



PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND SPORT FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN LITHUANIA



PRESENTED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND SPORTS
UNDER THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF LITHUANIA

Since regaining its independence in 1990, the social and economic changes Lithuania has been undergoing have had a direct influence on the development of physical education and sport. New sports organizations have been set up and more attention is now being paid to the physical education of youth and school children as well as to the social integration of the disabled. Sport for all events, which are intended for all age groups, are being promoted, too. Special attention to these matters was given at the Lithuanian Sports Congress 2000, which adopted the Strategy for Physical Education and Sports of the Republic of Lithuania for the years 2002-2012 as well as the Physical Education and Sports Development Programme for 2000-2004. There are 124 national sports bodies, 1299 sports clubs and 103 sports educational institutions along with other sports organizations in Lithuania at present.

At a national level, the legal basis of sport is regulated by the Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania, the Law on Physical Education and Sport of the Republic of Lithuania, the Law on Education and the Law on Social Integration of the Disabled. While planning and implementing activities in the field of sport Lithuania, as a member of the Council of Europe, follows the provisions of the European Sports Charter, the European Sport for All Charter: disabled persons, the European Anti-doping Convention and the European Convention on Spectator Violence and Misbehaviour at Sports Events and in Particular at Football Matches.

Children are the future active citizens of the society who wish to know what their opportunities and rights are! Therefore they are given warm receptions by various state sport institutions and become acquainted with their activities.



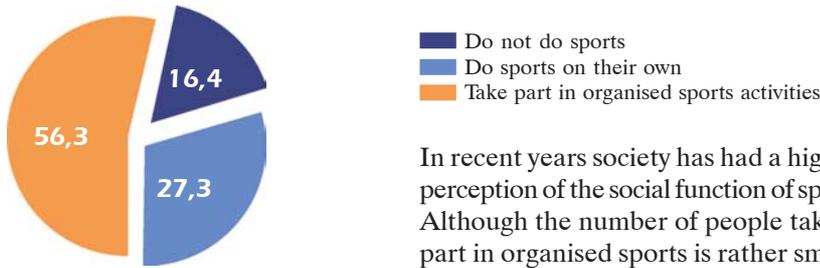
The Lithuanian authorities are concerned about the position of physical education in schools. Optional extra-curricular physical education activities are encouraged in particular. In 1995, Lithuania adopted the Law on Physical Education and Sport of the Republic of Lithuania, which sets out a programme for the establishment of three weekly physical education lessons at school. If schools cannot have more than 2 physical education lessons in their curriculum, schoolchildren must therefore be given the opportunity of having physical education and sports sessions (at least 1 hour) at school as well as in other educational institutions. Another possibility is to have one optional educational hour for compulsory physical education practices.

More and more public organizations tie up their physical education and sport initiatives to prevent young people from being drawn into street culture.

The Department of Physical Education and Sports under the Government of the Republic of Lithuania works in close cooperation with the Ministry of Education and Science, Ministry of National Defence, Ministry of Health, the Lithuanian National Olympic Committee etc.



Individual and organized physical education and sports activities are popular among schoolchildren who:



only 3,06 per cent of the citizens, social research carried out in 2001 indicates that 32 per cent of Lithuanian citizens do sports independently and 16 per cent participate in organized sport. We can therefore conclude that Lithuanian citizens aged 7-80 have a positive attitude towards physical education and sports for their health benefits, the development of physical capacity and improved working ability.

CONTESTS

Since 2002 a new project - a TV programme named "Winner's League" - has been running. During the competition schoolchildren compete on inflated amusement attractions and are cheered on by their schools' fans and supporters. The game is shown on TV every Sunday morning. The competition abounds in emotions and non-traditional sport contests – and if one wants to win, he has to be not only physically strong but quick-witted as well! The filming takes place in a new indoor soccer arena in Vilnius.



For younger schoolchildren another contest named "The Healthiest of All" is being organized. Even the name itself says that the competition is intended for those who wish to grow up healthy and vivacious. An interesting element is that not only children but also their teachers are assessed on their sporting, acting, and artistic accomplishments. In order to win children have to be friendly and work in a team together with their teacher!



A number of promising young athletes still study at school, where they also learn to represent their country and raise its profile at the international level. As it is sometimes difficult to combine studies with sport, the top ten school-aged athletes and their coaches are awarded annually in the "Best School-Aged Athletes and Their Coaches of the Republic of Lithuania" contest.



