



ANNUAL REPORT 2018

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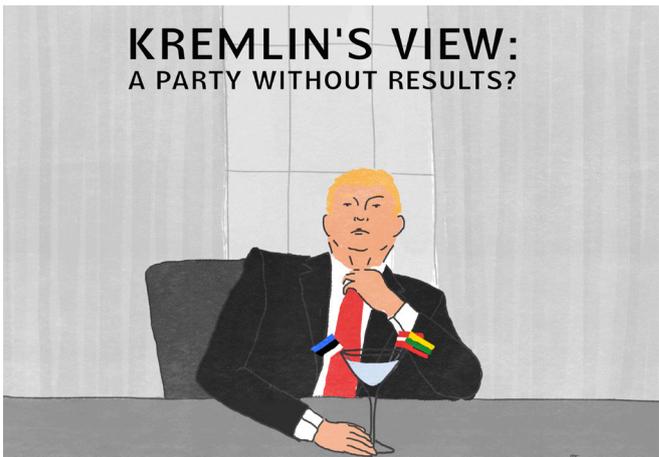
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Original illustrations created by "Kuri Kuri" team

#PACKOFLIES

#PackOfLies is an ongoing project of Vilnius Institute for Policy Analysis, which aims not only at presenting separate cases of disinformation, but also revealing certain tendencies and providing readers with disinformation recognition and debunking tools. When creating #PackOfLies, special attention is paid to disinformation, related to distortion of historical facts, and employing social problems for the sake of disinformation.

The target group for #PackOfLies are the users of social media, which is very important having in mind that social media is a perfect tool for spreading disinformation through automated or fake accounts with a purpose of affecting public opinion. Social media is mostly used by young people, therefore visual, not

only textual, information is very important. This is why every #PackOfLies is presented along with an illustration by “Kuri kuri” team, which is not only an addition to the text, but also an independent piece of art itself.

31 | the number of
#PacksOfLies
published in 2018

In the year 2018, there were 31 #PackOfLies created and published on the “Facebook” wall of Vilnius Institute for Policy Analysis. In addition, our #PackOfLies were translated into English and Russian, and published in the websites of our partners, such as “StopFake” (Ukraine), “DisinfoPortal” (Atlantic Council, USA) etc.



Awards ceremony

INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALISM AWARDS

Investigative journalism is a field of vital importance, when we talk about the mission of journalism aiming at the rule of law, transparency, and strengthening the principles of accountability. However, investigative journalism is a field susceptible to time and money. In addition, investigative journalism is related to a number of risks, e. g., the risk to lose sponsorship if the sponsors are analysed in the investigation.

Understanding the importance of investigative journalism and seeing the challenges it has to face Vilnius Institute for Policy Analysis decided to organise Investigative journalism competition. Its purpose is to attract

attention of the society to the importance of investigative journalism and to evaluate the best works in this field.

**Investigative journalism
strengthens the
principles of
accountability**

In 2018, one first prize of 5000 Euros, two second prizes of 3000 Euros, and three prizes of 2000 Euros were awarded. The winners were selected by the jury, specially gathered for this competition, chaired by the Associate Professor of Vilnius University Deimantas Jastramskis.

MEDIA LITERACY TRAINING

The experts of the Vilnius Institute for Policy Analysis carried out two big projects of media literacy education in the second half of 2018. There were three trainings organised in cooperation with the Ministry of Culture for the PR specialists from the institutions subordinate to the Ministry. A special methodology for these trainings was prepared, the team of professional speakers was selected, recommendations were prepared after the training according to the questions raised and wishes expressed during the trainings.

Also, a research was carried out in cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs about euro-sceptical narratives in Lithuanian media. Two trainings based on this research were organised in Kedainiai and Vilnius.

In addition, the Head of Media Programme Donatas Puslys presented the research to the representatives of regional media at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. He also shared his insights regarding challenges to liberal democracy at the event on the 6th of November at the European Parliament Information Office, where representatives of schools that joined the project “Schools – Ambassadors of European Parliament” participated.

The research of euro-sceptical narratives is especially relevant as the European Parliament election is approaching, and experts are predicting that populist euro-sceptical powers may significantly strengthen their positions there.



Workshop in the Ministry of Culture



Presentation by Rolf Fredhem, NATO Stratcom

VILNIUS CONSULTATIONS

Vilnius Institute for Policy Analysis organized an annual public event “Vilnius Consultations 2018. The Art of Disinformation: Lessons Learned and Future Challenges” on the 13th of September.

Fake news, disinformation, propaganda, hybrid warfare: these terms have been widely used and abused in recent years. Despite the visible spike in attention paid to these issues, many of the most pressing questions in the field still remain unanswered. Questions, like what are the most effective policy solutions to curb malign activities by trolls, bots and hackers, or how to maintain the fragile balance between security demands and fundamental liberties that sustain liberal democracies, were all raised during the event. It was a step forward from a descriptive and diagnostic level of analysis of virtual threats to a more practical, forward-looking, agenda-setting and policy-oriented level.

