Lithuania: Research Assessment Exercise
Panel S2: Social Sciences
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Panel S2: Social Sciences

MOSTA, March 2015
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Introduction

Background
The overall objective of the research assessment exercise of the Lithuanian Higher Education and Research Institutions was:

*To provide the Lithuanian public, policy-makers and decision-makers and the academic community with the most objective picture possible of the excellence and competitiveness of Lithuanian science in comparison with global practice in the respective area of science.*

The assessment produced evidence based analytical material that carefully and in detail analyses the research excellence and competitiveness of Lithuanian research, whilst also considering its socioeconomic impact and the capacity of its research institutions. This material provides evidence for research policy making at different levels as well as enabling the research institutions involved in the process to gain a significant impetus for improving their operations. The research assessment was directed at institutions that were Higher education institutions and their constituent faculties/departments/research groups or State research institutes.

Altogether nine panels were appointed to perform the evaluation. This document is the report of Panel S2: Social Sciences.

Scope of Panel S2: Social Sciences
The Panel was asked to evaluate research in 12 Units of Assessment (UoA) using the following criteria: research quality, economic and social impact, infrastructure, research management and development potential and to score each Unit on a five point scale, namely, ranging from outstanding [5] to poor [1]. The overall objective was to benchmark research in Lithuania against international research in the Social Sciences.

Material on which the assessment was made
Each Unit participating in the evaluation provided the panel with a self-assessment report for the years 2009 - 2013. The self-assessment report contained the following categories:

1. General information about the unit of assessment (UoA)
2. Human resources
3. Research output
4. Doctoral training
5. National and international collaboration
6. Other scientific and social activities
7. SWOT analysis
8. Funding

The self-assessment also included a list of best publications which were sent to the panellists. The panel also had access to a bibliometric analysis including information on citations and international co-authors.

The evaluation by the Panel was based on the self-assessment reports prepared by the Units of Assessment themselves, bibliometrics based on the data from the Scopus database, publicly available information via the websites of the research institutions as well as site visits and meetings with the representatives of the Units of Assessment. The Panel and the organisers of the assessment exercise do not take any responsibility for the quality and accuracy of the information submitted by the individual Units of Assessment.
**Assessment procedure**

Experts from Panel S2 visited Lithuania on February 23 – 27, 2015 and during this period they made site-visits to all UoA. The final Panel S2 assessments were based on both the self-assessment reports and evidence gathered during site visits. At least two Panel members were present at each visit. Each self-assessment report was read in detail by at least two Panel members and then discussed by the whole Panel on at least two occasions, namely, before and after the Panel visits to the Units.

**Institutions involved**

Panel S2 was asked to evaluate 12 UoA within 6 institutions. The scientific disciplines of these institutions include Sociology, Psychology, Political Science, Law. The institutions were as follows:

**Universities**

1. Vytautas Magnus University
2. Vilnius University
3. Mykolas Romeris University
4. The General Jonas Žemaitis Military Academy of Lithuania

**Research Institutes**

1. Law Institute of Lithuania
2. Lithuanian Social Research Centre
Assessment of the Unit
Faculty of Social Technologies, Mykolas Romeris University

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<th>Name of the UoA</th>
<th>Faculty of Social Technologies</th>
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<tr>
<td>Name of institution being assessed</td>
<td>Mykolas Romeris University</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total no. FTE researchers</td>
<td>39,76</td>
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<tr>
<td>Composition of the Unit of Assessment (UoA)</td>
<td>Faculty of Social Technologies; Institute of Educational Sciences and Social Work; Institute of Communication and Mediation; Institute of Psychology; Institute of Digital Technologies</td>
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Quality of the research performance and impact on the scientific research discipline of the UoA: 3

The economic and social impact of the research in Lithuania: 4

The physical infrastructure of the UoA: 4

Research management (including career development and human resource management) of the UoA: 3

The development potential of the UoA: 3

OVERALL SCORE: 3

Overall score

The overall score that this UoA received was 3, which indicates that on some aspects the UoA is already at a good level on an international scale of comparison. As positive factors contributing to this, there is good quality research with publications in well-respected specialized journals, international collaboration networks, strong top research management with clear vision but also important sensitivity to bottom-up research initiatives, excellent infrastructure/facilities, and a focus on a clear and promising niche area where social sciences and information technology are sought to be combined. As negatively-weighing factors that prevented giving any higher overall score, the number of publications in good-quality international ISI-indexed journals is as of yet making up only a fraction of the total publishing volume, the publications are not yet highly cited, there is some reluctance among the staff for publishing in English, the information technology is not as strong as social sciences in the UoA, the quality of PhD students is variable, the teaching-burden of staff is high and many of them are not working full-time at the unit, and there are few post-doc researchers.
Quality of the research performance and Impact on the scientific research discipline of the UoA

While containing clear basic research aspects, the research of the unit in general seems to be more oriented towards applied research. In the UoA, the “top-down” push is towards research that utilizes information technology in social sciences research (broadly speaking, based on list of 20 most important publications provided), of which initiating/fostering collaboration with South-Korean Dongseo University (formerly of Technology) is a good example, and building research teams around multidisciplinary laboratories is another. This combination of information technology and social sciences is a clear strength. There are many good-quality international publications in respected specialized ISI-indexed journals (with impact factors of the journals as high as >5; though it has to be kept in mind in many specialized areas of social sciences impact factors between 2–3 (sometimes even >1) can be considered very good due to lower numbers of researchers in the field resulting in lower number of citations than in case of, e.g., genetics) and good examples of combination of technology and societally important research include research on sensors and algorithms to help evaluate risks of transportation of dangerous goods (Dzemydienė & Dzindzalieta, Technological and Economic Development of Economy, 16:654-671, 2010), utilization of complex network math in analyses of the role of social network position in spreading of a dangerous disease (Gyarmathy et al. AIDS Behav 18:505-510, 2014), and biometry-supported method for assessment of learning (Kaklauskas et al. Computers & Education 55, 821-833, 2010). In addition to these, the selected publications included also more traditional social sciences studies that were published in high-quality international peer-reviewed journals. Importantly, it is evident looking across publications that there is international collaboration with scientists in established institutions, which indicates that researchers of the UoA are considered viable partners in research endeavours. The UoA has also been able to compete for both domestic and international funding and given the applied nature of research there should be further opportunities to obtain funding from, e.g., Horizon 2020. What subtracts from the overall research quality is that the number of publications in respected specialized ISI-indexed journals is still relatively low (especially compared with total volume of publishing) and the work is not yet highly cited. Further, during the site-visit it was voiced that in the area of education research there are arguments against publishing in English, and that the information technology aspect is not as strong as social sciences in the UoA at this point (though they have collaborative schemes to strengthen this). During the site visit a concern was also voiced that the number of PhD students available is too low and for the utilization of some laboratory equipment there are currently no skilled personnel available with PhD student(s) sought to help fill the gap. The variability in the quality of PhD students was also evident during the site visit.

The economic and social impact of the research in Lithuania

The very high score of 4 given to this UoA on national-level societal and economical impact is to a large extent due to the largely applied nature of research and the combination of information technology and social sciences, making the UoA very competitive in this area. For example, longitudinal studies on positive youth development and research on e-democracy/government represent the type of applied research that can directly benefit policy-making and the society. The UoA researchers also have strong interactions with business enterprises (e.g., Visoriai Information Technology Park). Researchers of the unit also seem to be actively contributing to society via memberships in governmental committees. Naturally, the research in the unit also provides a very good basis for the education of professionals, which is an integral part of the societal and financial impact of universities and in the case of this UoA, there is the critical mass and research quality to achieve this goal very well.

The physical infrastructure of the UoA

The infrastructure of the UoA is modern and of good quality. Space is abundant; the library is modern and the availability of databases and computing is at a good level. A new building was being erected at the time of the assessment where multidisciplinary work will be organized around laboratories that have been
thematically determined based on bottom-up initiatives from research staff. Staff seemed to be genuinely excited about this and looking forward to working in the new facilities. While the focus in scoring is on infrastructure available at the time of assessment, in the case of MRU social technologies the new building is clearly only some months away, and contributed to the very high score of 4 given to this UoA on infrastructure. A negative remark emerged during the site visit regarding laboratory equipment, which was stated to be good but currently lacked a good leader and staff were hoping to train a PhD student to fill the need. Since the majority of research is something else than laboratory research (i.e., data collection seemed predominantly questionnaire-based and via field studies), this did not weigh very negatively on the score given but fixing this particular aspect might increase the quality/potential of research.

Research management (including career development and human resource management) of the UoA

Top research management official at the university level (i.e., vice rector Dr. Zaleniene) seemed very strong and determined with clear visions but also necessary sensitivity to bottom-up research inspirations and visions. There is a clear push by the management towards publishing in ISI-indexed journals (they have clear incentives in place for publishing in ISI-indexed journals which is very positive) and in supporting the research through development of the new multidisciplinary laboratories (though here the panel voiced some concerns about limiting the call for positions to in-house applicants). Combination of technology and social sciences is a clear and strong niche area of the UoA and the management seems to be supporting this very well. As a very important and positive deviation from what seem to be the norm in Lithuanian institutions of managing their own journals that lack international visibility, the MRU has been able to partnership key journals with Elsevier that will undoubtedly be promoted to respected international specialty area journals by the publisher. Besides these strengths, there were some weaknesses, including a lack of post-docs in the organization (though when asked about this, research staff welcomed the idea of developing the post-doc system), some PhD students expressing uncertainty about career paths (an absence of targeted career development discussions with thesis supervisors, in the case of some of the students), difficulties (expressed by staff) in finding good-quality PhD students, variable commitment by research staff to publishing in international respected ISI-indexed journals, and some laboratory equipment lacking the appropriate person with expertise and leadership to maximise research in the area. Overall, however, there is a strong, professional and insightful leadership in this UoA, which well merits the score of 3.

The development potential of the UoA

There certainly is a good pace of publishing in international ISI-indexed peer reviewer journals as well as international collaborations on scientific projects and very good management. These together hold a lot of promise in terms of research potential. There are also areas where there is a lot of potential if successful, specifically, the UoA at the time of assessment was in the midst of a mixed top-down/bottom-up organizational change that will place them in a new building with a new type of organization based on multidisciplinary laboratories that have been created based on wishes expressed by the researchers. If successful the new facilities and organizational structure can be very good for generating new types of research and providing PhD students with a strong learning environment. The launching of Elsevier-published journals is another potentially very useful action for strengthening the position of MRU_STF in international science, if the journal(s) will reach respected position within its field of research.

Conclusions and recommendations

As the overall conclusion, this UoA is a very promising one, they are pursuing a relatively novel area of research in combining social sciences and information technology, and based on their very promising publication track record and level of internalization, and strong research management they are very likely to strengthen their position as an internationally viable contributor and partner. The specific recommendations concerning this UoA are meant as advice on how to reach a higher level and are as follows: 1) the
management should continue encouraging and supporting publication in more renowned ISI-indexed journals, even with the cost of reducing the overall number of publications somewhat, 2) special emphasis should be placed on circumventing the problem of finding good-quality PhD students, 3) similarly there should be recruiting of post-docs and helping good PhD students to earn post-doc positions as career development plans, 4) teaching load of scientists should be reduced and staff should be supported so that they do not need to work part-time in other universities, 5) the problem of a lack of expertise-leadership that now prevents full utilization of some of the laboratory equipment should be addressed, 6) given the applied nature of the niche research where social sciences and technology are combined, more active pursuit of EU-funding in the future by the more internationalized staff members can be seen as potentially fruitful.
Overall score

This UoA received 3 as an overall score indicating that although the quality of research conducted in the past few years is below that of a strong international player, there are several promising characteristics in its present work and research conditions. (1) The number of publications per researcher is low and only a small proportion of them appeared in international journals. (2) The Unit has been dealing with applied research themes directly connected with the actual social-developmental problems of the country and may have a significant regional impact. (3) The Faculty has recently moved into a new building equipped with modern technologies that provides exceptionally good working conditions for their researchers. (4) The Unit trains a large number of PhD students, their methodological preparedness is good in general, but their international activity is low.

Quality of the research performance and impact on the scientific research discipline of the UoA

The self-assessment report describes a university faculty where teaching is the main mission but research also receives growing attention. The Faculty has a large staff (30.9 FTE), their work is relatively well funded
and it trains a number of PhD students (annual average: 26.7). Although the number of publications of this UoA is high (92), the paper per researcher indicator (2.2) is low, and the number of independent citations per paper is very low (0.43). The modest international impact is also mirrored in the low Hirsch index (3). Ten publications produced by the researchers of the UoA were submitted for evaluation, three book chapters and seven articles. As for the book chapters, they deal with relevant social issues (transnational returnees in Lithuania, gender studies, religion), but are not based on empirical studies. The papers present results of original studies and appeared in international journals (with varied but often decent impact factors, e.g.: Innovations in Education and Teaching International, IF=0.30; European Journal of Social Work, IF=0.35; Children And Youth Services Review, IF=1.04; International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, IF=1.99; Children And Youth Services Review, IF=1.04), but not in leading ones of the particular fields. The themes of these studies range from the university students’ wellbeing through intervention studies with control groups to large-scale surveys on preschool children’s emotional and behavioural development. The Unit is engaged in international cooperation, which focuses on teaching activities, the presence of international scholars is visible, but the impact of the cooperation on research is not strong enough. Participation in international research projects is not significant either.

The low research quality indicators may be attributed to the fact that the bulk of publishing activity is through local dissemination channels. The focal area self-identified by the UoA is specialisation in post-soviet societal changes, which certainly has potential for impact on the scientific research discipline. The Unit’s self-assessment report identifies sociology, psychology and education as the main research domains, and the sub-fields belong to important applied research areas in Lithuania (e.g. lifelong learning, e-teaching, social work and health psychology). On the other hand, several mainstream research areas of these domains are still missing from the portfolio, themes that would offer more possibilities for interdisciplinary work and international cooperation as well (e.g. social inequality, large-scale international surveys, EU and OECD projects). The statement that appears repeatedly in the self-assessment report about applied research grounded on basic research is a good sign of potential for high quality and cohesiveness of scientific efforts in the unit.

The economic and social impact of the research in Lithuania

The UoA is carrying out socially and economically important research in Lithuania; there are several research themes that are directly related to the social development of the country (citizenship, identity, migration, social policy, health education, drug abuse etc.) Research in the area of education policies is very important in helping efforts towards lifelong learning and implementation of information technology in learning, as higher quality of education at all levels is one of the most robust ways to advance the economy and social wellbeing in the long run. Research on the pre-school, primary and secondary education is not mentioned among the main research areas, although several issues studied by the researchers of the unit are rooted in the problems of school education. Mitigation of social problems, such as the research on the effectiveness of interventions like brief therapies and studies on the causes of psychosocial stress are important in preventing the derailing of especially young individuals from being proactive members of the society. In sum, several areas of research are very well justified from the perspective of economic and social impact and higher quality of research would without doubt increase the impact significantly.

As the Faculty is very active both at Masters and at PhD level of training, it has a direct impact on the socio-economic development of the country. The Faculty is well networked at the national level. Among the cooperating partners, there are several non-academic organisations (e.g. Lithuanian Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Crafts, Employers’ Confederation, Ministries of Education and Science and Social Security and Labour). The Faculty participated in a number of activities to solve actual policy problems, including the development of the national qualification system, the system for validation of non-formal and informal learning, the system of career guidance in education institutions and the implementation of the principles of the Bologna process. The Faculty reported four market-oriented research projects, three contract research
projects, and it has initiated the establishment of a Public Institution (by two master students), which is related to research in psychology.

**The physical infrastructure of the UoA**

The UoA has a very good physical infrastructure, its building has recently been renewed, and most of its furniture and ICT facilities are new. The computer and computing infrastructure and the other equipment are in good physical condition and represent the latest generations of the instruments. In the self-assessment report there were contradictory remarks about the lack of certain key statistical software, but the site visit proved that at the time of the visit the software packages were already available and in use. The researchers of the Faculty were satisfied with the availability of the software and the PhD students mentioned the application of the most recent methods of data analysis (including structural equation modelling). The Faculty has a modern library with quiet reading and working spaces and good library services, all major publication data-bases are accessible. The computer classrooms are also equipped well with the latest generation of hardware and software, and there are good telecommunication facilities in the building, including dedicated classrooms for webinars, teleconferencing and distance learning. Beyond the standard ICT infrastructure, software packages, and library services, the Faculty has some further specific research instruments, including biofeedback system Nexus and a driving simulator. Technical staff to operate the infrastructure is available and is well trained.

