resources, regarding them as a threat to national security. This practice, although aimed at protecting the information space, raises discussions about maintaining the balance between security and freedom of access to information.

In addition, the legislation provides for liability for incitement to hatred and dissemination of false information, which in some cases has led to prosecutions for online statements. Although no systematic persecution of independent media and NGOs is observed, cases of pressure on the public broadcaster (LRT) and difficulties in accessing state information for journalists have been noted.

Forecast of developments

1. **Neutral scenario (maintaining the status quo):** Lithuania will continue to adhere to the current course, balancing between EU obligations to protect freedom of speech and the need to counter external information threats. Blocking will continue to be applied selectively, mainly to resources related to Russian propaganda, illegal gambling and copyright infringement. Legislation in the field of content regulation will remain without significant changes, and law enforcement practice will follow established precedents. The level of self-regulation among internet users and the popularity of VPNs for accessing blocked resources will remain at the current level.
2. **Positive scenario (liberalisation):** In the event of a decrease in geopolitical tension, a weakening of state control over the information space is possible. Authorities may revise approaches to blocking, focusing not on prohibitive measures but on increasing media literacy of the population and supporting independent media. Judicial practice in cases of online statements may become more liberal, with greater emphasis on protecting freedom of expression. Public oversight of regulators' activities will be strengthened, and blocking procedures will become more transparent and receive clearer appeal mechanisms.
3. **Negative scenario (strengthening censorship):** In the event of escalation of the geopolitical situation or the emergence of new national security threats, further tightening of legislation is possible. The grounds for blocking internet resources may be expanded, and procedures simplified, which could potentially lead to restriction of access to a wider range of sites, including opposition or critical resources. Control over social networks and messengers may be strengthened, and attempts may be made to technically restrict the use of VPN services. Liability for disseminating information deemed "false" or "harmful" may be tightened, creating risks for freedom of speech and journalistic activity.

The most likely is the development of events according to the **neutral scenario** with elements of the negative one, especially if the geopolitical situation in the region remains tense. Lithuania, as an EU member, will strive to comply with European human rights standards, but the priority of national security will most likely continue to determine a tough line regarding content perceived as a threat.

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