Vilnius Consultations 2018 focused on success stories, mistakes, and the most efficient solutions in fighting disinformation, with a special emphasis on Russia’s malicious operations, tactics, and methods in the virtual domain. Experts and analysts from NATO’s frontline states as well as Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova shared their recent experiences and offered recommendations for successful resilience-building. A separate panel was dedicated to examine the future threats which stem from the never-ending progress of technology, and to question the public responsibility as well as accountability of tech giants.

The event was very popular, with around 200 attendants, it was widely discussed in the Lithuanian media. After the event, VIPA published recommendations that were distributed to state officials, Lithuania’s decision makers, experts, partners from abroad and everyone who attended the event.

200

participants

Articles and interviews in the media

Recommendations for decision-makers and experts

15MIN > AKTUALU > UŽSIENIS

Publikuota: 2018 rugsėjo 11d. 17:1

Estų analitikės patarimas prezidento rinkimams: lyginkite Kremliaus poziciją ir kandidatų naratyvą

Plačiau apie propagandos pavojus virtualioje erdvėje U.Eslas papasakos rugsėjo 13 d. vykstančiame renginyje „Vilniaus konsultacijos 2018“

Advice of Estonian analyst for the presidential election: compare Kremlin's position with the narrative of the candidates.

U. Eslas will tell more about the dangers of propaganda in virtual space in the event "Vilnius Consultations 2018" on the 13th of September.



15MIN > AKTUALU > UŽSIENIS

Publikuota: 2018 rugsėjo 17d. 06:34

A.Šechovcovas: Europos radikalios dešinės partijos su Rusija šoka „juodąjį tango“

A. Shekhovtsov: European radical right parties are dancing "tango noir" with Russia.

15MIN > AKTUALU > UŽSIENIS

Publikuota: 2018 rugsėjo 17d. 17:04

S.Herasymčukas: „A.Zacharčenkos nužudymas – Rusijos bandymas vilkinti Minsko susitarimų įgyvendinimą“

Lietuvoje lankęsis ir renginyje „Vilniaus konsultacijos 2018“ dalyvavęs S.Herasymčukas *15min* teigė, kad prorusiškų politikų kalbos, esą autokefalijos Ukrainos stačiatikių bažnyčiai suteikimas sukels pilietinį karą, yra gerokai perdėtos – bažnyčios vaidmuo šalyje nėra toks svarbus.

S. Herasymchuk: "The murder of A. Zakharchenko – Russia's attempt to delay realization of the agreement of Minsk"

S. Herasymchuk, who visited Lithuania and was a speaker at the event "Vilnius Consultations 2018" explained to 15min that the statements of pro-Russian politics that granting autocephaly to Ukraine's orthodox church will lead to a civil war, are highly exaggerated, as the role of the church is not so important in that country.



Community of Žiūrai village, that was awarded with a special diploma in the category “Civilisation”

THE INNOVATIONS IN POLITICS

Vilnius Institute for Policy Analysis along with the network of European Innovation in Politics participated in organising competition of European political initiatives (“Innovation in Politics Awards”). Gala ceremony of European Innovation in Politics awards was held in November, 2018 in Vienna, Austria.

The aim of the competition is to notice, present and honour politicians who have courage to spread innovations creatively and are able to achieve actual results, to improve the quality of people’s lives, strengthen the state irrespective of their political views or activities. New ideas come not only on the global or national level, but also in municipalities or communities.

A call for proposals of projects in political innovations for the international competition, annually organised by the Innovation in Politics Institute in Austria, and by

Vilnius Institute for Policy Analysis in Lithuania was announced. The projects were supposed to make a positive impact on people’s lives and well-being of societies on the national and local levels. There were six projects from Lithuania among the finalists of the competition.

6 | political innovations from Lithuania reached the finals of the competition

600 projects for this competition were submitted from 14 European countries. Nominated political initiatives were evaluated by jury comprised of 1053 European citizens, among them – 27 judges from Lithuania. 80 initiatives reached the finals, of which 6 were from Lithuania. Our country was represented by 32 initiatives of different categories from all regions of Lithuania.

Representatives of all the finalist

projects were invited to the town hall of Austrian capital Vienna in November where they were solemnly announced and awarded.

Vilnius Institute for Policy Analysis will also organise Lithuanian competition of national and regional political innovations. Vilnius Insti-

tute for Policy Analysis worked in cooperation with the Innovation in Politics Institute from Austria. Lithuania participated in the competition “The Innovation in Politics Awards” for the first time. Competition is sponsored by Kahane Foundation, B&C Privat Stiftung and other donors.