**Research management (including career development and human resource management) of the UoA**

The research strategy of Faculty is derived from the strategy of the university, and covers the period of 2012-2020. A large number of Faculty members participate in several international academic activities and their experiences help designing and maintaining a good research management system. They identify their international positions well and have clear intentions to improve them. The strengths in the research management include striving to attract best experts as staff or post-docs. Students at each level of training are encouraged to participate in the research projects. Doctoral students are regularly employed as Lectures, Assistants or Junior Researchers (22 of them had such a position in 2013.) To improve the preparation of the young scientist, the Faculty develops the internationality of the existing doctoral programs. On the other hand, there seems to be lack of effort in the self-evaluation report towards international highest-level publishing of research results and support for acquisition of relevant skills is a somewhat surprising and clear weakness in research management.

The Faculty consists of a number of institutes and research units representing several disciplines. Although they deal with interdisciplinary research themes, only modest cooperation is observable in practice between the researchers of different units. Although the Faculty has implemented a strategy to increase the cooperation between the different disciplines by organizing the research activities into clusters, financial resources are allocated to clusters, the current work still seems to be fragmented, and the efforts are divided between too many different small-scale studies. The Faculty reports several further measures to improve the cooperation between the disciplines, including organizing inter-field research seminars. The faculty has a well-defined salary policy that takes into account scientific achievements as well as organizational and educational activities. Despite all positive measures to improve the quality of scientific output, at present the unit seems to be still far from the optimal situation where there would be enough strong internationally recognised scientists in their respective scientific disciplines working together as needed and supported by the institution in carrying out their research efforts (i.e. support to “bottom-up” driven research, as opposed to “centralized” top-down organization of research).

**The development potential of UoA**

Concerning the developmental potential of this institution, there are positive as well as negative signals. Social science research is relatively well funded at this university, and the researchers receive support from
international programs as well. The proportion of documented international co-authors of the publications is below average, and there are few partners from countries with well-established social science research culture. On the other hand, the self-assessment report presents a large number of international cooperation, and only in few cases are definite research themes and activities are named. Making the collaboration with these international partners more intensive and more fruitful (in terms of co-authored publications) may improve the scientific productivity of the Faculty. The existing international partnerships indicate that the researchers have the skills necessary to participate in international competition; these skills might be better utilized. A great majority of the PhD dissertations have been written in Lithuanian; increasing the proportion of works written in English would be a further area of the implementation of the planned internationalization.

The self-assessment report notes several possibilities to initiate new research directions and several ways young students and young researchers are supported; these potentials could be more actively exploited in order to improve the scientific output of the Faculty. The Unit has clear vision about the future development and has definite plans to intensify its international visibility. The UoA realistically identifies its strengths and same weaknesses have been listed in the SWOT analyses (e.g. a low number of publications in high impact journals) which were found on the basis of the scientometric data. Another weakness mentioned in the report (poor English skills) was not observed during the visit, the administrators, researchers and other personnel (librarians) demonstrated a good command of English, especially the PhD students. The threats were also identified, but some of them (e.g. the stagnating or decreasing funding of social sciences both in Lithuania and in the EU) cannot be managed at the institutional level, however, the management is aware of them and tries to minimize the risks.

Overall, the excellent physical infrastructure of the UoA seems to be a plus when thinking about the future development potential. This infrastructure may both attract more international scholars, researchers and students, and may provide good environment for more intensive and productive research activities. The large number of PhD students also contributes to the good developmental potential.

The unit certainly has the potential to become an international contributor in science if the necessary steps are taken to support and improve skills in international publishing and to develop the research careers of young scientists. Realizing that a lot of research carried out in the unit has the potential to be published in prestigious international journals would be an important precondition for realizing the development potential of the UoA. In sum, at present the UoA is not a solid international player, but has the potential to become one.

**Conclusions and recommendations**

The Faculty is a strong national player in the field of applied social sciences and its research and the expertise of the faculty members help facilitate the social development of the country. The modernized physical infrastructure is promising for the future and with a further improved management and international promotion the visibility of the Unit could significantly be increased.

Publishing in international journals would be the most important area of development since this is the way the research findings become a part of scientific knowledge and the UoA researchers would become better known as potential collaborators internationally. Relating the research themes to the social-developmental issues of the region is a promising endeavour, but embedding these works with great local relevance in larger/global research trends would improve the international relevance and acceptance of these works alike. The research management could take further efforts to find better focused research areas, unifying fragmented smaller studies into larger multidisciplinary projects, increasing the internal cooperation between the researchers, sharing methodological and data-analytical experiences and expertise may help to improve the quality of the research work and make the results better publishable in top journals. Acquiring a research culture already practiced in other countries and at other disciplines in the same country, in which fewer but more prestigious (WoS/Scopus indexed) publications, often written by the joint effort of several co-authors,
are highly appreciated would also help. Intensifying the international activity (conference attendance, participation in international workshops) of young researchers and PhD students, more sabbatical periods with international visits for the senior scientists may be vital from the perspective of improving research quality.
**VMU the directions of the science of law, Vytautas Magnus University**

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<th>Name of the UoA</th>
<th>VMU the directions of the science of law</th>
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<td>Total no. FTE researchers</td>
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<td>Composition of the Unit of Assessment (UoA)</td>
<td>Faculty of Law; Department of Private Law; Department of Public Law</td>
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**Quality of the research performance and Impact on the scientific research discipline of the UoA**

- **The economic and social impact of the research in Lithuania**: 3
- **The physical infrastructure of the UoA**: 4
- **Research management (including career development and human resource management) of the UoA**: 3
- **The development potential of the UoA**: 3

**OVERALL SCORE**: 3

**Overall score**

The overall score of this unit for research activity is 3. VMU – Law Faculty belongs to a set of very dynamic and internationally oriented academic units. It does not have a long history but has already been able to gain a reputation as a solid and reliable partner in some international academic networks, in spite of the fact that so far its research activity has not reached adequate international level. The UoA is constantly improving its infrastructure and actively supports young scholars.

**Quality of the research performance and impact on the scientific research discipline of the UoA**

Assessing the quality of research of the UoA one has to bear in mind that legal sciences in principle have to address a local audience. But at the same time there is a need to be present in the international arena. It is obvious that the UoA understands these needs very well. The importance of research conducted by its staff is unquestionable. The unique topic of specialization of the UoA is legal ethics – a very important subject indeed. During the last couple of years many interesting international conferences dealing with that subject have been organized. The Unit publishes well-recognized scholarly journals. There is good evidence of high quality research being a product of joint research projects. Publications presented for review are in English.
Some of them are rather educational or training oriented but some do represent very solid research work. Like in other academic legal sciences institutions in Lithuania there are no publications in mainstream international legal journals. During the period under review a relatively small number of articles has been published in journals indexed in WoS and Scopus. It has to be pointed out that from the methodological point of view the majority of the presented articles are of a descriptive rather than analytical character. Also the number of doctoral students enrolled (8) is low. So far only two doctoral theses have been defended. Nevertheless, the UoA has managed to develop a growing number of international contacts. It occupies a strong national position and gradually is under process to establish itself as a competent partner in the international academic community.

**The economic and social impact of the research in Lithuania**

So far the national level impact of the research of the UoA to the Lithuanian economy and society is limited. There is a strong competition as far as legal sciences in Lithuania are concerned. The VDU, as a relatively young institution, does not have the same opportunities as its older, Vilnius based competitors. Nevertheless the UoA has managed to gain a strong national position in two areas – legal ethics and law on education. It is also pursuing regular contacts and interactions with local legal professions – judges, prosecutors, attorneys, public officials, police, etc. It has also managed to attract some international scholars to undertake research on the Lithuanian legal system and therefore contributes to the improvement of that system.

**The physical infrastructure of the UoA**

The VDU has managed to create an excellent, internationally comparable research environment. The infrastructural resources that have been put in place can fully support the future development of the unit. Reading rooms and conferences rooms are very well equipped. Scholars have access to all relevant databases. Also the library offers a great number of books, periodicals, documents, etc.

**Research management (including career development and human resource management) of the UoA**

The research strategy of the UoA is linked to the cluster “Research on Impact of Globalisation to law”, with a unique field of specialization of legal ethics. The majority of scholars employed at the Faculty are involved in this cluster. At the same time two trends are visible. One is to attract foreign scholars to stay at the faculty not only for educational but also research activities. The second trend concerns young researchers in particular PhD students. While the number of these students is still not very high, their quality is exceptional. The Faculty has managed to ensure that all of them are spending a considerable amount of time at different foreign academic institutions. It is obvious that the management of the Faculty is able to provide a research environment that is comparable with globally recognized academic institutions. It certainly has a strategic resources planning including human research management. Young scholars have a chance to pursue their academic carrier. It is not easy to win competitions with legal professions as far as young brilliant law graduates are concerned. Nevertheless it seems that VDU has managed to attract many of them.

**The development potential of the UoA**

VDU – Law Faculty is a very dynamic and creative academic institution. It is pursuing an interesting strategy aimed at specializing at certain not well covered so far in Lithuania areas – legal ethics and attracting young, internationally oriented scholars. The crucial problem is possibility to acquire more international and national research funds. The Faculty will need also to increase memberships in international networks and organizations. However mobility actions as well as the presence of a growing number of international partners, projects with foreign academics and participation in international events are positive symptoms of a potential for development in a right direction. However due to its excellent research facilities and proper human resources management, the potential of the Faculty to strengthen its position in the international scientific community looks very promising.
Conclusions and recommendations

Based on presentations by the VDU – Law Faculty, information and discussions held with management and researchers, the conclusion can be drawn that the UoA is an important and solid national player and is in a process to improve its international standings in a community of legal sciences. It should be encouraged to pursue the policy of developing international contacts through invitations of foreign academics and sending scholars to foreign academic institutions. Also contacts with legal professions should be maintained and strengthened. More efforts should be made to publish in journal indexed in WoS and Scopus. Researchers should be encouraged to adopt more innovative and analytical approaches in their publications.
### Faculty of Law, Mykolas Romeris University

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<tr>
<th>Name of the UoA</th>
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#### Quality of the research performance and Impact on the scientific research discipline of the UoA

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<tr>
<td>The economic and social impact of the research in Lithuania</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research management (including career development and human resource management) of the UoA</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>The development potential of the UoA</td>
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**OVERALL SCORE** 3

### Overall score

The overall score of 3 recognises the good potential of MRU-TF but also warns about its still-low international visibility and low level of research management. MRU-TF does not seem to have its own specific research objectives and strategy for the medium or long term and fully relies on the MRU general research strategies. There is a lack of integration of the research outputs into international standards and best practices. Lack of strong leadership and ambition at Faculty level also poses a significant challenge. On the other hand, MRU-TF offers an attractive infrastructure.

### Quality of the research performance and Impact on the scientific research discipline of the UoA

Since it was established in 2004, and although being a teaching and professionally oriented university, MRU-TF focuses on promoting interdisciplinary research as a priority. It is clearly a strong national player whose research is only sometimes internationally recognised. The total number of SCOPUS articles for 2009-2013 is 48. The handful of SCOPUS publications is actually reasonably highly cited in the comparative Lithuanian context. MRU-TF is the fifth of eleven UoA, with an H index of 5. This might be considered...
high research productivity but surprisingly only a small proportion of the published work appears in international peer-reviewed outlets. Besides, compared to the total number of FTE researchers (43,8) it only makes a very low number of publications per researcher (1,1). The list of publications quoted is a mix of textbooks for students, annotated comments and articles in national and international publications. They are mainly in Lithuanian with very few in English. There are no publications in mainstream international legal journals and very few of them (seven publications with international co-authors) involve any international collaboration even if published in English or through English editors. In addition, the scientific approach in the submitted publications is quite traditional from the perspective of methodology and content, and not particularly outstanding or innovative. The descriptive dimension prevails against the analytical one and the very limited international doctrine cited is surprising. However, it must be taken into consideration that since three of the five submitted publications are in Lithuanian, it was only possible to access their English summary. Therefore, the assessment may be incomplete. Those three were published in a national journal specialised in philosophy, with no international relevance in the area of law. Two other articles were published in recognised international outlets (Baltic Yearbook of International Law from Brill, and the European Journal of Health Law from Martinus Nijhoff), but actually they are the only international publications submitted. Faculty staff arranges and participates regularly in international scientific conferences and seminars, and gives lectures and presentations in different international scientific conferences abroad. However, this presence is limited to a handful of researchers. We learned in our site visit that MRU-TF submitted several unsuccessful international applications and on-going projects are still only national. To this it should be added that there is rather limited international external recognition for researchers because there are not many publications in English for an international audience and the staff only have a few emerging international collaborative outputs. Therefore there is a lack of integration of the research outputs into research following international standards and best practices. MRU-TF coordinates the publication of the peer-reviewed research journal Jurisprudence and researchers are encouraged to publish there. Starting in 2015, MRU-TF coordinates the publication of the peer-reviewed research journal International Comparative Jurisprudence. The priority given to certain internal publications that have quite a limited international visibility may discourage publication in a more demanding high-quality international peer-reviewed journals. The number of doctoral students enrolled (282) and doctoral thesis defended (82) during the period of reference, although declining, is still relevant. This shows a high PhD training capacity of the Faculty. Nevertheless the number of young researchers and post-docs is low.

The economic and social impact of the research in Lithuania

MRU-TF has a very good level of presence in national institutions (political, professional and academic bodies). Research outputs are therefore relevant for Lithuanian society: MRU-TF is quite visible in the professional field and its members seem to have the ability to influence the agenda of those bodies (Parliament, Government cabinets, courts of justice, Research Council, Lithuanian Bioethics Council, Lithuanian Centre for Human Rights etc.) Actually, the Faculty contributes not only to the analysis of the field of law but also to the professional practice of law itself. While MRU-TF mainly addresses national priorities through its research activities, there is also some relevant interaction with international institutions through projects and consortia (for instance, with members of the Cross Disciplinary Doctoral Programme in Contemporary Russian and Chinese Economic Law in a Global Economy; or members of the Joint Master degree programme EU Law and Governance, through the Odysseus Academic Network on Immigration and Asylum or the EU Free movement of Workers’ Observatory, etc.. Most of the academics are at the same time pursuing professional careers, which allows the MRU-TF to retain teaching staff that would otherwise be induced to leave for better salaried work. However, this also means that most of the academic staff are employed on a part-time basis. On the other hand, there is clearly an excellent doctoral training programme and the Faculty thus contributes significantly to the training of lawyers at the highest level and reproduction of legal science in Lithuania.
The physical infrastructure of the UoA: 4

MRU has modern infrastructure available and there are two more new buildings planned for 2015. There is a good level of resources available at the general MRU Library (220000 publications, 200 periodicals subscribed, 44 data bases), plus good reading rooms accessible to researchers and PhD students. University computer and electronic resources are also outstanding. However, there is still some need of additional funding to be devoted to paper copies of some essential books. The Faculty of Law offers infrastructure that is sufficient for performing high-quality research relevant in both national and international contexts. There are no individual offices for researchers, but large reading rooms, separate from students’ reading rooms - most in the library- that are properly equipped, especially for the use of electronic media and access to databases. However, it is noteworthy that – during the site visit – these rooms were practically empty, since it seems that most researchers work at home. This hinders the creation of an academic community for researchers and can be discouraging for younger researchers.

