



## ENERGY EFFICIENCY, MODERN EQUIPMENT AND WELL TRAINED HOSPITAL PERSONNEL IN LITHUANIA THE HEALTH OF MOTHERS AND CHILDREN



The Lithuanian health programme reduced infant and maternal mortality rates and improved energy efficiency and the indoor climate in the maternity wards.

Switzerland supported the continuing training of medical personnel and the modernisation of antiquated hospital infrastructures in 27 Lithuanian hospitals, and increased energy efficiency in 24 of these hospitals. These measures greatly improved overall conditions for women in childbirth and for their newborn babies.

Despite enormous progress in the Lithuanian healthcare system since the early 1990s, the infant and maternal mortality rates in Lithuania were still higher than the European average in 2010. The healthcare system was well organised, but its infrastructure and equipment were inadequate – a situation that affected both basic equipment and the use of new medical technologies.

Energy efficiency also had some catching up to do: most Lithuanian hospitals were built between 1960 and 1980 to the Soviet standard of the time. Their outdated equipment consumed a great deal of energy and the buildings were poorly insulated.

### REDUCING INFANT AND MATERNAL MORTALITY

Thanks to Swiss support, conditions for newborns and mothers in Lithuania have improved significantly. Most strikingly, infant mortality has fallen sharply.

While in 1992 an average of 16.5 in 1,000 infants died, by 2014 this figure had dropped to only 3.9. This corresponds to the Swiss infant mortality rate. The Swiss contribution has achieved the following:

- 27 hospitals have been provided with modern medical equipment.
- Three remote hospitals have received special transport vehicles for newborns.
- Over 2,300 healthcare workers have attended training.
- 70 diagnosis and treatment guidelines have been developed to standardise and systematise the most important pathological conditions.

### ENERGY EFFICIENCY INCREASED AND OPERATING COSTS REDUCED

Lithuania's geographical location means extreme temperature fluctuations, from hot days in summer to the icy cold of winter. Thanks to improved building insulation, women in childbirth and their newborn babies enjoy better conditions, hospital operating costs have been reduced and the hospitals are more environmentally friendly. The following measures for improving energy efficiency were taken in 24 of the 27 hospitals mentioned above:

- The highest priority was improved thermal insulation. To this end, doors, windows, roofs and walls were renovated or replaced.
- The hospitals' building technology – heating and water supply systems, electrical installations, air supply and ventilation – were modernised. The installation of heat pumps and solar collectors enable the use of renewable energy.
- The medical oxygen supply systems were improved.

### CONTINUITY OF SUPPORT

Switzerland's present support has its roots in Swiss transition assistance provided during the 1990s, which brought about substantive improvements in the health of mothers and children in Lithuania. The level of medical care for infants in Lithuania is



The federal Councilor Didier Burkhalter visited the Vilnius Children's Hospital in 2013.

remarkable thanks to the long-term partnership with Switzerland, said Lithuania's President Dalia Grybauskaitė during her state visit in Bern in 2015. Switzerland's support over many years has been received very positively in Lithuania. As part of the project a hospital partnership with the Geneva University Hospital was expanded and Swiss companies received mandates amounting to a total of CHF 2.3 million.



*When Lithuania's smallest baby girl was born she weighed just 420 grams. She is now a schoolgirl. The life journey of this "Thumbelina" started in the Neonatal Intensive Care Department of Vilnius University Children's Hospital, which bears a logo indicating the support provided by Switzerland to Lithuania. It was in the period from 1992 to 1994 when Switzerland began to provide aid for the health of Lithuanian babies and their mothers by supporting eight medical institutions. The new Swiss-Lithuanian Cooperation Programme will be implemented until 2017. This time, 27 Lithuanian hospitals are to be renovated and provided with modern medical equipment. Thanks to Switzerland's enlargement contribution, we will be able to ensure that pregnant women and women who give birth will receive the same standardised diagnosis and treatment as women living in large towns and cities. Our objective is to reduce the disparities between the country's urban centres and weaker outlying regions, as well as to bridge the gap between Lithuania and more developed European countries.*

Rimantas Remeika,  
Former chancellor of the Ministry of Health of the  
Republic of Lithuania

## THE PROJECT IN BRIEF

### OBJECTIVE

Increasing social security and protecting the environment

### SUBJECT

Good health / energy efficiency

### COUNTRY

Lithuania

### PARTNERS

University hospital of Geneva

### STARTING POINT / BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Thanks to the support of the EU and Switzerland, the Lithuanian health system has improved significantly since the beginning of the 1990s. Nonetheless, the infant and maternal mortality rates were still higher than the EU average. Most Lithuanian hospitals were built during the Soviet era.

Under the original plan Switzerland was to modernise medical equipment and outdated hospital facilities in 22 hospitals, train hospital staff and renovate 16 hospitals according to energy efficiency standards. But thanks to the strong Swiss franc and savings in tendering procedures, 27 hospitals are receiving medical equipment upgrades and 24 are being made more energy efficient.

### PURPOSE

This project aims to reduce infant and maternal mortality rates and to improve energy efficiency and the indoor climate in the maternity wards.

### ACTIVITIES

- Continuing training of medical personnel
- Purchase of modern medical equipment
- Improvement of building insulation and building technology

### TARGET GROUPS

Pregnant women, women in childbirth and newborn babies

### COSTS

Total project budget  
CHF 53.6 million  
Swiss contribution:  
CHF 45.6 million

### RESPONSIBILITY FOR PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

Lithuanian Ministry of Health and 27 hospitals

### DURATION

2011 – 2017