VIPA ARTICLES IN THE WEBSITE „INTEGRITY INITIATIVE“



Through the year 2018, in cooperation with Integrity Initiative and StopFake.org, Vilnius Institute for Policy Analysis published 10 articles on the different topics of disinformation. The topics of most articles aimed to reveal and analyse narratives, hostile to Lithuania and Baltic countries, to explain disinformation tactics employed by the Kremlin, and present the most interesting cases of propaganda in 2018. Topics like prevailing Kremlin's narratives about NATO's Enhanced Forward Presence in the Baltics, narratives about Russia as a liberator of Europe, or Kremlin's initiatives of the

military camps for the children from the Baltic countries were analysed in the articles. Specific cases showing how Kremlin uses disinformation were also analysed, e. g., employment of actors. Out of the articles mentioned, 9 were published in Integrity Initiative, and 1 – in StopFake.org website. These articles were published in English, so that people from the Western countries would have an opportunity to get to know the Baltic experience fighting the methods of Kremlin's disinformation. This successful initiative will continue in 2019.

PARTICIPATION IN THE FESTIVAL

„BŪTENT!”

VIPA experts Donatas Puslys and Algis Davidavičius took active part in the annual debates festival „Būtent!“ in Birštonas, Lithuania on the 6-7 of September. Each expert participated as a panellist or a moderator in four debates. Altogether our Institute was actively presented in eight of them with acclaim from organizers. All mentioned events attracted bigger than average participation from audience. Topics such as future of the Lithuanian identity, nepotism, controversy of historical

memory, contrasts of societal and interpersonal trust in the region, Lithuanian public sphere and civic protest were covered and engagingly discussed with the audiences coming from both major cities and other regions of Lithuania. All topics and positions our experts took in the debates were reflecting and expanding VIPA’s long-term goals – countering state capture and strengthening democratic civic culture.





Schoolchildren
from Skirsnemunė
– participants of the
project

PROJECT “HOW THE STATE WORKS”

Vilnius Institute for Policy Analysis was a partner in the project “How the State Works”, that has been organised by the Centre for Civil Education in the Presidential Palace together with the Education Development Centre and other partners for the second time.

The aim of the project is to introduce the school children to different fields of public life in Lithuania, to discuss relevant national and regional problems, and to consider possible solutions of those problems. Not only knowing the history of the state is important, but it is also important for every citizen to be actively involved in state building.

In the first stage of the project, teachers discussed the problems arising in their school communities, ways of solving them and possible involvement of institutions that might be helpful with the experts of different fields from the Human Rights Monitoring Institute, Vilnius Institute for Policy Analysis, Lithuanian Armed Forces, Ministry of Environment, Ministry of National Defence, Special Investigation Service, Bank

of Lithuania and Education Development Centre.

During the second stage of the project, teams of pupils analysed, explored the problems arising on the state level, prepared recommendations, presented them and discussed the possibilities of realisation with the help of their teachers.

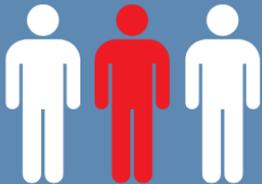
VIPA was an advisor to the teams of fifteen schools who had chosen the topic “Self-governance”, organised their visits and meetings with the representatives from the institutions on the national level. After returning to the schools, the teams of pupils and their teachers explored and analysed the problems, related to self-governance, prepared recommendations on how activities in different fields could be improved. They also discussed the ways to implement those recommendations with the representatives of municipalities and talked about how volunteering students could contribute.

In year 2018, 110 schools participated in this project, with more than 2000 students.

NEPOTISM

IN LITHUANIA

WHY IS THIS A SERIOUS PROBLEM?



70%

'NEPOTISM' IS A PRACTICE OF FAVOURING RELATIVES AND FRIENDS BY THOSE WITH ANY POWER OR INFLUENCE

OF LITHUANIANS CONSIDER NEPOTISM TO BE A SIGNIFICANT PROBLEM



19% OF EMPLOYERS OR MANAGERS



REFER TO NEPOTISM AS 'PROBLEMATIC'

NEPOTISM ADVERSELY AFFECTS



MISTRUST OF OTHERS

ONLY 33% OF LITHUANIANS IMMEDIATELY TRUST STRANGERS*

LIFE IS SOCIALLY UNJUST

92% OF LITHUANIANS THINK INEQUALITY IS TOO BIG**

NEPOTISM IS BOLSTERED BY TWO WIDESPREAD FEARS

NEPOTISM CAN BE REDUCED BY



VIPA RESEARCH

SOURCES: VIPA NEPOTISM RESEARCH 2018
* EUROPEAN SOCIAL SURVEY 2018;
**EUROBAROMETER 2017.

“CRISIS, CONFLICT AND CRITICAL DIPLOMACY”

“Reputation, the reflection of the reality of power in the mind of the observers can be as important as the reality of power itself. What others think about us is as important as what we actually are.”