Research management (including career development and human resource management) of the UoA

The research strategy at MRU is quite centralised. It seems to be well directed and well managed, including human resources, by the rectorate team. The team has a clear picture about their future developmental directions. In such a framework, MRU promotes a strong interdisciplinary orientation of its research. This orientation was established by the Senate through the programme “Societal innovations for global growth” with five major research programmes: justice, security and human rights, social technologies, national sustainable growth in the context of globalisation, improving the quality of life and advancing employment opportunities, continuity and change of values in global society. However, this seems to be a top-down trend and it is not evident how this is perceived in a bottom-up scenario by the researchers, who do not take part in the process of strategy’s elaboration. There is no specific research strategy on concentration of key topics or research priorities within those areas at MRU-TF level, neither an analysis on how to concentrate the research effort where this is the most promising at Faculty level. Nor is there a policy for publishing in mainstream international outlets or for designing the researchers’ stays abroad and visits to the LT by international researchers. This is aggravated because of the lack of leadership and ambition at the Faculty level. Besides that, it is not clear how such an interdisciplinary orientation is aligned with the MRU-TF research capacity and how it really affects the identification of priority research areas by the researchers themselves. PhD students were unaware of any guidelines on interdisciplinarity in the supervision of their studies but indicated some interest towards the matter. Actually most researchers seem to work in quite an isolated environment; there are no scientific interactions between them; there is nothing similar to a research community but individual researchers; therefore even interdisciplinarity amongst the different areas of law seems difficult to achieve. That makes the Faculty’s research planning surprisingly modest and limited and seems close to being a restatement of its core areas of strength. Concerning managerial aspects of research activities, there is a Research Centre at MRU that helps with technical support and even offers specific training for researchers. There is some support for students’ research activities (4.600€ in 2013) and for young researchers’ organisations. In 2013, 48 Ph.D. students were employed as lectures, assistants or junior researchers.

There is a reward system in place for recognising research activity of Faculty members (fixed component and variable component of the salary) that should help to promote research activity amongst the academic staff. Nevertheless, because academic staff are required to focus on students, their activity is predominantly teaching and professional oriented. The high number of lecturers (136) and low number of researchers (3 juniors) points to a prioritisation of teaching and professional work above research activities. Staff are often overloaded with teaching, with too little time for research. Moreover, for some of them, the university is not their main job; they are pursuing a professional career and are part time employees. This very same reason, however, allows MRU-TF to retain teaching staff that would otherwise be induced to leave for better salaried work. There is little sense of how any of the weaknesses or threats identified in the SWOT analysis might be
addressed or alleviated or even managed and there is little sense of how the Faculty might go about enhancing the international standing that one would expect it to be able to achieve.

**The development potential of UoA**

According to SAR, MRU has research objectives for the next years, although those are defined in a very broad manner. In this context, the potential of MRU-TF is rather strong, but the existing research strategy is insufficiently developed to give a clear sense of how the Faculty will promote itself more on the international stage, encouraging for instance a higher proportion of staff to strive to publish in international peer-reviewed outlets and to seek competitive international funding for their research projects. Of special attention is the lack of specific scientific objectives and research themes at the Faculty level directed at improving the UoA’s impact on the international scientific community. In the absence of such a strategy there is a danger that the potential remains partially unrealised, in spite of favourable conditions (such as the existence of reasonable resources, the medium age of the active scientific staff and the involvement of managerial staff). However, bearing in mind the fact the Faculty has a relatively short history its performance is impressive. Internationalisation is supposed to be one of the characteristic features of MRU-TF in the future. The two joint doctoral programmes, some mobility actions as well as the presence of some international partners, international projects, and participation in international events are good signs of a potential for development. The large number of PhD students trained at this faculty is also very promising, but more theses might be written in English. On the other hand, MRU seems to be quite active in acquiring funding from abroad although the volume is still insufficient (126.000€ in 2013) and it is recommendable to attract more competitive and non-competitive funding.

**Conclusions and recommendations**

As the overall conclusion MRU-TF has a promising potential as an international partner in the future. Currently it has low internationally visibility and still suffers from low level of research management. There is a lack of integration of the research outputs into international standards and best practices. However, it is likely to strengthen its position in the near future.

There are several aspects that may be further improved. First of all, a research strategy, including key topics or research priorities, planning the international outlet of the project’s results and including a publication policy and actions to encourage mobility actions from and towards MRU-TF are needed. The creation of a research community inside the MRU-TF, perhaps through regular joint activities such as seminars or workshops, can provide the necessary interactions to produce a more collaborative dynamic. MRU has quite a good PhD programme, but a very low number of young researchers and post-docs. It could help to budget some money to promote young researchers and post-docs activities aligned with strategic goals and the creation of internationally trained researchers. Young researchers with potential to open new research opportunities should be encouraged. It is also necessary to continue the efforts to develop collaboration with foreign colleagues and to increase membership in international networks and organizations in order to improve the international profile.
Faculty of Philosophy (2), Vilnius University

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**Quality of the research performance and Impact on the scientific research discipline of the UoA**

The economic and social impact of the research in Lithuania

The physical infrastructure of the UoA

Research management (including career development and human resource management) of the UoA

The development potential of the UoA

**OVERALL SCORE**

3

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**Overall score**

The overall score of this unit was 3, which is a combination of various factors. First of all, it has to be stated that there is good quality research with international collaboration networks, insightful management, good critical mass, as well as very impressive PhD students. Given these, there clearly is potential to reach a higher level in the future (though the overall score per se reflects the present state only). Lack of space in the buildings of the UoA is a concern as well as an apparent lack of desire by some of the staff for publishing their results in high impact international outlets.

**Quality of the research performance and Impact on the scientific research discipline of the UoA**

Based on joint publication history in high-quality specialized ISI-indexed journals, conveyed by the self-assessment report, publications provided, and bibliometric data, multiple researchers of the UoA have active and productive international collaborations with colleagues in respected institutions (e.g. University of Manchester UK and University of New Orleans USA). The site visit confirmed this impression of internationally relevant high-quality research in the UoA by more than a few of the researchers and it is easy
to foresee that that the quality and impact will continue to rise in the future. This is especially the case for the psychologists working in the Unit, who constitute about half of the UoA. Going from basic to applied research, in the area of experimental (“general”) psychology, there is high-level specialized basic research on human perceptual systems that is made possible by the availability of laboratory equipment resourcefully built on site. Results representing this work as included in the RAE materials were published in *J Optical Society of America A* in 2009 by Vaitkevicius *et al.* (vol. 26, p. 1553-1563) and during the site visit it became evident that visual perception research is one of the focus areas in the UoA. Another strong area of research involves analyses of child-parent behavioural interactions and includes very interesting results published in specialized journals such as *European Child & Adolescent Psychiatry* by Pakalniskiene and colleagues (in 2011, vol 20, p. 261-269). Further, there are high-quality research efforts in the area of clinical psychology on interventions that involve collaboration with for example scientists in Zurich. As another area of applied psychology, one that is directly very relevant to society, there are efforts in the UoA in collaboration with pioneering institutes in Minnesota to translate and develop psychological tests (clinical, neuropsychological as well as organizational) for Lithuanian psychologists, with also the goal to distribute (at first nationally and regionally) the developed tests and questionnaires. In the areas of education and social work, whilst not as strong in terms of research quality and internationalization as the Psychology Dept., worthwhile and policy relevant research appears to be carried out. Overall, the PhD students in this UoA were rather impressive and it is easy to see that some of them have the capability, given mentoring within the UoA and across the international collaborative network, to become scientists performing at the top level internationally. Visits abroad are relatively frequent (around 40) as well as – in comparative terms – international visits to UoA (22). 46 per cent of articles in Scopus (2009-2013) were co-authored with international authors, which is relatively high. All this implies that UoA has created an international research culture. What prevented giving a higher score of 4 at this point is that the volume of publishing in respected specialized journals was still lower than in leading institutions internationally, the work is not yet highly cited, and there was lack of publications in leading specialized journals and/or high-impact multidisciplinary journals. In addition, UoA has not been successful in applying international R & D funding in 2011-2013. And while the number of memberships in editorial boards is impressive (more than 80), the share of international journals is still low.

**The economic and social impact of the research in Lithuania**

The national level impact of the research of the UoA to the Lithuanian economy and society more generally comes through multiple activities. The efforts carried out in the UoA provide psychologists in Lithuania with professional tests, both in the form of translation and standardization of established tests and development of new tests and questionnaires. Clinical psychology (e.g., intervention) research also has potential applicability locally. Nationally very important research is carried out by the social-work and education scientists, and they are also very active in their participation as experts in various policy-shaping committees that support legislative work in Lithuania. Whilst there is a lot of basic research in the UoA that has less of a direct impact on Lithuanian economy and society, the research in the unit provides a very good basis for the education of professionals, which is an integral part of the societal and financial impact of universities and in the specific case of this UoA, there certainly is the critical mass and quality of research to achieve this at high level.

**The physical infrastructure of the UoA**

Although the UoA is very centrally located (which is an advantage), the lack of office space was glaring, as evidenced during the site-visit. Within these strict limits, the research management has been innovative by assigning office space based on grant funding obtained by research teams. Nonetheless, the lack of space can be seen as hindering creativity (since many of the staff have only the option to work from home this reduces spontaneous interactions), makes it impossible to expand and strengthen laboratories, reduces possibilities for meeting with students, and thus overall inhibits realizing higher research quality in the future. Library
facilities and database availability seems to be at relatively high level at Vilnius University even when looking at international scale, and the laboratory facilities, while relatively modest compared to best international units, have been utilized impressively in scientific efforts by the UoA researchers. While the relevant software was available, concerns were voiced about the unnecessary bureaucracy and time delays in acquiring specialist programmes and an overall lack of personal computers. According to the management of the UoA, some classroom space may in the future be converted to office space for researchers due to the declining number of students (resulting from the overall demographic situation in the country), but in the meantime this very acute lack of space poses a serious limiting factor on activities and expansion. The panel members who participated in the site visit have never before witnessed such an acute shortage of space and personal computers in any other academic institution. The low score of 2 for this UoA is due to this specific reason.

Research management (including career development and human resource management) of the UoA

The research management at the top level of the UoA is very dynamic and has clear visions and methods for managing and directing the research to attain better quality of science. Their approach is one where they encourage researchers to form teams based on their research ideas and complementary expertise and apply for funds from, e.g., the Lithuanian research council (which for the rather strong basic research initiatives in the UoA is a better suited mechanism than EU funding instruments that are more applied-nature contract research). Furthermore, as an incentive, successful applicants are rewarded with office space, something that is very limited in this UoA. There are also clear incentives for publishing in ISI-indexed journals (with a relatively good track record in this, with research results published in well-recognized specialized journals).

The research management also has plans for converting classrooms (the need for which is declining due to demographics) to office space for researchers, which is a practical and proactive financial decision. These aspects are clearly among the strengths of the UoA. As a danger/challenge to the research of the unit, the LRC has been planning to reduce funding to “bottom-up” research initiatives (and fund more research in specific theme areas), but the management seems to be also aware of this, which is a good sign. Further, gifted active students get to utilize international collaboration networks that already are in place at a relatively high level and a larger proportion of research staff are working full-time in this UoA than in equivalent institutions in the country. The issues that prevented the panel from awarding a higher score than 3 (which is, already, a high score, given this is an international comparison) are A) the language policy indicated in the self-assessment form for fluency in Lithuanian when recruiting to leading scientific positions (e.g., professors). This requirement is particularly odd as research-teaching staff indicated that up to 50% of the UoA’s teaching could easily be provided in English, especially in the area of psychology), b) on-going “resistance” among some of the UoA’s researchers to publishing in ISI-indexed journals, c) some lack of clarity amongst junior staff about career-path requirements and options, d) the teaching load is calculated without taking into account preparation time for lectures (and teaching loads seem too high from the perspective of the obvious potential to attain stronger position in international science for the UoA, the heavier teaching load of assistant and associate professors relative to full professors is also problematic). In sum, however, the positive aspects of research management could be exported to other research units and institutions in Lithuania, and the score given here should be interpreted as a strong 3.

The development potential of the UoA

Given that there already are some publications in high-quality specialized journals and that (based on observations during the site visit) there seems to be very relevant research and high-level international collaboration in multiple areas, there clearly is the potential to attain an even higher level of research quality (i.e., a score of 4 instead of 3) should they continue to do things the right way and not be hindered by changes in funding schemes towards less bottom-up funding from the LRC, which was a justified concern voiced during our site-visit. Greater participation in EU funded calls is in order, though the UoA has already
applied, as an associate PI, in two Horizon 2020 calls. The desire to be ‘the EU partner’ for such schemes is, in the panels view, fulfillable. As further positives for future potential, the researchers are more full-time in this UoA than in some other places in Lithuania and the research management seems to be doing the right things within the constraints imposed by the infrastructure and resources. Some new research equipment has been purchased recently that will enable measurement of cortisol levels from saliva samples, which is a very important addition to methodology in research involving stress factors. It is easy to envision ways how this methodology will be potentially usable across the UoA’s developmental, clinical, education, and social work research. The very high quality of some of the PhD students, as evidenced by their English skills and being active in utilizing the international collaborative networks of the UoA in their research, is yet another strength. Lack of space is a serious question mark that reduces future potential, as this means that laboratories cannot be expanded, it might be very difficult to accommodate returning post-docs in the future, and there is lack of spontaneous interactions, since some of the staff have no place to work on the premises. This reduces the potential that is offered by the critical mass. Based on the self-assessment report, it was not evident that the research management of UoA has succeeded in developing a clear and systematic research strategy about research priority areas and effective measures to reach the goals. The standing policy of recruiting only Lithuanian-speaking staff is yet another limiting factor on future potential that could be easily fixed by relaxing this requirement to the extent that it is possible. As a further concern for future potential, some of the research staff did not seem to be committed to even attempting to disseminate their research results in credible outlets (i.e., better ISI-indexed journals or well-renowned publishers in case of areas where monographs are the primary form of dissemination).

Conclusions and recommendations

As an overarching conclusion it seems to be clear that a lot of things are being done in the right way in this institution and that they are well on track to become a solid international player in their area(s) of research, in fact, in certain areas they already are an important part of the international scientific community. The specific recommendations concerning this UoA are meant as advice on how to reach an even higher level and are as follows: 1) the management should continue encouraging and supporting publication in ISI-indexed journals and, importantly, in currently stronger areas support efforts for even higher-impact publications (i.e., towards more fundamental advances in the area of research communicated at higher levels of ambition). This will inevitably reduce the number of publications overall but should be accepted since the payoffs of publishing in more respected outlets are manifold and the skills to succeed are clearly in place, 2) the criteria for fluency in Lithuanian in recruiting professors should be relaxed to open the door for international researchers, 3) the teaching-load should be reorganized to allow more possibilities to focus on high-level research, the teaching loads should additionally be equalised further across the academic hierarchy 4) the glaring lack of office space should be solved somehow, 5) More PhD students should be encouraged to write their thesis in English and/or the possibility of paper based theses considered, 6) post-doc system seems to be relatively underdeveloped and thus this is a very potential area of improvement in terms of career development and internationalization, 7) as an overall policy-related comment, it is foreseeable that possible shift in funding instruments by LRC away from funding “bottom-up” research will likely hinder progress by the scientifically stronger units such as this UoA from achieving the next level.
Institute of International Relations and Political Science, Vilnius University

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Quality of the research performance and Impact on the scientific research discipline of the UoA: 2

The economic and social impact of the research in Lithuania: 4

The physical infrastructure of the UoA: 3

Research management (including career development and human resource management) of the UoA: 2

The development potential of the UoA: 3

OVERALL SCORE: 3

Overall score

The overall score reflects performance across the categories of assessment, which ranged from 2 to 4. It should be noted that this was not a particularly strong 3 and the unit needs to make significant progress in international research, where it is underperforming relative to both its potential and resources. The institute is clearly a key player in both the political science and policy making communities in Lithuania, it makes important contributions to Lithuanian society and governance and attracts top quality students at both undergraduate and graduate level, however it is underperforming in terms of its scientific research impact.

