ENRI-East
European, National and Regional Identities

Interplay of European, National and Regional Identities:
Nations between States along the New Eastern Borders of the European Union

Series of project research reports

Contextual and empirical reports on ethnic minorities in Central and Eastern Europe

Belarus

Germany

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Research Report #7

The Belarusian Minority in Lithuania

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About the ENRI-East research project (www.enri-east.net)

The Interplay of European, National and Regional Identities:
Nations between states along the new eastern borders of the European Union (ENRI-East)

ENRI-East is a research project implemented in 2008-2011 and primarily funded by the European Commission under the Seventh Framework Program. This international and inter-disciplinary study is aimed at a deeper understanding of the ways in which the modern European identities and regional cultures are formed and inter-communicated in the Eastern part of the European continent.

ENRI-East is a response to the shortcomings of previous research: it is the first large-scale comparative project which uses a sophisticated toolkit of various empirical methods and is based on a process-oriented theoretical approach which places empirical research into a broader historical framework.

The distinct ethno-national diversity in this region, along with the problems resulting from it was generated by dramatic shifts of borders, populations and political affiliation which have continued until today. The prevailing pattern of political geography of this part of Europe was the emergence and the dismemberment of empires, a process which created ethno-national enclaves within the boundaries of new nation states. These minorities were frequently drawn into inter-state conflicts and subjected to repression, ethnic cleansing and expulsion. The subjects of interests were ethnic minorities in the supra-region "Wider Eastern Europe", i.e. the region between the Baltic Sea and the Black Sea, along the current geo-political "East-West" division line. Estimated 8 to 10 millions of people are affected by "ethnic splits" or minority groups, whose ethnic compatriots would constitute a titular majority in another country, some of them even on each side of this contemporary geopolitical east-west diving border line.

The complex ENRI-East study was designed as a comprehensive set of theoretical, methodological, empirical and comparative work streams exploring the interplay of identities among the twelve ethnic minorities in the supra-region of Central and Easter Europe. These ethnic groups are: Russians in Latvia and Lithuania, Belarusians and Ukrainians in Poland, Slovaks in Hungary, Hungarians in Slovakia and in Ukraine, Poles in Ukraine, in Belarus and in Lithuania, Belarusians in Lithuania as well as Lithuanians in Russia (Kaliningrad oblast). The project includes also a case study of Germany, where our target groups were the ethnic Germans returning to their historical homeland after the centuries of living in other European countries as well as Jewish immigrants (so called "quota refugees" who had moved to the country since 1989).

ENRI-East addresses four general research themes. The first one deals with the interplay of identities and cultures by comparing 'mother nations' and their 'residual groups abroad'. The second theme is a cross-cutting approach which addresses the nations and the states: more exactly, the attitudes and policies of 'mother nations' and 'host nations' toward the 'residual groups' and vice versa. The third research theme comprise the reality of self organization and representation of "residual groups abroad" (ethnic minorities) along the East European borderland. Finally, the last research theme of the project deals with path dependencies, historical memories, present status and expected dynamics of divided nations in Eastern Europe.

The empirical data base for ENRI-East was generated through 5 sub-studies implemented in all or several project countries:

- ENRI-VIS (Values and Identities Survey): face-to-face formalized interviews with members of 12 ethnic minority groups in eight countries, 6,800 respondents;

- ENRI-BIO: qualitative, biographical in-depth interviews with members of 12 ethnic minority groups in eight countries (144 interviews);

- ENRI-EXI: semi-structured expert interviews with governmental and non-governmental representatives of ethnic minority groups in eight countries (48 interviews);

- ENRI-BLOG: online content analysis of weblogs and Internet periodicals run or maintained by ethnic minority group members;

- ENRI-MUSIC: special study on cultural identities and music; an innovative, multi-disciplinary pilot effort in Hungary and Lithuania.

The series of ENRI-East research reports   (www.enri-east.net/project-results)

Main outcomes of the ENRI-East research program are summarized in the series of research papers and project reports as outlined below. The whole collection of papers will be publicly available on the project web-site by December 2011, while some papers can be accessed since September 2011.

Individual papers are written by ENRI-East experts from all project teams and the whole series is edited by the Coordinating Team at the CEASS-Center at the Institute for Advanced Studies under the guidance of the Principal Investigator Prof. Hans-Georg Heinrich and Project Coordinator Dr. Alexander Chvorostov.

Summarizing and generalizing reports

1. Theoretical and methodological backgrounds for the studies of European, national and regional identities of ethnic minorities in European borderlands (Edited by Prof. Claire Wallace and Dr. Natalia Patsiurko)

2. Interplay of European, National and Regional Identities among the ethnic minorities in Central and Eastern Europe (main results of ENRI-East empirical program) (Edited by Prof. Hans-Georg Heinrich and Dr. Alexander Chvorostov)

3. ENRI-East Thematic Comparative papers and synopsizes of authored articles of ENRI-East experts (9 tender papers and further bibliography of project-related publications)

Contextual and empirical reports on ethnic minorities in Central and Eastern Europe:
(edited by respective team leaders)

4. The Polish Minority in Belarus
5. The Slovak Minority in Hungary
6. The Russian Minority in Latvia
7. The Belarusian Minority in Lithuania
8. The Polish Minority in Lithuania
9. The Russian Minority in Lithuania
10. The Belarusian Minority in Poland
11. The Ukrainian Minority in Poland
12. The Lithuanian Minority in Russia (Kaliningrad oblast)
13. The Hungarian Minority in Slovakia
14. The Hungarian Minority in Ukraine
15. The Polish Minority in Ukraine
16. Special Case Study Germany

Series of empirical survey reports:

17. ENRI-VIS: Values and Identities Survey

   o Methodology and implementation of ENRI-VIS (Technical report)
   o ENRI-VIS Reference book (major cross-tabulations and coding details)

18. Qualitative sub-studies of ENRI-East project (methodological and technical reports)

   o Methodological report on Biographical Interviews (ENRI-BIO)
   o Methodological report on Expert Interviews and data base description (ENRI-EXI)
   o Methodological report on the pilot study on Musical cultures and identities (ENRI-MUSIC)
   o Methodological report and main findings of the Pilot study of web-spaces (ENRI-BLOG)

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http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/ssh/home_en.html
http://ec.europa.eu/research/social-sciences/index_en.html

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Abstract

The report is composed of these main parts: executive summary, contextual report, ENRI-VIS Results, ENRI-BIOG Results, ENRI-EXI Results, ENRI-BLOG Results, Conclusions.

In the contextual report we present an overview of data gained from the secondary sources (historical, sociological, other kind of research) on the history of Belarussians in Lithuania, demographic overview, self-organisation of Belarussians in Lithuania.

The second part presents the main results of the ENRI-VIS survey. The report provides with main descriptive outcomes under the following sets of questions: ethnicity and ethnic identity, national identity; family, households and related ethnic aspects; xenophobia, conflicts and discrimination; social and political capital, participation, attitudes toward EU. The importance of independent variables is marked in case of relevant results.

The third part presents overview of the main findings of biographical interviews (ENRI-BIOG). It presents the brief description of the people interviewed and the main facts of their live stories. The report presents quotations and primary analysis of the interviews having in mind the main questions – European identity, national identity (relationship to country of residence and mother country), regional identity, civic participation and ethnic organisation.

The fourth part introduces the main findings of expert interviews (ENRI-EXI). Three experts were interviewed in Lithuania an in this part the primary analysis of each interview is presented. The analysis is made in accordance to the following questions: main issues associated with that minority in the country of residence, relationship to mother country, relationship to European events and organisations.

The fifth part introduces the main findings of web-analysis (ENRI-BLOG). It provides the content analysis of online resources attributable to ethnic minorities, such as periodicals, organizations, blogs, forums, personal websites, and commentaries to articles.

Summary of the study

The **contextual report** contains overview and analysis of data gained mainly from the secondary sources (historical, sociological, other kind of research) on the history of Russians in Latvia, demographic overview, Russian self-organisation in Latvia.

ENRI-VIS: The second part presents the main results of the ENRI-VIS survey. The report provides with main descriptive outcomes under the following sets of questions: ethnicity and ethnic identity, national identity; family, households and related ethnic aspects; xenophobia, conflicts and discrimination; social and political capital, participation, attitudes toward EU. The importance of independent variables is marked in case of relevant results.

The survey used a questionnaire translated into Russian (61 per cent) and Lithuanian (35 per cent) languages. Survey Sample: 400 Belarussians living in Lithuania. For the sampling, a snow balling method was applied, the first contacts were reached through the non-governmental organisations. The survey took place in three counties and 6 municipalities. In Klaipeda county, the respondents were questioned in the municipality of Klaipeda city; in Utena county, the respondents were questioned in the municipality of Visaginas town; and Vilnius county, the respondents

were questioned in the municipalities of Svencionys region, Salcininkai region and Vilnius city and Vilnius region. Time: Fieldwork: 15 January 2010 – 22 May 2010. Survey agency: Lithuanian Social Research Centre.

The majority of the Lithuanian Belarussians (68.3 per cent) speak 'other languages" most often at home, among which Russian speakers comprise three quarters, and the rest indicate using several languages at a time such as Russian, Belarussian, Lithuanian or Polish. Counting from the whole sample, those who speak Russian at come comprise half of it (53 per cent). Approximately one fifth of the Belarussian respondents (18.5 per cent) indicated that they speak Belarussian most often at home, one tenth (9.8 per cent) – Lithuanian. According to the survey data, 3.5 per cent of the respondents speak Belarussian and Lithuanian most often at home.

The majority of the Lithuanian Belarussians fell very close or rather close to the local environment as 83.8 per cent maintain their closeness to the settlement where they live and 75.8 per cent – to Lithuania. Most of the Belarussian respondents indicate their closeness to Belarus (67.3 per cent) and to the Lithuanian Belarussians (55.1 per cent).

Concerning the closeness to other dimensions, approximately one third of the Lithuanian Belarussians feel close to the Baltic country region (32.1 per cent), Europe (39.3 per cent) or Eastern Europe (31.1 per cent).

When analysing aggregated choices, it is obvious that for most of the Lithuanian Belarussian the most important category for self description is their current (previous) occupation (58.3 per cent), coming from the settlement you live (47.1 per cent).

The questionnaire included the questions that aim at disclosing the respondents' opinion on what things are important for being truly Belarussian or truly Lithuanian. While considering the components that are important for being truly Belarussian, the great majority of the Lithuanian Belarussians give priority to the feeling being Belarussian and having Belarussian ancestry – 90.3 per cent and 85.6 per cent, correspondingly maintain that it is very important or rather important. 72.1 per cent of the Lithuanian Belarussians named knowledge of the Belarussian language, 64.1 per cent – respect of the political institutions and laws of the Belarus and 61.3 per cent being born in as important factors for being Belarussian. Most share of the Belarussians surveyed do not consider such factors as being a citizen of Belarus and being have lived in Belarus for most of one's life as 63.3 per cent and 54.8 per cent answered negatively.

The answers to the question on the level of proud of being member of certain ethnicity related group, most Lithuanian Belarussians are very proud or proud of being Belarussian (77.3 per cent) and being Lithuanian Belarussian (72.1 per cent). While considering their proud of being Lithuanian, the Belarussians surveyed have the following opinions: most of the respondents (65.3 per cent) maintain that this question is not applicable to them, while one fifth (19.1 per cent) of the Lithuanian Belarussians are very proud or rather proud being Lithuanian and one tenth (10.5 per cent) has opposite positive attitudes.

The majority of the respondents maintain that their ethnic status is best described by a formula 'I'm Lithuanian Belarussian' – 70.3 per cent. Every sixth (16.5 per cent) Lithuanian Belarussian gives priority to the statement 'I'm Belarussian' and nearly every tenth (9.3 per cent) – to the statement 'I'm Lithuanian with Belarussian' descent'. No one of the Belarussian sample has chosen an answer 'I am Lithuanian' while defining their ethnic status.

According to the survey data, nearly half of the Lithuanian Belarussians define themselves as Roman Catholics (47.3 per cent) and over third of the sample – Orthodox (36.8 per cent) or Old

believers (2 per cent). One tenth of the Belarussian sample (10.3 per cent) consider themselves as not belonging to a denomination.

Although the majority of the Lithuanian Belarussians define themselves as belonging to a certain religion or religious denomination, most of them are relatively rear practitioners as 54.8 per cent practice their religion several times a year or rarer apart from funerals, christenings and weddings.

Respondents were asked about the languages they speak. Majority of Belarussians questioned declared their knowledge of Russian (99 per cent), Belarussian (89.5 per cent) and Lithuanian (77.0 per cent) languages. Those who do no know Lithuanian (N=91) are born in Belarus or other country. Most of them are Belarussian seniors (50 years old and elder) (58 per cent), living in urban areas (65 per cent).

While considering possible tensions between different social groups, Lithuanian Belarussians were asked to express their opinion on the level of tension between poor and rich people, between old people and young people, between Lithuanian Belarussians and Lithuanians, between Lithuanian Poles and Lithuanians, between different religious groups and between Roma and Lithuanian society.

Most parts of the Belarussian respondents tend to identify a lot of tension between poor and rich people and Roma and the Lithuanian society (36.5 per cent, each category); also, approximately half of the sample maintains that there is some tension among the aforementioned categories (48.5 per cent). More than half of the Lithuanian Belarussians surveyed (58.8 per cent) maintain there is some tension between old and young people.

According to the opinion of most of Belarussian respondents, there is no tension between Lithuanian Belarussians and Lithuanians (69.8 per cent) and between different religious groups in Lithuania (62.3 per cent). Still, approximately one quarter of the sample names some tension between different religious groups (27 per cent) or the Lithuanian Belarussians and Lithuanians (22.8 per cent).

The relationships with relatives and friends living in Belarus are more frequent than those with other acquaintances or business partners. In general, in all cases, the same pattern of relationships dominate: the most widespread means of communication are personal meetings and telephone / SMS contacts.

In case of relatives living in Belarus, 77.7 per cent of the Belarussian respondents communicate per telephone / SMS at least once or several times a year or more often (at least once a month – 48.6 per cent), 75.7 per cent have face to face or personal meetings at least once or several times a year or more often (32.6 per cent at least once a month). Internet based contacts for at least once a month are used by 31.8 per cent of respondents, on a rarer basis – by 12.4 per cent (at least once or several times a year). 71.3 per cent do not use mail at all in contacting their relatives in Belarus.

According to the survey data, 17.5 per cent of the Belarussian respondents indicated that in the past 12 months they have personally felt discriminated against or harassed in Lithuania on the basis of one or more of the following grounds: ethnic or national origin, gender, age or religion. (In total, 87 cases of experienced discrimination or harassment were reported in the survey data).

Among the grounds listed, ethnic or national origin was most frequently mentioned: 13 per cent of the Belarussians had felt discriminated against or harassed on the grounds of ethnic origin in the last 12 months. 4.5 per cent of respondents indicate experienced discrimination or harassment

on the ground of age, 3.3 per cent – on gender. While analysing the social demographic data of those who have experienced discrimination, no significant patterns can be observed as the distribution of gender or age of respondents corresponds the sample with an exception of education as most share of this group (60 per cent) have the highest educational attainments.

Among the sectors of society, in which the respondents felt discriminated against or harassed because of their ethnicity in this period, the area of employment was most often mentioned.

While analysing the data on social trust, most Lithuanian Belarussians tend to express their higher trust to different social groups than the institutions. The great majority of the Belaussians surveyed trust the Belarussians (88.3 per cent, including answers 'trust them completely', 'rather trust them'), people in general (85.3 per cent), Lithuanian Belarussians (84.3 per cent), and Lithuanians (84.8 per cent).

Regarding the different institutions, most Lithuanian Belarussians tend to distrust them with an exception of the police and courts in Lithuania.

While analysing the survey data on respondents' interest in politics, the Belarussians surveyed express their very high interest in all areas of politics as the majority is interested in politics of Lithuania – 78.3 per cent ('very interested' and 'rather interested'), politics of Belarus – 74.5 per cent and politics related to the Lithuanian Belarussians – 73.6 per cent.

While considering the European Union, the Belarussian surveyed have rather positive than neutral image of the EU: 44.3 per cent maintain that their image is very o fairly positive, and 41.3 per cent – neutral. Those who have very negative or rather negative image of the EU comprise 10.5 per cent of the sample.

Also, the majority of the Belarussians surveyed (58.8 per cent) maintains that Lithuania benefits a lot or rather benefits from being a member of the EU. Over one fourth (28.8 per cent) of Belarussians maintain negative attitudes towards Lithuania's benefits from the EU and thing that the country has no benefits at all or rather does not have benefits. Worth noticing that nearly one tenth (9.8 per cent) of the sample did not have an opinion with regard to the Lithuania's benefit from being a member of the EU.

One third of the Belarussians surveyed (34.0 per cent) provided the interviewers with negative answers that they would never leave. Nearly similar share of respondents (30.0 per cent) said they would definitely leave, and a bit less part (28.0 per cent) expressed their doubt saying that they perhaps would leave. Those who have expressed their willingness to leave Lithuania, were asked which country they would prefer. Most often the Belarussian respondents (N=111) mentioned Belarus (46.8 per cent), followed by the United Kingdom (7.6 per cent), Germany (5.5 per cent) and Norway (4.6 per cent).

The most popular voluntary organisations among the Lithuanian Belarussians are the church or religious organizations, in which 40.0 per cent of respondents indicate inactive and 7.5 percent – active membership. The Roma Catholics and Orthodox take part in religious organisations in similar shares, e.g. among the both active and inactive members of the church or religious organizations, 49.5 per cent of respondents define them as Roma Catholics, 45.8 per cent – as Orthodox or Old Believers.

ENRI-BIOG: The respondents for biographical in-depth interviews were selected and interviewed in accordance to the guidelines set up in the Enri-East manual of biographical interviews. In total 12 interviews were conducted. The respondents represent three generations (youngest, middle and older generation) and both genders. All interviews were conducted with the residents

of Vilnius, the capital of Lithuania. The report presents quotations and primary analysis of the interviews having in mind the main questions – European identity, national identity (relationship to country of residence and mother country), regional identity, civic participation and ethnic organisation.

The respondents described themselves as Europeans in two senses: as residents of geographical region (Europe) and/or as citizens of political unit (European Union). If 'Europe' is understood geographically, then it is a broader category than the EU since it encompasses Russia, Ukraine and other countries that are not part of the EU but that are located in Europe and are important for the respondents. However, the categories 'European Union' and 'Europe' often inter-twinned when respondents talked of their identities and experiences.

The category of 'Europe' was related with certain values and characteristics: Christianity, advanced technologies, science. The EU was related with human rights, freedom, freedom of movement, traveling, political rights. Most respondents were very positive about Lithuania's accession to the EU. This was related with free movement, human rights and country's security. Some respondents, however, were skeptical regarding the Lithuania's accession to the EU and argued that they are against any unions. The nation states (Lithuania or Belarus) were often perceived as more important than the EU. The EU was described as not so relevant and important in respondent's every day lives.

Most respondents who were born in Lithuania or/and whose family has deep historical roots in the country, defined Lithuania as their homeland. Some respondents defined Belarus as their mother-country and Lithuania as a "second mother-country" or "country of residence", "country which they love as well". Belarus was defined as mother country because the respondent was born there, grew up in this country, they still have relatives in Belarus. However, years of living in Lithuania let them talk of Lithuania as a second mother country. Vilnius in the majority of interviews was named as a place of key importance for Belarusian community.

The respondents who were born in Belarus consider Belarus as their mother country. However, Lithuania was also commonly named as important country in their lives and as a country which is loved. The relations with the Belarus are mainly kept by visiting relatives. The personal connections are important bond that was connecting respondents with Belarus. Therefore the increase in visa prices after Lithuania joined the EU and Schengen area seriously affected the possibilities of some respondents to visit their relatives in Belarus and especially – possibilities for their relatives and friends from Belarus to visit them in Lithuania.

The current political regime in Belarus was important theme in discussing respondent's attitudes towards the Belarus. Part of respondents disassociated from any political questions and talked of the relations with their relatives, friends in Belarus. For a few respondents, who escaped from Belarus to Lithuania because of regime prosecutions, the issues of political system in Belarus was of key importance and formed one of the most important axes of the interview.

Big share of respondents defined eastern Lithuania (mainly Vilnius city) and western part of Belarus as one region they identify with. It was argued that western Belarus is different from the Eastern part of Belarus and historically western Belarus and eastern Lithuania are closely related. Vilnius was named as a city that has been culturally and politically important for Belarusians. Belarusians themselves were seen as important actors in the history and cultural life of Vilnius city.

The general opinion of respondents who participated at ENRI-BIOG was that there is no discrimination of Belarusians in Lithuania and that there are no open ethnic conflicts between Belarusians and other ethnic groups in Lithuania.

ENRI-EXI:

The first expert interviewed is employed at the state institution. The other two experts are representatives of Belarusian non-governmental organizations. Nor representative of the state institution working with ethnic minorities, nor representatives of Belarusian NGOs in Vilnius (Lithuania) could name any urgent, specific problems related with the situation of Belarusians in Lithuania.

The experts mentioned possibility for Belarusians in Vilnius to send their children to the Belarusian secondary school by the name of Pranciskus Skorina. There are Belarusian Sunday schools in Lithuania. Belarusians can visit their historical motherland.

ENRI WEB-ANALYSIS: *Belarusians in Lithuania*, have the same number of resources like in Poland (15), but they are different concerning the quality of information. Belarusians have one periodical "Run'", 3 news/broadcasting portals, 6 organizations, 2 blogs, and 3 resources with articles/blogs with postings. The internet sites focus mainly on human rights violations in Belarus itself as well as on cultural matters and are predominantly operated by organizations. Apart from "Krok", which represents the opinion of the Belarusian authorities, there are organizations with a traditional and national orientation like the Association of the Belarusian Culture in Lithuania and the member-organizations of the international human-rights network like "Belarus Watch" (former JuBiC) and the Belarusian Human Rights House in Exile in Vilnius.

If some Belarusian organizations in Lithuania position themselves loyal to official politics in Belarus, other Belarusians are ideologically close to the critical civil society and to the international human rights network (*"civil activity"*, 11.5%). The organisations of the Belarusian minorities, who share the official national ideology of Belarus, like the Belarusian Cultural Center "Krok" (*"native country supportive"*, 6.2%), represent ideas which root in the Soviet past and glorify the history of Belarus after the Second World War. In the centre of this national ideology stands the victory of the Soviet soldiers over fascism (*"void formula"*, 5.0%).

The Belarusian cultural community in Lithuania developed together with the Belarusian national independence (*"national state"*, 3.5%). In Vilnius, the Association of the Belarusian Culture is a gathering place of intellectuals, musicians, artists, journalists, scientists and writers. It understands itself as a missionary organization which aims to preserve and to pass the Belarusian tradition to further generations (*"historical memory"*, 4.6%, *"personalities"*, 4.6%). In the opinion of their leaders, the Belarusian culture, which contributed to the multicultural society in Vilnia, is perishing. The Belarusian community does not find support either from the Belarusian or from the Lithuanian government and has to struggle for its existence. By the critical stance towards their mother country, the Belarusians criticize their host country for not observing the minority rights efficiently (*"host country critical"*, 6.2%).

Belarusian critical civil society is consolidated in Vilnius (civil society here counts 11.5% in comparison to the Belarusians in Poland – 6.2%). According to the opinion of some Belarusian politicians, the Belarusians achieved their political maturity while fighting for human rights and making their interests clear to the international community. "Belarus Watch" in Vilnius is an organisation of young people who position themselves as a modern political club. The NGOs like Belarusian House for Human Rights in Exile and the Centre of Belarusian Initiative represent the

Belarusian civil society in the European Union. Among the human rights activities were the appeal of the human rights defenders against the death sentence which was carried out by the Belarusian authorities in case of two Belarusian citizens, by which Belarus violated the international human rights. Another activity of the civil organizations in Lithuania had been election observation missions in different European countries (*"native country critical"*, 11.5%).

Summary of practical recommendations

The research conducted in Lithuania encompasses quantitative and qualitative surveys. The research data is revealing on different aspects of Byelorussian minority situation in Lithuania and presents perspectives of different members of Byelorussian group. The initial data analysis is presented in the report and raises a number of questions to be further investigated. Some basic practical recommendations can be drawn at this stage.

The Byelorussian ethnic group in Lithuania seems to be quite well organized. Even if there are no Belarusian political parties in Lithuania, there is a great number of Belarusian civil society organizations. Belarusian organizations vary in regard to their main aims and number of participants. Part of the organizations are mainly oriented to cultural activities, to the fostering and dissemination of Belarusian ethnic culture. Part of organizations define their main aims as struggle for human rights and democracy in Belarus.

It is of highest importance that in their work the civil society organizations seek for interethnic communication, promotion of communication between different ethnic groups, between titular nation and ethnic minorities. Cooperation between ethnic minority organizations is also of key importance in achieving or promoting certain legal or policy developments favorable for ethnic minorities.

The Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania guarantees the state support for national communities. From the 1990s until late 2009 the Department of National Minorities and Lithuanians Living Abroad under the Government of Republic of Lithuania was responsible for communication with national minorities and the implementation of various social and cultural programmes oriented to and/or developed by national minorities. At the end of 2009 this Department was closed and its functions were taken over by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Culture, and the Ministry of Education and Science. The experts interviewed pointed that due to this reorganization the state attention to the needs of ethnic minorities has decreased. The economic crisis started in 2008 and it also affected state's possibilities to provide support for the needs of ethnic minorities organizations. The reconstitution of the previous level of the state support for ethnic minority organizations, for the needs of ethnic minorities is essential in guaranteeing the development of ethnic communities in Lithuania.

1   BELARUSIANS IN LITHUANIA: A BACKGROUND OVERVIEW

Vida Beresnevičiūtė / Tadas Leončikas / Arvydas Matulionis / Kristina Šliavaitė

1.1 Lithuanian majority and Belarusian minority relations

1.1.1 Historical overview

Belarus is the eastern neighbour of Lithuania and the two countries have long and rich historical and cultural connections. Belarus and Lithuania in the 13th-15th centuries were parts of a common medieval state: the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. This historical past is a source of pride and national identity construction for both Lithuanians and Belarusians nations. In 1569 the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth was established, however, after a few divisions, at the end of the 18th century the territories of the Commonwealth were divided between Russia, Prussia and Austria and as a result the major part of territories of current Lithuania and Belarus became part of the Russian Empire.[1]

Historian Grigorijus Potašenko[2] emphasizes the rich cultural and historical heritage of Belarusians in Lithuania. The Russian Orthodox churches in Vilnius and other places are important cultural heritage sites for Russians, Belarusians, and Ukrainians in Lithuania. In this context it is also important to mention the name of Pranciškus Skorina, who is considered as the "father of Belarusian literature" and a founder of the first printing house in Vilnius in the 16th century. In general it is possible to conclude that the histories of Poles, Belarusians, Lithuanians have been intertwined, therefore it is not astonishing that a number of historical cultural leaders are important figures in the history of all three nations.

Vilnius (Wiłna), the capital of Lithuania, has been an important economic and cultural centre for Belarusians (Bumblauskas 2000). Some newspapers that were of the highest importance for the formation of Belarusian nation were issued in Vilnius. The most well-known is "Nasha Niva"[3] which was established in Vilnius in 1906. It was closed down in 1915 and restarted in Vilnius again in 1991, later on it was moved to Minsk. It has been persecuted by the Lukashenko regime and was granted honourable European awards for its activities. As it is stated in the newspaper, "it is the embodiment of independent Belarusian society struggling for its political and cultural rights".[4]

In the 1940s Belarus and Lithuania became parts of the Soviet Union and this intensified migration between the republics. According to the census data the number of Belarusians in Lithuania increased considerably from 4,400 in 1923 to 30,300 in 1959 and 63,200 in 1989 (Population Censuses Data cited in Kasatkina, Leončikas 2003:39-40). After the declaration of Lithuanian independence, however, their number fell back to 42,900 in 2001 (Population Censuses Data cited in Kasatkina, Leončikas 2003:39-40).

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[1] On the history of Lithuania see Šapoka, 1988 (1936) and Bumblauskas 2007.

[2] Potašenko G., Lietuvos baltarusių kultūros paveldas, available at: http://www.kpd.lt/epd2009/index.php/lt/kitoks-pveldas/baltarusiu-paveldas, (accessed on 15.03.2010).

[3] Information on this newspaper is based on About Nasha Niva newspaper, available at http://www.nn.by/?c=sp&i=8 (accessed on 17.03.2010).

[4] About Nasha Niva newspaper, available at http://www.nn.by/?c=sp&i=8 (accessed on 17.03.2010).

There are no visible conflicts between Belarusians and other ethnic groups in Lithuania. In the Lithuanian language Belarusians are also referred to by the terms 'gudai' and 'baltgūdžiai', which do not have any negative connotations and have historical roots.

1.1.2 Political overview

There are no visible conflicts or tensions between Belarusians and other ethnic groups or the titular nation in Lithuania. The Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania[5] adopted in 1992 guarantees a number of rights to the ethnic minorities in Lithuania. Article No.37 guarantees the right to the members of national communities to nourish their language, culture and customs. Article No.45 grants the right to the ethnic communities to manage independently their national culture issues, education and charity. State support for the national communities is guaranteed.[6]

In 1995 the Law on the State language of the Republic of Lithuania was introduced[7] which regulates the use of the state language (Lithuanian language) in establishments, enterprises and organizations, courts, transactions, official events, education and culture, names, signs and information. Article No.1 of the Law on the State Language states that "other laws of the Republic of Lithuania and legal acts adopted by the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania shall guarantee the right of persons, belonging to ethnic communities, to foster their language, culture and customs".[8]

From the 1990s until late 2009 the Department of National Minorities and Lithuanians Living Abroad under the Government of Republic of Lithuania was responsible for communication with national minorities and the implementation of various social and cultural programmes oriented to and/or developed by national minorities. At the end of 2009 this Department was closed and its functions were taken over by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Culture, and the Ministry of Education and Science.