"The Most Sporty School" contest finds out which schools have achieved the best results throughout the school year in Lithuania. The results achieved are evaluated on the basis of specific criteria – the implementation of three weekly physical education lessons; the sports activity of the school; the school's sport facilities, their supervision and use; the schoolchildren's health care; and their participation in national and international projects, etc.

An army with physically and psychologically strong recruits guarantees a country's security. Unfortunately, not all recruits entering the army are in the best physical condition to protect the country. To find out the schools which have trained the best, strongest, fittest, and the most disposed for physical self-training recruits, the "Physical Preparedness Contest for Recruits" has been organized for the second time. The strongest recruits are motivated by an order issued by the head of the training regiment, and their former schools are awarded with sports equipment by the Department of Physical Education and Sports under the Government of the Republic of Lithuania.

He who learns to respect the environment in which he lives, will be repaid with healthy air and clean water. So that children could get to know better the surrounding environment and learn to respect as well as preserve it, the "Sport and the Environment" contest is being organized for them.



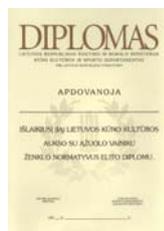
NATIONAL PROGRAMMES

One of the most popular programmes of physical education and sport in schools – “Lithuanian Physical Education Badge” – revived a tradition dating back to the year 1936. A schoolchild reaching sports qualifying standards of the programme has the opportunity to improve his level of fitness. The programme includes not only physical tests, but also tests on healthy way of living, personal hygiene, sports history, and olympism.

Schoolchildren can also prepare for a theory test using the book “Always Improving Oneself”, written by S.Stonkus.

Awards are badges, certificates and elite diplomas, signed by the Minister of Education and Science and the Director General of the Department of Physical Education and Sports under the Government of the Republic of Lithuania.

Rigorous training and practice are provided in the publication “Growing up and Getting Stronger”, aimed at younger schoolchildren (aged 8-11). All participants are awarded. The most physically fit and wise schoolchildren receive badges and diplomas.



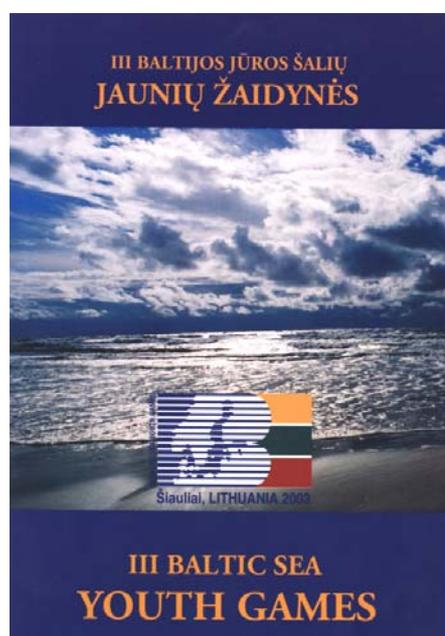
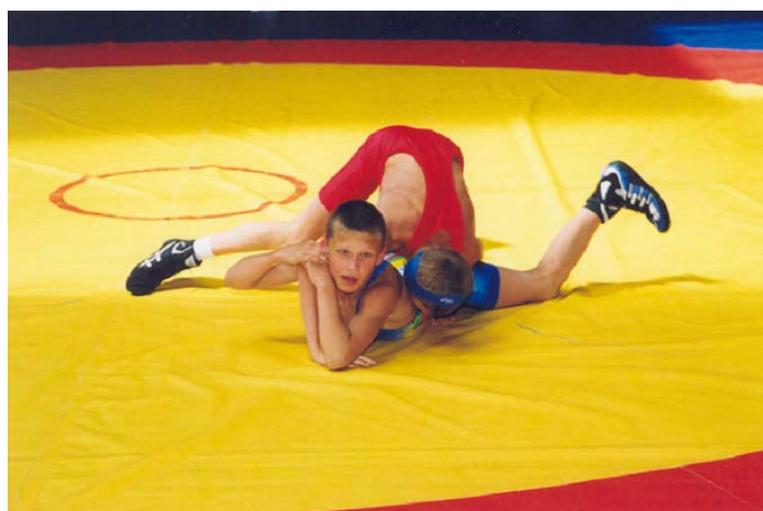
Kids also have the opportunity of joining “Children’s Summer Camps”. Of a sporting nature, the camps are intended to make children’s leisure time purposeful, and every year the camps enroll more and more children.