Quality of the research performance and Impact on the scientific research discipline of the UoA

To make a mark on the global scene, the Unit needs to publish far more in leading and top (ISI Thomson Reuters) journals in the disciplines of international relations and political science, without forgetting internationally renowned publishers of monographs. Many of the top 20 publications listed (almost half) are in Lithuanian and this rules out any international readership. None of the four papers submitted as part of the
exercise was particularly theoretically innovative and most could be considered applications of existing theory and methods to the Lithuanian/Baltic case and none were in what would be considered mid to top tier political science/IR outlets. Academics appear to be publishing in in-house journals, of which there are four, which is rather a lot for a unit of this size. Unfortunately, there is no evidence of publication in leading generalist journals in the discipline of political science/IR (though two respectable Economics journal publications were provided to the panel). Even the *Journal of Baltic Studies* currently ranks 41/64 in Area Studies (within Area Studies one might expect publications in Post-Soviet Studies, which is more widely regarded), *Democratization* ranks 87/157 in Political Science. Given the focus on electoral and party politics, one would hope to see publications in sub-field journals such as *Electoral Studies*, *Party Politics* etc. While recognising funding restrictions, attendance at international conferences in the discipline needs to be improved, in terms of overall visibility of the unit. While there have been a handful of appearances at ECPR events, there is no evidence of regular attendance at other major international conferences in the discipline such as APSA, ISA or EPSA. More funding for such events would be desirable, although there is a small pot of money each year for attending international conferences. The unit has good international connections, though not necessarily with the very best national universities (however links with places such as UCL, LSE, Science-Po should be strengthened), but there is clear potential and ambition here. More research collaboration is needed: the number of articles with international co-authors is very low (1, in Scopus 2009-2013). There have been reasonable achievements to date in EU funding schemes (e.g. COST) and there is great potential for further expansion here, but annual average of the R&D funding from international programmes is still low (33,200€ in 2011-2013). Doctoral students indicated that they were discouraged from completing PhD theses in English, even though this was technically permissible and the expressed wish of the student(s) in question. The majority of theses continue to be completed in Lithuanian, which limits dissemination of results internationally. It should be noted that the panel was very impressed by the quality of PhD students at the Unit and there clearly is great potential to raise the international profile of the UoA with this particular cohort.

**The economic and social impact of the research in Lithuania**

As the oldest university in the country and having the additional advantage of being based very centrally in the capital, it is not surprising that many members of the UoA have a significant media profile and regularly serve on public committees as experts, for instance members of staff are members of the Lithuanian Progress Council and the Council of Higher Education. The institution is clearly an important player in Lithuanian policy-making and regularly writes policy briefs for government departments and agencies (e.g. a Foreign Ministry funded project entitled “Public Debates on European Identity”). Staff members are in high demand as experts in both the public and private sector (e.g., 1200 civil servants instructed for Lithuanian EU Presidency). Visibility in the mass media is high; staff members even have contracts with TV stations. That being said memberships in committees and scientific advisory boards of governmental bodies and business companies seems to be confined to a handful of key members of the department and contracts with nongovernmental agencies are limited. Overall the national policy and political focus of the Unit should not come at the cost of international research output. The UoA runs the risk of complacency due to its ‘pole position’ with the movers and shakers in Lithuanian policy-making. The Institute is a big player in a small pond, rather than making an impact on the international research stage.

**The physical infrastructure of the UoA**

The Unit is based in its own renovated historic building in the heart of Vilnius and facilities are, on the whole, quite good. The building has its own seminar and meeting rooms and computing labs for the exclusive use of students and staff of the Institute. Office-space is generally shared by researchers and while reasonably commodious, there was an expressed desire for more individual offices. Also, more frequent updating of computing hardware is required. Access to the required statistical packages (SPSS, R etc.) and electronic resources (e-journals) was generally good, though the JSTOR suite is not as extensive as some
would like (unfavourable comparisons were made with Western European University libraries). The Unit has its own library space (and reading room) with an annual book budget for the subject area, though the range of books in stock is still limited when compared with a top-flight international research library. At present there is no Inter Library Loan facility, which was problematic for doctoral students completing theses that had a historic focus. However, the students do have access to other libraries in the VU system.

**Research management (including career development and human resource management) of the UoA**

The University is in the process of developing a strategic plan but it not yet clear if it will be aligned with the research priorities of the Institute. In general, the UoA did not appear to have a very clear plan and strategy for increasing international research in terms of publications and/or funded projects. For instance, it is not clear whether area studies is a strategic focus area of research or not. Furthermore, University level research management was criticised for being overly bureaucratic, though there are funds (seed-funding) provided to support international applications. Funding resources are allocated yearly by the central administration of the University, which interferes with even mid-term planning and are driven almost entirely by study programmes. As is the norm in Lithuania, money follows students and the rigid regulation of study programmes hinders researchers’ ability to take advantage of medium to long-term visits abroad. High teaching loads interfere with research outputs for many researchers and the teaching workloads across researchers are somewhat unevenly distributed with some researchers having as few as four hours per week and others up to 16. The lack of a routinized routinized sabbatical system and separate contracts for teaching and research are also obstacles to surmount in the bid to raise the research profile of the Institute. There is a modest incentive system for publishing internationally but the monetary rewards are limited and most researchers are self-motivated rather than driven by these external stimuli. Some researchers indicated that there was no clear link between research outputs and rewards, either in terms of pay or promotions and that this was demoralising. Although there was some disagreement on this point, with senior management in the Institute claiming the requirements, in terms of the number of publications, were transparent. In terms of career development and progression: staff specifically would like more mobility funding and methodological training, a recent training session provided by an overseas lecture in the use of R has proved very popular. The allocation of €10,000 per year for attendance at international conferences is to be commended though in a Unit of this size this sum does not begin to meet demand. Some senior staff were forgoing international conference appearance in order to allow others to participate. On the plus side the age profile of the Unit is encouraging, with the majority of those employed under 45 and only 6 of the Units staff over 55. Furthermore, the number of staff employed full time in the Unit is higher than in many other Lithuanian institutions (though below the professorial level this could still be improved on). PhD students were not overburdened with teaching (2 modules per semester) but many did have to take on other work to make ends meet, as LRC and Institute scholarships did not provide a living wage. In terms of PhD student training and development, all students were required to take compulsory modules and were encouraged to attend international Summer Schools and provided with funds to do so (often via the LRC). The ratio of students involved in research relative to overall staff numbers was low.

**The development potential of UoA**

This unit’s research is quite heavily focussed on Lithuanian issues (Lithuanian foreign policy, public administration and electoral politics in Lithuania etc.), which necessarily will limit its potential to have a global impact. While such research needs to be undertaken, some diversification would also be in order. It was not clear that the Unit had an organized strategy for initiating new research directions. To engage in international debates in political science, the quality and originality of the output will need to be increased. The Unit’s researchers primarily still publish in Lithuanian and PhD thesis are also largely in this medium. It seems unlikely that the Unit will be able to attract overseas, high quality PhD Students or staff in the short to medium term. The UoA has rather good international connections already, including 1 or 2 top tier
international universities (LSE, Sciences-Po), and there is clear potential for further expansion here. Recent Horizon 2020 bids (unsuccessful) with Sciences Po and LSE indicate that the UoA really has the potential to be the biggest player in Political Science in Lithuania and it is ‘pushing an open door’ in forging such links. More should be done to capitalise on these inherent advantages. There is space for more intensive and coordinated research management so that the improvements do not depend too much on the efforts of individual academics. The age profile of the unit is encouraging, with a large proportion of staff in their thirties and forties, with a good distribution across all ranks (7 professors, 12 associate professors, 11 lectures). The Institute has critical mass with 72 people on staff, across the 3 constituent departments. One would expect this Unit to be the frontrunner in international networks in Horizon 2020. It should be the first port of call for Western European political science departments looking for Lithuanian partners. The Unit has a keen awareness of its weaknesses, specifically mentioning a lack of international publications in its SWOT analysis. It does recognize the opportunities afforded it in the latest EU funding rounds. Overall the SWOT analysis was on the mark.

Conclusions and recommendations:

Overall, the Institute of International Relations and Political Science is well positioned to become a significant player on the international research stage. However, it really needs to address its research output, if it is to fulfil this potential. The Institute should not be complacent about its front-runner position in political science in Lithuania. It has many in-built advantages on the road to internationalisation but needs a more focussed commitment and strategy before it can become ‘a strong international player’.

- The Unit should seriously consider whether publishing 4 in-house journals is the best path to international visibility. This is not standard international practice for leading political science and international relations departments.
- Where possible, and where doctoral students express a clear desire to do so, PhD theses and defences should be written and conducted in English.
- Greater attention to journal rankings is required (for instance a focus on ISI publications), in particular the Unit needs to publish in mainstream generalist political science and IR journals if it is to raise its profile in these fields.
- A semester (preferably year) sabbatical rota system should be introduced to facilitate overseas visits and/or research productivity. These sabbaticals could be covered without an increase in staffing numbers through an overall reduction in contact hours in the classroom.
- Researchers have to increase their international visibility and networks through greater participation in major political science conferences.
### VMU Political Science, Vytautas Magnus University

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<tr>
<th>Name of the UoA</th>
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| Quality of the research performance and Impact on the scientific research discipline of the UoA | 3 |
| The economic and social impact of the research in Lithuania | 3 |
| The physical infrastructure of the UoA | 2 |
| Research management (including career development and human resource management) of the UoA | 2 |
| The development potential of the UoA | 2 |
| OVERALL SCORE | 3 |

#### Overall score

The overall score is 3, which means that the general level of the Unit is good. The score is largely based on the quality of research and economic and social impact, as other elements are less developed.

#### Quality of the research performance and Impact on the scientific research discipline of the UoA

Research staff is more active than that of many other units in terms of productivity (5.3 Scopus publications per researcher in 2009-2013). Almost all of the most important publications of the self-assessment are international and half of the most important publications are published by leading or top international journals or publishers. 23 per cent of international articles are co-authored with international authors. This indicates fairly vigorous attitude to international publishing. However, the sample publications submitted to
the panel remain descriptive or critical empirical analyses or literature reviews, with the exception of an article on energy security, which is based on a more transparent research design. The Unit publishes also its own journals indexed in EBSCO, which does not necessarily support the international visibility and quality assurance in the same way as internationally more leading publishers. The site visit revealed that there is a certain lack of determination in facing the challenges associated with producing a greater volume of output with top tier publishing houses in the discipline of political science, either in the form of articles (e.g. ISI Thomas Reuters indexed journals) or monographs (e.g. leading university presses). Prioritised research is understood to be mostly basic, but applied research is also done, especially in Public Administration. Academic staff are members of many editorial boards but not with internationally recognized leading journals. Researchers’ presence in international academic networks is relatively strong and the unit has quite good international connections with well-ranked international institutions (Bologna, Glasgow, Vienna). Visits abroad are plenty, but incoming (longer) visits to the Unit are rarer. International collaboration is active, both in Asia and Europe, but as research collaboration leading to major publications the international collaboration is underdeveloped. International funding for research is poor (annual average being €6000).

The invited presentations in international conferences tend to concentrate to few academics, but, based on interviews, the attendance by junior academic staff is relatively active too (around twice a year). There is a clear commitment to doctoral education, funding and training, with roughly one third of theses completed in English. Overall, the Unit is fairly active in research, attends widely to international networks, publishes internationally, but the Unit has not managed to use its networks to create internationally funded research projects, nor to create a publishing strategy that would effectively increase the share of publications in leading and top international publishing outlets.

The economic and social impact of the research in Lithuania

The staff is involved in an impressive amount (nearly 50) and variety of scientific advisory boards of governmental bodies but rarely in business organisations. The Dept. of Public Admin does a very significant amount of applied research (50%), primarily for government agencies. The UoA has extensive networks with key government agencies and international organizations such as Transparency International, the Humans Rights Monitoring Institute, Council of Europe etc. However, the memberships seem to be concentrated to a handful of staff members. The members of the Unit are often invited to provide expertise or give lectures in different institutions or media. Governmental institutions (e.g., ministries) consult the Unit on regular basis. This is supported by partnerships and networks with other societal actors, also those of major European institutions (e.g., the Council of Europe, the European Journalism Centre), but there are few research projects (3) carried out with non-university partners. The staff publish also in Lithuanian and strengthen in this way the research-based political culture in the country that has had an opportunity to establish proper political science not more than two decades ago. The major impact seems to build around memberships of advisory boards and media presence. There are no spin-offs.

The physical infrastructure of the UoA

According to the SWOT-analysis, the Unit would like to have more sufficient infrastructure in terms of work places for lecturers and researchers. According to the self-assessment, there is a need for additional computers and statistical software for the members of the Unit. The site visit confirms the need for additional work-space for academics, but the new building being constructed should improve this situation. The faculty is not able to provide laptops for funded PhD students. The library services of the university seem to be sufficient, including international article databases, although PhD students would like to have more printed books, especially when their research is not in mainstream areas. New reading rooms provide excellent services for the customers of the library. The library monitors its performance through customer surveys and seems to be aware of the needs of academics and students. The major flaw is the lack of proper working space for academic staff and PhD students and sufficient computer hardware and software.
Research management (including career development and human resource management) of the UoA

Research is thematically quite fragmented. One justification for this seems to be the division of labour of academic staff: most of them teach in the study programmes of the Unit and research is related to themes taught. In this sense, the research is teaching-led. The SWOT-analysis demonstrates that the Unit understands the trade-off between specializing in narrower topics and the need to get research funding, which increasingly needs a broader focus, both in teaching and research. Research is conducted in four interdisciplinary scientific clusters, which are cross-departmental, but also in thematic groups of the departments. The Faculty does not lead research by allocating funding but encourages academic staff to choose their research topics as individuals. However, there is a general tendency that senior and junior researchers work together. Linking individual research to clusters is voluntary. The clusters provide some competitive funding for travelling etc. but not for salaries of actual research projects. Although there are "priority fields of science" no major management instruments are properly used to support them. However, the Unit encourages publishing articles listed in Thomson Reuters Master Journal, which is a sign of the awareness of the needs for strengthening international quality and visibility of the research. Based on interviews, there is no indication of having a goal to increase critical mass around major themes. The research performance of academic staff is registered and followed in performance appraisal that may lead to salary increments. The staff indicated that their research performance is important for making progress in their academic careers (higher positions) but (increasing) teaching takes most of the working time. The slow publishing process of top tier international journals is believed to be in contradiction with the interval of 5-year performance appraisal in competition for higher academic positions. Good research performance is rewarded in the form of institutional prizes (best scholar of the year), but the faculty has also received national rewards for PhD theses and international honours (prof. Donskis). The existence of a research culture is clear and it is supported by the management, but financial instruments are insufficient. There are a handful of examples of success in applying for international funding, but there seems to be no practices of using these examples as learning instruments. The staff is critical about the performance of research services in applying for external funding. Gender issues are checked regularly. The age structure of the Unit – 59/86 under 45 – seems to support the renewal of the academic staff, but the annual numbers of completed PhD degrees (1-5) may not be sufficient. Also the lack of a well thought-out academic career path (no post-docs) may decrease the attraction of the academic profession among PhD graduates.

The development potential of the UoA

There is no clear set of institutional policies for achieving research objectives, indeed the latter are very generally defined and lack specificity; simply listed as names of research fields and the general principle of inter-disciplinarity. The potential is to a great extent related to recently launched measures to support PhD studies. The university has allocated funding for doctoral places and has provided scholarships for doctoral students since 2012. PhD students can apply funding for conferences, research traineeships and summer schools. There is a financial incentive system for PhD students based on their advancement. The Unit does not have other resources to support younger researchers and there is no clear career path after graduation (no postdoctoral positions before professorship). The current number of doctoral degrees awarded could be higher. Most of the students still do not write their dissertation in English, which weakens the potential for international development. There should also be more focused measures of research management for creating critical mass around prioritised clusters of research. This would entail reconsideration of the provision of study programmes and their relation to research foci with ensuing challenges of funding (coming for teaching). The prospective development depends partly on governmental policies related to the role of social sciences. The staff of the Unit have been active on the national level in demonstrating the need for the reconsideration of the overall national research policy. There should be more governmental long-term funding to support concentration on key topics to make them internationally relevant strengths of the Unit. The necessity to apply for competitive external funding with varying goals may distract more than
supplement the creation of strengths. The Unit is aware of this problem. However, the Unit would use increased funding for organising and attending international conferences, training, internships, field research, attracting foreign scholars, acquiring infrastructure (software like SPSS, Nvivo), providing grants for young scholars and for continuing major research projects. This shows the lack of sufficient determination to change the principles of research management to more coordinated measures that would strengthen the focus on internationalisation. The Unit needs publication strategies based on identification of editorial policies of preferred international journal and publishers. The age structure of the Unit will not hinder the development of future potential as such, but the junior researchers should learn to do research in international research projects already during the PhD studies. However, it is apparent that the Unit views the burden of change more on the level of national and university level research policies than on its own shoulders, which may limits the Unit’s proactive measures for reconsidering its own practices.