The elections of Alexander Lukashenko in Belarus are often evaluated as undemocratic by western observers, therefore since mid 1990s the communication between Lithuania and Belarus could be described as reserved. Bilateral relationships with Belarus became more intense when Mrs Dalia Grybauskaitė was elected as the President of Lithuania in 2009. In 2010, after a long period of reserved relations, Alexandr Lukašenko and Dalia Grybauskaitė exchanged visits. However, the Lukashenko regime's repressions against protesters in Minsk in December 2010 raised discussions in Lithuanian society about the ways Lithuanian politicians should communicate with the current Belarusian regime (Makaraitytė 2010).

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[5] Lietuvos Respublikos Konstitucija. Available at:
http://www3.lrs.lt/home/Konstitucija/Konstitucija.htm#II_SKIRSNIS_ŽMOGUS_IR_VALSTYBĖ, (accessed on 08.04.2010).

[6] Lietuvos Respublikos Konstitucija. Available at:
http://www3.lrs.lt/home/Konstitucija/Konstitucija.htm#II_SKIRSNIS_ŽMOGUS_IR_VALSTYBĖ, (accessed on 08.04.2010).

[7] The Republic of Lithuania Law on the State Language, available at:
http://www3.lrs.lt/pls/inter2/dokpaieska.showdoc_e?p_id=21941 (accessed on 2010-04-08)

[8] The Republic of Lithuania Law on the State Language, Available at:
http://www3.lrs.lt/pls/inter2/dokpaieska.showdoc_e?p_id=21941 (accessed on 2010-04-08)

1.2 Demographic overview

1.2.1 The 2001 census

The Population Census revealed that 42,866 Belarusians were registered in Lithuania in 2001. This is the third biggest ethnic minority group in Lithuania and makes 1.23 per cent of the total population (Statistics Lithuania 2002a:12-13).

1.2.2 Language Usage

The Population Census 2001 revealed that 34 per cent of Belarusians (14,603) considered Belarusian language as their native language. The Census revealed that the absolute majority of the Belarusians in Lithuania, 52 per cent, (22,386) considered Russian language as their native language, 6 per cent (2,494) speak Polish and 4 per cent (1,622) speak Lithuanian as their first language (Statistics Lithuania 2002b:74).

1.2.3 Age Structure

The statistical 2001 Census data reveal that 11 per cent of Belarusians in Lithuania are under 20 years old (by comparison 28.4 per cent Lithuanians are under 20 years old) (Department of Statistics to the Government of the Republic of Lithuania cited in Leončikas 2007:149). Within the Belarusian group, 19.1 per cent are older than 65 years old (Department of Statistics to the Government of the Republic of Lithuania cited in Leončikas 2007:149). Therefore it is possible to conclude that the Belarusian minority in Lithuania is relatively "older" than the "titular" nation.

1.2.4 Geographic Distribution

Ethnic Belarusians live mainly in Eastern part of Lithuania - the town of Visaginas (Belarusians make 9.6 per cent of total population), in the municipality of Vilnius, in the districts of Vilnius, Švenčionys, Šalčininkai. In Klaipėda there are 3,606 Belarusians registered (Statistics Lithuania 2002a:190-192)

1.2.5 Religious denomination

The 2001 Census showed that 47 per cent of the Belarusian community are Roman Catholic, 32 per cent are Orthodox and 0.5 per cent are Old Believers, and 0.5 per cent belong to other religious denomination (Statistics Lithuania 2002b:204). So the Orthodoxy and Catholicism are the two main religious denominations that Belarusians identify with.

1.2.6 Education

The rights of national minorities to receive public and state supported pre-school and general education in their native languages is guaranteed by a number of laws, such as the Law on Education,[9] the Law on National Minorities,[10] the Provisions for the Education of National Minori-

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[9] Švietimo įstatymas (Law on Education), No. I-1489, of 25 June 1991; last amended on 21 January 2010, available at: http://www3.lrs.lt/pls/inter2/dokpaieska.showdoc_l?p_id=279441&p_query=&p_tr2= (accessed on 12.04.2010)

[10] Tautinių mažumų įstatymas (Law on National Minorities), Law No. XI-3412 of 23 November 1989; An English translation available at: http://www3.lrs.lt/c-bin/eng/preps2?Condition1=21840&Condition2=) (accessed on 12.04.2010)

ties[11]. In March 2011 the Lithuanian Parliament adopted a new Law on Education according to which the number of lessons taught in Lithuanian language in elementary and secondary schools of national minorities is going to increase (Samoškaitė 2011).

In 1994 Pranciškus Skorina Secondary School was opened in Vilnius. It implements basic, primary, secondary and after-school education in the Belarusian and Lithuanian languages. Approximately 15 pupils complete this school every year. Since the school was founded approximately 230 pupils completed their education at Pranciškus Skorina Secondary School in Vilnius. At the beginning of 2010, 168 pupils attend this school[12].

In 1991 the Department of Belarusian Language, Literature and Ethnic Culture was established at the Faculty of Slavonic Studies at the Vilnius Pedagogical University. On the 1st January 2009 the Department was re-organized into the Centre of Belarusian Language, Literature and Ethnic Culture. The Faculty of Philology introduces the programme of Belarusian philology. The Centre of Belarusian Language, Literature and Ethnic Culture at the Vilnius Pedagogical University also organizes scientific conferences, develops educational programmes of Belarusian language and provides translations.[13]

The European Humanities University (EHU) in Vilnius is a very important cultural and academic institution for Belarusian students from Belarus and local Belarusians. The European Humanities University (EHU) was established in Minsk in 1992 but was closed by the Belarusian authorities in 2004. It re-started its activities in Lithuania in 2005 and successfully implements a number of studies programmes at BA and MA levels[14]. According to the data provided by the University, in 2008/2009 academic year, "nearly 1,000 Belarusians study at EHU in Vilnius and more than 800 pursue higher education through low-residence study".[15] Many EHU graduates return to Belarus and work in independent media, NGOs.[16]

There are Belarusian sunday schools in different regions of Lithuania. For example, one of the best known Belarusian Sunday schools is in Klaipėda. Approximately 20 pupils of different age come to this Sunday school every year. Part of pupils are ethnic Belarusians, others are pupils of other ethnic origin (Poles, Ukrainians) interested in Belarusian culture. The attendance of the Sunday school gives possibilities to be enrolled at the university level in Minsk.[17] There are Belarusian Sunday classes in Visaginas.

1.2.7 Employment

There is no statistical data revealing what sectors the Belarusians are mainly employed.

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[11] LR Švietimo ir mokslo ministro 2002 m. sausio 16 d. įsakymas Nr 56 „Dėl Tautinių mažumų švietimo nuostatų patvirtinimo". Valstybės žinios, 2002, Nr. 9-337.

[12] Information provided by the representative of Pranciškus Skorina school during the interview conducted in February 2010.

[13] Information provided by the Centre of Belarusian Language, Literature and Ethnic Culture at the Vilnius Pedagogical University.

[14] About EHU, available at: http://en.ehu.lt/about/ (accessed on 15.03.2010).

[15] About EHU. Students and teachers, available at: http://en.ehu.lt/about/students_teachers/ (accessed on 15.03.2010)

[16] About EHU. Students and teachers, available at: http://en.ehu.lt/about/students_teachers/ (accessed on 15.03.2010)

[17] Information provided during interview by phone with a representative of Belarusian association „Krynica" in Klaipėda. See also „Klaipėdos baltarusiai meilės tėvynei semiasi iš šaltinio"// Vakarų ekspresas, 09.06.2006, available at: http://www.ve.lt/?rub=1065924826&data=2006-06-09&id=1149779227 (accessed on 23.03.2010)

1.3 Belarusian self-organisation in Lithuania

1.3.1 Political organisation

There are no Belarusian political parties in Lithuania. Belarusians can be members of any political party in Lithuania and participate at national, local and EU elections. If persons of Belarusian ethnic origin are elected to the Parliament or municipal authorities, they usually come to the elections as members of any other political party of Lithuania.

1.3.2 Civil society organisation

Belarusian organizations vary in regard to their main aims and number of participants. Part of the organizations are mainly oriented to cultural activities, others define their main aims as struggle for human rights and democracy in Belarus. Belarusian cultural organizations are founded in a number of Lithuanian smaller towns. Some of the organisations are supported by Belarus while others are supported by the Lithuanian authorities. It is possible to state that NGOs attitudes towards current regime in Belarus differ.

A number of Belarusian NGOs in Vilnius focus mainly on cultural activities. *Lietuvos gudų visuomeninių organizacijų susivienijimas* (The Union of Lithuania's Belarusian Public Organizations) unites 19 different organizations from all Lithuania and organizes various cultural projects and events.[18] *Gudų kultūros draugija Lietuvoje* (Association of Belarusian Culture in Lithuania) was founded 1989 in Vilnius and aims to preserve Belarusian cultural heritage in Lithuania and is also involved in some other public activities.[19] *The Belarusian union "Siabryna"* was founded at the end of the 1980s in Vilnius and their focus is cultural activities, such as the celebration of Belarusian calendar festivals. The "Siabryna" choir is widely known in Lithuania.[20] *Gudų mokyklos draugija* (Association of Belarusian Schools in Lithuania) was founded in 1991 in Vilnius and mainly organizes cultural-educational activities, for example, excursions related to Belarusian culture and history, various cultural events.[21] *Vilniaus baltarusių politinių kalinių ir tremtinių bendrija (*The Association of Vilnius' Belarusians Political Prisoners and Deportees*)* was founded in Vilnius and unites those who themselves or whose family members experienced the exile and deportations by the Soviet regime.

Some organizations located in Vilnius focus on advocacy of democracy and development of civic society in Belarus. For example, such non-governmental organizations as the *United Center of*

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[18] Information gained during interview with a representative of Lietuvos gudų visuomeninių organizacijų susivienijimas conducted on 09.02.2010. See also information at: Lietuvos gudų visuomeninių organizacijų susivienijimas, available at Tautinių bendrijų namai at http://www.tbn.lt/lt/?id=20 (accessed on 31.03.2010)

[19] Gudų kultūros draugijai Lietuvoje – 20 metų!, available at: http://westki.info/tbk/7344/gudu-kulturos-draugijai-lietuvoje-%E2%80%93-20-metu (accessed on 23.03.2010)

[20] Information gained during interview with a representative of Belarusian union „Siabryna" conducted on 09.02.2010. See also information at: Baltarusių klubas „Siabryna", available at Tautinių bendrijų namai at http://www.tbn.lt/lt/?id=20 (accessed on 21.03.2010)

[21] Information gained during interview by phone with a representative of Gudų mokyklos draugija. Interview was conducted on 23.03.2010.

Initiatives for Belarus (JuBIC)[22]*, Belarusian Human Rights House in Exile in Vilnius (HRH)* work in this direction.[23]

1.3.3 Arts and culture

There are a number of Belarusian cultural organizations in Lithuania that organize cultural events such as calendar festivals and Belarusian folklore music events. The midsummer festival Kupala (June 24), Belarusian Christmas ("Kaliatki") and the Day of Independence of Belarus (March 25) were named by different sources as important festivals for Belarusians.

The Literary museum of A. Pushkin in Vilnius also takes part in the preservation of Belarusian cultural heritage.[24]

1.3.4 Religious organisation

In 1998 the Catholic church of St. Bartholomew in Vilnius was returned to the Belarusian community. The service there is held in Belarusian language.[25]

1.3.5 Publishing and the press

Vilnius has served as an important place for independent Belarusian press in cases where newspapers have been expelled from Minsk. For example "Nasha Niva", which was issued in Vilnius in 1906-1915 and 1991-1996.[26] The Belarusians in Lithuania issued some local newspapers in Belarussian language in post-Soviet period, but mainly due to financial reasons this publishing was stopped.

1.3.6 Minority media

The Belarusian minority in Lithuania has a weekly programme on public TV. Some radio stations transmit some programmes in Belarusian: Laisvės radijo, R. Polonia, Lietuvos radijo.

In the growing sphere of new social media "Westki.info" is an internet news portal, which covers the region between Polatsk, Vilnius and Minsk and aims to foster communication between Belarus and Lithuania.[27]

1.4 Overview of existing surveys

This section does not intend to make a detailed historiography of the research of Belarusian ethnic group in Lithuania. However, we can conclude that the Belarusian ethnic group in Lithuania has not been a popular object of research. Historians and political scientists have been investigat-

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[22] United Center of Initiatives for Belarus, available at http://www.jubic.org/en/about-us (accessed on 16.03. 2010)

[23] Belarusian Human Rights House in exile in Vilnius, available at http://humanrightshouse.org/Members/Belarus/index.html (accessed on 16.03.2010).

[24] The Literary museum of A.Pushkin, http://www.vilniausmuziejai.lt/a_puskinas/en/index.htm (accessed on 23.03.2010); Baltarusių kultūros paveldo išsaugojimu Lietuvoje rūpinsis ir A.Puškino muziejus, lrytas.lt 2008-01-18, available at http://www.lrytas.lt/-12006624391200411312-baltarusi%C5%B3-kult%C5%ABros-paveldo-i%C5%A1saugojimu-lietuvoje-r%C5%ABpinsis-ir-a-pu%C5%A1kino-muziejus.htm (accessed on 15.03.2010)

[25] Tautinių bendrijų namai, available at: http://www.tbn.lt/lt/?id=4&item=20

[26] About Nasha Niva newspaper, available at http://www.nn.by/?c=sp&i=8 (accessed on 17.03.2010).

[27] Westki.info, available at http://www.westki.info/artykuly/3634/westkiinfo-about-us-english, (accessed on 16.03.2010).

ing the common history of Belarus and Lithuania and contemporary political relations between the two countries. However, there are no sociological surveys focusing specifically on Belarusians in Lithuania.

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Lietuvos   gudų   visuomeninių   organizacijų   susivienijimas,   available   at Tautinių   bendrijų   namai   at http://www.tbn.lt/lt/?id=20 (accessed on 31.03.2010)

Lietuvos   Respublikos   Konstitucija.   Available   at: http://www3.lrs.lt/home/Konstitucija/Konstitucija.htm#II_SKIRSNIS_ŽMOGUS_IR_VALSTYBĖ,   (accessed   on 08.04.2010).

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2 MAIN FINDINGS OF THE ENRI-VIS SURVEY (ENRI-VIS)

Vida Beresnevičiūtė

2.1 Technical parameters of the survey of the Lithuania's Belarussians

- Instrument: The survey used a questionnaire translated into Russian (61 per cent) and Lithuanian (35 per cent) languages.

- Survey Sample: 400 Belarussians living in Lithuania.

- Sampling: For the sampling, a snow balling method was applied, the first contacts were reached through the non-governmental organisations.

- Survey geography: The survey took place in three counties and 6 municipalities. In Klaipeda county, the respondents were questioned in the municipality of Klaipeda city; in Utena county, the respondents were questioned in the municipality of Visaginas town; and Vilnius county, the respondents were questioned in the municipalities of Svencionys region, Salcininkai region and Vilnius city and Vilnius region.

- Time: Fieldwork: 15 January 2010 – 22 May 2010.

- Survey agency: Lithuanian Social Research Centre.

Socio-demographic profile of the respondents

		N	%
Gender	Female	238	59.5
	Male	162	40.5
Total		400	100.0
Age groups	Up to 29	7	1.8
	30-49 years old	217	54.3
	50 year old and elder	175	43.8
	NA	1	0.3
Total		400	100.0
Education	No qualifications	1	0.3
	Primary	2	0.5
	Basic with vocational training	14	3.5
	Secondary	79	19.8
	Secondary with vocational training	135	33.8
	Higher (Bachelor degree)	96	24.0
	Higher (Master degree, post graduate degree)	71	17.8
	NA	1	0.3
Total		400	100.0
Occupation	Working full-time (40 hours a week)	190	47.5
	Working part-time (8-30 hours a week)	37	9.3
	Casual/temporary work	14	3.5
	Housewife/keeping house	4	1.0
	Unemployed	47	11.8

		N	%
	Retired/disabled	71	17.8

Socio-demographic profile of the respondents (continued)

		N	%
	Full-time student at school/college	18	4.5
	Temporary leave (sick leave, maternity leave)	10	2.5
	Other	6	1.5
	Refusal	2	0.5
Total		400	100.0
Marital Status	Single	63	15.8
	Cohabitating/living with partner	12	3.0
	Married	249	62.3
	Divorced	40	10.0
	Widowed	34	8.5
	DK	2	0.6
	Refusal	63	15.8
Total		400	100.0
Average net monthly income	Up to 800 LTL*	130	32.5
	801-1250 LTL	107	24.8
	1251-2000 LTL	78	19.6
	2001 LTL and more	35	8.8
	No income	29	7.3
	NA	21	5.3
Total		400	100.0
Place of residence	Rural	Salcininku reg.	66	16.5
		Svencioniu reg	92	23.0
		Vilniaus reg.	8	2.0
	Urban	Klaipeda	33	8.3
		Vilnius	103	25.8
		Visaginas	98	24.5
Total			400	100.0

* 1EUR=3.4528 LTL

The report provides with main descriptive outcomes under the following sets of questions: ethnicity and ethnic identity, national identity; family, households and related ethnic aspects; xenophobia, conflicts and discrimination; social and political capital, participation, attitudes toward EU. The importance of independent variables is marked in case of relevant results.

2.2 Ethnicity and ethnic identity, national identity

This section of the report covers the following issues and related questions to ethnicity and ethnic identity: self-categorisation, ethnic categorisation, closeness to different groups and areas, concept of nation, identity categories, media and identity.

2.2.1 Language usage

First of all, the ethnic minorities' respondents were asked what language they speak most often at home. The majority of the Lithuanian Belarussians (68.3 per cent) speak 'other languages" most often at home, among which Russian speakers comprise three quarters, and the rest indicate using several languages at a time such as Russian, Belarussian, Lithuanian or Polish. Counting from the whole sample, those who speak Russian at come comprise half of it (53 per cent). Approximately one fifth of the Belarussian respondents (18.5 per cent) indicated that they speak Belarussian most often at home, one tenth (9.8 per cent) – Lithuanian. According to the survey data, 3.5 per cent of the respondents speak Belarussian and Lithuanian most often at home. (See Table 1)

2.2.2 Closeness

The respondents were asked about their closeness to different groups and regions, including local and European dimensions. The answers of the Lithuanian Belarussians indicate several tendencies. The majority of the Lithuanian Belarussians fell very close or rather close to the local environment as 83.8 per cent maintain their closeness to the settlement where they live and 75.8 per cent – to Lithuania. Most of the Belarussian respondents indicate their closeness to Belarus (67.3 per cent) and to the Lithuanian Belarussians (55.1 per cent). (See Table 2)

Concerning the closeness to other dimensions, approximately one third of the Lithuanian Belarussians feel close to the Baltic country region (32.1 per cent), Europe (39.3 per cent) or Eastern Europe (31.1 per cent).

The factor analysis of the indicators that target the issues of belonging to certain groups or area confirms extracts two factors that could be defined as a 'Belarussian' and a 'European' one. The first one, although, explains less distribution on the opinions (18 per cent), covers the closeness to Belarus and Lithuanian Belarussians. The second one encompasses closeness to the Baltic country region, Eastern Europe, Europe and Lithuania (See Table 2a).

2.2.3 Self-categorisation

Trying to identify the components of self-identification, the respondents were asked to define the categories, which are the most important in thinking about him/her selves by defining the three most important categories. While generalising the data on the first category chosen by the respondents, the distributions are as follows: one third of the Lithuanian Belarussians (34.0 per cent) mentioned their current (or previous) occupation, followed by the other categories with much less significance prescribed in the following sequence: being a Lithuanian Belarussian (13 per cent), the coming from the settlement that one lives in (12.8 per cent), and gender (12 per cent). While considering the set of the second importance of the categories in self definition, the following categories were mentioned: 15.5 per cent of Lithuanian Belarussians named the coming from the settlement that one lives in, 14.5 per cent – their age group, 14.0 per cent - their current (or previous) occupation, 13.5 per cent – being a Lithuanian Belarussian, and their gender group (12 per cent). The set of the third choice tends to repeat the already mentioned categories of the self definition with one exception: 18.8 per cent of the Lithuanian Belarussians mentioned the coming from the settlement that one lives in, 15.3 per cent – being a citizen of the Republic of Lithuania, and 10.3 per cent – their current (or previous) occupation and their age group (each category). (See Table 3)

When analysing aggregated choices, it is obvious that for most of the Lithuanian Belarussian the most important category for self description is their current (previous) occupation (58.3 per cent),

coming from the settlement you live (47.1 per cent). Being a Lithuanian Belarussian, being representative of a certain age and gender group as most important self categorisations are indicated by one third of the sample (36.3 per cent, 32.3 per cent and 32 per cent, correspondingly).

2.2.4 Concept of nation

The questionnaire included the questions that aim at disclosing the respondents' opinion on what things are important for being truly Belarussian or truly Lithuanian. While considering the components that are important for being truly Belarussian, the great majority of the Lithuanian Belarussians give priority to the feeling being Belarussian and having Belarussian ancestry – 90.3 per cent and 85.6 per cent, correspondingly maintain that it is very important or rather important. 72.1 per cent of the Lithuanian Belarussians named knowledge of the Belarussian language, 64.1 per cent – respect of the political institutions and laws of the Belarus and 61.3 per cent being born in as important factors for being Belarussian. Most share of the Belarussians surveyed do not consider such factors as being a citizen of Belarus and being have lived in Belarus for most of one's life as 63.3 per cent and 54.8 per cent answered negatively. (See Table 4).

While considering the components that are important for being truly Lithuanian, several issues could be considered. The great majority of the Lithuanian Belarussians maintain that for being a truly Lithuanian it is very important or rather important to be able to speak Lithuanian (85.3 per cent), to feel being Lithuanian (79.6 per cent), to respect the Lithuanian political institutions and laws (75.8 per cent) and to have Lithuanian ancestry (70.3 per cent). (See Table 5)

More than half of the respondents think that for being a truly Lithuanian it is important being a citizen of the Republic of Lithuania (64.5 per cent), being born in Lithuania (63.3 per cent) and being have lived in Lithuania for most of one's life (53.1 per cent). The opinions of the Lithuanian Belarussians are nearly equally dispersed regarding the religion: 43 per cent maintain that is important and 46.3 per cent that it is unimportant to be a catholic for being a truly Lithuanian.

While comparing the attitudes of the Lithuanian Belarussians towards the importance of certain things for being a truly Belarussian or Lithuanian, there differences with regard to language as it is the most important factor for being Lithuanian and the third important factor for being Belarussian. This might be related to the fact that most of the Lithuanian Belarussians use Russian as their everyday language. Still, in both cases the subjective dimension of ethnicity, i.e. feeling of being Belarussian, is of high importance for the Belarussians surveyed. Also, the fact of having ancestors is important in the conception of the minority and majority group definition.

2.2.5 Ethnic pride and ethnic status

The answers to the question on the level of proud of being member of certain ethnicity related group, most Lithuanian Belarussians are very proud or proud of being Belarussian (77.3 per cent) and being Lithuanian Belarussian (72.1 per cent). While considering their proud of being Lithuanian, the Belarussians surveyed have the following opinions: most of the respondents (65.3 per cent) maintain that this question is not applicable to them, while one fifth (19.1 per cent) of the Lithuanian Belarussians are very proud or rather proud being Lithuanian and one tenth (10.5 per cent) has opposite positive attitudes. (See Table 6).

While considering their feelings towards being representatives of Europe, the Baltic country region, and Eastern Europe, most of the respondents tend to feel proud of being European (64.8 per cent), residents of the Baltic country region (60 per cent) and Eastern European (51.6 per cent).

The majority of the respondents maintain that their ethnic status is best described by a formula 'I'm Lithuanian Belarussian' – 70.3 per cent. Every sixth (16.5 per cent) Lithuanian Belarussian gives priority to the statement 'I'm Belarussian' and nearly every tenth (9.3 per cent) – to the statement 'I'm Lithuanian with Belarussian' descent'. No one of the Belarussian sample has chosen an answer 'I am Lithuanian' while defining their ethnic status. (See Table 7)

2.2.6 General assimilation strategy

The respondents were asked to express their opinion regarding the situation of ethnic minority groups and Belarussians in particular. The Lithuanian Belarussians nearly unanimously agree with a statement that 'It is better if Belarussians preserve their own customs and traditions' – 94.3 per cent strongly agree or rather agree with it. Concerning the statement 'It is better if Belarussians adapt and blend into the larger society', the opinions of the Lithuanian Belarussians are contradictory: in equal shares the respondents tend to agree (42.5 per cent) and disagree (42.3 per cent) with it. (See table 10). However, no significant correlations could be observed.

2.2.7 Educational and cultural aspects of identity

The respondents were asked to express their opinion on different statements related to the opportunities for their children education, to speak minority language in everyday life, opportunities to read newspapers and magazines in Belarussian and have the representatives in the parliament. In general, the opportunities listed in the questionnaire seem to be of a different significance to the Lithuanian Belarussians.

The great majority of the Lithuanian Belarussians maintains that an opportunity to preserve Belarussian folk customs, traditions, culture to be very important of rather important for them (87.8 per cent). Most of the respondents maintain that an opportunity for their children to study the ethnic history and culture of Belarussians, and an opportunity to have the Belarussian representatives in the parliament are of great importance (69.3 per cent and 67.1 per cent, correspondingly). An opportunity to read newspapers and magazines in Belarussian is assessed by the Belarussian respondents both as important and unimportant: 45.1 per cent chose positive answers and 52.5 per cent – negative answers. With regard to opportunity to speak Belarussian in everyday life and opportunity for their children to get education in Belarussian, most of the Belarussians surveyed tend to treat them as unimportant (62.5 per cent and 66.6 per cent, correspondingly). (See Table 11).

The data analysis shows a slight correlation between the attitudes towards preservation of ethnic culture and its nurture and respondents' education in Belarussian language – those who have acquired primary or secondary education in Belarussian are relatively more concerned regarding educational and cultural aspects of Belarussian identity.

The majority of the sample of Lithuanian Belarussians surveyed has obtained primary education (60.3 per cent) in Belarussian language. 42.3 per cent of the respondents have obtained secondary education in Belarussian language and 13.3 per cent – higher education or professional training. (See Table 12) Educational attainments in Belarussian language are related to respondents age and country of origin: out of those who have acquired primary education in Belarussian (N=241), more than half (54 per cent) are Lithuanian Belarussians seniors (50 years and elder), majority (89 per cent) are born in Belarus. Out of those, who have acquired secondary education in Belarussian (N=169), more than half (55.6 per cent) are Lithuanian Belarussians seniors (50 years and elder), majority (92.9 per cent) are born in Belarus.

Concerning the use of the media in Belarussian language and education of their children in Bela-russian, the respondents of the survey indicate different opportunities. Nearly in similar shares the Lithuanian Belarussians maintain that they have and have not opportunity to watch TV pro-grams of the Lithuania TV channels in Belarussian language (46.8 per cent and 46.5 per cent, correspondingly) and to listen to the radio programs of the Lithuania radio stations in Belarussian language (41.5 per cent and 46.5 per cent, correspondingly). In case of reading newspapers and magazines in the Belarussian language, issued in Lithuania and education of their children in Belarussian language, most of the respondents maintain that they do not have such opportunities (67 per cent and 66.8 per cent, correspondingly). (See Table 13)

2.2.8 Media usage

Several more detailed questions were provided to respondents concerning their usage of printed or electronical newspapers, television, radio and websites. Among the media resources, television and printed newspapers are most widely used in terms of different programs, followed by radio and internet based sources. Most of the Belarussian respondents read Lithuania's printed news-papers, watch Lithuania's TV programs and listen to the Lithuania's radio programs on regular basis (52.8 per cent, 55.5 per cent, and 44.0 per cent, correspondingly) or rarely (35.0 per cent, 26.0 per cent, and 30.8 per cent, correspondingly). 13.0 per cent of the Belarussian sample read newspapers of Belarus regularly and 46.5 per cent – rarely, while most of the respondents watch the TV programs of the Belarus regularly (42.0 per cent) or rarely (40.8 per cent). The media resources produced by the Lithuanian Belarussians are scarce, therefore majority of the respon-dents indicate that they never use them as they do not have an opportunity to read the newspapers (73.0 per cent), to watch TV programs (66.5 per cent), to listen to the radio (66.5 per cent) or to browse the internet sources (66.3 per cent). Lithuania's and Belarus' internet sources are used by most of the Belarussian respondents on regular basis (47 per cent and 30.3 per cent, correspon-dingly) or rarely (16.3 per cent and 28.0 per cent, correspondingly). (See Table 14, Table 15).

2.2.9 Religious denomination and practice

According to the survey data, nearly half of the Lithuanian Belarussians define themselves as Roman Catholics (47.3 per cent) and over third of the sample – Orthodox (36.8 per cent) or Old believers (2 per cent). One tenth of the Belarussian sample (10.3 per cent) consider themselves as not belonging to a denomination. (See Table 21).