H. Morgenthau, 1965

Representatives of politics, diplomacy and science discussed the narratives constructed by the media in describing conflicts in Ukraine and Israel, the importance of those narratives and elite opinions in different countries on June 19–22 at Ben-Gurion University (Israel) and at the Delegation of the European Union in Tel Aviv. The results of the analysis carried out in Lithuania were presented by the expert of the Vilnius Institute for Policy Analysis Gintaras Šumskas along with the team of the project „Crisis, conflict and critical diplomacy: narratives and perceptions of the EU in Ukraine, Israel and Palestine“ (C3EU).

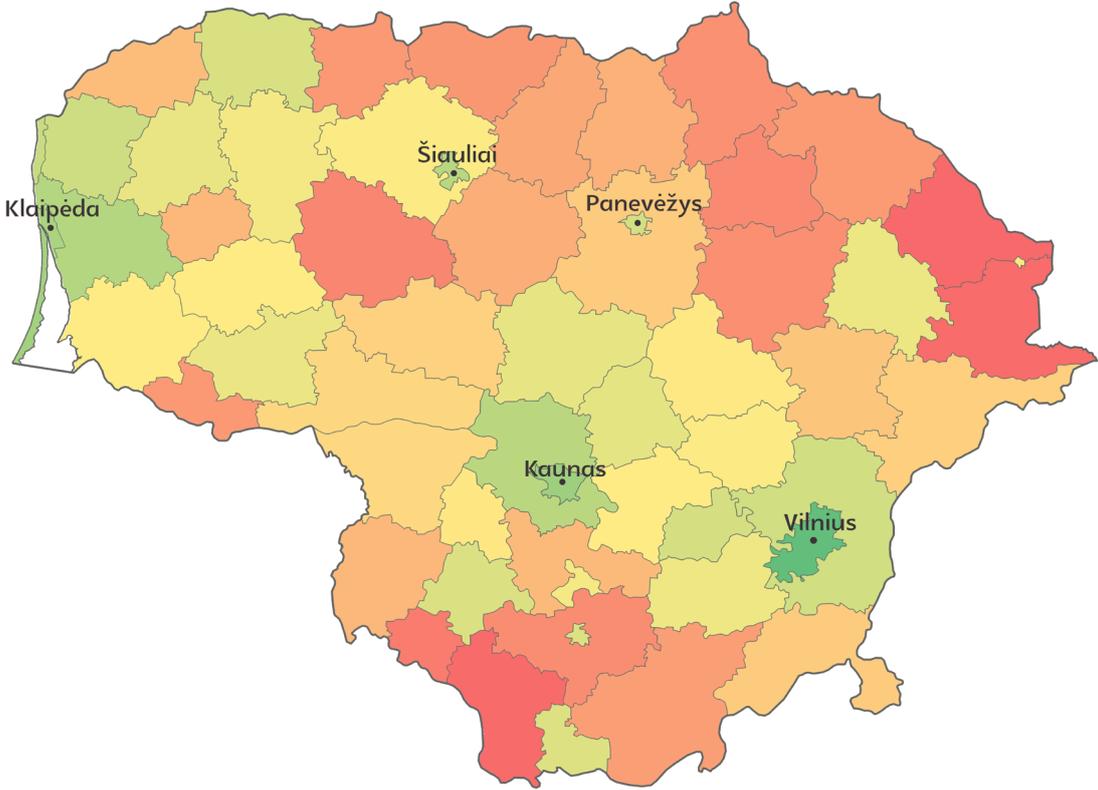
One aspect of the narratives in the context of Ukraine and EU, where Lithuanian popular media clearly differs from German media, is solidarity. In Germany, Russian – Ukrainian conflict is described ambiguously, with avoidance of defining a clear position, and diplomacy of the state is depicted in the general concert of EU. Meanwhile, Lithuania often demonstrates almost unconditional political support for Ukraine. Lithuania itself is usually pictured as an independent political actor, defender of Ukrainian interests in the EU and NATO, while the context of EU is left behind.

RESEARCH ON NEPOTISM

VIPA’s long term goal to contribute to the civic countering of state capture by democratically unaccountable interest groups was brought a step closer to fruition in 2018 by conducting literature, expert and public opinion research on problems of nepotism in Lithuania – what are the levels and nature of acceptance of this controversial mode of social networking, what is the scope of this difficult challenge for our fledgling democracy. Public survey gave a picture of real urgency with up to 70 percent of respondents naming nepotism as a significant hindrance in job market, careers and work relations. The results were publicized through social media, distributable

infographics, live debates with experts and specialized seminars/lectures for several institutions concerned (Public Service Ethics Board, Special Investigation Service of Lithuania) and local entrepreneur clubs (Vilnius Club). Several requests for the first half of 2019 to conduct seminars on problem of nepotism in business and municipal organizations are received, further expanded policy paper with recommendations to private, NGO and state/municipal decision makers will be published in 2019, the opinion survey will be repeated with addition of comparative Latvian and Estonian examples.