Conclusions and recommendations

The Unit is a strong national player with some international recognition. The Unit is a recognised member of the discipline, but continuously struggles with maintaining its position in the international scientific community under challenging financial conditions. The Unit has an important national and local role in interactions with non-academics on the level that is expected of recognised academic institutions. With more proactive research management, the Unit might use its potential in more effective ways. The panel would recommend the following measures. (1) The Unit should develop a more rigorous publication strategy for international publishing with systematic identification of leading journals and book publishers and their editorial and review policies relevant for the Unit and implement the strategy systematically on the individual level in collaboration with senior and junior researchers and international co-authors where appropriate. (2) The Unit should use its good international networks more effectively in applying for international funding and integrate domestic and foreign PhD students and postdocs in these projects. (3) The job descriptions of academics should be reconsidered to give more opportunities for research, especially in connection with future developments in study programmes. Study programmes should not dictate research fields, but rather it should be the other way round. (4) The Unit should consider the possibilities of creating more critical mass around interdisciplinary research, make concrete decisions about priority research areas and implement them also in the recruitment and promotion of academics. (5) Success in international publishing and in applying for international and domestic research funding should be capitalized on more systematically as a means to generating future successes. (6) PhD students should write their thesis more often in English or at least – as a standard procedure – create an international publication plan after graduation to increase the international visibility of the research. (7) The Unit should collaborate with foreign universities in the area of PhD studies, in a way that would ensure at least one longer research visit for each student.
Lithuanian Social Research Centre, Lithuanian Social Research Centre

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Overall score

This Unit was awarded 2 as an overall score, which reflects the general quality of its research, the relatively few international publications per researcher, few papers in high quality journals, their modest impact indicated by low citation per article and the high proportion of papers not cited. This UoA is an institution specialized for research with all the associated benefits and disadvantages (e.g. the lack of a general supporting infrastructure and motivated students who could be involved in the technical work), although the presence of PhD students compensates for this latter deficiency. Although the self-assessment report states that basic research is a dominant area of activity, the themes of the investigations and the channels of dissemination of the results indicate that the Centre is engaged mostly in applied research. The developmental work and the expertise of the researchers of the Unit have high local and regional relevance and play an important role in supporting social and economic policy. The physical infrastructure meets the basic requirements in terms of office space and computer facilities but the researchers lack access to some databases and high-quality library services. The research themes are fragmented and although the Centre participates in international collaboration, the management is not initiating large-scale projects with a leading role in them. Invitation of guest researchers is uncommon, and attendance at international conferences organized by leading research associations is relatively rare.
Quality of the research performance and impact on the scientific research discipline of the UoA

The special status of this institution is mirrored in its capacity of attracting external funding (196.4 k EUR); however, the Unit is only a participant, not a leader of international projects. The total number of publications shows a relatively good global productivity of the Centre, but neither the article per researcher (3.4), nor the average citation per paper (1.56) is high. The majority of publications (54.7%) have not been cited showing that the research carried out in the unit receives modest attention. Although the proportion of publications with international co-authors is good, these figures indicate that the researchers of the unit choose dissemination channels not visible for the international research community. The low level of quality indicators of research is also reflected in the list of the most important publications provided in the self-assessment report. Although all publications are written in English, few are published by leading international journals or publishers. Only four publications were submitted for evaluation, and their quality is not exceptionally high. One out of the four papers appeared in a non-international Romanian journal in English. It seems few of the researchers of this Unit are capable to publish papers in high quality journals. In sum, LSTC utilizes a fair amount of resources both in terms of funding and human resources, and produces a number of publications but the quality indicators are not as high as might be expected from a leading research centre. During the site visit, it was expressed that international comparative research is the area where higher-impact publishing is possible and some instances of this was mentioned during the site visit. What was also brought up is that lack of matching funds has prevented researchers of the unit from accepting roles as partners in EU projects, thus limiting the possibilities for international comparative research.

The economic and social impact of the research in Lithuania

The social impact of the Lithuanian Social Research Centre is good in several respects. It has a clear and established role in communicating recommendations to public authorities, which is in line with the mission of the Unit. There are major projects carried out with external partners. Although it is not a higher education institution, it contributes to the training of future researchers and experts in social issues. It cooperates with several higher educational institutions and the majority of its staff members have part-time jobs at universities. The Centre deals with a broad range of research topics relevant for the development of the Lithuanian society. The staff is frequently invited to various working groups and as experts outside the academic research field. The Unit has a long-term practice in inter-institutional cooperation with different governmental bodies. The self-assessment report presents a large number of national cooperations, among these there are both academic and non-academic organizations. The Centre is involved in several civic activities. Furthermore, it has produced two spin-off companies, which are active in fields closely related to the profile of the Centre (public opinion and market research, social innovations).

The physical infrastructure of the UoA

The self-assessment report presents a detailed description of the infrastructure the Centre can use for its research. These items are related to the info-communication technologies. The type of research carried out by the Centre does not require expensive infrastructure beyond the usual administrative software and some statistical packages, and the unit has the major software both for quantitative and qualitative analyses. On the other hand, the access to data-banks is limited; some publication databases are not accessible from the institute. During the site visit, the researchers remarked that they often have to use the modern library services of their partner universities, not available at the UoA.

Research management (including career development and human resource management) of the UoA

The Unit has a clear identity and focuses its activities in five main domains (human social development, social welfare, socio-demographics, employment and labour market, and ethno-social research). On the other hand, the number of the sub-fields is over twenty, which seems too large relative to the size of the centre.
The Centre has an established research management system dealing with project administration, finance, human resources, applications, and implementation of the projects. They are familiar with the main social science research needs of Lithuania (and the Baltic states). The Centre knows its major international competitors, is able to identify the key players of the field and position itself in an international context and in the European social science research landscape. The job descriptions and expectations for the performance of research staff are transparent and monitored. Due to its special status, the Centre is expected to be engaged in expert activities not contributing directly to research. The major deficiency of the research management is that, despite the declared aims, the publications of the Centre are not directed towards the leading journals of the field. There exists a publication strategy, but targeting the best journals of the field is not among the highest priorities, and the mechanisms that would help the researchers in publishing in ISI referenced journals does not work in practice.

Although the Unit is not an educational institution, it is engaged in training PhD students and this way can contribute to preparing new potential group members. On the other hand, the PhD students seem to be working in an isolated manner and only few signs of real cooperation between them were identifiable during the site visit. They have few opportunities for attending international conferences and travelling abroad. In this dimension the international connections are not utilized. During the site visit, it came up that the lack of matching funds that has prevented the UoA’s researchers from joining EU-projects to carry out international comparative research can be seen as a shortcoming of the research management.

The development potential of UoA

The developmental potential of this Unit is determined by a number of positive and negative circumstances. Its main mission is research, not hindered considerably by other commitments, e.g. high teaching loads. A relatively large number of full-time researchers have been working in this institution which would facilitate the running of large-scale projects and participation in international cooperation but this potential is distributed over too many small-scale activities. Many researchers of the Unit teach at universities, which offer dissemination opportunities and helps accessing library services on the one hand, but high teaching load may distract them from focusing on research on the other. Although it is not very well funded it has a good ability to attract external resources. Its researchers are able to produce and publish papers in international journals. The institute is internationally well connected; an outstandingly high proportion (35.8%) of the publications have co-authors from other countries.

The Unit indicates good self-understanding in its SWOT-analysis. The selection of completed research projects and organized conferences paves the way to more effective international co-operation. The Centre has a clear vision for the use of increased funding, as they have the goal to establish a Baltics Research Institute for carrying out and coordinating high-level comparative research. The centre seeks to become a Centre of Excellence for Baltic countries in the research areas where the Unit is strongest, but it needs more basic funding to ensure continuity in its strengths.

Conclusions and recommendations

The Unit enjoys fortunate conditions as a research institute with a unique status, a relatively large research staff and good national and international funding. As one of the main institutes of the country of its kind, international partners easily identify it when seeking collaborators, which should be capitalized on by finding solutions to the problem of lack of matching funds to join EU projects as partners.

The centre does not make use of these advantages in every respect, and there are several aspects in which the research management and the activities of the Centre may be improved. It should be made a part of their research and publication strategy that not only the number of publications, but also their potential impact should be taken into account when choosing the forum of publication of the results (e.g. targeting more high impact journals). As the quantity expectations are already met (in the number of publications, number of partnerships etc.), the research management should better focus on quality issues. Fewer, but better focused
large-sale (and comparative) studies would produce results better publishable in high-quality journals. Facilitation of the international activities of young researchers and PhD students (research visits in top social research centres abroad, conference attendance) would not only improve the quality of the current publication output but would be a good investment into the future human resources as well.

A more directed approach in analysing the channels through which the Units interacts with the international scientific community would be beneficial. More intensive participation in the activities of the leading international research organizations would be useful.

The relationship of this Unit with the universities is somewhat ambiguous. A number of researchers of the Centre have a part-time job at a university, and the Unit itself is engaged in PhD training. This is very useful for having further channels for disseminating the results and preparing future researchers on the one hand, but may distract researchers from their main activity. In this arrangement, PhD students are isolated from a university environment and other inspiring sources. These discrepancies would be resolved if the Centre was merged with one of the social science faculties of the major universities. A unified set of human resources would form more easily the critical mass required for word-class research.
## Faculty of Law, Vilnius University

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<td>Composition of the Unit of Assessment (UoA)</td>
<td>Faculty of Law</td>
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### Quality of the research performance and impact on the scientific research discipline of the UoA
- The economic and social impact of the research in Lithuania: 4
- The physical infrastructure of the UoA: 3
- Research management (including career development and human resource management) of the UoA: 2
- The development potential of the UoA: 2

### OVERALL SCORE
2

### Overall score
The overall score of the UoA is 2. The reasons are explained in more detail below. One has to acknowledge the fact the VU Law Faculty is the biggest and most prestigious Law Faculty in Lithuania. At the same time it is obvious that it is not fully using its potential to gain a commensurate position in international legal academic networks. The overall score reflects the UoA’s very low international visibility and its lack of an international oriented research strategy, which is reflected in a lack of effort to integrate and assess research outputs by international standards. Indeed the Unit was quite dismissive of such exercises and felt it was better placed to internally assess its own quality. The panel was left with the view that internationalization was not a priority for this Unit.

### Quality of the research performance and impact on the scientific research discipline
That Faculty is clearly at the centre of legal academic community in Lithuania. As such it contains a very high level of domestic legal expertise. Judged from that perspective its performance is impressive. The UoA is clearly a strong national player. On the other hand it is disappointing that such an august and renowned academic institution should publish so little in English for an international audience and should receive, as a
consequence, not adequate international external recognition for its scholarship. The total number of SCOPUS articles for 2009-2013 is surprisingly low (much lower than the numbers for other law faculties under review). There were only 9 articles indexed on Scopus (which is already a generous index) of which only 2 are international. The overall H index is 0. There are no publications in journals indexed at JCR Social Sciences Edition. Most of the publications quoted have a strong local character, even if published in English or through English editors. Very few of them involve collaboration with international authors. The list of publications quoted does not show a clear research strategy. They rather reflect the academic and professional interest of individual scholars. On the other hand, the scientific approach in the publications provided was of high quality and meets international standards. As such, the panel was of the opinion that researchers in this Unit could publish internationally in high impact peer reviewed journals but choose not to do so. The staff of the Unit both convenes and participates regularly in international scientific conferences and seminars, and gives lectures and presentations in different international scientific conferences abroad. The faculty publishes a nationally well-regarded peer-reviewed journal “VU Research Papers. LAW”. However this journal has quite limited international visibility. The number of doctoral students enrolled (46) and doctoral thesis defended (49) during the period of reference is satisfactory. Additionally the VU has established special funds for financing doctoral studies. The overall assessment of doctoral studies at the VU is quite high. However relatively small number of young researches and postdocs are participating in research activities of the UoA. The Unit has incentivised top researchers through its establishment of a Lehrstuhl type style system around a number (7) of top performing professors, though as such systems are not in keeping with University policy, the Unit does remain department based and not all professors are structured into these ‘research units’. The Unit claimed it has no capacity to act as a PI in a Horizon 2020 bid, but this seemed unnecessarily pessimistic given University wide support for such applications.

The economic and social impact of the research in Lithuania

VU Law Faculty has a very prominent presence in national institutions (courts, political, professional and academic bodies). Research and expertise outputs are therefore of high relevance for Lithuanian society. It has significantly contributed to the development of the Lithuanian legal system. The UoA clearly plays a central role in the writing and implementation of law in Lithuania. It has established strong links between its scholarship and its impact in the teaching, social, cultural and political arenas. VU Law Faculty concentrates on national priorities through its research activities (e.g. A recent €400,000 contract with the Ministry of Social Justice). There are some relevant interactions with international institutions through projects mainly of educational or professional character rather then research ones. Most of the academics are at the same time pursuing professional careers, only one third (40/120) of researchers are full time employed in the Unit, which is low, even by the standards of law schools. The Unit has a history as a successful bidder for commercial contracts and consultancy projects. The money generated from such projects is used within the research centres and the UoA to provide additional administration support and to bolster salaries (which are quite competitive) etc.

The physical infrastructure

VU - TI has sufficient capability (in terms of human resources) and offers infrastructure (computers, internet, software, stationery, DDBB, literature) that is sufficient for performing high-quality research relevant in both national and international contexts. There are some individual offices for researchers and it is obvious that this work-space is comfortable and satisfactory. The VU has invested in several areas of improvement including a new state of the art library, the introduction of electronic and web resources, study space, reading rooms, software and books.

Research management (including career development and human resource management)

The research management team of VU gives the impression of being modern and open-minded and forward looking. Nevertheless, the research strategy being pursued is linked to traditional law branches and lacks any
real international focus. The Faculty has reorganized itself into three departments – Criminal Justice, Private Law and Public Law. In addition there are 7 active institutes and Scientific Research centre under the supervision of the Dean’s office. The Unit’s research strategy is based on the global program “Integration of the EU into the legal system of the Republic of Lithuania”. However, the UoA has problems with setting more specific research priorities. The publications provided cover all areas of law. While this is understandable, bearing in mind the role of that Faculty in the legal society of Lithuania, it makes it difficult to propose innovative and focussed research priorities. There is a reward system (bonuses to salaries) in place aiming at stimulation of research activity. However that system promotes mainly publications in the VU – TI journal. Indeed, PhD students are required to publish 1 article in this journal, which seems rather inflexible. Like in many other university institutions in Lithuania, academic staff is often overloaded with teaching. There is no clear policy as to how to stimulate interdisciplinary approaches on the one hand and international research cooperation on the other. Students and young researchers are not integrated into research teams. The spirit of teamwork is very low. The Faculty is rather a constellation of stars. As a result its research output, in particular in the international dimension, is far below its potential.

The development potential of the UoA

The potential of VU - TI is strong, bearing in mind its role in the legal community of Lithuania. It seems, however, that the existing research strategy does not sufficiently takes into consideration the need to be more active on the international stage, encouraging, for instance, academics to seek publication of their articles in international peer-reviewed outlets. The attitude of some researchers to such publications could, at present, be characterized as hostile. Also more efforts should be undertaken to acquire competitive international funding for research projects. At present the potential of the UoA is not fully realised. Modification of present research policy will offer a chance to obtain by the VU – TI the appropriate international standing.

Conclusions and recommendations

The Vilnius University Faculty of Law is the biggest law faculty in the country. It plays a crucial role in the development of the national legal system in general and legal sciences in particular. It is well equipped in terms of human resources and physical infrastructure. At the same time its international standing as far as research output is concerned is not adequate to its potential. It is recommendable that its research strategy should put far more emphasis on joining international research projects and publishing in international peer review journals. The Faculty should create a better environment for teamwork. Multidisciplinary and innovative research projects should be given priority.