Although the majority of the Lithuanian Belarussians define themselves as belonging to a certain religion or religious denomination, most of them are relatively rear practitioners as 54.8 per cent practice their religion several times a year or rarer apart from funerals, christenings and wed-dings. (See Table 22) One fifth of the Belarussian sample (20.6 per cent) practices religion once a week or more frequently.

2.3 Family, households, employment and related ethnic aspects

This section of the report provides with an overview of main results of the survey on the house-hold of the respondents, their socio-demographic profile, ethnic descent, marital status, issues related to employment and subjective social status.

2.3.1 Household composition

Most of respondents live in small households, as one fifth of the sample (21.0 per cent) lives alone, i.e. a respondent is the only member of the household; in this case, the majority is comprised by women (68 per cent). According to the answers of the Lithuanian Belarussians, nearly one third (30.8 per cent) of their households are comprised of two persons. One fourth (24.0 per cent) of the respondents' household consists of three persons. 18.3 per cent of the Belarussian respondents live in the households that consist of 4 persons, and 6.2 per cent – five or more persons. (See Table 30)

The structure of the two-persons households most often consists of a respondent and her/his spouse (76 per cent of all two-person households), a respondent and her/his child (15.5 per cent) or a respondent and her/his parent (3.4 per cent).

While analysing the relationship of respondent's household other members with him/her, most often the oldest household member is respondents' spouse (74 per cent), parent (9 per cent), or other relative. While defining ethnicity of the household's oldest member, the respondents tend to choose between the Belarussian (38 per cent), the Lithuanian Belarussian (5 per cent) and other ethnicities (41 per cent) and the Lithuanian (15 per cent). Among the other ethnicities (N=97), more than half (55 per cent) of the oldest household members are defined as Polish, more than one third (36 per cent) – Russians.

In most cases, the second (and the third) oldest member of the household is a child (75 per cent), who in terms of ethnicity is defined as the Belarussian (38 per cent), the Lithuanian Belarussian (13 per cent), having other ethnicity (24 per cent; in most cases Polish) or the Lithuanian (15 per cent). Among the Belarussian respondents, the Lithuanian citizenship dominates, the same corresponds their family members, while in each case over 92 per cent of household members are identified as citizens of the Republic of Lithuania. 16.6 per cent of respondents indicate that in their households children of 7-15 years old live (in most cases - 1 child), in the households of 7.1 per cent respondents, there are children under 6 years old. (See Table 31, Table 32)

The survey data enable to conclude that the households of the Lithuanian Russians tend to bear a monoethnic nature. Based on preliminary estimations of different questions (the ethnicity of a spouse, ethnicity of other household members, language used at hose, etc.), it is possible to presume that approximately half of respondents'' household has Lithuanians or other minority members.

By their marital status, 62.3 per cent of the Belarussian respondents are married, 3.0 per cent live with a partner or cohabitate. 10.0 per cent of the sample is divorced, 8.5 per cent – widowed. 15.8 per cent of the Lithuanian Belarussians are single. (See Table 51) While asked about the number of the children, the greatest share of the Lithuanian Belarussians indicates having two children all in all (44.5 per cent), along with 25.3 per cent those who have one child. 9.6 per cent of the respondents have three or more children. (See Table 39)

Worth noticing that the respondent's educational attainment correlates with the level of educational attainment of his/her spouse, i.e. a tendency to marry a person of similar education can be observed among the Belarussians surveyed.

2.3.2 Ethnic descent

While asked about their parents ethnicity, 70.3 per cent of respondents named that their father and 69.8 per cent that their mother were Belarussians, with a corresponding shares of 4.8 and 2.5

per cent – the Lithuanian Belarussians. 3.3 per cent of respondents fathers and 4.0 per cent of mothers are/were citizens of the Republic of Lithuania.

Most of the Belarussian respondents' parents are/were citizens of Belarus – 62.5 per cent mothers and 61.3 per cent fathers, the rests' parents were either citizens of Lithuania (20.8 per cent mother and 22.3 per cent father) or of other citizenship (13.3 and 13.0 per cent, correspondingly). (See Table 40)

The aforediscussed data correspond to the data on the place where a respondent has been born and his/her duration of living in Lithuania. The majority of the Belarussian sample (71.3 per cent) was born in Belarus, with one fourth (25.3 per cent) born in Lithuania and 3.5 per cent in other countries. Among the oldest group (50 years old and elder) of the sample, the majority is born in Belarus (81 per cent), 16 per cent – in Lithuania. In the middle age group (30–49 years old), these shares comprise 61 per cent and 32 per cent, correspondingly.

Data on the period of living in Lithuania, corresponds the aforementioned survey results. Majority of those (69.4 per cent), who were not born in Lithuania, have been living in the country for 21–50 years or longer, i.e. coming to the country during the Soviet times. One tenth (11.1 per cent) of Belarussians born outside Lithuania have been living there for 11–20 years, and similar share (13.8 per cent) – up to 10 years. (See Table 38)

2.3.3 Education and professional activity

By the level of the education achieved, one third (33.8 per cent) of the Belarussians have vocational training (including secondary education), one fifth (19.8 per cent) – the secondary education. Other significant share of Belarussian respondents have reached the level of higher education: 24.0 per cent have a bachelor degree (or equivalent) and 17.8 per cent – master's or postgraduate degree.

The majority of the Belarussians questioned (56.1 per cent), indicated they have been in education for 11–15 years, 27.3 per cent have spent 16 years or more in education. 16 per cent of the sample has been in education for 10 years or less. (See Table 43)

Data on educational attainment rates of the Census 2001 broken indicators of educational attainments of the Lithuanian Belarussians are close to (e.g. in case of higher education) or higher the national average (e.g., vocational education, secondary education).

2.3.4 Languages spoken

Respondents were asked about the languages they speak. Majority of Belarussians questioned declared their knowledge of Russian (99 per cent), Belarussian (89.5 per cent) and Lithuanian (77.0 per cent) languages. Those who do no know Lithuanian (N=91) are born in Belarus or other country. Most of them are Belarussian seniors (50 years old and elder) (58 per cent), living in urban areas (65 per cent). The Census 2001[28] data recorded that 42.2 per cent of the Lithuanian Belarussians did not know Lithuanian language; this indicator was the highest among the minorities (e.g., the total was 7.8 per cent, while among Poles – 31.0, Russians – 27.8, Ukrainians – 35.9 per cent, Roma – 37.8 per cent, etc.). 48.8 per cent of the Lithuanian Belarussians indicated that they know other languages, among which Polish language dominates. Among the foreign

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[28] Source: Department of Statistics, CSES/ PPMI Data Request, 2004, Ex-post Evaluation of EU Support to National Minorities (focusing on pre-accession instruments)

languages, English and German were mentioned by over one fifth of the sample (23.0 per cent and 22.5 per cent, correspondingly). Other foreign languages (such as French or Spanish) were mentioned just by few Belarussians surveyed. (See Table 44)

2.3.5 Occupation and participation in the labour market

While generalising the data on the respondents' social status, more than half (60.3 per cent) of the Belarussian sample is active in the labour market, 37.3 per cent – inactive with regard to the labour market. The retired/disabled Belarussians comprise 17.8 per cent, unemployed persons – 11.8 per cent. Among the employed Lithuanian Belarussians, most work full-time (40 hours a week) (47.5 per cent), 9.3 per cent – work part-time and 3.5 per cent have casual / temporary work. (See Table 45) Work status of the Belarussians surveyed is influenced by the age structure of the sample (more than half of the sample (54.3 per cent) are middle age).

Unemployed people comprise 11.8 per cent of the total Belarussian sample. While considering the time of the survey, the general unemployment level was quite similar (e.g. in 2009, 13.7 per cent and in the 1st Q of 2010, - 18.1 per cent[29]). Also, as among the general population, unemployment is higher among the Belarussian men (16.7 per cent) than women (8.4 per cent).

Employed or those who have been employed are more involved in work places in the central or local government (35.6 per cent) or state establishments (14.1 per cent). In private sector, 39.5 per cent of the Lithuanian Belarussian sample works: in profit-making companies or self-employed or co-operatives. (See Table 46)

While describing the current or last employment, the answers of the Belarussian respondents distributed in the following sequence: more of the Lithuanian Belarussians work as employees in non-manual (48.3. per cent) than in manual (30.3 per cent) occupations. Only 4.3 per cent of the Belarussians surveyed describe their employment as self-employed professionals, 3 per cent – as self-employed in business/trade. (See Table 47)

With regard to occupation, most of the Belarussian respondents (32.6 per cent) named the occupations that could be defined as professionals. In similar shares, the Lithuanian Belarussians work elementary occupations (14.7 per cent), craft and related trades workers (13.1 per cent), clerical support workers (11.3 per cent), in less shares the respondents work as service and sales workers (8.0 per cent) or plant and machine operators, and assemblers (6.4 per cent). (See Table 48)

The respondents were asked whether they have ever been unemployed for a period more than three months. The survey data implicate that most of the Belarussians surveyed have not experienced longer unemployment as 59 per cent answered negatively this question. 40 per cent of the sample has been unemployed for a period more than three months.

The data analysis shows that the middle age respondents tend having experienced temporary unemployment relatively more often: among those who have ever been unemployed for a period more than three months respondents of 30-49 years old comprise 68.8 per cent, also, 24 per cent are currently unemployed.

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[29] Statistics Lithuania, http://www.stat.gov.lt/lt/news/view?id=8931&PHPSESSID=6637564967bf8f20a2bb3c3d763cb

2.3.6 Assessment of the social standing

While subjectively assessing their social standing in the 10-point scale, most of the Belarussian respondents tend to place them in middle social standing – 70.6 per cent of respondents marked the middle points (from 4 to 7) of the scale. 18.6 per cent of the Belarussian respondents perceive their social standing as low (while marking one of the first three (from 1 to 3) points of the scale), while 9.3 per cent identified him/herself with the higher social standing (while marking one of the last three (from 8 to 10) points of the scale). (See Table 50)

The data analysis shows there is although weak, but significant correlation between assessment of one's social standing and average monthly income: with an increase of average monthly income, a share of respondents that ascribe themselves to the middle social standing increases (e.g., in the groups of income up to 1250 LTL per month, the share of those in the middle comprises up to 68 per cent, while if the monthly income comprise 1251-1500 LTL or over 1500 LTL, this share correspondingly increases up to 88 or 77 per cent.

2.3.7 Average monthly income and household's articles

While analysing the data on average monthly income of the Belarussians surveyed, one third of the sample (32.5 per cent) is concentrated among those receiving the lowest income (up to 800 LTL, which is an official minimum wage; equivalent to ~230EUR); among those half are employed (49.2 per cent) and unemployed (47.7 per cent). While one fourth of the sample (24.8 per cent) on average receives 801–1250 LTL, one fifth (19.6 per cent) – 1250-2000 LTL per month. (See Table 51)

The analysis of the employed Belarussians who have indicated exact sums of their average income shows that the average is 1238.09 LTL which is lower to the average neto salary, which in 1st Q of 2010 was 1583.9 LTL[30]. Among those who chose to indicate an interval of their income, the average is higher than the whole's sample: the lowest income (up to 800 LTL) receive 19.8 per cent, 801-1250 LTL – 29.4 per cent, 1250-2000 LTLT – 28.6 per cent and those higher than 2000 LTL – 15.9 per cent of the sample.

Along with the question on average net monthly income, the respondents were asked about certain things (property) in their household. The great majority (95.8 per cent) of the households have a coloured television, while one third (32.6 per cent) has two coloured televisions, and every tenth (15.4 per cent) – three or more coloured televisions. Also, the great majority (87.2 per cent) households represented by the Belarussian respondents have an automatic washing machine. Most of the households are equipped with personal computer or notebook (68.3 per cent; 20 per cent of those have two or more personal computers or notebooks) and internet access at home (68.3 per cent). Most of the respondents' households (62.5 per cent) own a car 4 years old or older. Also, a half (52.1 per cent) of respondents own a HIFI. The summer house or dacha is own by over a quarter (27.5 per cent) of the households of the Belarussians surveyed. Least popular households articles are the dish washers, which are available in one tenth (10.7 per cent) of respondents' households.

The Lithuanian ENRI-VIS questionnaire included a question on the ownership of the housing in which a respondent lives. The majority of the Belarussian respondents (80 per cent) indicate that

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[30] Statistics Lithuania,
http://www.stat.gov.lt/lt/news/view?id=9014&PHPSESSID=a3684daa6c906396e76e3ae962cd4907

they themselves or anybody from their household are owners of the housing they live in. (See Table 52)

2.4 Xenophobia, conflicts, discrimination

2.4.1 Social tension

While considering possible tensions between different social groups, Lithuanian Belarussians were asked to express their opinion on the level of tension between poor and rich people, between old people and young people, between Lithuanian Belarussians and Lithuanians, between Lithuanian Poles and Lithuanians, between different religious groups and between Roma and Lithuanian society.

Most parts of the Belarussian respondents tend to identify a lot of tension between poor and rich people and Roma and the Lithuanian society (36.5 per cent, each category); also, approximately half of the sample maintains that there is some tension among the aforementioned categories (48.5 per cent). More than half of the Lithuanian Belarussians surveyed (58.8 per cent) maintain there is some tension between old and young people. (See Table 18)

Considering manifestations of ethnic tension, in similar shares the Lithuanian Belarussians indicate no tension between the Lithuanian Poles and Lithuanians (46.3 per cent) and some or a lot of tension (39.5 per cent and 6.3 per cent, correspondingly).

According to the opinion of most of Belarussian respondents, there is no tension between Lithuanian Belarussians and Lithuanians (69.8 per cent) and between different religious groups in Lithuania (62.3 per cent). Still, approximately one quarter of the sample names some tension between different religious groups (27 per cent) or the Lithuanian Belarussians and Lithuanians (22.8 per cent).

Comparing the data on social closeness or distance towards five ethnic groups, the Lithuanian Belarussian s tend to be very close to all of the groups listed expect the Roma: the great majority (over 93 per cent) accept all the relationships (family membership, friendship, neighbourhood, work, live in one settlement) with the Lithuanians, Belarussians, Poles and Russians. (See Table 17). The case of Roma discloses the most differentiated social distance with regard to different social relationships. The attitudes of the Lithuanian Belarussians towards the Roma are negative as most parts of the sample (63 per cent) tend to accept them as ones living in the same settlement, and as working colleagues (54.8 per cent). However, half and more respondents do not want the Roma to be their neighbour in the same street (51 per cent), be their friend (53.8 per cent) or family member (75 per cent). (See Table 17)

2.4.2 Friendship and communication

The respondents were asked to identify an approximate number of their friends. Most part of the Belarussian respondents (40.9 per cent) said they had from 5 to 10 friends, over one fourth (22.4 per cent) had up to 4 friends and one third (32.4 per cent) had eleven or more friends. 1 per cent of respondents indicated that they have no friends at all. Majority of the Belarussian respondents (70.1 per cent) maintain that most of their friends come from various ethnic/nationality groups, while 9.1 per cent of Lithuanian Belarussians estimate that most of their friends are Lithuanian, 7.1 per cent – Belarussians, and 6.1 per cent – Lithuanian Belarussians. (See Table 59, 60)

In the survey questionnaire, the respondents were asked if they have relatives, friends or other acquaintances or business partners living in Belarus. The great majority of the respondents (92.8

per cent) maintain that they have relatives or friends (77.8 per cent) in Belarus, while 57 per cent – other acquaintances or business partners. (See Table 55)

The relationships with relatives and friends living in Belarus are more frequent than those with other acquaintances or business partners. In general, in all cases, the same pattern of relationships dominate: the most widespread means of communication are personal meetings and telephone / SMS contacts.

In case of relatives living in Belarus, 77.7 per cent of the Belarussian respondents communicate per telephone / SMS at least once or several times a year or more often (at least once a month – 48.6 per cent), 75.7 per cent have face to face or personal meetings at least once or several times a year or more often (32.6 per cent at least once a month). Internet based contacts for at least once a month are used by 31.8 per cent of respondents, on a rarer basis – by 12.4 per cent (at least once or several times a year). 71.3 per cent do not use mail at all in contacting their relatives in Belarus. (See Table 56a)

In case of friends living in Belarus, 76 per cent of the Belarussian respondents have face to face or personal meetings at least once or several times a year or more often (29.3 per cent at least once a month), 69.1 per cent of the Belarussian respondents communicate per telephone / SMS at least once or several times a year or more often (at least once a month – 35.9 per cent). Internet based contacts for at least once a month are used by 38.1 per cent of respondents, on a rarer basis – by 17.6 per cent (at least once or several times a year). 78.5 per cent do not use mail at all in contacting their relatives in Belarus. (See Table 56b)

In case of other acquaintances or business partners living in Belarus, 61.2 per cent of the Belarussian respondents have face to face or personal meetings at least once or several times a year or more often (21.5 per cent at least once a month), 54.8 per cent of respondents use internet based contacts on most frequently (27.9 per cent – at least once a month), and 53.7 per cent of respondents communicate per telephone / SMS at least once or several times a year or more often (at least once a month – 21.5 per cent). 74.5 per cent do not use mail at all in contacting their relatives in Belarus. (See Table 56c)

2.4.3 Experiences of discrimination

According to the survey data, 17.5 per cent of the Belarussian respondents indicated that in the past 12 months they have personally felt discriminated against or harassed in Lithuania on the basis of one or more of the following grounds: ethnic or national origin, gender, age or religion. (In total, 87 cases of experienced discrimination or harassment were reported in the survey data). (See Table 19)

Among the grounds listed, ethnic or national origin was most frequently mentioned: 13 per cent of the Belarussians had felt discriminated against or harassed on the grounds of ethnic origin in the last 12 months. 4.5 per cent of respondents indicate experienced discrimination or harassment on the ground of age, 3.3 per cent – on gender. While analysing the social demographic data of those who have experienced discrimination, no significant patterns can be observed as the distribution of gender or age of respondents corresponds the sample with an exception of education as most share of this group (60 per cent) have the highest educational attainments.

Among the sectors of society, in which the respondents felt discriminated against or harassed because of their ethnicity in this period, the area of employment was most often mentioned. Of the Belarussians who reported discrimination in the survey (N=70), 21 respondents indicated the case 'at work' and 22 specified 'when looking for a job', 20 – 'in the health care system', 12 –

'in shops', 11 – 'on the street'. The data prompts that one respondent has indicated experienced discrimination in several areas. (See Table 20)

2.5 Social and political capital, participation, attitudes towards EU

2.5.1 Social trust

While analysing the data on social trust, most Lithuanian Belarussians tend to express their higher trust to different social groups than the institutions. The great majority of the Belaussians surveyed trust the Belarussians (88.3 per cent, including answers 'trust them completely', 'rather trust them'), people in general (85.3 per cent), Lithuanian Belarussians (84.3 per cent), and Lithuanians (84.8 per cent). (See Table 8)

Regarding the different institutions, most Lithuanian Belarussians tend to distrust them with an exception of the police and courts in Lithuania. The Lithuanian Parliament and the Lithuanian Government are the most distrusted institutions: correspondingly, 80.3 and 73.8 per cent of respondents indicate that they rather do not trust them or do not trust them at all. More than half of the Lithuanian Belarussians do not trust Lithuanian media (51.8 per cent). The police in Lithuania is the only institution listed regarding which the opinion of the Lithuanian Belarussians is rather positive than negative as 57.0 per cent indicate that they trust ant 38 per cent – do not trust the police in Lithuania. In case of the court in Lithuania, worth noticing that 15 per cent of the Belarussian sample does not have any opinion; still more respondents tend to distrust (48.6 per cent) than trust (21.8 per cent) the courts. While 57.0 per cent of the Belarussians surveyed maintain that they trust the police completely or rather trust, 38.0 per cent maintain that they rather do not trust or do not trust the police. (See Table 9)

2.5.2 Politics

While analysing the survey data on respondents' interest in politics, the Belarussians surveyed express their very high interest in all areas of politics as the majority is interested in politics of Lithuania – 78.3 per cent ('very interested' and 'rather interested'), politics of Belarus – 74.5 per cent and politics related to the Lithuanian Belarussians – 73.6 per cent. (See Table 23)

Also, the majority of the Lithuanian Belarussians voted in the elections to the parliament in 2008 (64.3 per cent), and the European Parliament Elections in Lithuania (62.8 per cent). 16 per cent identified themselves as non-eligible to vote in both elections. (See Table 24)

The political preferences of the Lithuanian Belarussians are quite stable as they are nearly identical in both elections and the votes distribute in similar shares for the following political parties: party "Order and Justice" (14.3 per cent and 15 per cent, correspondingly), Lithuanian Poles' Electoral Action (14 per cent and 13 per cent), and Labour Party (10.9 per cent and 12.6 per cent, correspondingly). (See Table 24a, 24b)

2.5.3 Attitudes towards European Union

While considering the European Union, the Belarussian surveyed have rather positive than neutral image of the EU: 44.3 per cent maintain that their image is very o fairly positive, and 41.3 per cent – neutral. Those who have very negative or rather negative image of the EU comprise 10.5 per cent of the sample. (See Table 25)

Also, the majority of the Belarussians surveyed (58.8 per cent) maintains that Lithuania benefits a lot or rather benefits from being a member of the EU. Over one fourth (28.8 per cent) of Bela-

russians maintain negative attitudes towards Lithuania's benefits from the EU and thing that the country has no benefits at all or rather does not have benefits. Worth noticing that nearly one tenth (9.8 per cent) of the sample did not have an opinion with regard to the Lithuania's benefit from being a member of the EU. (See Table 26)

The respondents were asked to assess their situation after joining the European Union. Most of Belarussian respondents maintain that both situation for their ethnic groups in making political decisions and recognition of culture of the ethnic group is much the same after the joining the EU – 56.5 and 59.3 per cent, correspondingly. Still, little bit larger shares of the respondents tend to maintain that situation has become much better or rather better in these areas (18.3 and 21.1 per cent, correspondingly) or that it has worsened – 14.3 and 10.0 per cent, correspondingly. Nearly every tenth Belarussian respondent did not have an opinion regarding possible changes of participation in the political decisions or recognition of culture of his or her ethnic minority group after joining the EU (9.5 and 8.3 per cent, correspondingly). (See Table 27)

The data analysis enables to conclude that the 'euro-optimists' tend to identify more benefits and positive changes in minority situation regarding their political participation and recognition of culture.

While analysing the survey data on fears about the future of Europe and the European Union, it is obvious that the Lithuanian Belarussians are mostly afraid of an increase in drug trafficking and international organized crime (76 per cent) and the loss of social benefits (64.5 per cent). More than half of the Lithuanian Belarussians are not afraid of possible the loss of the Lithuanian national identity and culture (52.5 per cent) and the loss of Belarussian identity and culture (53.3 per cent). Most reservations the Lithuanian Belarussians express regarding possibly more difficulties for ethnic and national minorities: in equal shares the respondents are either afraid of it or not (44.3 per cent, each opinion), and 10 per cent have no opinion concerning the issue. (See Table 28)

2.5.4 Migrational attitudes

The data of the minority survey enable to conclude on migrational attitudes of ethnic minorities in Lithuania. The respondents were asked whether they would take an opportunity to leave Lithuania and move for another country one either alone or with their whole family and a good deal of monetary and social support. The data results show that strong emigrational attitudes are close to minority groups.

One third of the Belarussians surveyed (34.0 per cent) provided the interviewers with negative answers that they would never leave. Nearly similar share of respondents (30.0 per cent) said they would definitely leave, and a bit less part (28.0 per cent) expressed their doubt saying that they perhaps would leave. (See Table 29) While comparing different social demographical groups of the sample, greatest differences are observed among the age groups and place of residence. The strongest negative attitudes towards migration are among the senior population – out of those who say that would never leave, the majority (61 per cent) are 50 years old or elder. Also, residents of urban areas have relatively stronger migrational attitudes than the rural residents.

Those who have expressed their willingness to leave Lithuania, were asked which country they would prefer. Most often the Belarussian respondents (N=111) mentioned Belarus (46.8 per cent), followed by the United Kingdom (7.6 per cent), Germany (5.5 per cent) and Norway (4.6 per cent). (See Table 30)

2.5.5 Participation in voluntary organisations

The questionnaire included several question on membership in voluntary organisations. The data analysis shows that the majority of the Belarussian sample (69.3 percent) takes part in one or several voluntary organisations. This is directly related to the selection method in the survey because representatives of several non-governmental organisations were selected as the starting points of a chain for interviews. In terms of activity, the Lithuanian Belarussians indicate different levels of involvement in the activities. The members of the voluntary organisations are residents of urban areas, having relatively higher education and are employed more often than non-members.

The most popular voluntary organisations among the Lithuanian Belarussians are the church or religious organizations, in which 40.0 per cent of respondents indicate inactive and 7.5 percent – active membership. The Roma Catholics and Orthodox take part in religious organisations in similar shares, e.g. among the both active and inactive members of the church or religious organizations, 49.5 per cent of respondents define them as Roma Catholics, 45.8 per cent – as Orthodox or Old Believers. (See Table 57)

The participation in other voluntary organisations is a bit lower. The other most popular type of voluntary organisations is the ones that unite representatives of Lithuanian Belarussians: 19.9 per cent of the respondents define themselves as active members and 12.8 per cent as inactive members. Among the members, men comprise 46.9 per cent, which is a bit higher the general sample.

Over one tenth of the Belarussian sample declares its membership in sport or recreational organizations (6 per cent as active and 5 per cent as inactive members), and in art, music or educational organizations (9.5 per cent as active and 3.8 per cent as inactive members). The sport or recreational organizations are more attractive to the men (64 per cent of members are men).

About 8 per cent of the Belarussian sample are members of Labour unions (3 per cent and 5 per cent, correspondingly) and political parties (4.3 per cent and 3.5 per cent, correspondingly). Among the members of the political parties, men comprise 54.8 per cent, which is a bit higher the general sample. Also, among the members of political parties, the rural residents dominate (74 per cent).

While analysing the answers to the question on ethnic composition of the voluntary organisations, according to the members of these organisations, the most mono-ethnic voluntary organisations are those representing the Lithuanian Belarussians and art, music or educational organisations the majorities of the members of these organisations estimate that the majority of the members are Belarussians (correspondingly, 96.3 per cent and 57.1 per cent of the members). (See Table 58) Concerning the other organisations (church or religious, labour union, and political party) majority (close to 70 per cent) of their members estimate that there are a few Belarussians.

2.6 Annex: Tables

Table 1. What language or languages do you speak most often at home?

	Frequency	Percent
Belarussian	74	18.5
Lithuanian	39	9.8
Belarussian and Lithuanian	14	3.5
Other languages	273	68.3
Out of which Russian	212	53.0
Total	400	100

Table 2. How close do you feel to…

	Very close		Rather close		Rather not close		Not close at all		DK		Refusal		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
How close do you feel to Lithuanian Belarussians?	79	19.8	141	35.3	134	33.5	44	11.0	1	0.3	1	0.3	400	100
How close do you feel to settlement where you live?	145	36.3	190	47.5	58	14.5	4	1.0			1	0.3	400	100
How close do you feel to Lithuania?	111	27.8	192	48.0	84	21.0	6	1.5	3	0.8	1	0.3	400	100
How close do you feel to Belarus?	90	22.5	179	44.8	104	26.0	22	5.5	1	0.3	1	0.3	400	100
How close do you feel to Baltic country region?	15	3.8	113	28.3	178	44.5	82	20.5	6	1.5	2	0.5	400	100
How close do you feel to Eastern Europe?	11	2.8	113	28.3	166	41.5	97	24.3	5	1.3	3	0.8	400	100
How close do you feel to Europe?	20	5.0	137	34.3	151	37.8	83	20.8	4	1.0	2	0.5	400	100

Table 2a. Rotated Component Matrix(a)

	Component	
	1	2
How close do you feel to Lithuanian Belarussians?	-,004	,817
How close do you feel to settlement where you live?	,561	,258
How close do you feel to Lithuania?	,724	,123
How close do you feel to Belarus?	,142	,732
How close do you feel to Baltic country region?	,819	,143
How close do you feel to Eastern Europe?	,805	,008
How close do you feel to Europe?	,852	-,099

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.
 Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.
a Rotation converged in 3 iterations.

Compo-nent	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumula-tive %	Total	% of Variance	Cumula-tive %	Total	% of Variance	Cumula-tive %
1	2,988	42,686	42,686	2,988	42,686	42,686	2,905	41,494	41,494
2	1,233	17,609	60,295	1,233	17,609	60,295	1,316	18,801	60,295
3	,958	13,689	73,984						
4	,746	10,657	84,640						
5	,467	6,670	91,310						
6	,358	5,110	96,420						
7	,251	3,580	100,000						

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Table 3. We think of ourselves in different terms. Generally speaking which is the most important to you in de-scribing who you are? And which is the second and third important?