INDEX OF WELL-BEING IN LITHUANIAN MUNICIPALITIES





In November, Vilnius Institute for Policy Analysis presented the Index of Well-being in Lithuanian Municipalities of the year 2018 to the public, experts and politicians. This is a composite index, covering a broad range of thematic measures. Similar indices are used widely in EU countries for monitoring and analysis of regional developments. VIPA has reviewed the Index of Human Development for Sweden's Municipalities and the Quality of Life Index of Municipalities of the Czech Republic.

The purpose of the Index, rather than providing a mere rating, is to ensure the longitudinal monitoring based on the objective contextual information for timely informing policy and decision makers and increasing awareness of general society on regional disparities in Lithuania.

Besides, it is expected that it will encourage local discussions and prompt civic engagement initiatives at local level.

Index of Well-being uses official statistics as of the year 2017 thus showing the up-to-date trends of Lithuania's regions. It entails 5 subcomponents, i.e. social security, physical safety, viable economy, quality education, and integral demography. Final rank of each municipality is computed as an average of these rankings.

Vilnius Institute for Policy Analysis will run the Index annually aiming to monitor and to assess the changes of wellbeing in Lithuanian municipalities. It is also planned that new relevant components will be added every year.

POLICY PAPERS

„A GUIDE TO THE RUSSIAN TOOL BOX OF ELECTION MEDDLING: A PLATFORM TO ANALYSE THE LONG TERM COMPREHENSIVE KREMLIN STRATEGY OF MALIGN INFLUENCE“

MARIUS LAURINAVIČIUS



The policy paper by Marius Laurinavičius „A Guide to the Russian Tool Box of Election Meddling: a Platform to Analyse the Long Term Comprehensive Kremlin Strategy of Malign Influence“ aims to deconstruct the phenomenon of Russia’s meddling in elections in different countries, which, in recent years, attracted special attention in the world.

As the research, carried out through the project „Alliance for Securing Democracy at The German Marshall Fund“ demonstrated, Russia has interfered in political processes at least in 27 countries in Europe

and North America since 2004.

At the same time, according to the author, Russian election meddling is usually simplified and narrowed to cyber-attacks and smaller or bigger disinformation campaigns. In other words, the attention is mostly paid to the component of information warfare, and especially to the role of internet in spreading Kremlin’s influence, in the whole puzzle of meddling.

Meanwhile, the examples of this meddling, already revealed in different countries, show that it is a much more complex and inclusive hostile activity, which uses a much bigger arsenal of tools for achieving its goals, and the process itself is much more diversified and multi-layered than mere tactics of information warfare.

This study analyses the ways and tools of Russia’s meddling in elections. It also offers possible methods of resistance to this meddling that is much more complex than merely cyber-attacks and disinformation campaigns.

The policy paper was financed by International Elections Study Center.

„LITHUANIAN GRAND STRATEGY AND EU DEFENSE INTEGRATION“

JUSTINAS MICKUS



Supposedly more has happened in the defence policy of the European Union over the past two years than in the past decade. Within two years after the EU institutions and member states renewed serious debates on greater defence integration in mid-2016, 23 member states launched joint projects focused on developing defence capacity and defensive preparedness, the European Commission has pledged funding to joint defence research and capacity-building projects, while a newly-established permanent operational headquarters in Brussels plans and coordinates all EU-led civilian missions. Importantly, such initiatives to deepen and strengthen EU defence cooperation seem to reflect popular attitudes across Europe, where public support for joint EU defence policy ranges from 57 % (Austria) to 90 % (Cyprus).

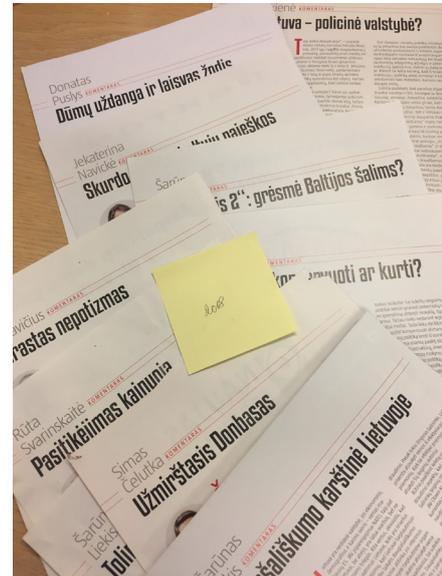
The concrete EU defence integration initiatives implemented in the last two years have also prompted broader discussions about the future direction of EU defence and security policy. Encouraged but not sated by the steps taken so far, some EU-enthusiasts have renewed their call for a joint European military force or proposed “strategic autonomy” as the fundamental aim of EU defence policy. At the same time, the recent initiatives also touch on the hot-button issue of compatibility between EU defence cooperation and NATO and raise contentious questions about the desired pace and form of EU integration. It thus seems that even the relatively limited EU defence policy initiatives have triggered and continue to drive discussions on the fundamental questions of European politics.