Specific Recommendations:

1. The UoA needs to address its low international visibility as a matter of some urgency. The overall dismissive attitude to assessments and journal rankings needs to be tackled. The complacency of the Unit, largely resulting from its undeniable role as the most prestigious UG law department in Lithuania, is a waste of the clear talent and potential of the Units researchers.
2. The Unit’s focus on training undergraduate lawyers should not come at the cost of research leaves. Staff should be encouraged to take sabbaticals and a rota system should be institutionalized to facilitate this.
3. Extend the weekly seminar for 3rd year PhDs to include all PhDs. Institute a policy whereby each student presents once a year in this colloquium. This will increase a sense of esprit de corps among PhD students, who are a little atomized at present.
## Law Institute of Lithuania, Law Institute of Lithuania

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### Quality of the research performance and Impact on the scientific research discipline of the UoA
- The economic and social impact of the research in Lithuania: 2
- The physical infrastructure of the UoA: 3
- Research management (including career development and human resource management) of the UoA: 2
- The development potential of the UoA: 2

**OVERALL SCORE**: 2

### Overall score

Although LTI has become a strong research institution in the area of legal studies in the country, it still shows a predominantly national profile and a rather limited scope of research areas. LTI plays a stable role in Lithuanian academia and its economic and social impact is good. However, scientific production and networking with some international relevance is almost non-existent (with the exception of participation in some projects that show some potential).

### Quality of the research performance and Impact on the scientific research discipline of the UoA

LTI is a research establishment founded in 1991 by the Government of Lithuania, seeking to coordinate the reform of the Lithuanian legal system. It is one of the few strong national research institutions in the area of legal studies and it has managed to attract well-qualified legal scholars. Although the main areas of research of LTI are public law (mostly constitutional law and human rights) and criminology, there has traditionally been a significant emphasis on the latter. Staff are told to be active at the international fora and they participate in research projects (we learn in our site visit that number of applications and on-going projects...
increases from 2 and 3 respectively in 2009 to 18 and 11 respectively in 2014) and in international scientific conferences and seminars, and give lectures and presentations in different international scientific conferences. However, scientific production with international relevance is almost non-existent. Although LTI has conducted a certain number of international research projects, in terms of results it is unclear what role it has had in them and what has been its involvement and input. Actually, the impact of such participation seems to be insignificant in terms of publications. Additionally, SCOPUS total number of reviewed articles for 2009-2013 is very low, just three (including one international collaboration), compared to the total number of FTE researchers (26,1), while there are only 99 papers in “refereed scientific edited journals and conference proceedings” in the same period. This positions LTI the eleventh of twelve UoAs, with an H index of 1 and a very low rate of articles per researcher of 0,1. Most of the publications quoted are studies published in Lithuanian by the LTI itself (in its own scientific journal or in the website) or collective monographs published by Lithuanian editors; the scope of the research so far is rather limited to certain aspects of criminal justice and criminology; most of the articles have a strong local character; very few of them published in English or published by international editors (only two, one of them in Lithuanian) or international journals, but none in mainstream international legal journals. As for the four publications attached (only one of them quoted on 4.3), those are mostly collaborations of a predominantly descriptive character in collective monographs, literature reviews or conference proceedings. They likely don’t drive change to public policies; have a significant lack of analytical apparatus and almost no support from the specialized international literature. One of them is a very broad description of the Lithuanian criminal legal system; another does not indicate where or when the work was published; and another is a collaboration signed under the affiliation of the University of Vilnius.

The economic and social impact of the research in Lithuania

Legal analysis plays and important role in countries under transitions like Lithuania and from this perspective it is clear that the scientific and research activities of the LTI have contributed to the creation of a favourable legal environment. In particular, legal analysis conducted by LTI’s researchers contributed to the creation of a proper understanding in the area of criminology and criminal justice and in the process of their application in courts. Thanks to this, LTI has now some presence in national institutions and bodies as well as in practitioners’ fields, though this is concentrated on a handful of scholars. Actually, the founder – the Ministry of Justice-, the Parliament and other national institutions, as well as law firms and courts usually request their expertise. LTI researchers’ inputs are quite appreciated and they are for instance called to inform legal proposals and to take part in national conferences as well. However, the scope of this expertise is rather limited to the domestic sphere and it has not yet managed to gain a reputation of a partner in international scientific community. Interaction with international institutions is weak.

The physical infrastructure of the UoA

Unlike in many other academic institutions in Lithuania, adequate and equipped offices are available, which are shared between two or three researchers. The premises seem to be spacious enough for the current number of researchers working physically at the LTI, but they risk becoming insufficient if the number of staff increases. Most of the staff are part time and some of them work at home under remote distance employment contracts. LTI equipment is not renewed regularly because of financial constraints. Library resources are not sufficient. Actually, the library is just a small room with a very limited number of paper copies and without working places. There are a limited number of databases, but LTI has direct and free access to the databases of the Ministry of Justice as well as to other research libraries. Other services that are pretty expensive are only affordable through some research projects. Besides, TLI does not have its own conference room, so, events are organised in cooperation with partners, or in rented premises.
Research management (including career development and human resource management) of the UoA

It doesn’t seem to be a specific research managerial activity, although LTI encourages participation in international projects, stimulates individual carriers of researches and undertakes various efforts to maintain a certain level of conducted projects. To that end, there is a three year Action Plan completed by long-term research programs and Annual action plans approved by the Research Council of the LTI. LTI seems to have a strategy to strengthen long-term research, but neither its specific objectives nor the means available to achieve them have been clearly explained in the SAR or the site visit. No specific strategy on concentration of key topics, prioritising research interests or publishing research’s results can be identified. LTI’s members claim to be a relatively small research group not being able to cover a wide range of topics, but they are not able to identify relevant research topics where they can find a niche. Nor is there a strategy to plan the researchers’ stays abroad and visits to the LTI by international researchers. In fact, there have been no stays longer than one month in any direction. A likely part of the problem is that most of the research staff at LTI are on a part time basis and have other jobs. Besides, researchers’ permanence seems to be an issue and it is unstable (since they can receive higher wages in the private sector, once they acquire the training they need, they abandon the LTI). This hinders the creation of a research environment and the development of long-term strategies for the promotion of joint research proposals. Some difficulties in understanding and assuming the dynamics of international and European projects are evident, and there are complaints about the administrative and bureaucratic burden required by these applications, but no proposals or plans to face the challenge. Youth and lack of experience and leadership of LTI members might be an element to be considered here. Is also significant here the lack of any technical support to meet these challenges (for instance, LTI’s researchers have no specific support to prepare international applications or in English editing). LTI is not allowed to offer a PhD program alone but it can hire PhD students as researchers to work on specific projects. LTI has been trying to convince Lithuanian universities in Vilnius to offer a joint program. However, so far no Lithuanian university has agreed, and the Unit is looking for an international partner for organising a joint PhD programme. So, there are few PhD students around who are hired as researchers and linked to specific research projects. Besides, those PhD students do not have a specific supervisor of their PhD dissertation at the LTI beyond the leading researcher of the project they are linked to. This is a handicap for the development of LTI research capacity, but it may be challenging to organise shared supervision with university professors. Perhaps some kind of mentoring program, matching PhD students with senior researchers with similar research interest in a more stable way could be of some help.

The development potential of the UoA

LTI has a stable position within Lithuanian academia. However, there is no strategic vision on how to produce leading research at national and international level or acting as partners of internationally recognized collaborators. In spite of difficulties, including limited financial resources, the Institute has managed to secure rather stable funding from national sources, but it would be necessary to be more proactive in order to attract more international competitive and non-competitive funding. It is also necessary to continue the efforts to develop further collaboration with foreign colleagues and to increase presence in international networks. This would help the international mobility of researchers to and from the LTI, and it would also help to give greater international visibility to its research activity in order to create an international profile.

Conclusions and recommendations

In the field of law, mechanisms that promote the shift from the fierce competition amongst legal research centres towards the creation of synergies that can support greater cooperation should be encouraged. In such a scenario, the viability of the LTI as an independent research unit with an international profile is questionable. New structural arrangements for the LTI should be envisaged in order to ensure a critical mass and the definition of a long-term research strategy that identifies priority areas and promote greater presence in international outlets. The Unit should clarify its future mission: to what extent it will do policy research
with the purpose of improving the knowledge-base of Lithuanian legal policies, and to what extent it will pursue high-quality academic research in criminology and law and a recognized status in the international scholarly community, given that legal systems are always strongly national institutions. If the mission will be mostly related to academic studies of criminology and law, there is a need to reconsider the Unit’s institutional status as an independent research institute vis-à-vis its merger with university structures. In this sense, the future of the institution should be analysed against national needs of academic research and evidence-based decision making of legal policies.
Social sciences: Strategic Research Centre (Institute of Military Sciences); Department of Political Science; Department of Management, The General Jonas Žemaitis Military Academy of Lithuania

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**Quality of the research performance and impact on the scientific research discipline of the UoA**

**The economic and social impact of the research in Lithuania**

**The physical infrastructure of the UoA**

**Research management (including career development and human resource management) of the UoA**

**The development potential of the UoA**

**OVERALL SCORE**

**Overall score**

This Unit was awarded a 2 overall, which reflects its current research impact and international profile. The panel was left with the impression that the primary focus of this Unit is on teaching (training undergraduate cadets, life long learning for army officers etc.) and facilitating research output is not seen as a top priority by senior management. Researchers have heavy teaching loads, many are employed part-time and research is conducted outside of office hours. However, there is clear scope for making a greater international impact through specialized research on the military and defence issues and some good work is already being done in these fields. For instance, the studies conducted to date on military sociology could have a much wider readership, given access is typically the problem for researchers, but not here. The UoA should capitalize more on this and encourage staff to submit to higher-ranking international journals. The research facilities
need to be addressed; there are barriers to conducting basic research that international academics do not typically encounter.

As an aside it is worth noting that the self-assessment form was somewhat short, and did not provide a lot of the required data. Overall, the information supplied beforehand did not ‘sell’ the UoA particularly well, however the site visit was far more useful and informative.

**Quality of the research performance and Impact on the scientific research discipline of the UoA**

The Unit is publishing in English, which is to be commended and will raise its profile internationally, though many of the publications are in an in-house journal, *Security and Sustainability Issues*. While the latter is indexed on Scopus, it should not become the primary outlet of the researchers in the Unit, good work should be targeted at ISI journals. Furthermore, if this in-house journal is to raise the profile of the UoA, it does need to be indexed, in the coming years, in Thomson Reuters, and additionally achieve a high impact factor, as only then will it attract top international scholars. Given the stated aim of the unit is to do research in military sociology, warfare and military history, the absence of publications in main stream history, political science, international relations or sociology outlets is disappointing. The 5 publications supplied prior to the visit represent the work of only 3 of the units 36 (14 FTE) researchers at lecturer level and above. It would have been good to see the work of others, especially as at least two of the aforementioned 3 authors have full time jobs at other UoAs in Lithuania. Furthermore, two of the publications were books chapters (one in a Religious Studies book), another was published in conference proceedings and the other two consisted of an article and its rejoinder in the *Journal of Baltic Studies* (current impact factor ranking 41 of 64 in Area Studies on Thomson Reuters). These particular writing samples do not provide clear evidence of consistent and significant international profile in political science and/or war studies. Some more publication in ISI journals were listed in the 15 most important works (interestingly the unit did not provide 20 items here, as was permitted and provided by all other institutions that the panel reviewed), but no leading/mid tier political science, sociology, history or management journals. Furthermore at least one of these 15 listed articles (Korsakiene and Tvaronavičienė) did not have this Unit listed as the authors’ affiliation but rather the Vilnius Gediminas Technical University, even though Korsakiene was an employee at the Military Academy at the time of publication. As such it cannot legitimately be counted as output for this Unit. Given the research interests of unit, one would hope to see publications in mainstream international relations, history and sociology journals (e.g. *Foreign Policy Analysis*, *Armed Forces and Society*, *Journal of Military History* etc.) There are relatively decent levels of funding provided for international conference participation, which is a good route to increasing visibility, though typically appearances are at quite specialised conferences (e.g. Ergomas, ISMS). Perhaps members of faculty should be encouraged to attend more mainstream international conferences in their disciplines (APSA, ECPR, ISA, ASA etc.). The Unit has quite good international connections, although these are almost exclusively (exceptions include the University of Essex) with other military institutes (e.g. Virginia Military Institute), but the significant use of Erasmus schemes is to be commended (including exchanges with military academies in Austria, Sweden and the Czech Republic). The organization of an OECD funded joint conference with Essex is another good example of international ambition. Unfortunately, there was no evidence of participation in EU funding projects to date. While recognising that the PhD granting authority is relatively new to this UoA, the number of enrolled PhD students is very modest (4) and one has to consider whether there really is room for much expansion here, especially as at least half of these students have full time jobs elsewhere. Teaching and contact hours are high by international standards and this impacts on researchers ability to conduct research. Many of the staff are working part or, indeed in some cases even, full time at other institutions (notably, the individuals with the most solid international publishing track-record).

**The economic and social impact of the research in Lithuania**

This UoA is quite unique in that it has deep and very close connections to one particular arm of Government, namely the Defence Forces of Lithuania. Indeed it’s research agenda is primarily determined by the
Ministry of Defence, which sets the overarching research priorities for the Academy’s researchers. The Unit’s research is dedicated, in large part, to providing analytical support to this external social partner. As such, the Unit contributes significantly to Lithuanian society, in the area of national defence policy and military training. The Unit has conducted a number of studies (over 30) of the armed forces in key areas such as gender equality and social exclusion and is to be highly commended for this work. The interaction with other non-academic partners, the public and business is, however, rather limited.

The physical infrastructure of the UoA

The physical infrastructure of the Unit needs to be addressed. For instance, there were no site licenses for SPSS and other statistical software; students and staff are required to use designated computers to access specialist software. Matlab access for students was slightly better in dedicated computer classrooms. There was no access to JSTOR on site (though this is accessible through the National library and the library at VU etc.) Many staff members indicated that they used their affiliations at other institutions to get access to the ejournals they required for their research. Further problems were reported about using standard software on office machines, due to security protocols at the Academy. Staff indicated that there were insufficient office spaces for their needs, and many spent their time off-site. The UoA is undergoing substantial renovations at present, once these are complete, there will hopefully be some more office space available. The library was a modest enterprise (two rooms) with rather out-dated computers and poor photocopying facilities. The library is open Monday to Friday, though there may not be demand for further opening hours at the weekend, especially given the ease of access to better resourced libraries elsewhere in Vilnius. Overall, the Unit does not yet provide the infrastructure that one would expect at an internationally respected Political Science/Sociology Department.

Research management (including career development and human resource management) of the UoA

The setting of research themes and priorities is more constrained in this UoA than elsewhere, given the relationship of the Academy to the Ministry of Defence. While bottom-up projects are permissible, research topics are subject to approval by the MoD (though to date they have not exercised their veto but inevitably the existence of a veto results in auto-limitation by staff). By definition, this limits the Unit’s ability to initiate new research directions. Project management is overly bureaucratic and the process of applying for grants, while improving, still involves a great deal of red tape. Career progression paths are unclear. There are clear issues around promotions, while the criteria for being promoted are reasonably transparent, even when researchers meet these they are not guaranteed a position at the higher rank. This is demoralizing. The lack of a clear motivational system for staff may hinder further expansion of the Unit’s research profile. The percentage of staff time available for research is rather low by international standards but not atypical in Lithuania. There are a large number of part time staff, e.g. there are 11 staff at professorial level but this number is reduced to 5 FTE positions, this inevitably impacts on both research and career development options. Several key, research productive staff have full time jobs in other political science departments (e.g. at Vilnius University and VDU), one is even head of a department at another university. At lecturer and above level the Unit has only 14 FTE members. Overall, this raises questions about career development opportunities, the level of leadership that can possibly be provided by senior members of the Department and overall critical mass. Given the death of doctoral students, the ratio of students to staff involved in research is negligible. The strategic long-term research plans of the UoA are somewhat vague and generally defined; they lack focus and specificity. Given the UoA’s research plans/focus are driven by an external agency (the Ministry of National Defence) this inevitably limits the unit’s autonomy and ability to plan mid to long term, particularly as the Plan of the Ministry of National Defence appears to be annual. During the site visit, concerns were voiced by research staff over unwillingness, at times, of military personnel to participate in research about them, which naturally constrains the scope and possibilities to do meaningful research.
The development potential of UoA

The Unit has quite a unique position in Lithuanian higher education and the research focus of the unit is, understandably, quite narrow, which will make any move to create a stronger international profile in political science, history and/or sociology quite challenging. The Unit does not have a particularly well-articulated vision for its research future, and control over future planning is largely dictated by sources outside the institution. Thus the ability to initiate new research directions is extremely constrained. This is not an institution that will attract overseas doctoral students for full time study; indeed it has very few doctoral students at all. Nor is this an institution, which is in a position to strongly attract overseas scholars to join its ranks. There is clear potential to further strengthen links with overseas military institutes but these are specialised links. Links with international partners in mainstream political science departments will not be easy to establish and it is not clear that the Academy wishes to forge such relations. Success in competing for funding (e.g. Horizon 2020) beyond contracts with the Ministry of Defence again will be challenging, though there may be potential with e.g. NATO, OECD funded projects. However, the very interesting work being conducted on military sociology and geo-political issues in the Baltic will be of interest to an audience outside of Lithuania and if the Unit’s researchers were more focussed in the outlets they choose for publication, the Academy could definitely carve out a respectable niche for itself on the international scene. The Unit lacks critical mass, with only 14 staff employed in FTE positions. 53 per cent of staff are aged between 35 and 44, if these can be retained this bodes well for the future, however the career options within the Unit seem limited. There is currently a dearth of mid-career staff who are full time based at the Institute.