	The most impor-tant		The second important		The third impor-tant	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
My current (previous) occupation	136	34.0	56	14.0	41	10.3
My gender (that is, being a man/woman)	48	12.0	48	12.0	32	8.0
My age group (that is, young, middle age, old)	30	7.5	58	14.5	41	10.3
My religion (or being agnostic or atheist)	25	6.3	33	8.3	25	6.3
Being a Lithuanian Belarussian	52	13.0	54	13.5	39	9.8
My social class (that is upper, middle, lower, working, or similar categories)	17	4.3	26	6.5	26	6.5
Coming from the settlement you live	51	12.8	62	15.5	75	18.8
My preferred political party, group or move-ment	1	0.3	1	0.3	9	2.3
Being European	15	3.8	23	5.8	36	9.0
To be a citizen of the Republic of Lithuania	19	4.8	29	7.3	61	15.3
98 – DK	1	0.3	5	1.3	7	1.8
99 – Refusal	1	0.3	3	0.8	4	1.0

Table 4. Some people say that the following things are important for being truly Belarussian. Others say they are not important. How important do you think each of the following is

	Very important		Rather important		Rather not important		Not important at all		DK		Refusal		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
a. to have been born in Belarus	107	26.8	138	34.5	116	29.0	33	8.3	3	0.8	1	0.3	400	100
b. to have Belarussian citizenship	34	8.5	105	26.3	175	43.8	78	19.5	2	0.5	3	0.8	400	100
c. to have lived in Belarus for most of one's life	49	12.3	125	31.3	155	38.8	64	16.0	2	0.5	2	0.5	400	100
d. to be able to speak Belarussian	137	34.3	151	37.8	91	22.8	15	3.8	1	0.3	2	0.5	400	100
e. to be an Orthodox	32	8.0	59	14.8	77	19.3	200	50.0	16	4.0	4	1.0	400	100
f. to respect Belarussian political institutions and laws	71	17.8	185	46.3	98	24.5	34	8.5	4	1.0	2	0.5	400	100
g. to feel Belarussian	233	58.3	128	32.0	27	6.8	7	1.8	1	0.3	1	0.3	400	100
h. to have Belarussian ancestry	183	45.8	159	39.8	47	11.8	7	1.8			1	0.3	400	100

Table 5. And how important do you think each of the following things for being truly Lithuanian?

	Very important		Rather important		Rather not important		Not important at all		DK		Refusal		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
a. to have been born in Lithuania	115	28.8	138	34.5	81	20.3	25	6.3	11	2.8	22	5.5	400	100
b. to have Lithuanian citizenship	106	26.5	152	38	79	19.8	24	6	9	2.3	22	5.5	400	100
c. to have lived in Lithuania for most of one's life	85	21.3	127	31.8	125	31.3	22	5.5	10	2.5	21	5.3	400	100
d. to be able to speak Lithuanian	242	60.5	99	24.8	18	4.5	1	0.3	9	2.3	22	5.5	400	100
e. to be a Catholic	78	19.5	94	23.5	81	20.3	104	26	11	2.8	22	5.5	400	100
f. to respect Lithuanian political institutions and laws	134	33.5	169	42.3	40	10	14	3.5	11	2.8	22	5.5	400	100
g. to feel Lithuanian	211	52.8	107	26.8	29	7.3	10	2.5	12	3	21	5.3	400	100
h. to have Lithuanian ancestry	164	41	117	29.3	58	14.5	19	4.8	11	2.8	21	5.3	400	100

Table 6. How proud are you of being ….

	Very proud		Rather proud		Rather not proud		Not proud at all		Not appli-cable		DK		Refusal		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Belarus-sian	128	32.0	181	45.3	52	13.0	15	3.8	9	2.3	10	2.5	3	0.8	400	100
Lithua-nian	17	4.3	59	14.8	32	8.0	10	2.5	261	65.3	9	2.3	6	1.5	400	100
Lithua-nian Belarus-sian	95	23.8	193	48.3	63	15.8	24	6.0	11	2.8	10	2.5	4	1.0	400	100
Baltic country region	36	9.0	204	51.0	90	22.5	37	9.3	13	3.3	13	3.3	4	1.0	400	100
Eastern European	23	5.8	183	45.8	113	28.3	43	10.8	11	2.8	18	4.5	6	1.5	400	100
European	58	14.5	201	50.3	77	19.3	42	10.5	5	1.3	8	2.0	6	1.5	400	100

Table 7. Out of the following list, please select the formula that best describes your ethnic status

	N	%
I'm Lithuanian Belarussian	281	70.3
I'm Belarussian	66	16.5
I'm Lithuanian with Belarussian descent	37	9.3
I'm Lithuanian	0	0
DK	4	1.0
Refusal	1	0.3
Total	786	100

Table 8. Could you tell me how much you trust?

	Trust them completely		Rather trust them		Rather do not trust them		Do not trust them at all		DK		Refusal		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
People in general	38	9.5	305	76.3	45	11.3	11	2.8			1	0.3	400	100
Lithuanian Belarussians	57	14.3	296	74.0	33	8.3	7	1.8	4	1.0	2	0.5	400	100
Lithuanians	39	9.8	300	75.0	43	10.8	15	3.8	1	0.3	1	0.3	400	100
Belarussians	50	12.5	303	75.8	32	8.0	9	2.3	3	0.8	1	0.3	400	100

Table 9. Please tell me how much you trust each of the following institutions?

	Trust them completely		Rather trust them		Rather do not trust them		Do not trust them at all		DK		Refusal		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
a. Lithuanian parliament	2	0.5	55	13.8	127	31.8	194	48.5	17	4.3	4	1	400	100
b. Lithuanian media	9	2.3	168	42	120	30	87	21.8	12	3	2	1	400	100
c. The police in Lithuania	26	6.5	202	50.5	76	19	68	17	24	6	2	1	400	100
d. Lithuanian government	8	2	79	19.8	133	33.3	162	40.5	14	3.5	3	1	400	100
e. The courts in Lithuania	10	2.5	132	33	105	26.3	89	22.3	59	15	3	1	400	100

Table 10. There are different opinions about the situation of ethnic minority groups and Lithuanian Belarussians in particular. I will read out some statements concerning this issue. Could you please tell me, how much do you agree with them?

	Strongly agree		Rather agree		Rather do not agree		Do not agree at all		DK		Refusal		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
a. It is better if Lithuanian Belarussians adapt and blend into the larger society	46	11.5	164	41	121	30.3	48	12	10	2.5	8	2	400	100
b. It is better if Lithuanian Belarussians adapt preserve their own customs and traditions	225	56.3	152	38	12	3	1	0.3	5	1.3			400	100

Table 11. To what degree is it important for you:

	Very important		Rather important		Rather not important		Not important at all		DK		Refusal		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
a. An opportunity for your children to get education in Belarussian language	30	7.5	95	23.8	145	36.3	121	30.3	7	1.8	2	0.5	400	100
b. An opportunity for your children to study the ethnic history and culture of Lithuanian Belarussians	77	19.3	200	50.0	90	22.5	25	6.3	6	1.5	2	0.5	400	100
c. An opportunity to read newspapers and magazines in the Belarussian language	43	10.8	137	34.3	132	33.0	78	19.5	6	1.5	3	0.8	400	100
d. An opportunity to speak Belarussian language in everyday life	40	10.0	101	25.3	156	39.0	94	23.5	5	1.3	3	0.8	400	100
e. An opportunity to preserve Belarussian folk customs, traditions, culture	144	36.0	207	51.8	37	9.3	6	1.5	3	0.8	2	0.5	400	100
f. An opportunity to have the representatives of your nationality in Lithuanian	97	24.3	171	42.8	61	15.3	58	14.5	9	2.3	3	0.8	400	100

parliament														

Table 12. Have you obtained education in Belarussian language?

	Yes		No		Refusal		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
a. In primary education	241	60.3	154	38.5	2	0.5	400	100
b. In secondary education	169	42.3	216	54	2	0.5	400	100
c. In higher education or professional training	53	13.3	291	72.8	6	1.5	400	100

Table 13. Do you have an opportunity …

	Yes		No		DK		Refusal		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
a. to watch TV programs of the Lithuanian TV channels in Belarussian language	187	46.8	186	46.5	20	5	2	0.5	400	100
b. to listen to the radio programs of the Lithuanian radio stations in Belarussian language	166	41.5	186	46.5	35	8.8	8	2	400	100
c. to read newspapers and magazines in the Belarussian language, issued in Lithuania	81	20.3	268	67	37	9.3	9	2.3	400	100
d. To give school education for your children in Belarussian language	92	23	267	66.8	22	5.5	14	3.5	400	100

Table 14. How often do you read printed or electronic NEWSPAPERS…

	Regularly /Often		Rarely		Never, but I have such an opportunity		Never, but I do not have such an opportunity		DK		Refusal		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Lithuanian newspapers	211	52.8	123	30.8	49	12.3	14	3.5			2	0.5	400	100
Belarussian newspapers	52	13.0	186	46.5	41	10.3	114	28.5	2	0.5	4	1.0	400	100
Lithuanian Belarussians' newspapers	16	4.0	43	10.8	34	8.5	292	73.0	6	1.5	6	1.5	400	100

Table 15. How often do you watch TELEVISION or listen on the RADIO or on the WEB…

	Regularly /Often		Rarely		Never, but I have such an opportu-nity		Never, but I do not have such an opportunity		DK		Refusal		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
TV:														
Lithuanian programs	222	55.5	140	35.0	30	7.5	6	1.5			1	0.3	400	100
Belarussian pro-grams	168	42.0	163	40.8	22	5.5	42	10.5			4	1.0	400	100
Lithuanian Belarus-sians' programs	32	8.0	61	15.3	26	6.5	266	66.5	9	2.3	5	1.3	400	100
Radio														
Lithuanian programs	176	44.0	104	26.0	72	18.0	44	11.0	1	0.3	2	0.5	400	100
Belarussian pro-grams	111	27.8	147	36.8	53	13.3	83	20.8	4	1.0	1	0.3	400	100
Lithuanian Belarus-sians' programs	21	5.3	55	13.8	39	9.8	266	66.5	15	3.8	2	0.5	400	100
Websites														
Lithuanian websites	188	47.0	65	16.3	38	9.5	104	26.0			2	0.5	400	100
Belarussian websites	121	30.3	112	28.0	47	11.8	114	28.5	1	0.3	2	0.5	400	100
Lithuanian Belarus-sians' websites	28	7.0	47	11.8	41	10.3	265	66.3	12	3.0	3	0.8	400	100

Table 17. We all have different relationships with one another. Please tell me for each one of them if you would accept the relationships with persons coming from different ethnic groups. So how would you feel about having a member of the following…

	17.1 Lithuanian										17.2 Belarussian									
	Yes		No		DK		Refusal		Total		Yes		No		DK		Refusal		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
a. as a family member?	371	92.8	24	6	1	0.3	4	1.0	400	100	397	99.3					3	0.8	400	100
b. as a friend?	386	96.5	8	2	1	0.3	5	1.3	400	100	395	98.8	1	0.3			4	1.0	400	100
c. as a neighbour on your street?	389	97.3	6	1.5	1	0.3	4	1.0	400	100	396	99	1	0.3			3	0.8	400	100
d. as a work-ing col-league?	389	97.3	6	1.5	1	0.3	4	1.0	400	100	396	99	1	0.3			3	0.8	400	100
e. as one living in the same set-tlement?	391	97.8	4	1	1	0.3	4	1.0	400	100	396	99					3	0.8	400	100

	17.3 Pole										17.4 Russian									
	Yes		No		DK		Refusal		Total		Yes		No		DK		Refusal		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
a. as a family member?	370	93	27	6.8			3	0.8	400	100	383	96	13	3.3	1	0.3	3	0.8	400	100
b. as a friend?	380	95	15	3.8			5	1.3	400	100	395	99			1	0.3	4	1.0	400	100
c. as a neighbour on your street?	385	96	12	3			3	0.8	400	100			1	0.3	1	0.3	3	0.8	400	100
d. as a working colleague?	382	96	15	3.8			3	0.8	400	100	393	98	3	0.8	1	0.3	3	0.8	400	100
e. as one living in the same settlement?	388	97	8	2			4	1.0	400	100	395	99	1	0.3	1	0.3	3	0.8	400	100

	17.5 Roma									
	Yes		No		DK		Refusal		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
a. as a family member?	92	23.0	300	75.0	5	1.3	3	0.8	400	100
b. as a friend?	176	44.0	215	53.8	6	1.5	3	0.8	400	100
c. as a neighbour on your street?	187	46.8	204	51.0	6	1.5	3	0.8	400	100
d. as a working colleague?	219	54.8	171	42.8	6	1.5	4	1.0	400	100
e. as one living in the same settlement?	252	63.0	139	34.8	6	1.5	3	0.8	400	100

Table 18. In your opinion, how much tension is there between each of the following groups in this country

	No tension		Some tension		A lot of tension		DK		Refusal		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Poor and rich	45	11.3	194	48.5	146	36.5	12	3	3	0.8	400	100
Old people and young people	121	30.3	235	58.8	29	7.3	14	3.5	1	0.3	400	100
Lithuanian Belarussians and Lithuanians	279	69.8	91	22.8	7	1.8	22	5.5	1	0.3	400	100
Lithuanian Poles and Lithuanians	185	46.3	158	39.5	25	6.3	31	7.8	1	0.3	400	100
Different religious group	249	62.3	108	27	9	2.3	31	7.8	1	0.3	400	100
Roma and Lithuanian society	45	11.3	194	48.5	146	36.5	12	3	6	1.5	400	100

Table 19. In the past 12 months have you personally felt discriminated against or harassed in Lithuania on the basis of one or more of the following grounds?

	Yes		No		DK		Refusal		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Ethnic or national origin	52	13	337	84,3	3	0,8	8	2.0	400	100
Gender	13	3,3	379	94,8			8	2.0	400	100
Age	18	4,5	373	93,3	1	0,3	8	2.0	400	100
Religion	4	1	386	96,5	2	0,5	8	2.0	400	100

Table 20. In which of these environments did you felt discriminated or harassed because pf your ethnic origin in the last 12 months

	Yes		No		Not applicable		DK		Refusal		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
a. At school/university	1	0.3	27	6.8	352	88.0			20	5.0	400	100
b. At work	21	5.3	19	4.8	349	87.3			11	2.8	400	100
c. in the health care system	20	5.0	16	4.0	348	87.0			16	4.0	400	100
d. By the court	5	1.3	28	7.0	351	87.8			16	4.0	400	100
e. By the police	7	1.8	27	6.8	350	87.5			16	4.0	400	100
f. At church	4	1.0	29	7.3	349	87.3			18	4.5	400	100
g. when looking for a job	22	5.5	16	4.0	348	87.0	1	.3	13	3.3	400	100
h. In restaurants, bars, pubs, or discos	3	0.8	29	7.3	349	87.3			19	4.8	400	100
i. On the street	11	2.8	23	5.8	348	87.0			18	4.5	400	100
j. By neighbours	6	1.5	28	7.0	348	87.0			18	4.5	400	100
k. In shops	12	3.0	24	6.0	348	87.0			16	4.0	400	100
l. On public transportation	6	1.5	27	6.8	349	87.3			18	4.5	400	100

Table 21. Do you belong to a religion or religious denomination? If yes, which one?

	N	%
Roman Catholic	189	47.3
Orthodox	147	36.8
Old believers	8	2.0
Protestant	1	0.3
Buddhist	1	0.3
Other	9	2.3
Do not belong to a denomination	41	10.3
DK	1	0.3
Refusal	3	0.8
Total	400	100

Table 22. Apart from funerals, christenings and weddings, how often do you practice your religion?

	N	%
Every day	15	3.8
Several times a week	14	3.5
Once a week	53	13.3
Once a month	45	11.3
Several times a year	171	42.8
Once a year or less often	48	12.0
Never	34	8.5
DK	1	0.3
Refusal	19	4.8
Total	400	100

Table 23. How interested would you say you are in politics in

	Very interested		Rather interested		Rather not interested		Not interested at all		DK		Refusal		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
a. Lithuania	113	28.3	200	50.0	56	14.0	28	7.0			3	0.8	400	100
b. Belarus	112	28.0	186	46.5	67	16.8	32	8.0			3	0.8	400	100
c. related to the Lithuanian Belarussians	89	22.3	205	51.3	73	18.3	29	7.3	1	0.3	3	0.8	400	100

Table 24. Did you vote in the last …

	Yes		No, but eligible to vote		No, not eligible		Can't remember		Refusal		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
a) Lithuanian Parliament elections (2008)	257	64.3	70	17.5	66	16.5	0	0.3	6	1.6	400	100
b) European Parliament elections in Lithuania	251	62.8	76	19.0	62	15.5	4	1	7	1.8	400	100

24A. Which party did you vote for in the Lithuanian Parliament elections (October 12 2008)?

	N	%
Party " Order and Justice "	37	14.3
Lithuanian Poles' Electoral Action	36	14.0
The Coalition "Labour party+Youth"	28	10.9
Lithuanian Social Democratic Party	23	8.9
Liberal and Centre Union	11	4.3
Homeland Union - Lithuanian Christian Democrats	6	2.3
Rising Nation Party	4	1.6
Liberals Movement of the Republic of Lithuania	1	0.4
Other	6	2.3
Do not know, do not remember	61	23.6
No answer	45	17.4

Total	258	100

24B. Which party did you vote for in the European Parliament elections (June 7 2009)?

	N	%
Party "Order and Justice"	38	15.0
Lithuanian Poles' Electoral Action	33	13.0
Labour Party	32	12.6
Lithuanian Social Democratic Party	16	6.3
Liberals Movement of the Republic of Lithuania	7	2.8
Homeland Union - Lithuanian Christian Democrats	5	2.0
Other	6	2.4
Do not know, do not remember	72	28.5
No answer	44	17.4
Total	253	100

Table 25. In general, do you have a very positive, fairly positive, neutral, fairly negative or very negative image of the European Union?

	N	%
Very positive	33	8.3
Fairly positive	144	36.0
Neutral	165	41.3
Fairly negative	28	7.0
Very negative	14	3.5
DK	12	3.0
Refusal	4	1.1
Total	400	100

Table 26. Generally speaking, would you say that Lithuania benefits or does nor benefit from being a member the European Union?

	N	%
Benefits a lot	51	12.8
Rather benefits	184	46.0
Rather does not bene-fits	96	24.0
Does not benefit at all	19	4.8
DK	39	9.8
Refusal	11	2.8
Total	400	100

Table 27. Compared to our situation after joining the European Union, would you say our current situation is better, much the same, or worse than the old system in terms of whether:....?

	Much better		Rather better		Much the same		Rather worse		Much worse		DK		Refusal		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
a. Your ethnic minority group has a say in making political decisions	6	1.5	67	16.8	226	56.5	48	12.0	9	2.3	38	9.5	6	1.5	400	100
b. Recognition of culture of your ethnic minority group	9	2.3	75	18.8	237	59.3	32	8.0	8	2.0	33	8.3	6	1.6	400	100

Table 28. Some people may have fears about the future of Europe and the European Union. I'm going to read out a list of things which some people say they are afraid of. For each one, please tell me if you - personally - are currently afraid of it, or not?

	Afraid of it		Not afraid of it		DK		Refusal		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
a. The loss of Lithuanian Belarussians' identity and culture	157	39.3	213	53.3	24	6.0	6	1.5	400	100
b. An increase in drug trafficking and international organized crime	304	76.0	67	16.8	24	6.0	5	1.3	400	100
c. The loss of social benefits	258	64.5	119	29.8	17	4.3	6	1.5	400	100
d. The loss of Lithuanian national identity and culture	148	37.0	210	52.5	34	8.5	8	2.0	400	100
e. More difficulties for ethnic and national minorities	177	44.3	177	44.3	40	10.0	6	1.5	400	100

Table 29. If you had an opportunity to leave your country and move for another one either alone or with your whole family and a good deal of monetary and social support, would you go?

	N	%
Yes, I would definitely leave	120	30.0
Yes, perhaps I would leave	112	28.0
No, I would never leave	136	34.0
DK	28	7.0
Refusal	4	1.0
Total	400	100

Table 30. If you can choose, which country would be your preference?

	N	%
Denmark	2	0.8
Finland	1	0.4
France	6	2.5
Germany	13	5.5
Ireland	3	1.3
Italy	3	1.3
Latvia	1	0.4
Moldova	1	0.4
Netherlands	1	0.4
Norway	11	4.6
Poland	2	0.8
Russia	6	2.5
Spain	3	1.3
Sweden	8	3.4
Switzerland	3	1.3
Turkey	2	0.8
Belarus	111	46.8
United Kingdom	18	7.6
United States of America	3	1.3
Other Europe	4	1.7
Other America	2	0.8
Other Asia	2	0.8
Other	3	1.3
Belgium	2	0.8
Canada	6	2.5
Czech Republic	1	0.4
Do not know	19	8.0
Total	237	100

Table 31. Including yourself, how many people – including children – live here regularly as members of this household?

	Total		Persons 16 years old and elder		Children of 7-15 years old		Children under 6 years old	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
0			1	0.3	334	83.5	371	93.0
1	84	21.0	94	23.5	51	12.8	25	6.3
2	123	30.8	155	38.8	14	3.5	2	0.5
3	96	24.0	84	21.0	1	0.3	1	0.3
4	73	18.3	53	13.3				
5	11	2.8	11	2.8				
6	9	2.3	1	0.3				
7	1	0.3	1	0.3				
8	1	0.3						
9	2	0.5						
	400	100	400	100	400	100	399	100

Table 32. Main characteristics of the household members (per cent)

	Senior (N=281)	Second oldest (N=166)	Third oldest (N= 82)
Male	53	49	54
Female	47	51	45
Up to 29 years old	14	9	1
30-49 years old	34	15	42
50 years old and elder	52	76	57
Spouse	74	5	2
Sun, daughter	10	75	74
Father/mother	9	10	1.2
Lithuanian Belarussian	5	13	12
Belarussian	38	37	39
Lithuanian	15	15	18
Other	41	24	18
Lithuanian citizenship	92	93	94
Belarussian citizenship	6	5	4

Table 33. Respondent's citizenship

	N	%
Lithuania	328	82.0
Belarus	61	15.3
No citizenship	7	1.8
Other country	3	0.8
NA	1	0.3
Total	400	100

Table 37. Place of birth

	N	%
Lithuania	101	25.3
Belarus	285	71.3
Other country	14	3.5
Total	400	100

Table 38. How long have you been living in this country?

	N	%
Up to 10 years	41	13.8
11-20 years	33	11.1
21-50 years	206	69.4
51 years or longer	17	5.7
Total	297	100

Table 39. How many children all in all do you have, including the adopted ones?

	N	%
No children	69	17.3
1	101	25.3
2	178	44.5
3	28	7.0
4 and more	10	2.6
Refusal	14	3.5
Total	400	100.0

Table 40. Parents' ethnicity and citizenship

| | ETHNICITY | | | | | CITIZENSHIP | | | |
| | Father | | Mother | | | Father | | Mother | |
	N	%	N	%		N	%	N	%
Lithuanian	13	3.3	16	4.0		89	22.3	83	20.8
Belarussian	281	70.3	279	69.8		245	61.3	250	62.5
Lithuanian Belarussian	19	4.8	10	2.5					
Other / double	76	19.0	83	20.8		52	13.0	53	13.3
DK	1	0.3	1	.3		4	1.0	4	1.0
Refusal	10	2.5	11	2.8		10	2.5	10	2.5
Total	400	100	400	100		400	100	400	100

Table 43. About how many years of education have you completed?

	N	%
Up to 4 years	2	0.6
5-10 years	61	15.4
11-15 years	224	56.1
16 years or longer	108	27.3
Refusal	5	1.3
Total	400	100

Table 44. What languages do you speak? (Answers – 'yes')

	N	%
Lithuanian	308	77.0
Russian	396	99.0
Belarussian	358	89.5
English	102	22.5
French	11	2.8
Italian	-	-
Spanish	5	1.3
German	99	23.0
Other	195	48.8

Table 45. Now we are also interested in the kind of work you are doing (i.e. main job). Which of the statements on this card applies to you at the moment?

	N	%
Working full-time (40 hours a week)	190	47.5
Working part-time (8-30 hours a week)	37	9.3
Casual/temporary work	14	3.5
Housewife/keeping house	4	1.0
Unemployed	47	11.8
Retired/disabled	71	17.8
Full-time student at school/college	18	4.5
Temporary leave (sick leave, maternity leave)	10	2.5
Other	6	1.5
Refusal	2	0.5
Total	400	100

Table 46. Which of these types of organizations do/did you work in?

	N	%
profit-making private firm or company	133	34.8
non-profit making private organization (charity, pressure group)	19	5.0
central government, local government, or other state organization (incl. health service, education, police, fire brigade, etc.)	136	35.6
self-employed	15	3.9
State establishment	54	14.1
worker's co-operative	1	0.3
agricultural association/co-op	2	0.5
never worked (house-wife)	1	0.3
DK	12	3.1
Refusal	9	2.4
Total	382	100

Table 47. Which of the descriptions on this card best describes your current/last employment status?

	N	%
Self-employed farmer	2	0.5
Self-employed professional	17	4.3
self-employed in business/trade	12	3.0
employee in non-manual occupation	193	48.3
employee in manual occupation	121	30.3
helps out, assists in family business	6	1.5
Other	6	1.5
DK	25	6.3
Refusal	18	4.5
Total	400	100

Table 48. Please, tell me with your own words, what is/was your occupation?

	Frequency	Percent
Managers	16	4.1
Professionals	127	32.6
Technicians and associate professionals	19	4.9
Clerical support workers	44	11.3
Service and sales workers	31	8.0
Skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery workers	1	0.3
Craft and related trades workers	51	13.1
Plant and machine operators, and assemblers	25	6.4
Elementary occupations	57	14.7
DK	2	0.5
Refusal	16	4.1
Total	389	100.0

Table 49. Have you ever been unemployed for a period more than three months?

	N	%
Yes	160	40.0
No	263	59.0
No answer	3	0.8
Refusal	1	0.3
Total	400	100

Table 50. In Lithuania today, some people are considered to have a high social standing and some are considered to have a low social standing. Thinking about yourself, where would you place yourself on this scale if the top box indicated high social standing in this country and the bottom box indicated low social standing.

	N	%
1	11	2.8
2	16	4.0
3	47	11.8
4	66	16.5
5	101	25.3
6	80	20.0
7	35	8.8
8	29	7.3
9	6	1.5
10	2	0.5
DK	3	0.8
Refusal	4	1.0
Total	400	100

Table 51. Considering all your sources of income, please tell me, what is your average net monthly income?

	N	%
Up to 800 LTL	130	32.5
801-1250 LTL	107	24.8
1250-2000 LTL	78	19.6
2001 LTL and more	35	8.8
No income	29	7.3
No answer	21	5.3
Total	400	100

1EUR=3.4528 LTL

Table 52. Does your household have… (Answers 'yes'

	N	%	How many
automatic washing machine	348	87.2	
HIFI	207	52.1	
coloured television	383	95.8	2 TV N=125, 3 TV N=53, 4 TV N=6
Any cars 4 years old or older	250	62.5	2 cars N=28, 3 cars N=3
Any cars younger than 4 years old	18	4.5	
personal computer or notebook	273	68.3	2 PC N=45, 3 PC N=10
Dish washer	43	10.7	
Dacha, summer house	110	27.5	
Internet-access at home	273	68.3	
Are you or anybody from the household an owner of the housing you live in	320	80.	

Table 53. What is your marital status?

	N	%
Single	63	15.8
Cohabitating/living with partner	12	3.0
Married	249	62.3
Divorced	40	10.0
Widowed	34	8.5
DK	2	0.6
Refusal	63	15.8
	400	100

Table 54. What is the highest level of education your spouse / partner has achieved?

	N	%
No primary	-	-
Primary	3	1.1
Basic with vocational training	9	3.4
Secondary	46	17.5
Secondary with vocational training	104	39.5
Higher (Bachelor degree)	57	21.7
Higher (Master degree, post graduate degree)	43	16.3
DK	1	0.4
Total	263	100

Table 55. Do you have … living in Belarus?

	Yes		No		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Relatives	371	92.8	29	7.3	400	100
Friends	311	77.8	89	22.3	400	100
Other acquaintances or business partners	228	57.0	172	43.0	400	100

Table 56a. How frequently do you contact your relatives living in Belarus?

	at least once a month of more frequently		not every month, but at least one or several times a year		less frequently (once in several years)		no contacts at all in this way		DK		Refusal	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Per telephone /SMS (N=364)	177	48.6	106	29.1	46	12.6	30	8.2	1	0.3	4	1.1
Mail (N=349)	12	3.4	40	11.5	28	8.0	249	71.3			20	5.7
Internet based contacts, such as Emailing chats, skype, Facebook, etc. (N=346)	110	31.8	43	12.4	23	6.6	154	44.5			16	4.6
Personal meetings, face-to face (N=362)	118	32.6	156	43.1	68	18.8	16	4.4	1	0.3	3	0.8

Table 56b. How frequently do you contact your friends living in Belarus?

	at least once a month of more fre-quently		not every month, but at least one or several times a year		less fre-quently (once in several years)		no contacts at all in this way		DK		Refusal	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Per telephone /SMS (N=301)	108	35.9	100	33.2	52	17.3	39	13.0			2	0.7
Mail (N=288)	10	3.5	21	7.3	20	6.9	226	78.5			11	3.8
Internet based con-tacts, such as Email-ing chats, skype, Facebook, etc. (N=289)	110	38.1	51	17.6	19	6.6	101	34.9			8	2.8
Personal meetings, face-to face (N=300)	88	29.3	140	46.7	58	19.3	13	4.3			1	0.3

Table 56c. How frequently do you contact your other acquaintances or business partners living in Belarus

	at least once a month of more frequently		not every month, but at least one or several times a year		less fre-quently (once in several years)		no contacts at all in this way		DK		Refusal	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Per telephone /SMS (N=214)	46	21.5	69	32.2	46	21.5	49	22.9	1	0.5	3	1.4
Mail (N=204)	5	2.5	16	7.8	13	6.4	152	74.5	1	0.5	17	8.3
Internet based con-tacts, such as Email-ing chats, skype, Facebook, etc. (N=208)	58	27.9	56	26.9	26	12.5	59	28.4	1	0.5	8	3.8
Personal meetings, face-to face (N=219)	47	21.5	87	39.7	67	30.6	16	7.3	1	0.5	1	0.5

Table 57. Membership in voluntary organizations

	Active member		Inactive member		Don't be-long		DK		Refusal		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Church or religious organization	30	7.5	160	40.0	190	47.5			20	5.1	400	100
Sport or recreational organization	24	6.0	20	5.0	334	83.5			22	5.6	400	100
Art, music or educa-tional organization	38	9.5	15	3.8	323	80.8	1	.3	23	5.8	400	100
Labour Union	12	3.0	20	5.0	344	86.0			24	6.1	400	100
Representatives for Lithuanian Belarussians	79	19.8	51	12.8	249	62.3	1	.3	20	5.1	400	100
Political party	17	4.3	14	3.5	346	86.5			23	5.8	400	100

Table 58. Description of members of the organization

	The majority of the members are Belarussians		There are a few Belarussians		Except yourself, there aren't any Belarussians members		DK		Refusal	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Church or religious organization (N=133)	17	12.8	83	62.4			33	24.8		
Sport or recreational organization (N=38)	5	13.2	18	47.4	5	13.2	10	26.3		
Art, music or educational organization (N=42)	24	57.1	14	33.3	2	4.8	2	4.8		
Labour Union (N=27)	2	7.4	19	70.4	2	7.4	4	14.8		
Representatives for Lithuanian Belarussians (N=108)	104	96.3	2	1.9	1	0.9	1	0.9		
Political party (N=20)	5	25.0	14	70.0			1	5.0		

Table 59. Approximate number of friends

	N	%
No friends	3	0.8
1–4	89	22.4
5–10	163	40.9
11–15	30	7.6
16–20	26	6.6
21 and more	70	18.2
DK	9	2.3
Refusal	10	2.5
Total	400	100

Table 60. Which statement describes your friends the most?