This study aims to enrich these discussions with the Lithuanian perspective. More precisely, the present study considers what position Lithuania may take in future negotiations on EU defence integration. To assess what future policy is likely, the study analyses Vilnius’ long-term strategic thinking in the area of security and foreign policy, as well as its current manifestations in the context of EU defence policy – i.e., the Lithuanian involvement in the current EU defence integration initiatives. Based on this analysis, the study presents four scenarios for the likely Lithuanian policy towards further EU defence integration and provides recommendations for stakeholders.

VIPA IN THE MEDIA

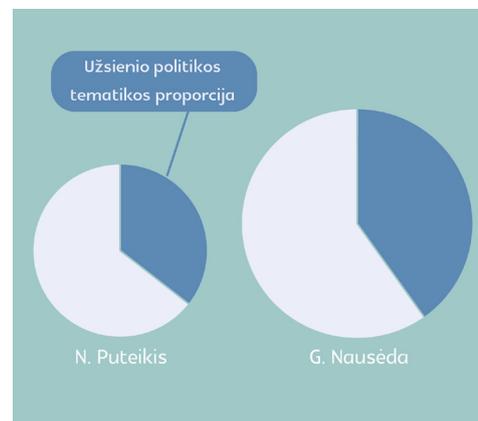
REFLECTIONS ON DEMOCRACY

The analysts and associate experts of the Vilnius Institute for Policy Analysis have published articles in the magazine „IQ“ every month in 2018. These articles analysed the problems of democracy in Lithuania and other countries (namely, Ukraine), discussed the negative aspects of the state life, e.g., nepotism, poverty, the absence of regional politics, steps towards becoming a police state, as well as lessons from the past – the circumstances of the Helsinki meeting, the situation in Ukraine and other relevant topics.



ELECTION MONITORING

Attention attracted in the media is very important during pre-election campaigns. In 2018, VIPA has also started and continues a pre-election project, aimed at monitoring mentioning of candidates in the online media. With the help of analytical tools, it is possible to reveal, in what contexts and how often the names of the candidates are most often mentioned in the different media outlets. The contexts that have been analysed so far, comprised directions of foreign policy, policy of education and science, policy of defence, law, and justice. The analysis of the mentioning of candidates is shared on Facebook, in the websites alfa.lt and 15min.lt.



Ratio in the context
“Foreign policy”



DELFI Dėmesio centre: ar gali bažnyčia sugriauti Putino kuriamą slavišką imperiją? (46)



GIMINYSTĖS, DRAUGYSTĖS RYŠIŲ ĮTAKA DARBUI
ALGIRDAS DAVIDAVIČIUS
VILNIAUS POLITIKOS ANALIZĖS INSTITUTO EKSPERTAS



Atviras pokalbis

ŽINIŲ
RADIJAS

Ar tikrai Lietuvoje valstybinio sektoriaus ne per daug, o per mažai?



15min studijoje – pokalbis apie Donaldo Trumpo ir Vladimiro Putino susitikimą



Donatas Puslys. Atminties kovos: kuo užkliuvo 1956 metų Budapešto rudens herojaus skulptūra?



Žinia atmiešama melu

Vilniaus Europos centras „Lietuvos ryšiai“
2018-10-02 16:27

Experts and associate analysts of the Vilnius Institute for Policy Analysis constantly analyse and comment the news from Lithuania and abroad in popular internet media, on the radio and TV.

141 ARTICLES

61 CONFERENCES AND DISCUSSIONS

45 INTERVIEWS ON THE RADIO

21 INTERVIEWS IN THE PRESS

81 INTERVIEWS AND COMMENTS ON TELEVISION

VIPA EVENTS:

PUBLIC DEBATES, PRESENTATIONS OF POLICY ANALYSES, EXPERT DISCUSSIONS

FEBRUARY

20



land and lessons learned for building a strategy towards Russia nowadays. While the concept is widely used, it is still a subject of controversy: some stakeholders consider and advocate it as a widely

LESSONS FROM FINLAND, THE KREMLIN'S NORDIC TARGET

Alpo Rusi, former diplomat and advisor to the President of Finland, presented and discussed a concept of Finlandization, its implications for Finland and lessons learned for building a strategy towards Russia nowadays. While the concept is widely used, it is still a subject of controversy: some stakeholders consider and advocate it as a widely applicable success story, yet there are those who disagree.

