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National and ethnic minorities and the image of the state in international public relations: a comparative study of Lithuania and Estonia

Mniejszości narodowe a wizerunek państwa w międzynarodowym public relations. Studium porównawcze Litwy i Estonii

Abstract: The article analyses the current situation in Estonia and Lithuania in the context of the position of both states and their public relations strategy and image since 1991, as well as the role of national minorities in this process. The authors emphasize that even though Estonia and Lithuania tend to be treated as very similar state organisms, they chose different ways of building their legal and democratic structures. Despite many similarities between the two states, such as location, size, small population, common historical background and, above all, ethnic divisions, one should pay attention to successful attempts to strengthen the statehood of Estonia and Lithuania.
Keywords: brand of the state, national minorities in Estonia and Lithuania, the image of the state, democratization

Streszczenie: Artykuł jest próbą analizy działań podejmowanych przez Estonię i Litwę na rzecz budowania pozycji obu państw, strategii kreowania i zarządzania reputacją każdego z krajów w międzynarodowym public relation od 1991 r. oraz roli, jaką w tym procesie zajmują mniejszości narodowe. Autorki starły się podkreślić, że Estonia i Litwa, choć często traktowane są jako podobne organizmy państwowe, wybrały własne drogi budowania demokratycznego państwa prawa i kreowania swojego wizerunku. Mimo wielu podobieństw między krajami, takich jak położenie geograficzne, wielkość, niewielka liczba ludności, wspólne podłoże historyczne, a przede wszystkim podziały narodowościowe, należy zwrócić uwagę na udane próby umacniania państwowości Estonii i Litwy.
Słowa kluczowe: marka państwa, mniejszości narodowe w Estonii i na Litwie, wizerunek państwa, demokratyzacja

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Introduction

The creation and management of a state brand is an integral part of foreign policy as a tool to achieve specific objectives in this field. A positive image of a country attracts investment, drives the tourism industry, fosters foreign policy relations, and guarantees security. Therefore, the survival of a country in the international arena[1] largely depends on an effective national branding strategy.[2] In broad global terms, this is especially true for young democracies, which have no strong historical roots. Such countries include the Baltic states, which had to reinvent their historical narrative – an integral part of their state branding – first in the interwar period and then on the eve of and after the collapse of the USSR.

The collapse of the Soviet Union and the reappearance on the world map of the independent Baltic states brought about the need to reflect on the juxtaposition of their political agendas and to formulate a new development strategy. The task was all the more difficult as the reborn Lithuania and Estonia had to face not only the transformation of the socio-economic legacy of the former political system, but also the reconstruction of the nation in both ethnic and civil terms. The issue of national minorities turned out to be an important factor, and the policy pursued in this area did not resonate well in the international arena, negatively affecting not only the perception of the young nation-states by external actors, but also enabling them to interfere in their internal affairs.[3] Although both Lithuania and Estonia signalled

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1   Cf. J. Akromienė, D. Bankauskaitė, *Valstybės įvaizdžio galia*, Vilnius 2007, p. 1.

2   While being mindful of the differences of terminology, the authors in this paper use for stylistic reasons the following terms interchangeably: nation branding, country branding, state branding, and state brand.

3   Russia has repeatedly spoken out in international forums in defence of human rights in the Baltic States. Violations of minority rights have also been pointed out by international organisations, including the European Foundation of Human Rights and the Advisory Committee of the Council of Europe for the Protection of National Minorities. The issue of the rights of national minorities in Lithuania is also raised by Poland. More on this topic: *Kolejny krytyczny rosyjski raport dotyczący praw człowieka na Litwie*, Efhr.eu, https://www.efhr.eu/2014/01/26/kolejny-krytyczny-rosyjski-raport-dotyczacy-praw-czlowieka-na-litwie/ [16.04.2021]; *Неграждане в Прибалтике: 10 лет на решение вопроса?*, BBC.com, https://www.bbc.com/russian/international/2014/11/141104_statelessness_issue_baltic_states [16.04.2021]; *Права человека в Эстонии 2014-2015. Годовой отчет Эстонского центра по правам человека*, Эстонский центр по правам человека 2015; *Odpowiedź podsekretarza stanu w Ministerstwie Spraw Zagranicznych – z upoważnienia ministra – na interpelację nr 10337 w sprawie sytuacji mniejszości polskiej na Litwie*, http://orka2.sejm.gov.pl/IZ6.nsf/main/43394BF9 [15.04.2021].