Conclusions and recommendations

In many ways, this was a challenging Unit for the Panel to assess, as it has a very unique role in Lithuanian Higher Education and a rather narrow research remit, when compared with international Political Science and Management Departments. The research output of the unit is, understandably, quite limited, which will make any move to creating a stronger international profile quite challenging. That being said there is real potential here, there is some very interesting work being done on military sociology, military history and defence by young scholars. The Unit needs to channel this potential by developing a systematic vision for its research future (and allowed the freedom to do so by military management at the Institute). More full time senior staff, based primarily at the Unit, are required to provide this leadership.

1. Too much of the researchers time is spent in the classroom. Teaching hours are rather high by international standards in political science and the social sciences. Students should be encouraged to be more independent in their academic studies.
2. If the UoA wishes to attract international researchers as visitors, the physical infrastructure will need to be improved. Software and hardware needs to be updated and more accessible from on site offices or better yet, remotely via secure connections.
3. Give greater attention to questions of journal rank when considering publication outlets. Not all international journals are of equal quality. Some interesting and good work already being conducted at the unit could find outlets in higher profile journals; this would increase the overall visibility of the Academy.
4. To raise the profile of the Unit, in terms of international research, the Unit needs more full time staff based primarily or indeed exclusively on site. There are too many part time staff with affiliations at other institutions. Overall, there is lack of critical mass as the unit is rather small.
5. The Unit should consider whether offering a PhD programme is a good use of resources, and if so, how to expand the numbers of such students, particularly full time PhD students, to reach a critical mass. The completion of PhD theses in English should also be encouraged in order to facilitate international dissemination of results.
6. Provide annual travel budgets to staff, in order that they can plan ahead to attend more international conferences (rather than applying on a case by case basis). Additionally, funds for membership in professional organizations (1 or 2 per researcher) would be useful.
Faculty of Public Security, Mykolas Romeris University

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**Quality of the research performance and impact on the scientific research discipline of the UoA**

1. The economic and social impact of the research in Lithuania
2. The physical infrastructure of the UoA
3. Research management (including career development and human resource management) of the UoA
4. The development potential of the UoA

**OVERALL SCORE**

1

**Overall score**

Reasons for an overall score of 1 are the low profile and poor performance of the MRU-Vsaug’s research activity, the lack of any specific strategy to deploy at Faculty level the general MRU’s research objectives and the lack of any adequate environment and infrastructure for quality research.

**Quality of the research performance and Impact on the scientific research discipline of the UoA**

MRU-Vsaug has a strong teaching and professional orientation. This can be explained by the need to create autonomous public security bodies when the country regained independence in the 1990’s and the challenge to manage the “transition” towards the European model’s standards. This also means that research activity has not traditionally been a high priority at the UoA. Therefore, the bibliometric data reflects a situation of a quite poor performance. The SCOPUS total number of reviewed articles is low (19, amongst them only one article with international co-authoring) compared to the total number of 15,4 FTE researchers, while there are around 400 papers in “refereed scientific edited journals and conference proceedings” in the same period. This positions MRU-Vsaug the eighth of eleven UoA, with an H index of two and a poor 1,2 articles per researcher. Besides, scientific outputs seem to be decreasing and according to MRU-Vsaug website, in 2014...
there are only five papers in peer reviewed international publications and only one indexed in WoS and Scopus. There is no publication strategy in the UoA in the medium or long term. Research focus of the quoted publications in the SAR is predominantly national; has a strong local character - even if articles are written in English--; and is mainly related to the development of professional topics. The majority of the articles are joint publications and very few of the researchers seem to publish regularly. MRU itself or Lithuanian publishing houses are the main publishers. International publishing appears to be a challenge because of the domestic specificities of public security issues as well as the lack of English proficiency of some academic staff. The quality of the articles attached to the SAR is not exceptional, being much more descriptive than analytical. Some of those papers seems to have been presented as two different articles with different structure and little variations; other address very particular topics related to forensic or electronic engineering but with no social science dimension; other seem to be closer to consultancy than scientific research. International visits, both from and towards MRU-Vsaug, seem to be rather limited. The absence of young researchers or postdocs, as well as the minimal presence of Ph.D. students in the Faculty is also a relevant issue. The Faculty does not have a specific PhD program, and the few PhD students they have around are linked to the Faculty of Law, which is the administrative unit for this purpose. This is a handicap for the development of research capacity and points out upon a prioritisation of teaching/professional training above of research activities. There is some evidence of capturing of national funding - though such funding levels still remain very low. MRU-Vsaug is not very active in acquiring those funds from abroad. Fundraising from private actors seems to be non-existent.

**The economic and social impact of the research in Lithuania**

Given the focus on national security, including protection of human rights, there is surprisingly little collaboration with the surrounding society. Presence in domestic administrative bodies is mostly related to the training of public security bodies in Lithuania or the neighbour countries. Especially relevant are the contacts with the Police Department and the State Border Guard Office. However this presence seems to be concentrated in the hands of a few people. Interaction with international institutions is very limited, and it is done through FRONTEX master’s consortium and CEPOL activities. New mechanisms might be developed to promote and increase knowledge transfer to the professional and institutional arena. The applied nature of much of the research allows assuming that there is potential for a fair degree of user and practitioner engagement.

**The physical infrastructure of the UoA**

Infrastructures in Kaunas are old and obsolete; in particular the Forensic Science Laboratory is in a very poor situation. There are no offices for the individual or shared use of academic staff - they are supposed to use the classrooms when empty. No reading rooms either. Essentially, there is no place to work for the academic staff or PhD students. According to SAR, MRU-Vsaug has its own library fund with 48.000 books. However, this is just a small room with some printed books, a computer with access to MRU general Library’s database and very few working places. There is no monitoring on the use and availability of Library resources. Premises in Vilnius (at the MRU Faculty of Law) are being sporadically and partially used and are much better. Good level of resources is available in the MRU general Library in Vilnius, plus good reading rooms, computers and electronic resources. MRU-Vsaug is supposed to use the MRU premises that are to be finished by 2015 in Vilnius.

**Research management (including career development and human resource management) of the UoA**

The MRU general strategy for research is very much centralised at the university level. Therefore, MRU-Vsaug fully relies on the broader context of the MRU research programme on “Societal innovations for global growth”, which includes five research programmes: justice, security and human rights, social technologies, national sustainable growth in the context of globalisation, improving the quality of life and
advancing employment opportunities, continuity and change of values in global society. There isn’t a specific strategy stating research priorities or leading the research activity within those areas at MRU-Vsaug and the decision on research topics is up to the individual researchers alone. Generally speaking, researchers at MRU-Vsaug organise themselves around the two axes of justice, security and human rights and social technologies. Objectives of internationalisation and interdisciplinarity are axes of the MRU research strategy but the way to achieve them at MRU-Vsaug have not been explained at all. In particular, it is not clear at all how the interdisciplinary orientation is aligned with the institutional research capacity in terms of human resources, since there is nothing similar to a research community but individual researchers. Besides, the increasing demands of internationalisation seem to create stress on the researchers, since they perceive the requirements for publishing internationally and the complexity of the procedures for applying for international projects as something disheartening and demoralising. International cooperation through FRONTEX and CEPOL seem to work only in the field of joint master degrees or specific projects linked to teaching and training activities. In addition, the Faculty seems to receive and send very few international visitors. Properly speaking, MRU-Vsaug seems not to have specific research staff and most of the employees teach on part time basis. Academic staff are often overloaded with teaching, with little time for research. According to interviews, few months’ research visits abroad are not possible due to teaching duties. However, according to MRU guidelines, they are expected to use around 400 hours/year on research tasks. A rewarding system allows recognising research when exceeding the minimum of hours for research. Also, if a “research profile” is applicable, academic staff are allowed to reduce up to 20% of its teaching workload. There is also a rewarding system to encourage international publishing but it does not seem to fit very well with the usual international peer review procedures. Although the academic staff seem to be quite happy with the support they receive, for example in applying for funding or arranging visits abroad, it doesn’t look like there is a “research culture” amongst them that would allow growing research, not only at international but also at national level. At Faculty level it doesn’t seem to be a specific research managerial activity either and a lack of leadership and ambition is clearly perceived.

The development potential of the UoA

This Faculty still seems to be at an early stage and in terms of substantive research expertise; there would still be much that needs to be developed. The biggest challenge for this unit would appear to be the lack of intellectual coherence of the research activity. It will therefore be hard to ensure that the unit moves forward in the way that it wants, while it remains so diverse in terms of focus. Lack of strong leadership and ambition at Faculty level also poses a significant challenge. Actually MRU-Vsaug doesn’t seem to have its own specific research objectives and planning at medium or long term and fully relies on the MRU research strategies. Besides, attracting foreign researchers at MRU-Vsaug is very difficult due to a lack of adequate research facilities, insufficient financial incentives and the inexistence of a Ph.D. program. It would be necessary to strengthen efforts to develop collaboration with foreign colleagues and participate in international networks in order to create some international profile.

Conclusions and recommendations

A thorough analysis of the role, vision and objectives of research in the Unit is needed. As the disciplinary background of the research expertise needed in teaching of the Unit’s different study programmes varies a lot, there should be a clear strategy for research collaboration both on domestic and international level. If the composition of the institution will remain as it is for educational reasons, a more coherent identity for the Unit’s research would probably be possible only on the basis of well thought-out interdisciplinarity of public security research in some key fields. The development of international research requires, as a first step, much stronger research-related international networks and attendance to international conferences.
Summary of the Institutional Assessments

Brief background

In total, twelve units were assessed by Social Science Panel 2 (S2), covering a range of disciplines: primarily the fields of Law, Political Science, Sociology and Psychology but also including elements from Education, Social Work, Communications, History, Public Administration, Management and Philosophy. Prior to the site visit, each Unit completed a detailed self-assessment report and each of these submissions was evaluated by at least two of the Panel’s six members prior to arriving in Lithuania. These reports were discussed in detail by the Panel as a whole, in a full day meeting, on February 23rd. The site visits took place on the 24-26th of February 2015 with 2-3 members of the panel visiting each UoA. Using the information from these visits, the panel met again on the 26-27th of February to update their assessments and arrive at the final scores for the individual units and to discuss their overall conclusions. This summary report, based on all of the above information, reflects the consensus of all six members of the panel.

Overall Quality of Research in the Social Sciences (with particular reference to Law, Political Science, Sociology and Psychology)

Social science research in Lithuania is relatively youthful (the discipline of Law apart) and in many ways still struggling to establish itself as an international player. There are no units that can be currently considered ‘strong’ in terms of research quality and output (although 3 of the Units could be considered strong national players with some international profile). Much of the research is applied and there is not a lot of published work (with some notable exceptions) that could be considered of a high standard in terms of its originality and importance. There is a strong emphasis on applying or translating the work of international scholars to the Lithuanian case and less research that is at the cutting edge or frontiers of scientific inquiry. A significant portion of the submitted work reviewed by the panel was descriptive and could not be considered internationally significant. Citations rates were, on the whole, very low, the average Scopus citation rate per article for 2009-13, across the 12 units was less than 1. There was a dearth of publications in mid-ranking journals (let alone top ranking generalist journals) in each of the disciplines we considered. In general, social science research is overly oriented to national issues, which limits its potential to arouse the interest of the international community. However, there is clear potential to make a bigger impact internationally as there is a pool of considerable talent in Lithuanian social science. With the right set of supports and, in particular, a more focussed and strategic publication plan, several (though by no means all) units could be stronger international players.

1 Publication Strategies:

The general consensus of the panel was that Lithuanian social science needs to focus more on the outlets in which researchers are choosing to publish, even good work is not being systematically targeted at top international, high impact journals. Additionally, much of the research has a very heavy focus on Lithuanian issues and inevitably, this makes publication in mainstream international outlets challenging. While work on Lithuanian subjects should not be jettisoned, the almost exclusive focus on these topics in some of the social sciences (sociology, political science, law) is far from ideal.

1.1 Consideration of Journal Rank

While the incentive systems that have been put in place to publish internationally are to be commended, the current structure of such motivational systems needs to be revisited. Not all international outlets are equivalent and the focus on quantity over quality has had perverse outcomes and does not serve the social science community well. One publication in a top ranking generalist journal can take many years to achieve but it does far more to raise the profile of a Unit than 20 articles in 3rd and 4th tier outlets. Journal impact
factors (e.g. ISI) and reputational rankings of journals and book publishers (where these exist) need to be embraced and staff rewarded for such publications in terms of promotions and hiring.

### 1.2 Alarming growth in In-House Journals

In response to the need and incentives to publish in international outlets, many UoAs have adopted a strategy whereby they have established their own In-House journals, often through the medium of English (in some cases more than 1 journal per Unit). This is not a wise stratagem. There are very large numbers of existing journals in each of the disciplines under consideration (even in very prestigious and selective indexes such as Thomson Reuters there are currently 200+ journals in Political Science and International Relations and 600+ in Psychology). These local journals, even where indexed on Scopus (which has 900+ Political Science and IR journals already), will not serve to make the units more visible in the short to medium term and are highly unlikely to attract the work of top international scholars until such a time as their impact factor increases dramatically (if ever).

### 1.3 Recommendations

i) Focus on publishing in established journals in each discipline (preferably ISI rather than Scopus), let alone renowned international publishers of scientific monographs when appropriate.

ii) Consideration should be given to the rankings of even ISI journals. High impact journal publications are much more likely to be read and cited. Incentive systems and rewards should allow time for publishing top journal articles. Listings of what are considered Tier 1, 2 and 3 journals in each discipline can be created to give further guidance to researchers.

iii) Simple strategies such as the use of H-indices in promotion rounds would underscore the need not just for output but also impact.

iv) The adoption of Google scholar profiles would facilitate easy comparison of productivity levels; there was a noted absence of Lithuanian social science researchers with such profiles.

v) There are some simple but effective strategies for increasing the visibility of publications (e.g. clever use of Keywords, choosing a descriptive title etc.) so that papers are easily identified by search engines, which in turn leads to increased citations; these approaches need to be disseminated to researchers on the ground.