MARCH

20



the election process itself and the broader political consequences. Is the Kremlin satisfied with the voter turnout? What does Putin's re-election mean for the current Russian regime and the West? Will we witness any changes in Russia's domestic affairs or international posture? What are the immediate goals of V. Putin's regime? What can we expect in 2024? What is the future of Russian opposition? These and other questions were discussed by Edward Lucas, Center for European Policy Analysis (CEPA); Anton Barbashin, Intersection Project; Solvita Denisa-Liepniece, Baltic Centre for Media Excellence; Vitaliy Averin, Movement for protecting voter rights Golos; David Kankiya, Movement for protecting voter rights Golos.

PUTIN FOREVER OR THE DAWN OF POST-PUTIN ERA?

The outcome of Russian presidential election was unsurprising: Vladimir Putin was re-elected for the fourth term. However, there were several intriguing questions related to

APRIL

11



standing of EU in conflict zones – Ukraine and Israel – as well as perception of conflicts in EU countries. What perception of the EU and what narratives about the EU prevail in the countries researched, what media messages are predominant in Ukraine, Germany, or Lithuania? Special attention during the event was paid to the presentation of the attitude and views of youth, that are predominant in the EU as well as the countries in conflicts. The research was carried out by Jean Monnet network C3EU: University of Canterbury (New Zealand); National Institute of Strategic Studies (Ukraine); Cherkasy National University (Ukraine); V.N. Karazin Kharkiv National University (Ukraine); Ben-Gurion University of the Negev (Israel); Vytauto Didžiojo Universitetas (Lithuania); Technische Universität Darmstadt (Germany); Royal Holloway, University of London (UK); Katholieke Universitet Leuven (Belgium).

DIAGNOSIS OF EU IMAGE AND NARRATIVES IN THE CONFLICT ZONES

The team of researchers and analysts from 9 countries presented the results of the research and insights on the under-

MAY
31

DISCUSSION: THE VALUE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Are there really too many people with higher education in Lithuania? What value do universities create? Is the goal of universities to prepare specialists for the labour market? How to attract and retain talents in Lithuania, to expand intellectual potential of the universities? Participants of discussion: Saulius Spurga, political scientist, writer; Paulius Kunčinas, economist, the founder of initiative „Lemiamas šuolis“; Šarūnas Liekis, political scientist, historian.

JUNE
1

CZESŁAW MIŁOSZ FESTIVAL – 2018

Internet news portal Bernardinai.lt and Vilnius Institute for Policy Analysis organised a discussion „The Identity of Humans from the Borderlands“. Participants: Donatas Puslys, prof. Irena Veisaitė, photojournalist Artūras Morozovas, photographer Neringa Rekašiūtė.

JUNE
4

INNOVATIVE POLITICAL DECISIONS IS A NECESSITY

Discussion „Innovative Political Decisions Is a Necessity Today“. Participants of the discussion: regional coordinator of the international initiative „Open Government Partnership“ Peter Vargauskas, Director of Association of Local Authorities in Lithuania Roma Žakaitienė, Advisor to the Mayor of Tauragė Dovydas Kaminskas, LRS member Dovilė Šakalienė.

JUNE
13

HOW MUCH NEPOTISM IS ENOUGH? DISCUSSION ABOUT THE ISSUE OF NEPOTISM IN LITHUANIA

Do close relations between leaders, officers and employees disturb our society? To what extent Lithuanian citizens tolerate and accept nepotism? Nepotism is a practice of favouring relatives and friends by those with any power or influence in companies and organisations. Presenting pilot survey carried out by Vilnius Institute for Policy Analysis, phenomena of nepotism in Lithuania and our society's attitude to it was discussed by dr. Gintaras Šumskas, journalist Liepa Želnieienė (15min.lt), and dr. Petras Ragauskas (Law Institute of Lithuania).

SEPTEMBER
13

VILNIUS CONSULTATIONS 2018

Disinformation is one of the most relevant political problems nowadays. What political and institutional decisions actually work? Did the decisions that had been made until now, e. g. the ban of TV channels, serve the purpose? Is there anything that opposes anti-Western narratives? These and other questions were discussed during our annual event Vilnius Consultations. At Vilnius Consultations, experts of different fields from the Baltic states, Ukraine, Georgia, Moldova, Spain, UK and other countries shared their newest experience and provided recommendations for the mentioned challenges. The aim of consultations is to formulate strategic goals and to look for common decisions. Anton Chekhovtsov, famous researcher and political commentator, the author of the recently published book „Russia and the Western Far Right: Tango Noir“ was among the speakers.

OCTOBER
19

DISCUSSION ABOUT KREMLIN'S INFLUENCE ON PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

The study of the senior analyst at Vilnius Institute for Policy Analysis Marius Laurinavičius, ordered by International Elections Study Center and publicly presented for the first time in Lithuania „A Guide to the Russian Tool Box of Election Meddling: a Platform to Analyse the Long Term Comprehensive Kremlin Strategy of Malign Influence“ became the reference point and an introduction to the discussion. The chair of the Committee of National Security and Defence at Lithuanian Seimas Vytautas Bakas and Ambassador at Large, Board member of the European Center of Excellence for Countering Hybrid Threats in Helsinki Eitvydas Bajarūnas participated in the discussion.