	N	%
most of my friends are Lithuanian Belarussians	24	6.1
most of my friends are Lithuanians	36	9.1
most of my friends are Belarussians	28	7.1
most of my friends are of other origin/nationality	26	6.6
my friends come from various ethnic/nationality groups	276	70.1
DK	3	0.8
Refusal	1	0.3
Total	394	100

3   MAIN FINDINGS OF BIOGRAPHICAL INTERVIEWS (ENRI-BIO)

Kristina Šliavaitė

3.1 Brief description of the people interviewed and their life stories and from which districts/settlements they came

The respondents for biographical in-depth interviews were selected in accordance to the criteria set up in the Enri-East manual of biographical interviews[31]. The respondents represent three generations (youngest, middle and older generation) and both genders. The selection of the respondents was made keeping in mind the above mentioned criteria and also by snow-ball method, i.e. asking the person interviewed to recommend somebody else who can be approached for an interview. The biggest share of Belarusians in Lithuania settle in Vilnius, therefore it was decided to conduct all interviews in Vilnius, the capital of Lithuania. The biggest number of active Belarusian NGOs is also concentrated in Vilnius. Below we will present a short overview of the respondents interviewed.

The first interview was conducted with a 22 years old Belarusian girl "Olga"[32] (interview no.1). She introduces herself as a Belarusian, she is an active member of a local Belarusian organization. Her father is a Pole, mother – Belarusian. She was born in Lithuania, in a small settlement in the outskirts of Vilnius in 1988. Probably due to the Lithuanian national revival in the late 1980s, even being a child she insisted to attend Lithuanian kindergarten. Later on she attended Russian school. She perceives Russian language as native language, but she also knows Lithuanian, Belorussian, Polish, French, English, Ukrainian. She is Catholic and learned Polish language by attending Mass at Catholic Church. "Olga" completed secondary school with high grades and was enrolled into the popular studies programme at University in Vilnius. At the time of the interviewing she was a student, lived together with her parents in the outskirts of Vilnius.

"Julia" (interview no. 9) is another highly educated Belarusian woman who was interviewed during the ENRI-Biog project. She was born in 1987, at the time of interviewing she was 23 years old. She was born in Vilnius at the end of 1980s and at that time her family lived in Vilnius. In 1988 her mother with children moved to settle to Belarus and father stayed in Vilnius, Lithuania. The family kept close contacts and father visited his family (wife and children) in Belarus regularly. Born in Lithuania "Julia" is a citizen of Lithuania, however since early childhood until school graduation she had lived with her mother and brother in a small town/settlement in Belarus. Since the settlement where they lived was small, the issue of her citizenship did not come up until the time of entering the institution of high education. As a citizen of other country (Lithuanian Republic) she was not able to get enrolled at any institution of high education in Belarus for free, i.e. without payment for education. She aimed to study in Lithuania and the family re-united and settled in Vilnius in 2005. Julia got successfully enrolled

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[31] The interviews were conducted in accordance to the methodological guidelines developed by the ENRI-East team and described in the project manual. "Manual for Qualitative Biographical In-Depth Interviews" Manual. Proposed and developed by a task-force: Professor Claire Wallace (head), dr. Lyudmila Nurse, dr. Natalia Waechter, dr. Alexander Chvorostov. July 2010.

[32] All names are changed.

into the BA programme at the institution of high education in Vilnius and after completion – into the MA programme. Her story is a story of a young, educated, ambitious and very motivated person.

"Grigorij" (interview no. 7) is a young man (24 years old). He introduces himself as Belarusian. He lives in Vilnius, together with his parents. He is unmarried, completed high education in technical sciences and after university completion got employed at a private company in Vilnius. Grigorij attended secondary school with Russian language of instruction, in his family the main language was what he called "trasianka", i.e. a mixture of Russian, Belarussian languages. When Grigorij was 18 years old, he realized that by origin he is a Belarusian, but does not speak Belarusian language and decided to learn it. Now Grigorij can speak, read, write in Belarusian. He is a member of an active Belarusian cultural organization in Vilnius. At the university the Lithuanian language was the main language of instruction. Lithuanian is the language of communication at his current work place. Grigorij is fluent in Russian, Belarussian, Lithuanian languages.

"Nikolai" (interview no. 10) is 18 years old, attends the last year programme at the secondary school in Vilnius. His mother is a Belarusian, father – a Pole. In his family the main language is Russian. With his mother and at school he speaks in Belarusian. He is also able to communicate in the Lithuanian language and has some English language command. He had difficulties in describing himself in ethnic sense – according to Nikolai, he is a citizen of Lithuania, the nationality stated in his passport – Polish. Nikolai says that he is partly Belarusian, partly Pole, partly Lithuanian and that for him, as for a young person, the questions related with ethnic identity are not of the highest importance.

"Marina" (interview no. 2) is a 45 years old teacher. She completed institution of high education in Balarus, but moved to Vilnius in 1990. She lives in Vilnius, her family consists of her husband and a son who studies at the last year of secondary school. Marina knows Russian and Belarusian languages. At home they speak mostly in Russian. With a son she occasionally speaks in Belarusian. Marina also speaks and understands some Polish and understands some Lithuanian language. She considers Belarusian language as her native language. Her father was a Belarusian and mother – Pole from Belarus. She uses Belarusian language mainly at her work and speaks with friends, family members mainly in Russian language.

"Inesa" (interview no. 5) is a 41 year old Belarusian woman from a local Belarusian family with deep historical roots in Vilnius. She was born in Vilnius and has lived there all her life. The interview was conducted in Vilnius. Inesa's mother was a Russian from Russia and father – a Belarusian. In her parents' family, when Inesa was a child, they used two languages – Russian and Belarussian. Inesa is married and has a son. The main language of communication in her family is Belarusian. Inesa also knows Lithuanian language and it is the main language that she uses at work. The interview was conducted in the Lithuanian language. Inesa also knows some Polish.

"Vikentii" (interview no. 11) is a 41 years old man who introduced himself as Belarusian. He was born in 1969 in Belarus, studied at conservatoire in Minsk, bus was not able to complete it due to KGB persecution. He escaped to Lithuania in 1993 and since then he has been living in Lithuania. In 1997 he received the status of political refugee in Lithuania. He got married in Lithuania and lives in Vilnius. He knows Lithuanian, Russian, Belarussian, Polish, English. In his own family the main languages of communication are Lithuanian and Russian.

"Boris" (interview no. 4) was born in 1957 in Belarus. His mother is a Belarusian. Therefore he considers himself Belarusian. For big part of his childhood he lived in children's home, later on in boarding school in Minsk. After school completion he started to work at some factory in

Minsk, but during his life course he has been imprisoned a number of times because of involvement to some illegal activities. At the same time Boris has been active in civic life. He says that he escaped from Lukashenko's regime and moved to Vilnius together with his mother in 1990s. He is single and lives in his flat together with some relative. Currently he is unemployed. He speaks Russian and the language which he calls "trasianka", i.e. a mixture of Russian and Belarusian. He says he uses Belarusian at some Belarusian NGO meetings.

"Sergei" (interview no. 3) is a representative of oldest generation. He was born in Belarus in 1938. He completed secondary and high education in Belarus. In 1972 he married a woman from Vilnius, but family still stayed in Belarus. His two children were born in the 1970s. In 1982 due to family reasons the family moved to Vilnius and since then he had worked as a teacher at a few educational institutions. Since 1996-1997 he has been involved into the cultural life of Belarusians in Vilnius. In his parents family in Belarus the main language of communication was a mixture of Russian and Belarussian languages. In his own family they use Russian language as the main language of communication.

"Anna" (interview no. 6) was born in 1933 year in Vilnius, so her family has deep roots in the locality. Her father was well known local Belarusian cultural leader. Anna and her brother attended primary Belarusian school in Vilnius. In 1945 the Belarusian school was closed by the Soviets, her father was deported to Siberia. Anna's mother stayed with two children in Vilnius. Anna attended Russian secondary school, studied foreign languages at some high education institution in Vilnius. She married to a Belarusian man in the 1950s and after marriage lived for a few years in Belarus. Later on the family returned to Lithuania and has been living in Vilnius. Anna worked as a teacher of foreign languages at the institutions of secondary education. Anna has been active in civic life, she is a member of some local Belarusian non-governmental organizations, was active in Belarusian national revival movement in the late 1980s-1990s. In the family they speak mainly in Russian. She knows also Belarusian and Polish. Anna argues that for her the most important language is Belarusian.

"Lena" (interview no. 8) – is a respondent of oldest generation. She was born in a small village in Belarus in 1922. Lena completed secondary education in a small town in Belarus. During the II World War her family stayed in countryside in order to survive. In 1949-1950s she was invited by her sister's family to settle in Vilnius and she hoped that life there would be easier economically. She completed extramural university studies there and had worked in Vilnius at some sewing company as administrator. Her first two children were born in Belarus, her third son was born in Vilnius. Lena learnt the Belarusian language at the secondary school in Belarus. However in her own family the Russian language was the main language of communication. Her children do not know Belarusian language and she communicates with them in the Russian language. Lena uses the Belarusian language mainly in the Belarusian cultural organization which she attends. Lena considers herself Belarusian.

"Naum" (interview No12)[33] is an informant from the older generation of ethnic Belarusians in Lithuania. Born into a Belarusian family before WWII in a small town in what was then Poland, until the age of 13 Naum thought of himself as Polish, spoke Polish and went to a Polish school. When the family had to flee from Belarus to Vilnius in 1943 and settled there, he got involved with the local Belarusians in Lithuania and started realizing his true ethnic identity: Belarusian.

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[33] This 12th interview was conducted and described in the report by dr.Lyudmila Nurse.

From the age of 14, he lived and was educated in the Russian Gymnasium in Vilnius and then in one of the Lithuanian Universities. After graduation from the University, he worked as a specialist in the forestry industry and then in the Design bureau until retirement. His wife was of Russian-Belarusian-Italian descent, but he is now widowed with two grown-up children. Naum spoke Russian and Belarusian in the family, but now only speaks Belarusian and Lithuanian. He also speaks Polish and German. He speaks Lithuanian, but acknowledges that he needs some extra help from the native speakers to write official letters in Lithuanian, which he describes as a difficult language. His son and daughter speak Lithuanian, Russian and Belarusian. His son speaks Lithuanian to his children. He is actively involved in the revival of Belarusian traditions and culture in Lithuania. Although he expresses a strong Belarusian identity, he considers Vilnius his home town. However, he still likes visiting Belarus, particularly the places he remembers from his childhood. His son lives in an EU country; his daughter and her family commute between Vilnius and another EU country. He is a highly intellectual person and has an up to date knowledge of history and political affairs, both in Lithuania and Belarus, and keeps in touch with the global Belarusian community outside of Lithuania.

3.2 European Identity

The issues of European identity could be revealed by analyzing how respondents described Europe and Europeanness and how they talked of the EU and evaluated Lithuania's accession to the EU. The respondents described themselves as Europeans in two senses: as residents of geographical region (Europe) and/or as citizens of political unit (European Union).

Part of respondents introduced themselves as Europeans due to the fact that geographically Lithuania and/or Belarus are in Europe. In this sense Europe is a broader category than EU since it encompass Belarus, Russia, Ukraine and other countries that are not part of the EU but that are located in Europe and are important for the respondents. For example, Marina (interview No.2) argues that Europe and EU is not the same:

> "I: Do you feel yourself a European?
>
> R: Well, probably yes.
>
> I: What does it mean to you?
>
> R: That means I live in Europe. And I am a cultured European person. I can put it that way.
>
> I: Mmm.... So if you are European...you did not marked country here...
>
> R: Of course, certainly I understood that, I thought about it… But again Russia and Belarus is not the European Union. But to exclude them from any of the circles I can not. That's why I guess. But Estonia which belongs to the European Union I don't want to include. But Ukraine is not European Union though. Or Moldova. So. Or Moldova. So.
>
> I: Mmm….
>
> R: European does not necessarily mean European Union. That's what I think."

The Europe was related with Christianity, advanced technologies, science. According to Grigorij (nr. 7):

> "I: And what if even a bigger…
>
> R: Well, then probably it's possible to mark the European culture, you could say so. You could… Where's Europe here „na Ural".

> I: And comment that also...
>
> R: Well, I think that looking at it so, that this is the whole civilization from, let's say, Lisbon there to Ural and maybe even further, because after all this belongs to one culture maybe, which differentiates of course, with it's own specifics everywhere, but I think that that Christianity unites... well I think that here... well, it's more or less one here...
>
> I: M... And what does it mean to you to be European?
>
> R: M... (pause) Well, yes... I think that that being European... it branched out of... Christianity. I could say so. That's one thing. Afterwards, with what Europe associates to me – with some kind of technological progress, that is to (pause) well yeah."

It is not astonishing, however, that the categories 'European Union' and 'Europe' inter-twinned when respondents described their identities and experiences. For example, Boris (interview No. 4) argues that there are common European values, human rights, juridical norms that are characteristics to the EU. According to Boris (No.4):

> "I: Does this region coincides with European Union for You, or is it slightly different?
>
> R: It does coincide. It's just such a superimposition which coincides with European Union and with common European values, common European human rights and other conventions and coincides with climatic and all these other conditions because there are lots of our people and all that. But most importantly, that European Union unifies. Most importantly, that European Union alleviated everything by the fact that the borders collapsed and there are commonly accepted juridical norms, which are the same in our country and the same there. For example, let's say the laws of European Union. They are integrated in the juridical system of Lithuania."

The EU was related with human rights, freedom, freedom of movement, traveling, political rights. According to Sergei (Nr. 3):

> "R: European Union and everything. Of course I like it already. I like this culture more, because...you know, European Union is something. It's even an attitude towards nations, towards life; a person should feel his nationality and live properly. Don't be oppressed. And before this, do you remember...People from Central Asia would be called churki, stupids or jakuty or...(pause – interviewer's remark) chukchi, there were anecdotes about them, hmm...No, you have to understand them, you have to see them; this European culture gives an opportunity to understand your ..."

On the other hand, the nation states (Lithuania or Belarus) were often perceived as more important than the EU. The EU was described as not so relevant and important in respondent's every day lives. Some respondents argued that recently they do not travel so much, others pointed to the lack of foreign languages knowledge, others argued of different culture or mentality in other European countries. So when asked about relationship between European and ethnic/national identity, most respondents were argued of the importance of ethnic/national identity and European identity was not so explicitly expressed. For example, according to Grigorij (No.7):

> "I: M... And you mentioned that you are Byelorussian, yes? You feel Byelorussian. This might seem a strange question to you. Do you feel more like Byelorussian or more like European?
>
> R: Byelorussian.
>
> I: And why?
>
> R: Well this being European it's, well, a very vague word, notion. Well, geographically you could say that even a Russian, and Greek, and even Turk you could say, which one of them there is. So...

> I: M... And what do you think about the expansion of the European Union, and about the political map of the current Europe?
>
> R: I am all for it. It would be good if they would accept Turkey as well and even up to… Well up to Russia, that is, with Russia as well. But probably that process isn't so fast, not all of the countries are ready. So. The socium isn't formed everywhere and achieved such a level that you could, so to say, install human rights and democracy. If you impose democracy one day in one or another country, where it's said that it's bad, that democracy, then it might not even work. There are still question everywhere, it's said so. So I think that in perspective European Union will… Take all of the Europe but not today, I think, that only in the perspective of a hundred years will that happen."

According to Olga (interview no.1):

> "I: So which one. Do You feel more European or more Belarusian, or more Lithuanian?
>
> R: Tough question. (Pause – transcriber's remark). Culturally I feel I am Belarusian. My spiritual understanding is like this, well, like... those all kinds of spiritual things... I don't know... well, starting with music, literature. I, for example, like reading in Belarusian. I like this language. I read... I listen to a lot of music – Belarusian, Ukrainian. Maybe because I like those languages. And for me it is such a pleasure. Some kind of spiritual satisfaction. And in a political sense, I certainly am a Lithuanian citizen. I mean, I don't know whether politically or as... well, actually I am a Lithuanian citizen, Lithuanian resident and all those earthly things are more related to Lithuania. (Pause – transcriber's remark). So...
>
> I: And being European?
>
> R: And being European is such an entirely political question. Well, I am... I have a passport of the European Union."

Some respondents of the youngest generation perceived the EU as one big country without internal borders and emphasized the increased possibilities to travel within the EU. According to Nikolaj (interview no. 10):

> "I: And do you feel yourself as a European?
>
> R: Well, I think that yes. As any young person, all young people feel themselves as Europeans. Because we live in Europe. Us, it is possible to say, we get along with technology – we try to learn something new, to buy something, something… well, we try to reach something more and to see something new. Only because of that, probably, we are Europeans. Young people consider themselves like this.
>
> I: M… And what does it mean to you – Europe, Europeans? Yes. Is it the European Union or more?
>
> R: I think that the European Union now has become as one big country, because basically similar politics are everywhere, in all countries. There are no borders anymore, I mean, in general, as people were going before, the same they are going now… they can go to any country, so to say, if taking Lithuania as an example, so if going from Vilnius to Klaipeda. The same is Europe. If going from Lithuania to France. So to say, I think that it has become one big country. Well, somehow countries have their own some kind of currencies: krones, there litas, franks and etc. and nevertheless united European currency is "euro".
>
> I: M…
>
> R: And respectively I, this is my personal opinion, that the European Union step by step is becoming a one big country."

The respondent of youngest generation Olga (interview no.1) also emphasizes the increased possibilities to travel after Lithuania joined the EU:

> "I: You are saying – You would say first You are a citizen of Lithuania, and second, a citizen of European Union... What does being a citizen of European Union mean?
>
> R: Well most probably... I don't know. For me it would sound as a cliché – free migration comes first to mind.
>
> I: M...
>
> R: Although I'm not traveling that much in Europe recently. But still it's free migration. First thing.
>
> I: M...
>
> R: A possibility to study somewhere, go somewhere, and this... also a cliché, but still some modernization which has reached us from... after, after the Independence... after accession, because still, we have received a lot from Europe, and this development of Lithuania...
>
> I: This means that You think it is positive...?
>
> R: Yes, positive."

Some respondents emphasized that Lithuania and Belarus historically have been part of European culture. According to Boris (interview no. 4):

> "I: And what does it mean for You to be a European?
>
> R: Well, we always felt ourselves Europeans, because even Belarus and The Grand Duchy of Lithuania was a European state. Very European. And although the last Christened there, let's say like that, Euro these our... Catholic priests, but on the whole it's so obvious, that there was Orthodox faith and this Christening wasn't so much necessary in this part, where there had been, but these European contacts were from old times. And this our Pranciškus Skorina (a Byelorussian cultural leader of the 16th age – interviewer's remark), who studied in Prague and in Krakow... and the crown that came from Rome to Mindaugas and Vytautas, I mean, and lots of other contacts... Let alone Rodzewill (a medieval gentry – interviewer's remark) had so much castles in so many European capitals and in many of them had his own estates. I.e. it did not lose contacts with Europe in those times as much as it was possible... there were no feeling of lost contacts with Europe. It happened when Soviet Union cut off even the feeling of being a European, it has only now lightened, such a gulp of oxygen appeared, the borders collapsed, Europe became open. Europe became open because we are very similar in our mentality. I was in Paris, I was in Germany, and Chech Republic... so. "

Most respondents were very positive about Lithuania's accession to the EU. This was related with free movement, human rights and country's security. Some respondents, however, were skeptical and argued that they are against any unions. According to Anna (interview no.6):

> "R: European Union. I don't feel such love for the European Union yet. (Laughs – transcriber's remark). I don't feel love. I don't know. Maybe this feeling will be…further generations will have it…I don't know. But I don't have such…(Pause – transcriber's remark) feelings towards it. (Laughs – transcriber's remark). It's fine that people can keep in touch, that youngsters can travel. In general it's not bad, but I don't have any particular…I don't have it. Neither to the Soviet Union, nor to the European Union."

3.3 National identity: relationship to the country of residence

Those respondents who were born in Lithuania or/and whose family has deep historical roots in the country, defined Lithuania as their homeland. According to Inesa (interview No.5):

> "I: Where is your homeland – the answer is kind of clear. Or not really?
>
> R: Yes.

> I: Lithuania. You wouldn't identify Belarus as your homeland? M... And as I understood there are no relatives left in Belarus?
>
> R: No. No one is left there.
>
> I: Some friends or...
>
> R: There are some friends of my husband. They live there. No, there are some friends.
>
> I: The relatives live in Belarus or not?
>
> R: Not mine. The parents of my husband are dead and his brother lives in Vilnius.
>
> I: I see. So you don't have whom to visit during summer?
>
> R: No, no one to visit and their village is in the radiation zone. They left it quite early. And there is no point to come back there. Just to go for a visit, my husband plans to take our son there, to show where the grandparents are buried, and we have bought this house in the countryside... But it's not good that you have to pay every time... well you have to buy visa each year and I am waiting for an agreement, but...
>
> I: And visas cost a lot?
>
> R: 150 euros for a year."

A respondent or the youngest generation Nikolaj (interview Nr. 10) also names Lithuania as his homeland because he was born there. However, he names Belarus as the most beloved country:

> "I: It is clear. And you were asked: where is your native land? Lithuania or Belarus – how would you describe, which country?
>
> R: I think that my native land is Lithuania. I was born here, I was living. Here everything has happened for the first time, first what I have learned. I think that yea, this is Lithuania. My native land is Lithuania.
>
> I: M… And how would you describe Belarus. What is it…
>
> R: Belarus – I would write that it is the most beloved country from all which exist.
>
> I: M…
>
> R: So to say.
>
> I: And why is it the most beloved?
>
> R: Well, I don't know why, I cannot explain this. Well, it is simply as a thing which you cannot define. I have namely this feeling.
>
> I: Do you need to go there every second week in order to feel yourself good?
>
> R: Yes. Well, if I stay there for a month, for instance, if during summer holidays I go there for one month, then I want to come back to Lithuania. Nevertheless. I want those two countries. Basically I have been in Germany as well as in Sweden. Somehow yes, but I am totally not attracted there."

Lithuania was related by some respondents with bigger opportunities for personal development, freedom, human rights than Belarus. Lithuania was considered as a part of the EU. According to Olga (interview No.1):

> "I: And their life there differs from what You see in life here... Your family's friends'?
>
> R: Its difficult for me to assess also because I rarely... I have been to Minsk maybe two times... well, and in the capital it's... and here I live in the capital in Lithuania. I don't know how people live in the village. I don't know. I don't have anyone there. So that's why I can't evaluate. I said: <<We live better>>. Of course we live better, more modern. It is obvious. Recently, a couple of days ago,

> several of my friends were here. They... (laughs – transcriber's remark): <<Oh. It's so cool here. Oh. So modern. We don't have this>>. There are things like this. We have a bigger, bigger... simply more possibilities to somehow express ourselves... "

Some respondents argued that that they feel well, "at home" only at some particular place of Lithuania, i.e. in Vilnius and further to the west of the country they feel as strangers. This is related to the argument that was repeated in many interviews that Vilnius is a very important historical place for Belarusians. According to the respondent of the oldest generation Sergei (interview Nr. 3):

> "I: And how would you describe yourself – Belarusian from Belarus or from Lithuania?
>
> R: No, from Belarus.
>
> I: From Belarus?
>
> R: You know, I don't want to insult you, anyone. But for me everything here is so alien.
>
> I: Where?
>
> R: You know, I've been to Kaunas, to Klaipeda, we went there. When I get there, I want to come back to Vilnius. Everything here is so homey.
>
> I: Vilnius.
>
> R: Vilnius, Vilnius, Vilnius. When I'm here. And there in Bela…It's all different. On my way to school I meet pupils, their parents, and I already know the news: what was in their family, what happened there, who ate what, and who bought what, everything. And here we are strangers, here."

Boris (interview no.4), a respondent of the middle generation also argues of the historical importance of Vilnius for Belarusians and argues that only Vilnius and not all Lithuania can be considered as his homeland. Vilnius is considered as part of Belarusian history. It is important to remember that Boris escaped from Belarus to Lithuania because he was afraid of some political prosecutions and he cannot return back or even go for a short visit to Belarus. Boris (interview No. 4) argues:

> "I: And Lithuania. What is it for You now? How would You call this country?
>
> R: It appears, Lithuania is now like the second motherland. Because it's not the whole Lithuania I have in mind. After all Vilnius to Belorussians has the greatest meaning. Like it was called earlier "Vilna". Belorussians consider "Vilna" like their Meka. I.e. Vilnius differs a little from all the rest Lithuanian towns. So. And it is considered to be a hundred times more Belorussian that Minsk. If we take history, so there, in Vilnius, "Vilna", yes, one hundred and forty three Belarusian newspapers were published even before the war yet. You can imagine how life boiled there. There lived, created and worked all Belorussian geniuses of our nation. I.e. "Vilna" is integral part of the Belorussian history, culture and so on. That's why, being in Vilnius, living there, you may consider it as a part of your motherland. That's how it is. If you went to Kaunas (a town in Lithuania – interviewer's remark), you were already in a foreign land. You were already an emigrant."

Some respondents defined Belarus as their mother-country and Lithuania as a "second mother-country" or "country of residence", "country which they love as well". The Belarus was defined as mother country because the respondent was born there, grew up in this country, they still have relatives in Belarus. However, years of living in Lithuania makes them talk of Lithuania as a second mother country. For example, a respondent of the middle generation, Marina (interview no. 2) says:

"I: So I want to ask you the following: Eh… (a pause – interviewer's remark) where is your homeland? Which country do you call your homeland?R: Probably Belarus.

I: Belarus. And why?

R: Well… Because I was born, because I was (a pause – interviewer's remark) raised there. I got my education there. Because the Belarusian language was the one I learned to think in. Probably that's why… Let's say all…all those best first memories are from there. (Laughing – interviewer's remark). First impressions, everything first…

I: And what do you think...

R: And of course I think it is important when you have your close relatives there. You feel a different kind of relation to them... . So that that that…

I: M… And what do you think about Belarus? I don't know – do you like Belarus, you like.. Do you like going there, visit?

R: Well, this is another slippery question. In any case I like going there, because my mother lives there, my own sister, my closest people are there. My father is buried there all generations of our family are buried there. So of course it is very important to go there. But now I do not take any kind of political side in development of Belarus as a country ... Well I can not .... Well I can not even ... discuss or talk about it ... Well, it would not be ethical.

I: M… So if Belarus is your homeland, how would you describe Lithuania?

R: Well Lithuania is also (a pause – interviewer's remark) my homeland in some way, because I spent a big part of my conscious life here.

I: So you would call Lithuania a homeland?

R: Yes. Yes. But if to make…some sort of distinction here… Well, again I say here my life passes deliberately and then you know where you live and how. I.e. you can always leave. Nobody though is holding me. Please! Leave!"

Respondents of middle of oldest generation used to define Lithuania as their homeland or second homeland due to the fact that they have already lived there many years. Some of them said that some years ago, mainly during the period of political changes at the end of 1980s, they had thoughts of leaving Lithuania for Belarus, but not anymore.

A respondent of the youngest generation considered himself as "partly Lithuanian, partly Belarusian and partly Pole". The respondent argued that Lithuania is his mother-country since he was born there, but Belarus is the country he loves the most. He described himself as caring and loving Lithuania and Belarus the most from all countries. Nikolai says (interview no.10):

"I: It is clear. And you were asked: where is your native land? Lithuania or Belarus – how would you describe, which country?

R: I think that my native land is Lithuania. I was born here, I was living. Here everything has happened for the first time, first what I have learned. I think that yea, this is Lithuania. My native land is Lithuania.

I: M… And how would you describe Belarus. What is it…

R: Belarus – I would write that it is the most beloved country from all which exist.

I: M…

R: So to say.

I: And why is it the most beloved?

R: Well, I don't know why, I cannot explain this. Well, it is simply as a thing which you cannot define. I have namely this feeling.