the adoption of a decisively pro-Western development course by the early 1990s,[4] stereotyping and the perception of these countries by significant international actors as an area of Russian influence did pose a challenge for the governments in Tallinn and Estonia. It was necessary to express the definitive desire to break with the Soviet past and develop a concept for the creation of a new state brand.

From the perspective of the three decades since the dismantling of the USSR, it is possible to conclude that both Estonia and Lithuania have, to a large extent, managed to shed the label of undefined or shapeless republics of the former Soviet bloc and create separate, distinctive state brands. In many respect, the Baltic region, which is a model today, is an example of the positive results of peaceful revolutionary initiatives undertaken by Lithuanians and Estonians in the late 1980s. On the other hand, the firm anchoring of Vilnius and Tallinn in the processes of European integration and orientation towards membership of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation brought tangible results in the form of access to the structures of these alliances.[5] Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia are the only former Soviet republics of the USSR in the European Union or NATO alongside the so-called brand name countries of Western Europe. The contemporary example of a number of post-Soviet states (including Belarus, Ukraine, and Georgia), which continue to struggle with the manifestations of the Kremlin's revisionist policy, proves that the political strategy chosen by the Baltic States in 1991 was by all means correct and effective.

The fact that both countries perform well in international rankings should be treated as a success in the public relations sphere. For instance, they were ranked among the top countries in Eastern Europe in the Democracy Index report in 2020[6] (Estonia ranked first while Lithuania was in fifth place). However, their current situation related to the epidemiological situation and the problem of information cha-

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4   J. Sobczak, *Integracja obszaru postradzieckiego* [in:] *Polityka, prawo, kultura i bezpieczeństwo na obszarze poradzieckim*, T. Bodio, J. Marszałek-Kawa (eds.), Toruń 2018, pp. 13-14.
5   Estonia and Lithuania were admitted to NATO on 29 March 2004 and joined the European Union on 1 May 2004.
6   *Democracy Index 2020: In sickness and in health? A report by The Economist Intelligence Unit*, EIU. com, p. 33, https://www.eiu.com/n/campaigns/democracy-index-2020/ [27.04.2021].

os – exacerbated by external states and translating into a low level of trust of national minorities in state institutions – provokes questions about the current legal situation of national and ethnic minorities in both countries and, consequently, about the real condition of the discussed democratic systems.

According to Michael E. Porter, an expert on international competitiveness, the wealth of nations is often not "inherited" but should be strategically created.[7] This is evidenced by the successes in this area of national branding achieved particularly by Estonia, which focused on reforms and evolved into a global "digital powerhouse" in a relatively short period of time. More conservative in introducing reforms or innovations and associated mainly with the achievements of its basketball players, Lithuania has also recently joined the digital race and engaged in processes to defend human rights and the rights of the repressed in Belarus.

This article attempts to compare measures implemented by Estonia and Lithuania to build the position of the state, the strategy of creating and managing the state's reputation in international public relations since 1991, and the role of national minorities in this process. Answers to the research question posed in the title were sought using a complex method of system analysis. The historical method was also used to show the dependencies and specificity of the region from the perspective of three decades. Finally, comparative methods were used to identify features that are shared by or distinctive of Lithuanian and Estonian image policies and their policies towards national minorities.