### 2 Doctoral/Postdoctoral Training and Hiring Practices

#### 2.1 PhDs

The panel was very encouraged by the quality of PhD students that it encountered during its visit. Indeed, for many S2 panel members meeting these doctoral candidates was the high point of their visit. The enthusiasm and ability of these students offers considerable hope for the future of social science research in Lithuania, on condition they are given the opportunity to progress up the academic ladder. These PhD students were very internationalized, rather more so than senior staff, and were making excellent use of LRC and EU funding to attend international conferences and Summer Schools and spend semesters at, in particular, universities in Western Europe and North America, where social science research is stronger. That being said, most PhD theses are still through the medium of Lithuanian, even when the students themselves had a stated preference for writing in English. If the work of these students is to reach beyond the borders of Lithuania and serve to raise the profile of the country as an international research player, more (though by no means all) theses should be written in English, which for better or worse is now the language of the social sciences. PhD student funding also needs to be addressed. In several units students had heavy teaching and project (not related to their own research) loads, in order to make ends meet. Many others were working in jobs outside of the University. This distracts from their main priority, which should be to complete their PhD.
2.2 Postdoctoral Fellows

There were very few postdocs in any of the institutions we visited (no unit had more than 2 and several had none). Better use and possible expansion of the LRC postdoctoral scheme would be an opportunity to bring in bright young international scholars to Lithuanian social science centres, it should also be used to encourage young Lithuanian PhDs from abroad to return home and additionally facilitate mobility between units. To make this scheme attractive to young international researchers and to ensure that postdocs focussed on their research alone, remuneration may have to be more generous. High remuneration levels will also ensure these fellowships are very prestigious. It is better to have a small number of well paid fellowships that numerous poorly paid ones.

2.3 Hiring Practices

There is a worrying lack of mobility within the Lithuanian job market. Students tend to do their undergraduate BA, Masters and PhD at the same institute and then subsequently take up academic jobs at the very same Unit. This is not best international practice. Job hires should be viewed as opportunities for an intake of “new blood”, rather than serving to reinforce the existing trends/biases/weaknesses in a Department (in terms of research traditions, norms, practices etc.)

2.4 Recommendations

i) Competitive PhD stipends offered by the LRC should be at a living wage standard (even if this means a reduction in the overall number of awards), in order to allow the very best PhD students to focus exclusively on their research.

ii) Dissertations should be completed more frequently in English; given international trends in the social sciences we would also encourage more article-based theses. Paper based theses with 3 or 4 papers would also facilitate theses being completed in both English and Lithuanian (e.g. 2 papers in Lithuanian and 2 in English), thereby serving both an international and domestic audience.

iii) Requirements for Lithuanian language fluency in some job advertisements serve to block international scholars from even being considered and should be removed. It is not unreasonable to expect fluency within a number of years of being hired, but insisting on it at the outset essentially is a barrier to entry for all but Lithuanian nationals.

iv) Make more systematic use of the LRC post-doctoral scheme. A key condition of such a postdoctoral schemes should be that students cannot undertake the 1-2 year fellowship at their home institution.

v) Formal skills training for PhD supervisory staff should be considered.

3 Internationalization and International Research Funding

3.1 Underperformance in international funding competitions

Given the relatively large numbers employed in many of the Units assessed, the performance in obtaining R&D funding from international programmes is disappointing. Only one institution, the Lithuanian Social Research Centre (FTE staff of c37 people), had a six-figure annual average income from international programmes in the period 2011-2013. Several large units (e.g. Vilnius University Faculty of Law and Vilnius University Faculty of Philosophy –both with FTE research staff numbers around 60) had zero international income in this time period. As national funding for basic research is reduced in the coming years, this lack of success to date is concerning.

3.2 Internationalisation

International networks and connections are growing but are often driven by Erasmus and undergraduate study programmes rather than research networks and are not always with top tier international institutions (particularly in Western Europe and the USA, where the tradition of social sciences is strongest). Furthermore, these connections are being utilised most effectively by PhD students rather than academic
staff, as the former can avail of LRC and EU funding to undertake extended stays abroad. There are good connections to institutions in Eastern and Central Europe and other Baltic states. Co-authorship with international scholars remains low however, particularly in the discipline of law (VU-Law had zero articles with international co-authors, LTI had 1). For the five-year period, 2009-2013 there were less than 350 articles published (c68 per year) with international co-authors, across the 12 units. Given the large numbers of staff employed in the units assessed by S2, this figure is unsatisfactory. Publishing in top tier international journals is challenging, one of the best routes to such success is through establishing international co-authorships.

3.3 Recommendations

i) National Research Funding Competitions (e.g. LRC): the assessment of proposals should be conducted by international panels of experts (as in common practice in other low population European countries). Lithuanian social science is simply too small for this system to be work purely on merit and anonymity. More importantly, the experience of international feedback would prove invaluable if and when researchers come to apply for EU and other non-domestic funding schemes.

ii) A routinized sabbatical leave system should be introduced, not only to facilitate greater research output but also to allow researchers to spend 6-12 months abroad. Such visits will lead to an organic growth in international links and international collaborations.

4 Infrastructure

The physical infrastructure of the S2 units varied quite significantly (ranging from 1 to 5) but there are some very modern and impressive facilities in places such as VMU Social Sciences. There does appear to be a general shortage of individual office spaces and some systematic consideration should be given to this, is this considered important or not? Individual researchers did feel it was important but it did not seem to be a top priority for management in many of the Units. Collaborations, co-authorship and good moral are easier to foster when a UoA has a norm whereby most staff work in their Departments regularly. Without dedicated office space, researchers can become quite atomised. Access to e-journals, statistical software etc. was of a very good standard (better than in many other EU member states) and serves to facilitate high quality research in the social sciences. There is very good inter-institutional and national level coordination of these resources and this is highly commendable. The Vilnius University Library, Science Communication and Information Centre is a particularly impressive piece of infrastructure, with facilities comparable to those at the best international universities. But as a final note of caution, it is worth underscoring that much of this state of the art infrastructure has been heavily funded by EU structural funds, the reliability of such funding streams in the medium to long term needs to be considered.

5 Age Profile, Critical Mass, Potential Consolidations:

5.1 Age Profile

The spread of staff across age categories was quite reasonable with only one of the units having large proportions of staff aged 55 or over (VU-Philosophy where 35% of staff fell into this cohort). Some of the units did however, have notably large proportions of research staff in the 25-34 year old age group. VDU_PM, MRU_TF, VU_TSPMI and LTI each had more than 30 per cent of their staff in this age category. Indeed, VU- Political Science had 40 per cent and the Law Institute of Lithuania had 42 per cent of their staff under the age of 35. These are very high proportions. It is unclear given current hiring practices how many of these staff will be afforded the opportunity to progress up the academic hierarchy and whether or not many will be forced out of academia, only to replaced by another cohort of 25-34 year olds.
5.2 Critical Mass

The Units were not small by international standards and some units have already restructured to create critical mass. For instance, MRU Politics and Management has purposively attempted to create additional research capacity by merging several departments and now is a very large unit with c.60 FTE equivalent staff (across 3 Institutes). The smallest unit was the General Jonas Žemaitis Military Academy with only 14 FTE staff at lecturer or above level, but given its unique role in Lithuanian society, it is not an obvious candidate for merging with another UoA. The Law Institute of Lithuania is also small in comparative perspective and could potentially be merged with another law faculty (see below).

5.2.1 Potential Consolidation/collaboration

The research niche that each unit identified was not, in many circumstances, particularly unique, as such there is clear potential for consolidation but in the first instance more collaboration across units is to be encouraged. There is a notable and regrettable degree of competition between UoAs in the same field, which is not helpful in a country of the size of Lithuania. For instance, in Law several units described their niche as the evolution of the Lithuanian legal system in the post-transition period or human rights law in the Baltic regions. In political science, almost all units identified post communist studies, relations with near neighbours and Lithuania at the crossroads of Europe, as their individual area of research strength. However, the panel did not feel it was appropriate to make strong recommendations on the possible merging of units. With that caveat in mind, the Panel felt the most compelling case, if any, for consolidation could be made for the Law Institute of Lithuania. This Unit could be merged with another Law Faculty. The scientific rational for such an independent institute in Lithuanian is not compelling.

5.3 Inter-disciplinarity

The Panel wanted to emphasize that there is not only scope but an urgent need for more interdisciplinary work in the field of Education. Internationally, education, psychology and sociology are closely aligned but this is not the case in Lithuania where the legacy of the communist era seems to prevail, modern educational methods need to be embraced. Research on pedagogy remains very theoretical and there is little interest in the large scale assessments that are the hallmark of educational research internationally (VMU- Social Sciences providing a notable and admirable exception).

Recommendation:

i) The LRC should consider running schemes that force academics to cooperate across units both within and across disciplines. Streams of funds that require networks to be built at the national level will compel interaction and should lead to synergies and economies of scale. Such an approach would be similar to Horizon 2020 funding and earlier EU Framework grants, where applications must have researchers from across the EU and, in many cases, be interdisciplinary.

6:Contribution to Lithuanian Society

The Social Sciences clearly make a very valuable contribution to Lithuanian society and they should be commended for this. Five of the 12 units scored a 4 in this category and another 5 achieved a mark of 3. The UoAs have extensive links with, in particular, policy makers and legal practitioners. Networks with the business community were, however, less well developed.
Assessment of Individual Disciplines

**Law:** Five of the twelve units assessed by S2 could be considered to be dedicated primarily or exclusively to research in the field of law. Overall, research conducted in these units was not deemed to be of international note (no unit achieved a score greater than 2 for ‘Quality of Research’) and the research output was very much oriented to the national level, with an audience that was almost exclusively domestic. In part, this is the nature of legal scholarship worldwide; as a discipline, law, is expected to, and should, provide service to the legal profession in the home country. However, even taking this particular discipline specific issue into account, law schools in Lithuania seem to be rather insular. In some instances there were no articles published with international co-authors in the period 2009-2013 (VU- Law). Indeed, it was the view of the panel that the Legal Science units were also quite isolated from each other in Lithuania itself. They were very self-contained with a marked reluctance to engage with each other; there was too much competition amongst the units and more cooperation is needed. More joint research projects, especially in very specialised areas, would build critical mass in the country. Furthermore, there was not much recognition or acceptance of the need to engage with the international community and in some instances the law Units were dismissive of key performance indicators such as international funding, journal prestige and citation counts. Law is, undoubtedly the oldest of the social science disciplines in Lithuania (VU’s law department dates back to 1641) and has a long and venerable history but it is not very outward looking. Law is clearly a very prestigious undergraduate degree to obtain; a law degree provides an entry point to many high profile careers. However, this focus on training future lawyers has come at some costs. Together, these factors seem to have led to a level of self-satisfaction amongst legal academics that is misplaced, especially in terms of research that will give rise to interest in the international legal community. Legal scholarship in Lithuanian needs to embrace internationalisation more forcefully; at present it has very low international visibility and, in particular, the lack of publications in international journals needs to be addressed head on. Also, international networks need to be consolidated. It should be noted that some of the Units (e.g. VDU_Teis) are more positively engaging with these issues than others.

**Political Science:** Three of the Units assessed by Panel S2 could primarily be described as political science departments (the Institute of International Relations and Political Science at VU, the Dept. of Political Science at the General Jonas Zemaitis Academy and the Department of Political Science at VMU) but consideration of the political science conducted at The Faculty of Politic and Management at MRU (Panel S1) is also contained in this section. Overall, political science research can be said to be heavily Lithuanian and Baltic centric and while such work should and, indeed, needs to be conducted, it should not be to the exclusion of other research themes in the field. In top ranking international political science departments, research does not exclusively focus on national politics. This rather narrow focus inevitably restricts the international publication strategy of researchers, particularly in generalist journals in the discipline. Furthermore, much of the research the panel reviewed is applied and not theoretically or empirically innovative. Research tends towards applications of existing works to the Lithuanian case and much of it errs on the side of description. There was a notable absence of publications in mainstream, mid ranking journals in international relations, public administration and political science (there were none in top ranking journals) though some of the scholars based in Political Science units were publishing in ISI journals in other fields (e.g. public health, economics). In general there appeared to be a poor understanding or comprehension of journal impact and quality amongst political science scholars, even listing the top journals (let alone publishing in them) was not a straightforward task for many researchers the panel encountered. More engagement in international networks and, in particular, co-authorship with international scholars within these networks will facilitate the production of higher impact journal articles. Participation in the main conferences in Political Science (e.g. EPSA, ECPR, APSA) should be greatly improved, to facilitate these contacts. There are very interesting questions to be asked about Lithuania politics, security and decision making but pitching these to an international audience is a skill that has not yet been mastered by most in the field.
Sociology: Only one of the units assessed by the panel could be properly described as being devoted to the discipline of sociology (The Lithuanian Social Research Unit) but there were also sizable numbers of sociologists at the Faculty of Philosophy at Vilnius University (Depts. of Sociology and Social Work) and the Faculty of Social Sciences at VMU and the Jonas Zemaitis Military Academy. Overall, sociology as a field in Lithuania cannot be considered to be fulfilling its potential as an international player. There is a marked tendency to focus on applied rather than basic research and output in high impact peer reviewed international journals is minimal. The average number of citations suggests that Lithuanian sociology is not visible in the international research community. Currently, the main contribution of the discipline of sociology is very much at the society level. That being said, there is some very interesting work being done in the field, which could not only reach but also engage a wider audience (e.g. studies at the Military Academy on military families and gender and the armed forces).

Psychology: There were sizable numbers of psychologists working in three of the Units of assessment (VU-Faculty of Philosophy; VMU-Social Sciences; MRU Faculty of Social Technologies). Overall, the state of psychology in Lithuania is quite healthy. Two of these units were amongst the three top scorers in terms of research quality in panel S2. In particular, the Psychology Department at VU is doing very fine work (in a niche but well chosen subfield) and can be considered to be a good global player. In the circumstances and given funding limits, the work being done in the field of Psychology is quite impressive. There is a better awareness among academics in psychology, relative to the other social sciences, of the value of international publications in high impact journals and of internationalization in general. Collaborations with international scholars are already quite developed. Additionally, there is some interesting and very important applied work being done, bringing international standardised psychological tests to Lithuanian society with adaptations and innovations that are country specific (e.g. the work being done on the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory at VU, the development of online programmes for treating post traumatic stress syndrome and longitudinal studies on positive youth development). Overall, the future appears quite bright for Psychology as an academic discipline in Lithuania. There is clear potential for Psychology to ‘lead the way’ for other social sciences through greater interdisciplinary work, with the field of Education in particular, but also Sociology and Political Science. There are already good levels of interdisciplinary work being conducted by psychologists with fields such as information technology and optics/physics.

Some Final Overall Observations

1) Pay levels are not internationally competitive and without a significant improvement in salaries, internationalization of staffing is highly unlikely. If Lithuanian social science wishes to move up the world rankings this has to be acknowledged. International outlook (in terms of staff, students and research outlook) is a key component in the methodology of many international rankings agencies (e.g. Times Higher). Even if attracting international scholars is not considered important, pay levels have to be addressed. In an effort to make ends meet, too many academics are compelled to have contracts at multiple higher education institutions; this is distracting from research and is very inefficient. Best international practice is to have one reasonably well-remunerated job at one institution. One solution, which would not inflate education budgets, would be to reduce the number of overall staff in the social sciences by c.25% in the medium term (with a concomitant reduction in teaching hours –see point 2) and redistribute this pay to remaining staff. Reductions could be achieved through natural attrition, or possibly, incentivised voluntary retirements. Other solutions, such as increasing the overall expenditure on higher education should also be considered.

2) Staff are over teaching in the social sciences. The weekly contact hours per researcher are higher than for their peers in Western Europe and North America. Undergraduates in the social sciences in these countries would typically have 12-15 hours per week in the classroom, whereas in some Units in Lithuania this figure is as high as 25-30 hours. Encouraging students to be more independent in their studies would free up valuable time for research, without requiring a change in the overall funding model.
3) While this point has already been made above it is worth reiterating. Many units appear to be operating under the illusion that creating in house journals will raise their profile internationally, but this is not standard practice in the best international departments in the social sciences. Top international scholars tend to publish in ISI journals and very few, if any, of these in-house journals are likely to make this index in the medium term, not to mention rank highly on ISI citation indices. There is no shortage of established journals from which to choose, creating a slew of low ranking journals (at best indexed on Scopus) is not the answer to raising the international profile of Lithuanian research in the social sciences. It is wasteful of resources and extremely inefficient.

4) It is not clear that all universities and UoAs should be research oriented; several units will struggle to raise their game to an international level. However, these Units do provide important services to Lithuanian society (e.g. training police and army officers).

5) There are clear challenges going forward in terms of overall funding of the social sciences, which is already rather low. As in many other European countries it is not obvious that social science research is truly valued by funding agencies, universities and/or higher education authorities.