I: Do you need to go there every second week in order to feel yourself good?

R: Yes. Well, if I stay there for a month, for instance, if during summer holidays I go there for one month, then I want to come back to Lithuania. Nevertheless. I want those two countries. Basically I have been in Germany as well as in Sweden. Somehow yes, but I am totally not attracted there.

I: M…

R: But those namely two countries. I am attractive to Lithuania because it is my Native land, and Belarus – because it is my favorite country."

3.4 Relationship to mother country

The respondents who were born in Belarus consider Belarus as their mother country. However, Lithuania was also commonly named as important country in their lives and as a country which is loved. Lena, a respondent of the oldest generation (interview No.9) says during the interview:

"I: And where you think is your native land? Which country would you call as your native land?

R: Well, which one? Of course Belarus. In fact I was really born there. I. And already my son in 1954 was born here.

I: And then what is Lithuania for you, how would you describe it, what…

R: And Lithuania, I love Lithuania. Even I love it very much. Especially Vilnius city. I always walk or ride and I review, I look. I like Lithuania. I love Lithuania as well."

The relations with the Belarus are mainly kept by visiting close relatives (sometimes – every few weeks), spending holidays at some family summer house, etc. The personal connections are important bond that connects respondents with Belarus. Therefore the increase in visa prices after Lithuania joined the EU and Schengen area seriously affected the possibilities of some respondents to visit their relatives in Belarus and especially – their relatives and friends from Belarus to visit them in Lithuania.

"I: And why do you want to Belarus? You say - to enter as well as staying to live?

R: It attracts me there. There are all relatives, friends. Maybe different relation, and maybe because it is needed like that.

I: M… And so you say - relatives, friends. So do you go to Belarus often?

R: Yes. I go often. I keep relations… well, somehow from this school I was going to Belarusian camps. And those people with whom I've acquainted I communicate with them till now, write letters. Some kind of contacts. Considering relatives I have there two cousins. They are like real brothers for me. We keep such relations. Very close ones.

I: M… And from the childhood?

R: From the very, very childhood.

I: And how often do you go to visit your relatives?

R: Well, it is possible to say that one time in two weeks for sure.

I: Once in two weeks. Every… Isn't it difficult and cost…

R: Well, it costs money – this visa, passport. But this basically doesn't matter to me because I want there. I am attracted to that place ant there these money are in the background.

> I: It means not only during summer but also in autumn?
>
> R: Yes. Yes. Yes. In winter as well as summer and autumn and spring.
>
> I: M… And why are you attracted there?
>
> R: I don't know. I just feel it. Well, it attracts and that's it. I was even many times trying to explain it to myself and I cannot. It simply attracts."

The current political regime in Belarus was important theme in discussing respondent's attitudes towards the Belarus. Part of respondents disassociated from any political questions and talked of the relations with their relatives, friends in Belarus. For a few respondents, who escaped from Belarus to Lithuania because they were afraid of possible regime prosecutions, the issues of political system in Belarus was of key importance and formed one of the most important axes of the interview. The Lukashenko's regime was severely criticized and the respondents argued that they are not able to visit Belarus under current political conditions due to being "persona non-grata" in Belarus. The respondent of middle generation Boris (interview no.4) argued:

> "I: And do You often go to Belorussia?
>
> R: I don't go to Belarus nor am I able to do that. It is forbidden for me to enter Belarus. Because as long as Lukashenko is in power, I have no guarantee of safety. Because in 1996 they withdrew my Belorussian visa and announced officially that I am persona non grata and that the entry there is forbidden for me. [...] And as long as there is the dictatorship I cannot guarantee anything. I would want to go there, but there are no guarantees that I would return. If he puts in prison politicians of high rank, so it's very easy to annihilate, to shut down somewhere such forgotten, ex-, I mean, informals, who stood at the origins of all this. And moreover, bearing in mind my biography with my convictions, well, nobody would make a single sound if they would plant something on you, that's all. You sweared and you can already get a sentence there. I.e. they would revenge. They would revenge. They won't forgive what we did in Vilnius, when we burned the portraits and so on. So."

3.5 Regional Identity

Big share of respondents defined eastern Lithuania (mainly Vilnius city) and western part of Belarus as one region they identify with. It was argued that western Belarus is different from the Eastern part of Belarus and historically western Belarus and eastern Lithuania are closely related. Vilnius was named as a city that has been culturally and politically important for Belarusians. Belarusians themselves were seen as important actors in the history and cultural life of Vilnius city. In all interviews Vilnius was named as a place historically and presently important for Belarusian culture and Belarusian identity.

Anna (interview No. 6) is a respondent of oldest generation who still remembers the cultural life of Belarusians in Vilnius during the inter-war period of the XXth century. Anna emphasizes the importance of Vilnius for Belarusian culture.

> "I: If they ask you about your ethnical background, what will you say?
>
> R: Well, I…I was born in Vilnius. I'm Belarusian. And here in Vilnius there was a big centre of the Belarusian culture.
>
> I: Mhm.
>
> R: You see, there were writers, musicians. Everyone was here. It was a whole cluster here.
>
> I: Mhm.

R: Everyone was here and (pause – transcriber's remark) after all, everyone, if they seeked to get to know something Belarusian, to get something Belarusian, or if something Belarusian, I don't know, to get acquainted with it. They all went here, to Vilnius.

I: So Vilnius is very important to you and to Belarusians?

R: Of course. Of course. Belarusians themselves call it 'Belarusian Mecca.' There were coming here. 'Працуй пильно, то и ту будет Вильня' (speaks in Belarusian – translator's remark).

I: What is it?

R: You work hard, they say, and there will be Vilnia (Vilnius in Belarusian – translator's remark).

I: Mhm.

R: So 'Працуй пильно – будет Вильня' (repeats the same saying in Belarusian – translator's remark)."

Further Ana develops more on personal importance of Vilnius for her and on the relationships with this place she has built during all her life. Ana was born in Vilnius and the major part of her life has passed there, so she names Vilnius as her homeland.

"I: And you've told that for your personality and you as a Belarusian it's important to live in Vilnius. Is that right? That Vilnius is yours. What do you like here, what don't you like and what would you like to change here?

R: First of all, I like that it's my homeland. You know. It's all mine. I know every stone here, everything.

I: Vilnius or Lithuania? What do you have in mind?

R: I mean Vilnius.

I: Vilnius.

R: I mean Vilnius. But…(pause – transcriber's remark)…what is important for me here…Well, what can I say? First of all, probably, that it's my homeland. Yes. That I was born here. That everything here is mine. All my friends are here. All my family is here. All my relatives are here. All of it…The Old Town, of course. I don't know the new suburbs, but the Old Town – I have walked through it all…We skated from that hill, went for a walk there, did something else there…All of it is very dear. I went to school there, did something else there…And…It's very close to me, even you say – Lithuania – it was not even a part of my life, Lithuania. Because…there were almost no Lithuanians, but I must say that Belarusians, older than me, they tell they were friends and the students in the University, Belarusian and Lithuanian students, they were meeting each other, they were friends, they were dating each other. For example, NN (a name of a person – interviewer's remark) had a Lithuanian wife…many famous Belarusians and famous Lithuanians had mixed marriages: Belarusians and Lithuanians."

A respondent who was not born in Vilnius or Lithuania, but who moved there due to various reasons during the Soviet period talked of Vilnius as a place with higher quality of life during the Soviet period. Living in Vilnius was related with some kind of prestige by this middle generation respondent Marina (interview no.2). Marina says:

"I: What does it mean to you living in Vilnius? Is it important for a Belarusian to live exactly in Vilnius?

R: I understood your question. The thing is, that long time ago, very long time ago, many years ago. Probably 30 and more, in Belarus it was difficult to buy some products at that Soviet time. And we relatively lived not far from Vilnius… There was a local train and we were going to Vilnius…eh...for products: here they had very delicious "doktorskaya" (in English "doctor's" – transla-

tor's remark) sausage for 2 rubles, that you could find no where in Belarus. And we for the matter of fact…there were some nice things here in the store. I still remember. And I was still a kid at the time and I always envied inside my soul, that somebody lives here in such a city. That's true. I still remember. I remember mother used to say: "Somebody lives here". I think I was about 10. We used to come here often. There were sweets here – a big box cost 5 rubles. It was expensive. There were no sweets in Belarus. They were more expensive than and not as delicious as in Lithuania. Let's say it was enough for everybody then. There were queues to stand. But still there were some. It was possible to buy some nice clothes also. At the time I had this big desire to live in the city. I don't know why. Most probably I wanted to live in Moscow. It's just we were going to Vilnius. It was close. When I became older (laughing – interviewer's remark) that's what happen to me…. We used to come here too. It was still an open border, same Soviet Union. We used to come here to buy some things. I bought my first jeans here (laughing – interviewer's remark) in a such closed market. There were no open markets. Everything from under the counter, from under the counter. Things there were somewhat terrible. What was on sale. We were coming to buy things here. Well Vilnius, of course at those times for us Belarusians, it was somewhat special. There were many things to buy at those times. At that time I came up with a question: culture, architecture. What a beautiful city. No. No. Then came somewhat other material values.

I: Mmm….

R: There was something that was not in Belarus. Here. Therefore, it was so. Well, now, probably for me it's prestigious to live in this city. (…)"

The references to the common medieval history of Belarus and Lithuania, i.e. to the Grand Duchy Lithuania was given by big share of respondents. This common history was seen as making the border between western Belarus and eastern Lithuania "improper" and making this region as one single unit. It is important to note that such references to the medieval history and emphasis on the cultural closeness of eastern Lithuania and western Belarus were made by the respondents of different generations.

For example, a respondent of the youngest generation Grigorij (interview no. 7) says:

"I: M... And if I would ask you to mark a territory with which you identify yourself, to which you feel that you belong to… What would you mark? And comment if you could. What is here? (interviewer shows the map of Europe – interviewer's remark)

R: This here is western Byelorussia, from where I come. That is, from where all of my parents, grandparents, ancestors and everyone, and Vilnius region, where I live as well, also lived my relatives there, and my grandparents. There never used to be a border there, so that western part always used to be a province of Vilnius region. So yeah.

I: M...

R: For me it seems that looking historically there should be no wall (laughter) ever.

I: But it is still two separate countries. So how would you say in one word what this is… There's still a portion of one country and a portion of the other (comments the respondent's markings on the map – interviewer's remark)

R: I would probably say that historically this is Vilnius region.

I: Vilnius region. M... And tell me, if I would ask you to mark a larger territory

R: Well then I would mark all of Lithuania and all of Byelorussia.

I: And why? Comment

> R: Well, because all of my ancestors lived in that territory either in Byelorussia or in Lithuania. There was never differentiation like this before. There was the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. Grand Duchy of Lithuania there contained both republics of the nations."

Grigorij says that western Belarus and Vilnius region historically was one territory and refers to the Grand Duchy of Lithuania.

Sergei is a respondent of the oldest generation (interview no.3) and he defines the region which he names as "ethnic Belarusian territories" as the region which is important for him. Sergei says:

> "I: But I mean a territory, a region, the one that you can say: 'I'm also from there, I belong there.'
>
> R: Here…(shows again the territory on the map that was marked before – interviewer's remark)
>
> I: Larger than this.
>
> R: Larger than this – ethnical Belarusian places.
>
> I: Ethnical Belarusian places – what are they?
>
> R: It's Pskov, from the times when Belarus belonged to Poland. Pskov…Pskov…I write it in Belarusian. Smolensk is also our city, Belarusian. Chernovovshe in Ukraine – it's also our city. And Kaluga here – it's also our, our.
>
> I: And now it's Russia?
>
> R: Russia. It's been Russia for 300 years, yes, it's almost 300 years since Russia has russified it all, took it all. It's all ours.
>
> I: So ethnical then…
>
> R: Ethnical Belarus.
>
> I: And they go to Russia or how…
>
> R: Ok, let's even take Vilnius, it's this, all this…(points to the territories on the map – interviewer's remark), Suvalkija, Byalistok – it's all Belarusian, Stalin gave it to Poland. And Lithuanians gave Druskininkai to Belarus, and when they came from Lithuania to Belarus…'Your Belarus is so poor, and it's also this…the criminals are still walking there in Druskininkai, you won't handle it, and they said: 'Ok, take Druskininkai for yourself.' (Laughs – interviewer's remark). So it was like this.
>
> I: And if to mark something larger?
>
> R: Larger? You know…No, I won't mark larger."

3.6 Civic participation and ethnic organization

Most of respondents interviewed are citizens of Lithuania. One respondent has a residence permit and one respondent has a status of political refugee in Lithuania. The respondent who has a residence permit in Lithuania said that at the end of 1980s she still had some thoughts of moving back to Belarus. Now there are no such plans, however, she says that the rights given by residence permit satisfy her and she does not ask for citizenship because she does not wish to go through all procedure which she describes as complicated. Marina is a respondent of middle generation (interview no. 2) and she says:

> "I: And do you have our nationality… Lithuanian. Do you have Lithuanian citizenship?
>
> R: Now, no.
>
> I: Now, no.

R: Now I don't …now I don't have any well any citizenship. Though of course I have spent so much time here - I could take citizenship, but again I am telling you - it happened so. At that time when I moved here, I couldn't get citizenship. And later I did not even try. (Laughing – interviewer's remark). To be elected, electable or to elect.

I: Are you a citizen of Belarus then, or what?

R: . None.

I: No?

R: No.

I: How is that possible?

R: I have a permit for residency in Lithuania.

I: I see.

R: Meaning, I live in Lithuania. I have a permit for that and I am satisfied with all that. Well, nobody (pause – interviewer's remark) put me to the wall ... and said to make my choice.

I: Why don't you want it?

R: This year I suddenly had the desire to pass Constitutional exam and ... Lithuanian citizenship, I would have adopted long ago if not the issue of passing the examinations and etc. etc. Well, I am somewhat well, I do not know (pause – interviewer's remark) what is the correct word here – irritated me, i did not like it a little - I don't know how to pick up quickly, and that well, why then we had to take the exam on the Constitution of Lithuania. Plus it's not all Lithuanians that know Constitution themselves. Accept it, only those who go to school. Well, perhaps that was the fact that has caused controversy - I would not take it. Well, now I wanted to obtain citizenship. So in the end, I will get it. All what is required to get a citizenship I have – both accommodation and documents. Well now they say that N (president of Lithuania – interviewer's remark) calls everyone who is going to take citizenship for an interview. That's what I heard on TV. On this on this….probably on news. So we will get one. Probably I will.

I: But before ... why ... when there was no such exams - everybody received citizenship. So at that time….

R: Well no. I only shortly moved to here.

I: You shortly came to live?

R: I couldn't get citizenship based on the time of living here.

I: Mmm….

R: But later. There and then it was, when I say after I have lived so many years. You have to live 10 years here now to get citizenship. Well I arrived exactly at the "perestroika" time. The collapse of everything I already followed. Eh…and a television tower, etc. I am saying this to the fact that it was exactly such a time when citizenship I could not get. But my husband has the nationality of course. I.e ... This is not so important and relevant for me. Thanks God it never played any role in my life. So."

No respondents were members of political party and nobody revealed any deep involvement or interest in the political life of Lithuania. However, part of respondents were active in civic life and were members of NGOs related with Belarusian cultural and other activities in Lithuania.

The respondents of oldest generation referred mainly to the years of perestroika, national revival of Belarusians in Belarus and in Lithuania, to the period in the late 1980s and early 1990s when Belarusians started to organize first ethnic organizations in Lithuania. Sergei (interview no. 3) is

a respondent of the oldest generation and he remembers the revival of Belarusians in Lithuania as follows:

> "R: Yes, there were some gatherings, people would come, speak, most of it were on the Tauras hill (a place in Vilnius – interviewer's remark), in the Trade Union house. My daughter also went to the music school back then. And…Yes, she also got there, and she told me once: 'Dad, you know, the Belarusians meet there and it's very interesting, and they say interesting things.' And I went there. It was somewhere around 1997 or even in 1996.
>
> I: On the Tauras hill?
>
> R: Yes, on the Tauras hill. And during that time Belarusians would come here even from America, it was very interesting, we would sing and dance. All of it was interesting. This revival had started. To tell the truth, in the beginning I was, hmm, only a visitor, a listener. Then a society was established, NN (a name of a person – interviewer's remark) established it. They were primarily in charge of culture and language revival. And after some time they established a…the Association of Belarusian culture (speaks Lithuanian – translator's remark). We have this person, NN (a name of a leader of local Belarusian organization – interviewer's remark), he was consolidating the culture…And I was there too and we started to strive to open, it was already a ground for it, to open as well a school. And we went to different ministries, to the Municipality, to the City council. And in the beginning, I think, they opened the faculty of Slavic studies in the Pedagogical Institute. NN (a name of a person – interviewer's remark) came from Belarus, another woman, NN (a name of a person – interviewer's remark) came from Kaliningrad (pause – interviewer's remark), no, her name was different. And they organized a school, one class in the very beginning. I think this class…this group, a little group was organized for learning the language and culture. And the first class was, I think, on Savanoriu (a street in Vilnius – interviewer's remark); in the Vingis school (a school in Vilnius – interviewer's remark). And then, around 1992, we got…we strived for it, you know, Belarusians used to have very big traditions here. Before the war there was a Belarusian gymnasium, there were a lot of Belarusian institutions. And in general, Vilnius was conceived as a second capital in Belarus, especially in Western Belarus, despite the fact that it was under the Polish governance."

Anna, a respondent of the oldest generation (interview no.6) makes a distinction between the activity of Belarusians in Soviet period and after perestroika. According to Anna, Belarusians were not active or united in the Soviet period and relates the national revival of Belarusians in Belarus and Lithuania with *perestroika* times, i.e. late 1980s. Anna says:

> " I: And in the Soviet times, the fact that you were Belarusian, how was it: were you proud of it or…?
>
> R: Everyone was quiet then and, to tell the truth…We couldn't even believe that Belarus will come alive, that Belarusians will come alive. Because everyone thought that everything is already over, that everything, as they told, everyone was equal, everything…Everyone was quiet. Yes. Everyone was quiet.
>
> I: And this revival that you are talking about…It was nine…
>
> R: Now yes. We started gathering from 1987…maybe we…planned to…and in 1988 we already started gathering and later on you could see that one friend came, then another. We didn't know about each other before that we…we are Belarusians.
>
> (…)
>
> R: So, I participated everywhere. Everywhere. We made all that we could…we made all. For instance, we organized a meeting of this BNF. You know, it all had to be organized.
>
> I: How do you expand this?

R: Belarusian National Front.

I: In Vilnius?

R: Yes, in Vilnius. It was forbidden there. We made it here. So. It's something else organized there. We had to make it all…you know…The organization…we had to make everything…

I: And now you're also an active member?

R: You know, I can't be so active now, my health doesn't permit me. But as much as I can, I try to. I was ill with pneumonia for one and a half months, and now I stay at home because I turned my ankle. So, as much as my health permits me – I do participate. Now we have this organiza-tion…What is it called… NNN (the name of the Belarusian organization in Vilnius – interviewer's remark)

I: Mhm.

R: So I joined this association. After all, my father was deported. So. We gather. We gather and we mark the events, who, when…Almost everyone passed away already. I am, how to say, the youngest one from the generation that studied in the Belarusian gymnasium. So. Well, I was there in the primary school, but it was still the Belarusian gymnasium. So I…"

Some respondents of the oldest generation still participate in the cultural life of Belarussian or-ganizations in Lithuania. The respondents of middle and youngest generation raise the questions of political system in Belarus, questions of human rights in Belarus. Some of them participate in NGOs that aim to foster democracy and spread ideas of democracy and human rights in Belarus.

3.7 Ethnic conflicts and discrimination experiences

The general opinion of respondents was that there is no discrimination of Belarusians in Lithua-nia and that there are no open ethnic conflicts between Belarusians and other ethnic groups in Lithuania. For example Olga, a respondent of the youngest generation, says:

"I: What do You think, do some tensions between ethnic groups in Lithuania exist, between the smaller ethnic groups and the majority?

R: I don't know. It is also a very difficult question, really. I can tell that I am very, very lucky in my life, because I have never experienced any discrimination. Really, there wasn't any, ever. That due to the fact that I am not Lithuanian, I would be somewhat different from all the others. But there are people among my acquaintances, who always complain, that, see: <<I'm not a Lithuanian here, and something's been done to me because of that >>.

I: For example

R: That they gave me a lower grade at the university, or something... or that I didn't get the job, or something... But really I. I find it difficult to assess. I don't know. Maybe it is so, but I sometimes think that it's... I think about that person, that maybe because you are not Lithuanian, you were not worthy of the grade nevertheless, you really weren't... maybe there was someone better for that place... I don't know."

The issues of the Lithuanian language knowledge were coming up in a few interviews. Boris is a respondent of middle generation (interview no.4) and he argues that at least in Vilnius there are no ethnic tensions in everyday life. Boris does not know Lithuanian language and he predicts that in some years he could have problems in communication with some officials because he does not have the state language command. Boris says:

"I: And how do You think, are there any tension between ethnic minorities and majorities?

> R: Let's say, you can't notice such a tension in Vilnius at all. Can't notice, at all. You can't notice such a tension even when communicating with public institutions. Because the officials of public institutions know, that there's the law of public administration, according to which they are obliged, if a person does not understand, they must bring an interpreter, if it's not an official language, they have to make the translation themselves and that's all. I.e. if you won't run into a very conflict situation. If there's a conflict already, they begin to switch to Lithuanian and humiliate you at once. If you don't speak the language, then "me don't to understand your..." So. There's no such tension in everyday level. You can encounter very seldom. Very, very, very seldom. I don't even recollect such cases. I don't know how it is in Kaunas. Don't know how it is in the interior of the country. There's no such problem in Vilnius. Absolutely. Simply there isn't. So. It's a different thing with officials, the law obliges them to abide, even if gritting their teeth. So. That is not a question. Well, now a problem appeared that the officials are young. They didn't study Russian in schools. That's why they can't speak it. That's why it's easier to communicate with them in English instead of Russian, that's why we ourselves have to understand the problem, why the legislator introduced the cunning norm in the law... in public administration. When you come personally with paper not in Lithuanian, let's say, yes, you wouldn't terrorise this poor secretary in "rashtine" (office – interviewer's remark)..."

Two respondents referred to the events in the Soviet period when, according to them, they were not able to get some job because they did not know Lithuanian language sufficiently (for example Ana, interview no. 6, Lena interview no.8).

A few respondents recalled some cases in their personal lives in the Soviet period that could be treated as ethnic discrimination or insult on ethnic basis. For example, Inesa is a respondent of the middle generation (interview no.5) who refers to such memory from her childhood in Vilnius in the 1970s when she and her mother were insulted in the street because of speaking in Russian:

> "I: And tell me, you are Byelorussian. I think a book can be written about the history of your family. Did you ever feel discriminated because of your ethnic origin?
>
> R: From Lithuanians?
>
> I: From anyone in general?
>
> R: Well, not because I am Byelorussian, but... Well in general no. I never felt that and all this time I was working it never happened to me...But I remember from my childhood, when I was little, maybe something like five and I was walking somewhere in the city with my mother and I remember very well how my mother was dressed, it was summer, a very beautiful day. So we were walking and talking. An elderly man passed by. He looked creepy to me. And my mother turned my head so I would not look at him ...<<Don't look, don't look, he is not well >>. I understood later, what he said. He said „Russian pigs". It was... well actually he really looked creepy. So I remember this moment. And then I asked my mother why he said like this. And she explained me in a very nice way that there are also Russians like that, people who are not well, who walk in the streets and just want to insult someone, to say something, but... I don't remember any other moments, that there would be some tension, some conflicts...
>
> I: So that is why you remember?
>
> R: It stuck in my mind. Yes. I understood very well... I remember when he said it and my mother didn't want me to understand. But I took some steps and I understood the words.
>
> I: What year was it and how old were you?
>
> R: Well... I was really little. I didn't go to school yet. I was five or four. My brother was not born yet.
>
> I: So it was Soviet time still?
>
> R: Yes. It was Soviet time. Of course. Maybe around 1973."

3.8 Summarizing Matrix

Table presenting individual respondents in rows and a description of key variables in separate columns.

Respon-dent	Sex	Place of residence	Age	Occupa-tion	Educa-tional level	European identity	Languages	National identity (residence)	National identity (mother country)	Regional identity	Relationship to organisa-tion of minority group
"Olga" (interview no. 1)	Female	Vilnius outskirts	22	Student	Studies at BA level	Yes	At home speaks mainly in Russian. At university – Lithuanian. Knows Russian, Belarusian, Lithuanian, Polish, English, French, Ukrainian.	She introduces herself as Belarusian. Her home-land/motherland is Lithuania.	Almost no close relatives in Belarus are still alive. Visits this country rather seldom. However, as a Belarusian cares of the situation in Belarus.	The first region marked – territories of the former Grand Duchy Lithuania, the second – Europe (EU). No third bigger region.	Is a member of some local organization that focuses on the issues of democracy in Belarus, on the spread of Belarusian culture in Lithuania
"Marina" (interview no.2)	Female	Vilnius	45	Teacher	High	Yes, she identifies with Europe, but makes difference between Europe and EU. Not all countries that are part of the EU are important for her identity construction	Knows Russian, Belorusian, understands some Polish. The main language she uses in her family – Russian. The main language she uses at work – Belarusian. Says that her native language is Bela-rusian.	Introduces herself as Belaru-sian. She says that Belarus is her motherland (rodina) because she was born there, but she loves Lithuania as well because she has been living there for decades. Belarus and Lithuania are both homelands for her, just of different kind.	Belarusian was named as motherland because she was born there. Her family keeps close relations with relatives in Belarus, visit them every two weeks.	As the countries no.1 she markes Belarus and Lithua-nia. The second circle – includes Latvia and Russia. The third region – includes Austria and Poland.	Does not participate at any ethnic organization, is not interested in politics in gener-al.
"Sergei" (interview nr. 3)	Male	Vilnius	72	Pensioner, earlier worked as a teacher	High	He introduces himself as a Belarusian from Belarus. He likes European culture, freedom, but he does not feel at home when he visits his daughter in Holland.	He knows Belarussian lan-guage. At his parents family ther language was a mixture of Belrusian and Russian. In his own family the main language of communication is Russian because his wife is not a Belarusian.	He introduces as Belarusian from Belarus even if he moved to Vilnius in 1982. Says that the only place he feels at home in Lithuania is Vilnius.	Belarus is the country he feels at home and identifies with. The eastern part of Belarus is important for him. The third region is what he calls "ethnic Belarusian lands"	The first place that was marked on the map - a place where he was born in Bela-rus.	Is a member of local cultural Belarusian organization.
"Boris" (interview nr. 4)	M	Vilnius	53	Unem-ployed	Low	Evaluates very positively Lithuania's acceptance to the EU. Argues that Grand Duchy Lithuania was part of Europe.	Native language – Russian. Knows Belarussian language as well.	He introduces himself as a Belarusian of Lithuania. However, his motherland is Belarus because he was born there. Lithuania is said to be his second homeland, but not all Lithuania – only eastern part including Vilnius.	Belarus is his motherland because he was born there. But he cannot visit Belarus due to political reasons.	First circle – eastern Lithuania (with Vilnius) and western Belarus (with Minsk). Second circle – eastern Lithuania, all Belarus and part of Russia (European part). Third circle – whole Russia and part of Europe	He actively participated in civic life of Belarusians in Lithuania, was a leader of one Belarusian organization. Currently comes to some events organized by Belaru-sian organizations.

Respon-dent	Sex	Place of residence	Age	Occupa-tion	Educa-tional level	European identity	Languages	National identity (residence)	National identity (mother country)	Regional identity	Relationship to organisa-tion of minority group
„Inesa" (interview no. 5)	Female	Vilnius	41	Teacher	High	She feels European, she evaluates positively Lithuania's accession to the EU. Hoewever, says that she does not know English and this makes her feel uncomfortable in other coun tries.	Knows Belarusian, Russian, Lithuanian, some Polish. At home speaks Belarusian, at work the main language Lithuanian.	She is a Belarusian of Lithua-nia. Lithuania is her mother-land. She is a citizen of Lithuania, was born in Lithua-nia.	There are no close relatives in Belarus, her family visits Belarus seldom.	The first circle marked – Lithuania. The second circle marked – Belarus.	Does not participate in Belarusian NGOs .
"Anna" (interview no.6)	Female	Vilnius	77	Currently pensioner, earlier was a foreign language teacher	High	Yes, she is European, but regarding the EU says that she does not like unions in general even if there are a number of positive things related with EU.	Her mother tongue – Belaru-sian. But in her family, with husband they mainly talked in Russian. Knows some Polish.	Says that Lithuania is a country where she lives.	Belarus is her mothercountry, especially western Belarus.	The first circle – takes to-gether Lithuania and Belarus. Says that it is what was Grand Duchy Lithuania.	Was active member of Belarusian community in Lithuania during the period of national awakening at the end of the 1980s-beginning of the 1990s.
"Grigorij" (interview no.7)	Female	Vilnius	24	Bio-technologist	High	Yes, but Belarusiasness is more important category for him than Europeanesness. Says that Europeanesness is a bit vague term.	Knows Belarusian, Russian, English, Lithuanian. When he was 18 years old decided to learn Belarusian. With his parents speaks in Belarusian. At work – in Lithuanian.	Says that Lithuania is his native country (gimtinė) because he was born there and Belarus is his motherland (tėvynė) because of his ethnic origins. Introduces himself as a Belarussian of Lithuania (Lietuvos baltarusis)	Belarus was named as his motherland (tėvynę) because of his ethnic origins ("pagal kilmę"). Goes ot Belarus to visit his relatives at least once per two months.	The first circle – western Lithuania and western Bela-rus – a territoriyh which was one region historically (Vilni-aus gubernija) and from where all his relative are from. The second circle – all Lithuania and all Belarus – former Grand Duchy Lithua-nia. The third circle – Europe.	Is a member of a Belarusian NGO in Vilnius.
„Lena" (interview no. 8)	Female	Vilnius	88	Pensioner	High	She feels European because the countries that are the most important for her (Lithuania, Belarus, Russia) are in Europe.	Knows Russian, Belarussian. The main language in which she communicates in family and in everyday life – Russian. Speaks in Belarussian at the Belarusian NGO.	The motherland – Belarus because she was born there. But Lithuania is not less important, especially Vilnius.	Belarus is the motherland. Visited Belarus long ago. Her mother is a Belarusian, father – Russian.	The first circle – Lithuania because the biggest part of her life passed there, her children were born in Lithua-nia. The second circle – Belarus. The third circle – Russia (because her father is from Russia, because she communicates in Russian).	Sings at a choir of one local Belarusian NGO.

