



LITHUANIAN BAR
ASSOCIATION



GROWING COMMUNITY

Advocates: 2213	Advocate's assistants: 870
Female advocates: 848	Female advocate's assistants: 466
Male advocates: 1365	Male advocate's assistants: 404
Number of professional law partnerships: 76	Number of law firms: 1131
Average age of advocates: – 47 years	

HIGH INDICATOR OF TRUST IN ADVOCATES

72 percent of surveyed people relate advocate's activities in Lithuania to expert assistance by professionals.



LEGAL SERVICES PROVIDED BY ADVOCATES

- Legal consultations (legal advice)
- Drafting of legal documents
- Representation on legal matters
- Defence and representation in legal proceedings

Lithuanian advocates may also provide an interpreter services to the extent related to the legal services which can be provided by an advocate, or a mediator services (intermediary, alternative dispute arbitrator). These professionals may be members of a collegial management or supervisory body, and work at all levels of the election and referendum commissions, municipal councils, they also may be members of the commissions to which advocates are delegated by the Seimas, the President or the Government. They collaborate and engage in working panels for drafting legislation and offer research services for drafting legal acts.

MAIN PRINCIPLES OF ADVOCATES' ACTIVITIES

- Freedom and independence of the advocate's activities
- Democracy, collegiality of relations and fair competition among advocates
- Lawfulness of the activities of advocates
- Non-disclosure of the client's secret
- Loyalty to the client and avoidance of any conflict of interest
- Irreproachable behaviour

MISSION AND HISTORY

The mission of the Lithuanian Bar Association is to be the self-governance institution of the Lithuanian Bar, seeking an optimal balance between traditions and modern needs and expectations of the Bar, efficient moderation. Priorities in the activities of the Lithuanian Bar Association are to ensure the quality, accessibility of protection of a person's lawful interests and legal defence, to contribute to ensuring human rights in legislation, to develop legal education of the society and unpaid legal assistance.

The Lithuanian Bar Association is the institution that both represents and monitors, regulates the community of advocates. The Bar system started functioning in the independent Lithuania on 3 December 1918. The Bar institution goes back to such legal monuments as the Statutes of Lithuania (of 1529, 1566, 1588) – three sets of legal documents, collections of law, created in the 16th century that defined the foundation of the legal system of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and carried on until 1840.

From 2004, when Lithuania became a member of the European Union, the legal system of our country is influenced by the EU law, which has precedence over national law of the Member States. The integral system of courts in Lithuania consists of general and specialised competence (administrative courts) courts. The Lithuanian legal system is in the family of the continental or Romano-Germanic legal systems.

The Lithuanian Bar Association, in performance of the functions assigned to it by law, represents the community in debates and meetings organised by committees of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania, the Government, other state authorities, presents its comments, proposals for improvement of legal acts.

Lithuania is among five EU Member States, where settlement of the civil cases is the fastest: the average duration of settlement of civil, commercial law cases in courts of the first instance in Lithuania is under 100 days. The process of providing information to the public about court activities and pending cases is ensured best among the EU Member States – the court system has installed all necessary measures of providing information, including electronic ones.¹

- Fast and transparent settlement of cases in courts, reliable alternative business disputes resolution authorities also operate in Lithuania
- Productivity of lawyers characteristic of Nordic countries

Working with advocates that belong to the Lithuanian Bar Association ensures competitive price of legal services and the top competence, professional ethics of advocates and advocate's assistants in representing clients in courts at all levels.

¹ The 2017 European Union justice scoreboard.

SELF-GOVERNANCE BODIES

The bodies of the Lithuanian Bar Association are the General Meeting of Advocates, the Council of the Lithuanian Bar, the Court of Honour of Advocates and the Auditing Commission.

- General Meeting of Advocates

The General Meeting of Advocates is the supreme body of the Lithuanian Bar Association. The General Meeting of Advocates is valid if attended by more than a half of all the advocates entered onto the List of Practising Advocates of Lithuania.

- Council of the Lithuanian Bar

The Council of the Lithuanian Bar is a collective governing body of 11 representatives, elected for a term of four years. Advocates having a record of at least ten years of practice as an advocate may be members of the Council of the Lithuanian Bar. The Council of the Lithuanian Bar meets once a month. The Council of the Lithuanian Bar is assisted by 19 members of the administrative staff of the Lithuanian Bar Association. The Council of the Lithuanian Bar is headed by the Chairman of the Council of the Lithuanian Bar, who is elected by the General Meeting of Advocates for a term of four years, in accordance with the procedure specified in the Statute of the Lithuanian Bar Association.



Change in the number of advocates in 1999 – 2017

FUNCTIONS OF THE COUNCIL OF THE LITHUANIAN BAR

- Co-ordinates and monitors and regulates the professional activities of advocates in Lithuania
- Represents interests of advocates in public institutions, international and foreign organizations
- Allows individuals to engage in legal practice as professional advocates and may withdraw such rights on grounds established by law
- Makes decisions on disciplinary liability for violation of professional activities and ethics by advocates
- Appoints members to the Bar Exam Commission and proposes the chairman of the Bar Exam Commission
- Registers lawyers from the Member States of the European Union wishing to practise as an advocate in the Republic of Lithuania
- Organises the improvement of professional qualifications of members of the Lithuanian Bar Association
- Participates in organising the implementation of state-guaranteed legal aid

On legal matters, the Council of the Lithuanian Bar is being consulted by advisory committees formed by it:

- Disciplinary Committee
- Civil and Civil Procedure Law Committee
- Criminal and Criminal Procedure Law Committee
- State-guaranteed Legal Aid Committee
- IT Committee



CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL OF THE LITHUANIAN BAR PROF. PHD IGNAS VĖGĖLĖ

Elected on: 16 May 2014. Advocate since: 2002

Education:

- Professional qualification degree of a lawyer, Vilnius University
 - Doctoral degree in social sciences, in the field of sciences of law (01 S), Mykolas Romeris University
 - Post-master studies, Oxford University
 - Distinction endowment procedure, Mykolas Romeris University
- Practice areas: EU law, EU internal market law, EU company law, European Court of Justice case law, consumer rights protection, and competition law
- Court of Honour of Advocates

The Court of Honour of Advocates hears disciplinary actions against advocates in accordance with the procedure established by the Lithuanian Bar Association. The Court of Honour of Advocates consists of five members having a record of at least ten years of practice as an advocate. The Court of Honour of Advocates is composed of advocates: three members are elected by the General Meeting of Advocates and two members are appointed by the Minister of Justice.

- Auditing Commission

The Auditing Commission is the supervisory body of the Lithuanian Bar Association reviewing the financial activities of this organisation. The Auditing Commission is elected for a term of four years from among advocates having a record of at least five years of practice as an advocate.

SOCIAL INITIATIVES

- Unpaid legal advice in main regions of Lithuania
- Presentation of the advocate's profession in schools
- Organiser of the National Competition for Legal Knowledge
- Support for unpaid legal assistance initiatives
- Awards for journalists writing on legal topics
- Initiatives of legal education of the society
- Support for students of law taking part in various competitions
- Support for advocates' sports, leisure activities

MEMBERSHIPS IN INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS

- Since 1992, a member of the International Bar Association (IBA)
- Since 2004, an official member of The Council of Bars and Law Societies of Europe (CCBE)
- Since 2008, active participation in the Nordic Baltic Bar Associations Presidential meetings
- Since 2009, a member of the Chief Executives of European Bar Associations (CEEBA)