Top priority is given to ensuring children are taught to swim and behave safely in the water.

SPORT GAMES

Reinforcing a nice German initiative Lithuania organised the 3rd Baltic Sea Youth Games in 2003. More than 1 500 young athletes representing 8 states gathered together in the city of Šiauliai for competitions in 17 sport disciplines. Young athletes had a great opportunity to measure their strength, a chance for the evaluation of their athletic abilities and a time when they were able to get better understanding of the Elite sport. For the whole week-end the city of Šiauliai lived in the rhythm of sports.



Every year specialists at the Lithuanian Centre for School Sport organize sporting events for schoolchildren. Lithuanian schoolchildren’s games called “Orbit” are held in 2004 and are dedicated to the 28th Olympic Games in Athens. The general sponsor of the Games is the company “Orbit”; other sponsors include the Lithuanian National Olympic Committee, the Department of Physical Education and Sport under the Government of the Republic of Lithuania, and the newspaper “Sportas”. The aim of the games is to involve more schoolchildren in extra-curricular sports education, to create conditions for perfection for the talented, and determine the strongest school teams. The schoolchildren’s games are organized in 5 stages: during the first stage the best teams in schools are dis-

covered, during the second stage – towns and districts games or competitions of separate disciplines are organized, the third stage encompasses zone competitions, the fourth – inter-zone competitions, and the final stage – final competitions. Schoolchildren from all educational backgrounds take part in the games. A choice of 17 sport disciplines enables schoolchildren of various abilities to participate in the games. They can compete in team games: soccer (five-a-side), handball, basketball, volleyball, quadrat. There are also disciplines such as aerobics, gymnastics, athletics, and swimming. Schoolchildren can participate either in outdoor sports: cycling through uneven terrain, tourism, skiing, orienteering; or indoor disciplines: tennis, chess, and draughts.

PROJECTS

Children and teenagers eagerly take part in the most spectacular annual event – the “Olympic Day”. Hundreds of young people run happily in the green park of Vingis:



An original project is being carried out by the Lithuanian National Olympic Committee – McDonald’s festival for children:



The Olympic Games appear to be an important event in the life of many nations. Winners of Olympic medals are heroes many wish to take after and the spirit of the Games lives long after the Games are over. Since 2000 Lithuania has been organizing the project “Olympic Education for Children and Youth”.



The activity and scope of the project involves the spread of Olympic values among children on the basis of its main principle – the promotion of fair play. During the project, seminars are organized for teachers, and together with the children teachers prepare tasks for lessons on sports subjects, and organize the School Olympic Games.

SPORT FOR ALL ACTIVITIES

The public organization “Sport for All” has been active since 1991. It unites 17 organizations of physical education, sport and tourism, which have been registered in the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Lithuania. Their aim is to promote physical education which is beneficial to health, as well as amateur sport. The essential purpose of the Association is to strive for community well-being through the means of physical education and sports, improve the health of the population, and organize events of physical education, non-professional sport and recreation for people of different ages. The Association unites over 400 clubs and provides them with organizational assistance, organizes national competitions, championships as well as festivals and educational events. Each year there are around 600 different health-promotion events with more than 100,000 par-



ticipants of various ages taking part in them. Once a year the members of the Association gather together for a common event – the “Sport for All” festival, which has taken place since 1994 and which attracts for about 4000 participants. The Lithuanian association “Sport for All” is a member of the International “Sport for All” organization (TAFISA) and International Sport and Culture Association (ISCA). Close relations are maintained

with Lithuanian national non-governmental sport organizations – the Lithuanian National Olympic Committee, the Lithuanian Union of Sports Federations, the Lithuanian Non-Olympic committee, the Lithuanian Paralympic Committee, and the Lithuanian Airclub. Currently the Association “Sport for All” pays most attention to the realization of the Lithuanian 2000-2004 Physical Education and Sports Development programme.

Organisers of physical education and sport activities for children and young people in Lithuania:



The Ministry of Education and Science
The Ministry of National Defence
The Ministry of Internal Affairs
The Ministry of Health
Teachers Professional Development Centre

The Lithuanian National Co-ordinating Body for the EYES 2004

Address: Department of Physical Education and Sports under the Government of the Republic of Lithuania
Žemaitės Str. 6, 03117 Vilnius; tel. (370 5) 233 53 53, 233 39 43, fax (370 5) 213 32 21
e-mail: kksd@kksd.lt; http://www.kksd.lt