Respon-dent	Sex	Place of residence	Age	Occupa-tion	Educa-tional level	European identity	Languages	National identity (residence)	National identity (mother country)	Regional identity	Relationship to organisa-tion of minority group
"Julija" (interview No. 9)	Female	Vilnius	23	Student	High	Says that she has not visited many European countries and therefore cannot mark it on the map as the region she identifies with. Says that europeanessness is quite vague category for her. Argues that she feels part of the whole world.	Russian, Belarusian, Lithua-nian. A bit Ukrainian, German and Polish. The main lan-guage at home – Russian. Says that her native languag-es are Russian and Belarus-sian.	She was born in Lithuania, however since her early childhood until had 18 years lived in Belarus. Citizen of Lithuania. Both Lithuania and Belarus are motherlands for her.	Belarus is her motherland as well as Lithuania.	The first circle – eastern Lithuania (including Vilnius) and western Belarus (where she spent her childhood and school years)	Is a member of some NGO, but not Belarusian NGO.
"Nikolaj" (interview no. 10)	Male	Vilnius	18	Completing secondary education	Completing secondary education	Yes. Says he is European because he lives in Europe. Thinks that EU is becoming one homogeneous country without the internal borders.	Belarussian, Russian, Lithua-nian, some Polish and some English.	He is a citizen of Lithuania. In his passport the nationality is stated as Polish. The respon-dent says that he is "partly" Polish, "partly" Belarusian, "partly" Russian.	Lithuania was named as his motherland (rodina) because he was born there. Belarus is the country he loves the most.	Marks one region – Belarus and Lithuania	Does not participate in any ethnic Belarusian organiza-tions
„Vikentii" (interview No. 11)	Male	Vilnius	41	Journalist	High	He evaluates positively Lithuania's accession to the EU because he says it gives some protection for Lithuania. However, on his everyday lfie this does not have any influence. He feels european because lives in Euroepe, but for him more imortant category is not Europe, but a Belarussian of Ltihuania	Knows Lithuanian, Russian, Belarussian. Speaks in Belarusian at work, in his family – in Lithuanian and Russian.	Says he is a Belarussian of Lithuania. He escaped to Lithuania from Belarusian regime and has a status of political refugee. Lithuania is named as a second mother-land (antroji tevyne).	Belarus is his motherland (tevyne), he was born there. Now he is persona non-grata in Belarus due to political reasons.	The first circle – Lithuania and western Belarus together. The second circle includes all Belarus and Kaliningrad region.	Does not participate
„Naum" (interview No12)	Male	Vilnius	Approx.80	Pensioner	University diploma	Acknowledges Europe, the EU, but speaks about difficulty in understanding EU policies	Speaks Belarusian, Polish, Russian, Lithuanian, German	Thinks of himself as Belarusian, often refers to the fact that ancient Belarusian was a language spoken in the Great Dutchy of Lithuania	Considers Belarus his country of ethnic origin and Lithuania his home country	First Belarus, then Lithuania	Cultural organisation, actively participates

4 MAIN FINDINGS OF EXPERT INTERVIEWS (ENRI-EXI)

Kristina Šliavaitė

The interviews were conducted in accordance to the methodological guidelines developed by the ENRI-East team and described in the project manual[34].

The first expert interviewed is a senior specialist at a state institution. The respondent has been working in the institutions dealing with ethnic minority questions in Lithuania for 15 years, therefore she is deeply acquainted with the legal, social, cultural, political situation of different ethnic minority groups in Lithuania and with any political, juridical changes that may affect the situation of ethnic minority groups in Lithuania.

The other two experts are representatives of the key Belarusian non-governmental organizations. All three experts work in Vilnius. This is due to the fact that the most of active Byelorussian organizations are located in Vilnius.

4.1 Organization they represent and how it is organized

The first expert interviewed works at a state institution. The state is obliged to support culture of national minorities and its dissemination and the institution the respondent represents is providing the support to fulfill these aims. The institution aims to enable communication of members of ethnic minorities with their co-ethnics in their mother countries, provides support for some cultural projects, solves the questions related with the study of native language. The expert (interview no. 1) says:

> "I: Can you tell me more about how…what you, as you mentioned, are responsible for these groups, well in brief, what…what kind of nature is it…
>
> R: How it looks like, right? First of all there is communication, contacts with Non-Governmental Organizations, with their leaders, because our institution according to its competence is responsible for nurturance of ethnical identity and, how it is claimed by State, let's say, in Constitution and in other legislation, State takes an obligation to support the culture of national minorities, its spread, so our institution gives that support, let's say, and also solves all questions which are about nurturance of ethnicity and the spread of culture. This is our competence and our sphere. For example, activities such as teaching of language in particular level, support for ethnic minorities, let's say, through various projects or other areas are included. We solve also other relevant questions, for example, questions of their mobility, cooperation with…with their countrymen, let's say, in historically native places, right…promotion for particular cultural projects of the cooperation, let's say, help with visa for those who come in…and many other questions."

The respondent (interview no.1) describes the relationship between ethnic minority groups and the state institution she represents very positively. The respondent says:

> "R: That relation often depends on personal relationships, people need personal relationship in order to feel that they are safe, they need to trust that person and when liquidation of the Department

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[34] See „Enri-Exi: Expert Interviews Manual, 2010", designed by Claire Wallace, Natalka Patsiurko, Barbara Dietz, Natalia Waechter, Alexander Chvorostov, Lyudmila Nurse, available at: http://www.enri-east.net/work-packages/wp5/en/ .

happened, I simple want to give you an example, they say that we loose you as a guarantee of safety, they have already know… They know that they can call us and we would talk in their native language and they would understand, we will find out and will help them and they simply need such communication. They need to come where they could feel safe, I do not say that they aren't safe in the country, but when we talk about their ethnicity and its preservation, and for example, even solution of other questions, they need a person, who would be able to explain everything from governmental point of view, to tell how everything should be done, where they could ask for help and other various questions."

The other two respondents are representatives of the Belarusian NGOs in Lithuania. The first NGO is mainly oriented to cultural activities and to the fostering of Belarusian traditions and culture. The other expert interviewed (interview no. 3) represents organization which is oriented to the people of Belarusian background that were persecuted by the Soviet regime.

4.2 Main issues associated with that minority in the country of residence

The first respondent (interview no.1) works at the state institution, she is well acquainted with the situation of different ethnic groups in Lithuania and with state policies. She can compare and make an overview of the situation of Russians and Belorussians in Lithuania. In regards to Belorusians, she does not name any very accute or urgent issues. The respondent mentiones possibility for Belarusians in Vilnius to send their children to the Belarusian secondary school by the name of Pranciskus Skorina. There are Belarusian Sunday schools. There is a possibility for them to visit their historical motherland. The respondent (interview no. 3) says:

> "I: And for example, Byelorussians. How would you describe their situation?
>
> R: Byelorussians also have educational institution. They also have, let's say, headquarters which are crowded together and non-governmental…They take care of their identity actively. They have established…Sunday schools in regions where many people live and where are no schools. They are organized and collaborative. Community is quite united and…well, let's say, they as national minority do not think that they have problems because this place is here and their country is not very far. Now it is allowed to travel without a visa. You can cross the board easily. They regularly go to their historically native place and perhaps they feel safe in that way, that they don't need to go far, they can enter that country but when they come back here, they feel safe, because this country is remarkably more democratic and liberal. Their children can learn Byelorussian language, here…as I have already mentioned, is high school…
>
> I: But only in Vilnius?
>
> R: Yes, in Vilnius, but Sunday schools are working in regions where is no high school: in Klaipėda, Visaginas, they have Sunday schools and, and, where they gather lots of students."

The respondent (interview no. 1) says that currently one of the most important questions for different ethnic minorities in Lithuania is the question of language of instruction at the secondary schools of ethnic minorities. The respondent thinks that Lithuania should not force the increase of subjects taught in Lithuanian in the schools of ethnic minorities. The respondent (interview no. 1) says:

> "I: And such strong words as, let's say, discrimination of Byelorussians and Russians in Lithuania…could we use them in some particular areas?
>
> R: (…) Now Byelorussians and Russians meet with other difficulty, I saw about that in your questions and if we talk about it now, these are questions about their education, considering their schools, which should be schools, yes, with language of national minorities. Whether they remain the way they are now, or they should be…educate in Lithuanian language? More over, if you came

more deeply you would notice that the content of subjects at schools is Lithuanian, they learn about Lithuania…all their subjects. Only teaching language at these schools is Russian, other subjects in the content are related to this country, to Lithuania. Particular educational component which they could learn might be anticipated, for example, history of Russia, something about painting, but this do not touch all educational process and these students when they finish these schools talk in national language, pass exams in national language…So I would think that they do not rise questions about the need to know national language and, and, they can study in the institutions of higher education also in national language. I do not think that we should specially rush that process, because in any case these schools are vanishing. Since the time of independency the number of students in these schools decreased and there's no need for more people, because they work anyway as a cultural centre. Particular points of culture exist where it is told about history, traditions, manners, these children know their roots, their mentality is being formatted…and well, in my opinion, it's not very…"

The respondent (interview no.1) also mentions higher unemployment rates among ethnic minority groups, but this is also related with lower education, worse command of the state language and some other factors. The respondent says:

"I: Tell me, and what about other spheres…let's say labour market, what do you think, does situation of Byelorussians, Russians differ there?

R: According to the survey…we did a few times that survey and in both cases it was clear that the number of unemployed is bigger among them than among Lithuanians and we tried to find out what are the reasons. Firstly their education is lower, not less…of them have reached higher and second question is the knowledge of language, which should be very good in governmental institutions, not only speaking but also good writing skills, so this is still their obstacle. Secondly, we notice that their emigration from Lithuania is not smaller compare to Lithuanians, for example, we could say that not only Lithuanians emigrate but also representatives of national minorities. They also do not have a job, they can't find a job and search for better source for living."

The respondent (interview no. 1) does not think that Belarussians in Lithuania encounter any specific problems related with housing (as Roma people, for example), according to her opinion the members of ethnic minorities participate in political parties, non-governmental organizations.

The representative of key Belarusian organization in Lithuania (interview no. 2) says that in his opinion the Belarusians in Lithuania do not encounter any disatvantages due to their ethnic background. The respondent says:

"I: M… And tell me. You have already mentioned it little bit but I have nevertheless to ask it: "By which aspects Belarusians, your ethnical community, are in disadvantageous situation in Lithuania, for example in the system of education, in the labor market, political contribution?

R: I absolutely don't see it in any of them. I mean, for example if explaining the situation… Let's start from the birth of a child. Belarusians work in health care system, namely in clinics, in hospitals - everywhere. And now if taking an example, one Belarusian showed up, such NN. He was studying according to our recommendation in Minsk, stomatology. Later he transferred to surgery. Later he came back, he was working in Visaginas. Now he works in Santariskes as a leading surgeon. It is the first. The second – let's take NN – he was a champion of the world for five times, although he fell from the fifth floor. He was having a strain for couple of years. He graduated our school. And basically when he became a champion of the world for the first time he was asked "Who are you?" He said "I am a student of Belarusian school in Vilnius". They: "Who are you?" He answered "I am a student of Belarusian school in Vilnius". It shows that Belarusians are even there… Further we can take a school as an example. We have a possibility for education. There is a university. Business. We have so many cool Belarusian businessmen. We absolutely have it. So to say – we don't have problems. The same about part of representatives in the Parliament, basically there are

> some Belarusians as well. Basically everybody works his way, as he wants. There are absolutely no barriers. I mean, I don't see them anywhere. So to say there are no problems based on ethnical principle, either in the governance of the country or in any clinics, ministries and etc…"

In the interview no.3 the expert says that he could not name any spheres where Belarusians are disadantaged or in worse situation due to their ethnic background.

The representative of the key Belarusian organization in Lithuania (interview no. 2) emphasized close cooperation and communication with Lithuanian authorities. The respondent said:

> "R: And we constantly go to the Prime Minister, to Seimas, we go constantly. So to say, there are no problems. Collaboration with parties… Many Belarusians participate in different parties and in polls. And etc, and etc and etc… So everything is perfect, everything is all right. "

The representative of Belarusian organization in Lithuania (interview no. 2) expresses satisfaction bacause of Lithuania's policy towards local Belarussians and because closer political communication between Lithuania and Belarus. However, he pointed to the decreased financial state support to the non-governmental organizations of ethnic minorities in Lithuania. The expert says:

> „R: I can say that till 2009 the Department of National Minorities and Migration [Department of Ethnic Minorities and Lithuanians Living Abroad – interviewer's remark] existed under the Government of the Republic of Lithuania. At that time it was the only one such funding source for our organization and events. Then we were applying and all, practically all our applications were funded. This money was enough for our activities. And now when this institution has been removed we were going to the President as well as to the Parliament, we were explaining… Thanks to this institution Lithuania have neither international nor interfaith problems. Because this institution was working on the outrunning. It was correctly working with the leaders and correctly working with all organizations. Basically it explained and… so to say, there were right people working. That's why there were no problems. Since this institution has disappeared we, Belarusians, didn't get for the last year, in general not only Belarusians have not received a single cent. (….)
>
> R: No. Well, basically we spoke about everything. Life is such that, as it is said, it wouldn't be worse. The only one problem is financing of so to say our projects. It is the only one problem. If there is financing then it will be easier. There is no financing, then it means that no… Well, for instance the House of National Minorities. Now its account has been arrested. At the time when this problem was being passed so this premise was given to us and […] was closed, wasn't paying money, the Ministry of Culture also. And now the account is arrested as if for all "nuoma" ("rent" in Lithuanian – interviewer's remark). Also there were the gaps, were trying to solve them, we addressed the President. Now we will address. For example if simply they will take the office and will say to pay and with what to pay… We don't get any money for public activities, anything… Yes, when we were in Denmark… in Germany, there was a conference "How Germans as a national minority live in Denmark and how Danes live in Germany".

The poor financial support for ethnic minority organizations was pointed by the representative of other Belarusian organization as well. The expert (interview no. 3) says:

> "I: And tell please, does the state of Lithuania support in any way organizations of Belarusians in Lithuania and your organization?
>
> R: The situation is like this. There was the department for National minorities and Emigration at the Government of the Republic of Lithuania. When it existed, in my view, everything was normal. We knew where to apply for support and what we can expect. Now there's no department. It was disbanded. Emigration was passed to the competence of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, national minorities were passed to the Ministry of Culture. Now we belong to the Ministry of Culture. There's a foundation "Kultūros rėmimo fondas" for culture support at the ministry. But this foundation is

created to support culture in general. No matter, it would be minorities or not minorities. Culture in general. And naturally, they apply from all Lithuania. And of course, they pay attention to projects of such a great importance and significance. And they don't pay attention to some trifles, though it isn't a trifle for us. That's that. Therefore it became worse in this view."

4.3 Relationship to mother country

All three experts interviewed mentioned the support for local Belarusian organizations from Belarus. The expert who works at the state institution (interview no.1) mentioned the support from Belarus to the Belarusian secondary school in Vilnius. The respondent (interview no.1) says:

> "I: And, for example, what is the support which Byelorussia gives to the organizations of Byelorussians, can you comment on this?
>
> R: Well, they support Byelorussian school by giving technical devices, textbooks, some kind of supplement educational things, which could be used in that school, but, as you know, they must be checked and adopted, and they bought a bus so that children could be driven to school, besides, they show great attention indeed, despite that…that there are not many Byelorussian schools in Byelorussia and perhaps only one Byelorussian school is in Lithuania where educational language is Byelorussian and they really show attention and try to patronize that school."

The second expert interviewed (interview no.2) highlights the help that is granted to the Belarusian school in Vilnius by Belarus. The expert (interview no 2) emphasizes the other kind of support to Lithuanian Belarusians from the side of Belarus. For example, every year twenty Belarusians from Lithuania can be accepted to the high institutions of education in Belarus for free. The respondent names also these kinds of support from Belarus to local Belarusians:

> "R: Free of charge, yes. Free education, they get a dormitory room, diplomas are certified and everything. With regard to Belarus, they help us with national costumes. Now the improvement has already started again. We are invited to Belarus for excursions. Also the national coordinative council "Belarusians abroad" was established. So. We entered it. So mainly everything has started to be better. (…)"

The expert no.2. greets the Lithuania's policy to start political communication with Belarus when in 2010 the President of Belarus A.Lukashenko visited Lithuania and Lithuania's President Dalia Grybauskaite paid a visit to Minsk. The third expert interviewed (interview no.3) was more reserved regarding the evaluation of more open politics towards current regime of Belarus. The expert says:

> "R: Attempts of politicians in Lithuania and other European countries and the world over to ingratiate with Alexander Lukasenko's regime raise ambiguous reactions. Very ambiguous reactions. Ambiguous and not always understandable. Not once the same politicians, figuratively speaking, got the voice, however they themselves or those who took their places again and again trod on the same rake. Why does it happen, I don't know. But it's evident and it's hardly surprising. Either people are too self-assured or they think their forerunners are fools and they themselves are wise. And they will succeed in doing what their forerunners fail to do, or I don't know… (*a pause*). Maybe they are naïve. But it's evident, evident, it's seen, as they say, with naked eye that it can't be done like that, one can't behave like that. Nevertheless it's reiterating year by year."

The expert no. 3 also mentions a kind of division between Belarusian organizations in Lithuania that is based on their different attitudes towards current regime in Belarus. The expert says:

> "R: Well, let's say, the regime in Belarus at present. Not nearly everybody likes it. At the same time some organizations cooperate with this regime, though… one can understand them. Nevertheless

it doesn't contribute, let's say, to any productive cooperation between those who condemn the regime and who collaborate with it."

4.4 If they are from a local authority then summarise policies introduced and their problems

The respondent (interview no.1) names the Law on National Minorities (Tautiniu mazumu istatymas) which was passed in 1989 and the expert evaluates it positively. In 2010 the law was suspended and a working group at the Ministry of Culture was formed to work on a new project of law.

The expert was asked of the laws that regulate the use of the state or minority languages and she gave quite detailed overview of the laws. The expert pointed out that that there are some laws – the Law on State Language, the Law on National Minorities, the Law on Public Administration, the Law of Education and some others – that to some extent aim to regulate the use of state and national minority languages. The expert (interview no.1) pointed out that some regulations in these laws are contradictory, i.e. regulations on the state language use inscribed in one law can contradict regulations in another law and this makes some tensions.

The respondent talked of the issues of social integration of national minorities and overviewed the trends of work of the department which she represents. She mentioned such strategies of work as, for example, organizing the teaching of Lithuanian language, etc.

> "…we organize free courses of national language for those people who still need that. We do researches and look how many representatives of national minorities know national language and we still feel that they lack of knowledge that's why it's hard for them to integrate to labour market, they experience some kind of difficulties while attempting to find a job or studying, so we try to organize these free courses of national language so that they would equally compete in that area, so it's our, let's say, contribution to these questions and second thing is that we had a few, let's say…socially integrating projects. Our public institutions work with dissociated groups, with long term unemployed representatives of national minorities. One project was for Romany, another one was for other ethnic groups and for expanding their competence in the way of forming social skills so that they would become marketable, let's say, in labour market and could return to it faster, in one word…well, these projects were being realized when the Department of National Minorities and Emigration existed."

Asked particularly of the Belarusian group in Lithuania and any tensions that could be noticed the expert said:

> "R: Well, I didn't notice, indeed. The community of Byelorussians…I would say that knowing what nondemocratic environment is in their historical native place, they feel quite safe here in Lithuania. They know that they have freedom of thoughts and words, they could use their language, they have enough…they are integrated to labour market and these things maybe…that democratic environment, I think…they have more public spirit, citizens of Lithuania… I do not know, I really didn't notice any tensions, dissatisfaction or other questions of escalation. Moreover, they tend to talk about their historically native place and compare it with Lithuania and Lithuania seems more positive to them."

The respondent says that currently the issues of teaching in native language at the minority schools are of highest importance for the members of national minority groups:

> „At this moment they are united when questions of education became important, right, or questions of closing schools, because this is very important for them, they want to keep that native language and this native language comes through the youth, through the teaching of the youth, strong sup-

port and I say through installation of…of these roots so that they would know about their history, culture and school is the basis so they will try to keep this thing and they think, well, I would say they are united for this purpose right now. This shows in the way, for example, that they participate in a coalition while participating in the election, when Union of the Poles of Lithuania comes together with Alliance of the Russians of Lithuania as a coalition. Again, these decisions seem to me quite pragmatic, not ideological but more pragmatic. Well, they find the same language. "

4.5 Relationship (if any) to European events and organisations

The expert (interview no 1) mentiones some EU sponsored programmes that were oriented to national minorities and implemented in Lithuania. The expert says:

> „R: There were projects from the program of EQUAL, the project of Romany integration, the project of return to labour market and also the project of national minorities, where ethnic communities from Vilnius, Šalčininkai participated. We anticipated to establish some kind of centre, show opportunities, show that there are ethnic communities, they have particular…let's say, living places which could be visited, their skills were improved, computer skills, English, some kind of things formed, but I say, these projects lasted only two years and encompassed only one part of the society and to admit that they gave results…eminent and tangible…we couldn't say that."

The expert (interview no.2) says that Lithuania's entrance to the EU did not have any considerable influence on the situation of Belarusian group in Lithuania. The third expert interviewed was in general skeptical about Lithuania's accession to the EU since he was against any union in general. However, he pointed out that in regards to the ethnic minorities the membership in the union could be advantageous since, according to the respondent (interview no.3):

> "When a boiler is large, more people get there, and more people think in a different way, not as some. And if those people reveal their opinion and their reasoning, then that pottage in the boiler, no matter soup or porridge, also imbues with some other smack and taste. I agree, it helps to keep balance. The Right and the Left are everywhere, in every country. And when there are more opinions in general mass, it seems the situation reaches some average, kind of centrist level. "

5   MAIN FINDINGS OF WEB-ANALYSIS (ENRI-BLOG)

Hans-Georg Heinrich / Olga Alekseeva

5.1 Methodology

ENRI-East is an interdisciplinary project which employs different methodological approaches. In the framework of the project, Content Analysis of Internet Resources uses internet websites attributable to ethnic minorities in order to analyse the identity-related cultural, social and political activity of minorities. The study analyses the situation of twelve minorities: Russians in Latvia and Lithuania, Ukrainians in Poland und Hungary, Belarusians in Poland and Lithuania, Poles in Belarus, Ukraine and Lithuania, Hungarians in Ukraine, Hungarians in Slovakia, and Slovaks in Hungary. Lithuanians in Russia, who were polled in the ENRI survey, were excluded due to linguistic problems. Instead, Ukrainians in Hungary were included.

Internet can be assumed to provide valid sources of information, because it is a modern and flexible means of communication. Analyzing the presence of minorities in the internet, the study can be expected to yield insights into actual concepts of identity. The internet research helps to understand not only special opinions and media activities of minorities, but also how the concept of ethnic identity evolves within new media like internet. Internet provides a forum for the democratic exchange of information, a free and unrestricted domain to escape the limits of political participation in real politics. The World Wide Web can be the communication medium of groups which are politically underrepresented. Among flows of information in the internet, such new patterns of social communication are observable as forums, live journals, or blogs that have an authentic nature and help to restore the public discourse in the most objective way.

The data base of the content analysis consists of online resources attributable to ethnic minorities, such as periodicals, organisations, blogs, forums, personal websites, and commentaries to articles. Collection of empirical resources from the internet has been carried out in two steps: selection of online resources and selection of text fragments within the online resources. Internet resources were identified by employing search engines like www.google.com for different languages and countries using key-words combinations, or checking websites which contain catalogues of resources like http://kamunikat.org/. Individual text fragments within a resource were selected for processing according to the criterion of theoretical relevance.

The research discovered a large number of different resources of ethnic minorities. In the study, 154 online resources were randomly identified, from which 350 text fragments[35] were collected and analyzed. Qualitative and quantitative content analysis of the text fragments was conducted using simstat/wordstat6.2.1. The data analysis consisted of the description of a resource or a text fragment according to formal criteria like "title", "author", or "intention", as well as according to the content of text fragments. The former data were ordered and coded in a simstat data base. The data of the qualitative content analysis were generated by assigning single cases (usually combination of words or parts of sentences) to categories (keywords) which constituted the wordstat

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[35] The notion "text fragment" in this study indicates a unit of analysis in the simstat/wordstat program. These can be single texts like articles from websites of periodicals, blogs or organisations without postings of readers or with readers' postings. Apart from that, a "text fragment" can be called a number of single short texts under particular title as represented by dialogues on internet forums.

dictionary. On the basis of simstat/wordstat data, research results were generated in form of figures which in turn have been qualitatively interpreted.

During the analysis, 69 categories could be created. 8 categories among them belong to the main categories: "cultural heritage", "images of Europe", "history", "cultural encounter", "minority rights", "style", "politics", and "socio-economic situation". These main categories include further categories (sub-categories). The following data presentation describes however only those categories, which represent the majority of coded cases within text fragments, measured in %. All other categories, which cover less than 5% of cases were left out in the presented study.

5.2 Description of internet resources

Belarusians in Lithuania, have the same number of resources like Belarusians in Poland (15), but they are different concerning the discussed topics. Belarusians in Lithuania have one periodical "Run'", 3 news/broadcasting portals, 6 organizations, 2 blogs, and 3 resources with articles/blogs with postings. The internet sites focus mainly on human rights violations in Belarus itself as well as on cultural matters and are predominantly operated by organizations. Apart from "Krok", which represents the opinion of the Belarusian authorities, there are organizations with a traditional and national orientation like the Association of the Belarusian Culture in Lithuania and the member-organizations of the international human-rights network like "Belarus Watch" (former JuBiC) and the Belarusian Human Rights House in Exile in Vilnius.

"Run'" (http://kamunikat.org/run.html?pubid=11505) is the Belarusian periodical in Vilnius founded by the Vilnius Center of Democratic Initiatives "Democracy for Belarus". The periodical, which is issued in PDF format, started in 1997, but it has not been edited on a regular basis. The editorial office of the periodical together with its contributors understand their mission as revival of national Belarusian life in Vilnius and the strengthening of identity of those Belarusians who live in this for Belarusians historically symbolic place. The periodical strives to promote a kind of mutual solidarity among Belarusian intellectuals and people with Belarusian ethnic roots in order to achieve a better representation of their interests. The editorial staff is critically oriented informing about the politics in Belarus and ideologically it stands closely to the Association of Belarusian Culture in Lithuania observing the Belarusian history and tradition in Lithuania and uniting young enthusiastic nationally inspired activists. This periodical addresses, apart from the Belarusians themselves, other major minorities in Lithuania.

Both news portals "Westki.info" and "Svobodaby.net" are operated on the territory of Belarus but with news from the national community in Lithuania. *"Westki.info"* (http://www.westki.info/) covers a vast region between three historical capitals of Belarus: Polozk, Vilnius and Minsk. According to the web presentation of this site, its title derives from a Belarusian word „vestki" meaning „news" and English word „west" to signify that the website is catering to the Western Lakeland geographical region of Belarus. Through inclusion of the news from the Baltic States, the site tries to foster cross-border dialogue between Belarus and its northern neighbors. There are freelance correspondents in Vilnius reporting on the life of local Belarusian community and providing a roundup of general Baltic news. Although the region has a long border with Lithuania and Latvia, the general public on both sides lack information about events on the other side of the state frontier. The next important information portal for Belarusians in Lithuania is *"Svabodaby.net"* (http://svabodaby.net/). An online weekly "Tut i Cjaper" linked to this platform is officially registered in Minsk, Belarus. Apart from the critical news from Belarus representing the views of the Belarusian opposition, the weekly carries news from Lithuania and

caters to Belarusians in Lithuania. The website rubric of Larysa Shapavalava answers the questions of visitors concerning retail and tourist attractions in Lithuania. The most popular blog site is Andrei Khrapavitski's Blogsome (http://belarus.blogsome.com). Born in 1979, he graduated from the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill, worked as an NGO activist and is currently editor-in-chief of Westki.info.