OCTOBER
29

THE NEW GEOPOLITICS OF NATURAL GAS AND US – RUSSIA RELATIONS

During the event, Agnia Grigas presented her newest book „The New Geopolitics of Natural Gas“ (2017), in which she analyses the changing dynamics in global market of natural gas and the growth of influence of USA after it became the leader in the sector of gas production and the major liquid natural gas (LNG) exporter. US ambitions naturally challenge Russia's dominance in the field of energy. A. Grigas also discussed other relevant „hot“ topics: the threats arising from the project „Nordstream 2“, the policy of energy and sanctions of Trump's administration.

NOVEMBER
6

DOES NEPOTISM HINDER DEMOCRACY IN LITHUANIA?

The results of the representative survey of public opinion and recommendations based on them were presented during the event. The topic of the presentation and discussions – „Does Nepotism Hinder Democracy in Lithuania?“. The survey showed that major part of Lithuanian citizens consider nepotism a significant barrier for good, productive work relations and transparent career based on conscious and transparent evaluation of work in private as well as in public sector. Experts who contributed to the research and recommendations also took part in the discussion: Gediminas Sakalauskas (independent consultant), Rytis Juozapavičius (expert on organisational development), Gintaras Šumskas, Algis Davidavičius.

NOVEMBER
9

„LITHUANIA IN THE EU: THE IMPORTANCE OF MEMBERSHIP AND CHALLENGES OF THE PRESENT“

Vilnius Institute for Policy Analysis together with Lithuanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs invited residents of Visaginas town and its guests to an informal discussion – seminar „Lithuania in the EU: the Importance of membership and Challenges of the Present“. During the event, residents of Visaginas had an opportunity to get acquainted with the most popular myths about EU, to learn, where do they come from and how to recognize them. VIPA's Donatas Puslys, Simas Čelutka and Algirdas Davidavičius participated in the discussion.

NOVEMBER
12



WHICH LITHUANIA DO YOU LIVE IN: THE INDEX OF WELL-BEING IN LITHUANIAN MUNICIPALITIES

The index of well-being in Lithuanian municipalities was presented in the event „Which Lithuania Do You Live in?“, VIPA experts, academics, representatives from municipalities and NGOs participated in the presentation and discussed the present peculiarities of regional politics and major challenges in ensuring sustainable development of the country.

NOVEMBER
15



DISCUSSION WITH THE TEACHERS ABOUT POLITICAL CIVIL RIGHTS

Discussion with the teachers about political civil rights in the EU and Lithuania. Teaching materials of political rights were also presented during the event.

NOVEMBER
16



„LITHUANIA IN THE EU: THE IMPORTANCE OF MEMBERSHIP AND CHALLENGES OF THE PRESENT“

Vilnius Institute for Policy Analysis together with Lithuanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs invited residents of Kėdainiai and its guests to an informal discussion – seminar „Lithuania in the EU: the Importance of membership and Challenges of the Present“. During the event, residents of Kėdainiai had an opportunity to get acquainted with the most popular myths about EU, to learn, where do they come from and how to recognize them. VIPA's Donatas Puslys, Simas Čelutka and Algirdas Davidavičius participated in the discussion

DECEMBER
18



WHAT EU DEFENCE POLICY DOES LITHUANIA NEED?

In 2018, defence policy of European Union attracted unusually much attention. Resonant declarations of the leaders of France and Germany about the ideas of “strategic autonomy” and “united European army” and complicated relations of European leaders with the present president of USA Donald Trump incited hot discussions. The need for more solid EU defence policy was also conditioned by the changing situation in European security: new types of hybrid threats, continuous aggression of Russia and growing influence of China. Understanding and defining of Lithuania’s strategic position on EU defence policy is of particular importance in this context. This goal was a reason for VIPA’s policy paper “Lithuanian Grand Strategy and EU Defense Integration” that was presented at the event. Major insights of the research about what interests predetermined Lithuania’s involvement in common projects of EU defence policy in recent years were presented during the event. Questions, like, is there a reason for fearing the possible repetition of EU and NATO functions, what is the current status of transatlantic relations, and what goals Lithuania should try to achieve in the sphere of defence, were discussed.



Vilnius Institute for Policy Analysis (VIPA) is a non-governmental policy think tank having a mission to stand for open society, liberal democracy and rule of law.

VIPA conducts research and policy analysis on topical issues relevant to Lithuania and the broader region, provides expert policy recommendations, organizes conferences, workshops, panels and advocacy campaigns.

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