The *Association of the Belarusian Culture in Lithuania* (http://westki.info/tbk) uses the web portal of "Westki.info". The Association is a meeting place for all those who is interested in the Belarusian culture and who is concerned about the future of the Belarusian cultural heritage in Vilnius and Lithuania. As suggested on the website of the organization, the distance between Belarus and Lithuania grows, and the influence of the Belarusian culture in Vilnius which historically belongs to the integral part of this "eternal city" diminishes. The Belarusian community gets little support not only from Belarusians living in Lithuania, but also from Belarus itself. The reason for this lays within the fact that the Association represents the oppositional national thought, with activists belonging to the Belarusian national renaissance movement before communism, especially those elderly representatives who have lived in immigration. The Association organizes gatherings of the representatives of the older and younger generation of this movement from Belarus, Lithuania and abroad, which are symbolically called "impresa" (from Belarusian "event"). Many Belarusian biographies are connected with the famous "Vilenskaya gimnaziya" (Vilnius Gymnasium). In contrast to the Association of the Belarusian Culture, the Belarusian Cultural Center *"Krok"* (http://www.tts.lt/~snn/krok/index.php) represents "official" Belarusian culture. It was launched in the city of Visaginas in 1995 in order to support education in the Belarusian language as well as to promote Belarusian arts and crafts. Parallel to the Belarusian schools, the Center supports national choirs and runs a TV station.

Lithuania is the center for the Belarusian non-governmental organizations. Some addresses like European Humanitarian University or Independent Institute of Socio-Economic and Political Studies are registered in this country. Apart from that, there are some organizations which support the Belarusian NGOs and political parties to guarantee their rights in Belarus. *Belarusian Human Rights House in Exile* (http://humanrightshouse.org/Members/Belarus_BY/index.html) and *"Belarus Watch"* (former United Centre of the Belarusian Initiatives, JuBiC) (http://www.belaruswatch.org/) define their mission as to attract attention of the Lithuanian and international public to events in Belarus with the eventual aim to democratize the country. According to the mission statement, this can be achieved only in cooperation with international human rights organizations as well as with governments worldwide. Belarusian Human Rights House is a part of the international Human Rights House Network which mission is reaction in form of petitions, information, and actions on the violation of human rights in a particular country. Recently, such action was started to release the Belarusian human rights defender Ales' Byalyacki, who was taken into detention by the Belarusian authorities. The organization "Belarus Watch" which represents the younger generation has launched among election observation missions also the campaign for Belarus without visa regime.

5.3 Results of content analysis of internet resources

5.3.1 Dictionary

The highest frequency in the text fragments attributable to the Belarusians in Lithuania have the following categories (keywords), here in the alphabetic order:

Civil Activity

The category "civil activity" refers to political engagement and involvement of the representatives of ethnic minorities in non-governmental organizations and unions regarding different socio-political matters and human rights issues. This category examines the development of deliberative democracy and the ability of the members of ethnic minorities to influence the political process concerning the matters of their own community and to take part in the negotiation process at the local and regional level of governance.

Criticism Representatives

The category "criticism representatives" stands in context of the term "communication" which denotes the relationship between the members of the same ethnic minority. It can be a relation of partnership as well as a relation of conflict and criticism, especially based on different political interests.

Ethnic and National Conflict

"Ethnic and national conflict" indicates ideological and political tensions between the mother country and the host country of an ethnic minority, conflicts between the host nation and the minority, especially as result of nationalism. Conflict between neighbor nations, for example between Lithuania and Russia, can arise because of different views on history. This category can also refer to ethnic minorities who lack the knowledge of the language of the host country, and to the refusal of ethnic minorities to learn such language. An example of the ethnic and national conflict can be the rejection of the representatives of the host country to support an ethnic minority by financing national schools, like in the case of the Belarusian minorities in Poland, or the rejection of the Russian minorities to go through the process of naturalization in Latvia.

Host Country Critical

The category "host country critical" represents the views of an ethnic minority on the socio-political situation in the host country. Especially critical views shall be considered, how the members of an ethnic community position themselves towards official politics. According to such perception modes, the image and political views of an ethnic minority can be identified and the self-awareness as social group closely observed. The majority of ethnic groups share position of criticism towards the host country concerning the discrimination of their rights. However the politics of dialogue are typical especially when the host country supports the cultural programs of the minority.

National Consciousness Pos

"National consciousness pos" means the ability of individuals to share feelings of belonging to a particular cultural tradition, historical and cultural heritage, to a group for which particular value system is typical. A political debate goes on between those who apparently share the values of belonging to a collective body and those whose collective identity is not sufficiently developed.

Native Country Critical/ Native Country Supportive

The category "native country critical/ native country supportive" studies the views of an ethnic minority towards the development in its mother country, mutual activities and projects between the mother country and the ethnic community. It is important to see how the self-identification of the members of an ethnic group is formed and supported by the communication with the native

country and how much they identify themselves as part of the community of their mother nation. The relation to the mother country can have different aspects. On the one hand, the minority can be closely connected to the mother country and receive a positive support from it. On the other hand, this relation can be an alienated one when the minority criticizes the native country for its politics. The representatives of minorities, who understand themselves as part of the national opposition in their mother country like the Belarusians in Poland, demonstrate critical attitudes if human rights in the mother country are violated.

Personalities

The category "personalities" refers to remarkable personalities from culture, politics, and civil life, who are closely connected with the idea of national renaissance and have shaped the profile of the national identity. Personalities, who marked the history of the national idea formation, belong to "national heroes" and their biographies constitute the part of the national history.

5.3.2 Practical Realization

Figure 1 demonstrates keywords/categories distribution according to the % of coded cases for the Belarusian minority in Lithuania.

Figure 1: Keyword Frequency, % of Cases
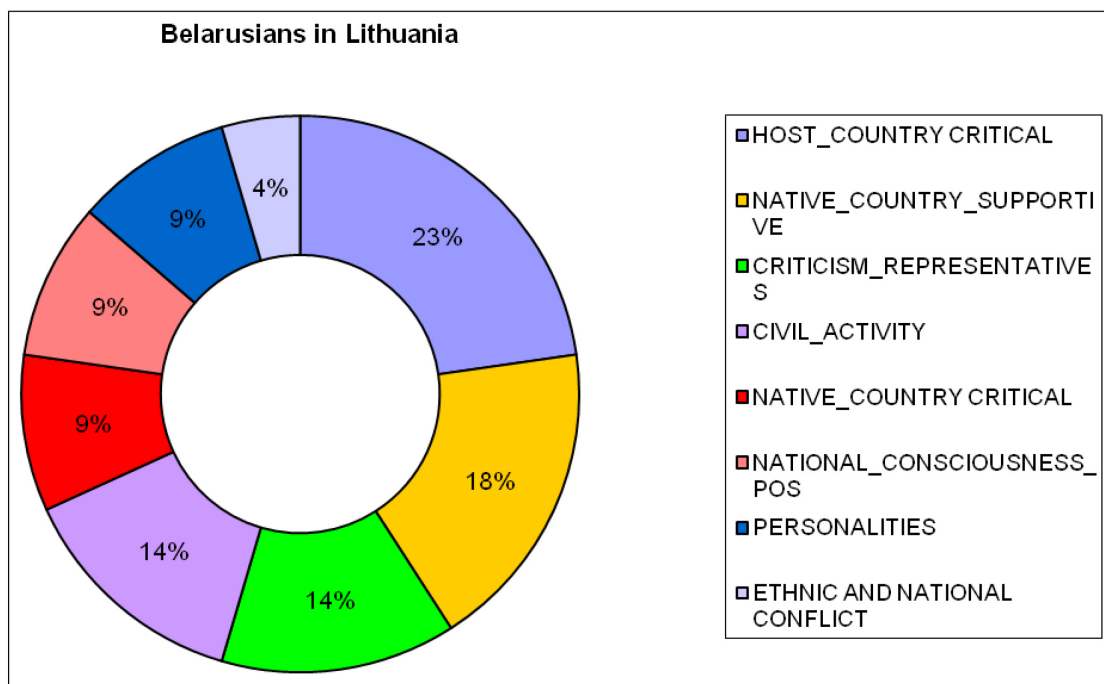
The majority of cases during the content analysis of the sources of the Belarusians in Lithuania covered the keywords/categories like "host country critical" as well as "native country supportive".

In the opinion of the leaders of the Belarusian community in Lithuania, the Belarusian culture, which contributed to the multicultural society in Vilnya, is perishing. The Belarusian community does not find support either from the Belarusians themselves (CRITICISM REPRESENTATIVES, 14%) or from the Lithuanian government and has to struggle for its existence. By the critical stance towards their mother country, the Belarusians criticize their host country for not observing the minority rights efficiently (HOST COUNTRY CRITICAL, 22%).

The organisations of the Belarusian minorities, who share the official national ideology of Belarus, like the Belarusian Cultural Center "Krok" (NATIVE COUNTRY SUPPORTIVE, 18%), represent ideas which go back to the Soviet past and to the history of Belarus after the Second World War. In the centre of the official national idea stands for example the victory of the Soviet soldiers over fascism.

The criticism toward the host country can be seen in the following quotation:

- Their speeches stated that the Belarusians in reality remained forgotten and neglected. They do not have any support from anywhere and everything is exclusively a matter of enthusiasm.
  Translation from Belarusian: У іх прамовах канстатавалася, што беларусы сапраўды засталіся забытымі і не патрэбнымі. Яны не маюць ніадкуль падтрымкі і ўсё трымаецца выключна на адным інтузіазме.

- Minister answered that if those want a Belarusian school they'd better go to Belarus.
  Translation from Belarusian: …міністар адказаў, што калі тыя хочаць беларускай школы, то няхай едуць у Беларусь.[36]

The Belarusian cultural community in Lithuania developed together with the Belarusian national independence (NATIONAL CONSCIOUSNESS POS, 9%). In Vilnius, the Association of the Belarusian Culture is a gathering place of intellectuals, musicians, artists, journalists, scientists and writers. It understands itself as a missionary organization which aims to preserve and to pass the Belarusian cultural tradition, which has been shaped by the personalities from the modern and old history (PERSONALITIES, 9%), to further generations.

If some Belarusian organizations in Lithuania position themselves loyal to official politics in Belarus, other Belarusians are ideologically close to the critical civil society and to the international human rights network (CIVIL ACTIVITY, 14%).

According to the opinion of some Belarusian politicians, the Belarusians achieved their political maturity while fighting for human rights and making their interests clear to the international community. "Belarus Watch" in Vilnius is an organisation of young people who position themselves as a modern political club. The NGOs like the Belarusian House for Human Rights in Exile represent the Belarusian civil society in the European Union. Among the human rights activities were the appeal of the human rights defenders against the death sentence carried out by the Belarusian authorities in relation of two Belarusian citizens. In this case, the Belarusian organizations in Vilnius accused Belarus of violation of the international human rights standards. Another activity of the civil organizations in Lithuania had been election observation missions in different European countries (NATIVE COUNTRY CRITICAL, 9%).

The organization "Belarus Watch" carries out the anti-border campaign pledging for abolishment of the visa regime between Belarus and the European Union, which can be exemplified by the following citation:

- The new border crossed the multicultural, multi-lingual, and woeful region of Vilnya which is famous for its traditions of openness and tolerance. The small chapel in the village Raki with two altars – catholic and orthodox – has alone a high value.

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[36] Adamkovich, A. (2009) «Яны захоўваюць беларускі дух: Таварыству беларускай культуры ў Літве 20!» (They preserve the Belarusian spirit: Association of the Belarusian Culture in Lithuania celebrates the 20th anniversary!), Association of the Belarusian Culture, 13 February, internet WWW-Site at URL: http://westki.info/tbk/7347/jany-zachouvaiuc-bielarusk%D1%96-duch-tavarystvu-bielaruskaj-kultury-u-l%D1%96tvie-%E2%80%93-20.

Translation from Belarusian: Новая мяжа прайшла праз шматкультурны, шматмоўны і шматпакутны Віленскі край, слынны сваімі традыцыямі адкрытасці і талерантнасці. Чаго вартая адна толькі капліца у вёсцы Ракі з двума алтарамі - каталіцкім і праваслаўным!

- The film is devoted to the visa regime, which has harmful effects on the destinies of people, separates families, destroys economy, and human and intercultural contacts.
  Translation from Belarusian: Фільм прысвечаны «візавай» заслоне, якая балюча адбіваецца на лёсах людзей, раздзяляе сем'і, разбурае гаспадарку, міжчалавечыя і міжкультурныя кантакты.[37]

The issues of nationalism and ethnic conflicts in the multicultural city Vilnius (ETHNIC AND NATIONAL CONFLICT, 5%), discusses among other resources, the blog site of Andrei Khrapavitski. The following citations exemplify this discussion:

- I don't know what the cure could be from nationalistic rhetoric, as it is so deeply rooted in our national identities. (Original citation)[38]

- … they (westerners) don't and won't allow us to be the equal member of the "club". Not because of our politics or economy, but because of their mind setting. (Original citation)[39]

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[37] (Without author) (2009) «JuBIC стварыў фільм ‹Памежжа›» (JuBIC created the film "Border land"), JuBIC, 8 December, internet WWW-Site at URL: http://www.jubic.org/by/naviny/jubic-stvaryu-film-pamjezza-zaprashajem-na-pragljad.

[38] Khrapavitski, A. (2009) "The Ills of Babylonian Vilnius", Blog of Andrei Khrapavitski, 13 October, internet WWW-Site at URL: http://belarus.blogsome.com/2009/10/30/the-ills-of-babylonian-vilnius/.

[39] Tad (nickname) (2009) "The Ills of Babylonian Vilnius", Blog of Andrei Khrapavitski, 9 November, internet WWW-Site at URL: http://belarus.blogsome.com/2009/10/30/the-ills-of-babylonian-vilnius/.

6 CONCLUSIONS

6.1 Research conclusions

The Population Census revealed that 42,866 Belarusians were registered in Lithuania in 2001. This is the third biggest ethnic minority group in Lithuania and makes 1.23 per cent of the total population (Statistics Lithuania 2002a:12-13).

The biggest shares of Belarusians in Lithuania are Roman Catholics and Orthodox (Statistics Lithuania 2002b:204). During the Soviet period the Belarusians in the Soviet Union experienced intense policy of russification what had negative consequences for the preservation of their national language.There are no visible conflicts or tensions between Belarusians and other ethnic groups or the titular nation in Lithuania.

There are no Belarusian political parties in Lithuania. Belarusians can be members of any political party in Lithuania and participate at national, local and EU elections. If persons of Belarusian ethnic origin are elected to the Parliament or municipal authorities, they usually come to the elections as members of any other political party of Lithuania.

Currently there are a number of Belarusian organizations in Lithuania which focus on cultural activities, including the promotion and dissemination of Belarusian language, culture and heritage. Vilnius serves as a place of foundation of a number of Belarusian NGOs that advocate in favour of human rights and democracy in Belarus.

6.1.1 ENRI-VIS results

The ethnic minorities' respondents were asked what language they speak most often at home. The majority of the Lithuanian Belarussians (68.3 per cent) speak 'other languages" most often at home, among which Russian speakers comprise three quarters, and the rest indicate using several languages at a time such as Russian, Belarussian, Lithuanian or Polish. Counting from the whole sample, those who speak Russian at come comprise half of it (53 per cent). Approximately one fifth of the Belarussian respondents (18.5 per cent) indicated that they speak Belarussian most often at home, one tenth (9.8 per cent) – Lithuanian. According to the survey data, 3.5 per cent of the respondents speak Belarussian and Lithuanian most often at home.

The respondents were asked about their closeness to different groups and regions, including local and European dimensions. The answers of the Lithuanian Belarussians indicate several tendencies. The majority of the Lithuanian Belarussians fell very close or rather close to the local environment as 83.8 per cent maintain their closeness to the settlement where they live and 75.8 per cent – to Lithuania. Most of the Belarussian respondents indicate their closeness to Belarus (67.3 per cent) and to the Lithuanian Belarussians (55.1 per cent).

While considering the components that are important for being truly Belarussian, the great majority of the Lithuanian Belarussians give priority to the feeling being Belarussian and having Belarussian ancestry – 90.3 per cent and 85.6 per cent, correspondingly maintain that it is very important or rather important. 72.1 per cent of the Lithuanian Belarussians named knowledge of the Belarussian language, 64.1 per cent – respect of the political institutions and laws of the Belarus and 61.3 per cent being born in as important factors for being Belarussian. Most share of the Belarussians surveyed do not consider such factors as being a citizen of Belarus and being have lived in Belarus for most of one's life as 63.3 per cent and 54.8 per cent answered negatively.

The answers to the question on the level of proud of being member of certain ethnicity related group, most Lithuanian Belarussians are very proud or proud of being Belarussian (77.3 per cent) and being Lithuanian Belarussian (72.1 per cent). While considering their proud of being Lithuanian, the Belarussians surveyed have the following opinions: most of the respondents (65.3 per cent) maintain that this question is not applicable to them, while one fifth (19.1 per cent) of the Lithuanian Belarussians are very proud or rather proud being Lithuanian and one tenth (10.5 per cent) has opposite positive attitudes.

While considering their feelings towards being representatives of Europe, the Baltic country region, and Eastern Europe, most of the respondents tend to feel proud of being European (64.8 per cent), residents of the Baltic country region (60 per cent) and Eastern European (51.6 per cent).

The Lithuanian Belarussians nearly unanimously agree with a statement that 'It is better if Belarussians preserve their own customs and traditions' – 94.3 per cent strongly agree or rather agree with it. Concerning the statement 'It is better if Belarussians adapt and blend into the larger society', the opinions of the Lithuanian Belarussians are contradictory: in equal shares the respondents tend to agree (42.5 per cent) and disagree (42.3 per cent) with it. However, no significant correlations could be observed.

The great majority of the Lithuanian Belarussians maintains that an opportunity to preserve Belarussian folk customs, traditions, culture to be very important of rather important for them (87.8 per cent). Most of the respondents maintain that an opportunity for their children to study the ethnic history and culture of Belarussians, and an opportunity to have the Belarussian representatives in the parliament are of great importance (69.3 per cent and 67.1 per cent, correspondingly). An opportunity to read newspapers and magazines in Belarussian is assessed by the Belarussian respondents both as important and unimportant: 45.1 per cent chose positive answers and 52.5 per cent – negative answers. With regard to opportunity to speak Belarussian in everyday life and opportunity for their children to get education in Belarussian, most of the Belarussians surveyed tend to treat them as unimportant (62.5 per cent and 66.6 per cent, correspondingly).

Most of the Belarussian respondents read Lithuania's printed newspapers, watch Lithuania's TV programs and listen to the Lithuania's radio programs on regular basis (52.8 per cent, 55.5 per cent, and 44.0 per cent, correspondingly) or rarely (35.0 per cent, 26.0 per cent, and 30.8 per cent, correspondingly). 13.0 per cent of the Belarussian sample read newspapers of Belarus regularly and 46.5 per cent – rarely, while most of the respondents watch the TV programs of the Belarus regularly (42.0 per cent) or rarely (40.8 per cent). The media resources produced by the Lithuanian Belarussians are scarce, therefore majority of the respondents indicate that they never use them as they do not have an opportunity to read the newspapers (73.0 per cent), to watch TV programs (66.5 per cent), to listen to the radio (66.5 per cent) or to browse the internet sources (66.3 per cent). Lithuania's and Belarus' internet sources are used by most of the Belarussian respondents on regular basis (47 per cent and 30.3 per cent, correspondingly) or rarely (16.3 per cent and 28.0 per cent, correspondingly).

According to the opinion of most of Belarussian respondents, there is no tension between Lithuanian Belarussians and Lithuanians (69.8 per cent) and between different religious groups in Lithuania (62.3 per cent). Still, approximately one quarter of the sample names some tension between different religious groups (27 per cent) or the Lithuanian Belarussians and Lithuanians (22.8 per cent).

According to the survey data, 17.5 per cent of the Belarussian respondents indicated that in the past 12 months they have personally felt discriminated against or harassed in Lithuania on the

basis of one or more of the following grounds: ethnic or national origin, gender, age or religion. (In total, 87 cases of experienced discrimination or harassment were reported in the survey data).

Among the grounds listed, ethnic or national origin was most frequently mentioned: 13 per cent of the Belarussians had felt discriminated against or harassed on the grounds of ethnic origin in the last 12 months. 4.5 per cent of respondents indicate experienced discrimination or harassment on the ground of age, 3.3 per cent – on gender. While analysing the social demographic data of those who have experienced discrimination, no significant patterns can be observed as the distribution of gender or age of respondents corresponds the sample with an exception of education as most share of this group (60 per cent) have the highest educational attainments.

Among the sectors of society, in which the respondents felt discriminated against or harassed because of their ethnicity in this period, the area of employment was most often mentioned. Of the Belarussians who reported discrimination in the survey (N=70), 21 respondents indicated the case 'at work' and 22 specified 'when looking for a job', 20 – 'in the health care system', 12 – 'in shops', 11 – 'on the street'. The data prompts that one respondent has indicated experienced discrimination in several areas.

While analysing the data on social trust, most Lithuanian Belarussians tend to express their higher trust to different social groups than the institutions. The great majority of the Belaussians surveyed trust the Belarussians (88.3 per cent, including answers 'trust them completely', 'rather trust them'), people in general (85.3 per cent), Lithuanian Belarussians (84.3 per cent), and Lithuanians (84.8 per cent).

Regarding the different institutions, most Lithuanian Belarussians tend to distrust them with an exception of the police and courts in Lithuania. The Lithuanian Parliament and the Lithuanian Government are the most distrusted institutions: correspondingly, 80.3 and 73.8 per cent of respondents indicate that they rather do not trust them or do not trust them at all. More than half of the Lithuanian Belarussians do not trust Lithuanian media (51.8 per cent). The police in Lithuania is the only institution listed regarding which the opinion of the Lithuanian Belarussians is rather positive than negative as 57.0 per cent indicate that they trust ant 38 per cent – do not trust the police in Lithuania. In case of the court in Lithuania, worth noticing that 15 per cent of the Belarussian sample does not have any opinion; still more respondents tend to distrust (48.6 per cent) than trust (21.8 per cent) the courts. While 57.0 per cent of the Belarussians surveyed maintain that they trust the police completely or rather trust, 38.0 per cent maintain that they rather do not trust or do not trust the police.

While analysing the survey data on respondents' interest in politics, the Belarussians surveyed express their very high interest in all areas of politics as the majority is interested in politics of Lithuania – 78.3 per cent ('very interested' and 'rather interested'), politics of Belarus – 74.5 per cent and politics related to the Lithuanian Belarussians – 73.6 per cent.

While considering the European Union, the Belarussian surveyed have rather positive than neutral image of the EU: 44.3 per cent maintain that their image is very o fairly positive, and 41.3 per cent – neutral. Those who have very negative or rather negative image of the EU comprise 10.5 per cent of the sample.

6.1.2 ENRI-BIOG results

<u>European identity</u>

The respondents described themselves as Europeans in two senses: as residents of geographical region (Europe) and/or as citizens of political unit (European Union).

If 'Europe' is understood geographically, then it is a broader category than the EU since it encompasses Russia, Ukraine and other countries that are not part of the EU but that are located in Europe and are important for the respondents. However, the categories 'European Union' and 'Europe' often inter-twinned when respondents talked of their identities and experiences.

The category of 'Europe' was related with certain values and characteristics: Christianity, advanced technologies, science. The EU was related with human rights, freedom, freedom of movement, traveling, political rights.

Most respondents were very positive about Lithuania's accession to the EU. This was related with free movement, human rights and country's security. Some respondents, however, were skeptical regarding the Lithuania's accession to the EU and argued that they are against any unions.

The nation states (Lithuania or Belarus) were often perceived as more important than the EU. The EU was described as not so relevant and important in respondent's every day lives. So when asked about relationship between European and ethnic/national identity, most respondents argued of the importance of ethnic/national identity and European identity was not so explicitly expressed.

<u>Relationship to the country of residence</u>

Most respondents who were born in Lithuania or/and whose family has deep historical roots in the country, defined Lithuania as their homeland.

Some respondents defined Belarus as their mother-country and Lithuania as a "second mother-country" or "country of residence", "country which they love as well". Belarus was defined as mother country because the respondent was born there, grew up in this country, they still have relatives in Belarus. However, years of living in Lithuania let them talk of Lithuania as a second mother country.

Some respondents argued that they feel "at home" only at some particular place of Lithuania, i.e. in Vilnius and further to the west of the country they feel as strangers. This is related to the argument that was repeated in many interviews that Vilnius is a very important historical place for Belarusians. It is important to remind that all respondents interviewed were from Vilnius themselves.

A respondent of the youngest generation considered himself as partly Lithuanian, partly Belarusian and partly Pole. The respondent argued that Lithuania is his mother-country since he was born there, but Belarus is the country he loves the most. He described himself as caring and loving Lithuania and Belarus the most.

<u>Relationship to mother country</u>

The respondents who were born in Belarus consider Belarus as their mother country. However, Lithuania was also commonly named as important country in their lives and as a country which is loved. The relations with the Belarus are mainly kept by visiting relatives. The personal connec-

tions are important bond that was connecting respondents with Belarus. Therefore the increase in visa prices after Lithuania joined the EU and Schengen area seriously affected the possibilities of some respondents to visit their relatives in Belarus and especially – possibilities for their relatives and friends from Belarus to visit them in Lithuania.

The current political regime in Belarus was important theme in discussing respondent's attitudes towards the Belarus. Part of respondents disassociated from any political questions and talked of the relations with their relatives, friends in Belarus. For a few respondents, who escaped from Belarus to Lithuania because they were afraid of regime prosecutions, the issues of political system in Belarus was of key importance and formed one of the most important axes of the interview.

Regional Identity

Big share of respondents defined eastern Lithuania (mainly Vilnius city) and western part of Belarus as one region they identify with. It was argued that western Belarus is different from the Eastern part of Belarus and historically western Belarus and eastern Lithuania are closely related. Vilnius was named as a city that has been culturally and politically important for Belarusians. Belarusians themselves were seen as important actors in the history and cultural life of Vilnius city.

The references to the common medieval history of Belarus and Lithuania, i.e. to the Grand Duchy Lithuania were made by big share of respondents. This common history was seen as making the border between western Belarus and eastern Lithuania "improper" and making this region as one single unit. It is important to note that such references to the medieval history and emphasis on the cultural closeness of eastern Lithuania and western Belarus were made by the respondents of different generations.

The general opinion of respondents who participated at ENRI-BIOG was that there is no discrimination of Belarusians in Lithuania and that there are no open ethnic conflicts between Belarusians and other ethnic groups in Lithuania.

6.1.3 ENRI-EXI results

The first expert works at a state institution in Vilnius. The other two experts are representatives of Belarusian non-governmental organizations.

Nor representative of the state institution working with ethnic minorities, nor representatives of Belarusian NGOs in Vilnius (Lithuania) could name any urgent, specific problems related with the situation of Belarusians in Lithuania.

The experts mentioned possibility for Belarusians in Vilnius to send their children to the Belarusian secondary school by the name of Pranciskus Skorina. There are Belarusian Sunday schools in Lithuania. Belarusians can visit their historical motherland.

The second expert interviewed (interview no.2), a representative of a local Belarusian organization, highlights the help that is granted to the Belarusian school in Vilnius by Belarus. The expert emphasizes the other kind of support to Lithuanian Belarusians from the side of Belarus. For example, every year twenty Belarusians from Lithuania can be accepted to the high institutions of education in Belarus for free.

The expert representing state institution (interview no. 1) says that currently one of the most important questions for different ethnic minorities in Lithuania is the question of language of instruction at the secondary schools of ethnic minorities.

The reorganization (liquidation) of the Department of National Minorities and Lithuanians Living Abroad was evaluated negativelly.

6.2 Practical recommendations

The research conducted in Lithuania encompasses quantitative and qualitative surveys. The research data is revealing on different aspects of Byelorussian minority situation in Lithuania and presents perspectives of different members of Byelorussian group. The initial data analysis is presented in the report and raises a number of questions to be further investigated. Some basic practical recommendations can be drawn at this stage.

6.2.1 Recommendations for civil society organizations

The Byelorussian ethnic group in Lithuania seems to be quite well organized. Even if there are no Belarusian political parties in Lithuania, there is a great number of Belarusian civil society organizations. Belarusian organizations vary with regard to their main aims and number of participants. Part of the organizations are mainly oriented to cultural activities, others define their main aims as struggle for human rights and democracy in Belarus.

It is of highest importance that in their work the civil society organizations seek for interethnic communication, promotion of communication between different ethnic groups, between titular nation and ethnic minorities. Cooperation between ethnic minority organizations is also of key importance in achieving or promoting certain legal or policy developments favorable for ethnic minorities.

6.2.2 Recommendations for governmental bodies and officials at local, regional, national and supra-national levels

The Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania guarantees the state support for national communities. From the 1990s until late 2009 the Department of National Minorities and Lithuanians Living Abroad under the Government of Republic of Lithuania was responsible for communication with national minorities and the implementation of various social and cultural programmes oriented to and/or developed by national minorities. At the end of 2009 this Department was closed and its functions were taken over by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Culture, and the Ministry of Education and Science. The experts interviewed pointed that due to this reorganization the state attention to the needs of ethnic minorities has decreased. The economic crisis started in 2008 and it also affected state's possibilities to provide support for the needs of ethnic minorities organizations. The reconstitution of the previous level of the state support for ethnic minority organizations, for the needs of ethnic minorities is essential in guaranteeing the development of ethnic communities in Lithuania.

6.2.3 Suggestions for future research and follow-up studies

The follow up studies should focus on the development of ethnic minority situation, interethnic communication, minority-majority communication in Lithuania influenced by political processes in Lithuania and Belarus, legal changes, economic situation and so on. For comparative reasons it were of highest importance to conduct research not only among the groups of ethnic minorities,

but among titular-Lithuanian population as well. The perspectives on ethnic situation, ethnic communications should come from "both sides", i.e. from ethnic minority and titular nation.

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