1. The brand of the Estonian state

Estonia has come a very long way towards rebuilding its statehood and then consolidating it. The long years of affiliation with the USSR and the often-inseparable treatment of the Baltic republics as a single political entity strongly influenced the process of gaining international and internal independence. It should be pointed out that the formation of the independent Estonian state was preceded by numerous national struggles. The decisions made by the leaders of the

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7   More on the subject: M.E. Porter, *Competitive Advantage of Nations*, Free Press 1989.

superpowers and the division of Europe during World War II deprived Estonians of their independence for decades.[8] The Stalinist period left its mark on many areas of social life, leading to very profound changes resulting in complete subordination to Soviet trends in culture, education, language policy, and many other areas.[9] Mikhail Gorbachev's policy implemented in the USSR from 1985 allowed for the gradual introduction of forms of thaw,[10] which in consequence led to political and economic transformation as well as the independence of the country, culminating in its proclamation of independence[11] and admission to international organisations such as the CSCE and the UN.[12]

The difficult situation of the reborn country gave impetus to the construction of a strong brand, which Estonia is today in both European and world terms. Country branding determines and creates its image, translating into its recognition and strengthening its development positions.[13] In particular, it is worth noting Estonia's leading position in the Democracy Index, which is compiled annually by the Economist Intelligence Unit. In 2020, Estonia came first in the ranking of Eastern European countries, with an overall score of 7.84. Out of the five categories considered in the ranking, i.e. electoral process and pluralism, the functioning of government, political participation, political culture, and civil liberties, two were ranked at the level

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8 Estonia declared its independence on 24 February 1918 and lost it in June 1940. For more information see: J. Sozański, *International Legal Status of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia in the Years 1918-1994*, Riga 1995, pp. 44-80 and G. von Rauch, *The Baltic States. The Years of Independence. Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania 1917-1940*, London 1974, pp. 50-60.

9 A. Włodarska-Frykowska, *Mniejszość rosyjska w życiu społeczno-politycznym Estonii po 1991 roku*, Łódź 2017, pp. 58-60.

10 A. Stępień-Kuczyńska, *Michaił Gorbaczow a idea i praktyka pieriestrojki*, Łódź 2016, pp. 106-110.

11 The Supreme Council of the Estonian Soviet Socialist Republic passed a series of resolutions condemning the seizure of control over Estonia and sanctioning a new legal order aimed at achieving independence: the resolution of 18 May 1989 condemned the 1939 Soviet-German agreement and the incorporation of Estonia into the USSR, the resolution On Historical and Legal Assessment of the 1940 Events in Estonia was passed on 12 November 1989, the resolution On Preparations for Estonian State Independence was adopted on 23 February 1990 and the resolution On the State Status of Estonia was passed on 30 March 1990. K. Karski, *Ius Postliminii jako podstawa uznania ciągłości przedwojennych i dzisiejszych państw bałtyckich*, "Zeszyty Prawnicze" 2014, vol. 14, no. 1, pp. 25-26.

12 K. Karski, *Międzynarodowe aspekty prawnego statusu republik związkowych ZSRR*, Warsaw 1991, pp. 35-36.

13 K. Dinnie, *Nation Branding. Concepts, Issues, Practice, Butterworth-Heinemann*, Oxford 2008, p. 14. For more information see: M. Daszkiewicz, *Wizerunek wewnętrzny w tworzeniu silnej marki kraju*, "Nauki o Zarządzaniu" 2013, vol. 2, no. 15, p. 52.

of full democracy (namely the electoral system and political plural-
ism at 9.58 and civil liberties at 8.24) while the government evalua-
tion index approached 8 and ultimately reached 7.86.[14] Estonia was
ahead of the Czech Republic, Slovenia, Latvia, and Lithuania in the
ranking, but also Poland, which ranked seventh. Estonia's high posi-
tion in the Eastern European region also translated into the country's
high, twenty-seventh position in the global ranking. It should also be
stressed that Estonia's high rates are by no means a one-off as Estonia
has consistently pursued a policy of consolidating democracy, and its
democracy index has remained above 7.60 since 2006.[15] Even though
Estonian democracy is classified as flawed according to Democracy
Index indicators, it is approaching full democracy values.

Activities that are directed to citizens and residents of the country,
both long and short term, are of great importance in building a strong
position and brand of the country.[16] In Estonia, the introduction of e-
voting proved to be a very important measure which was noticed not
only in Europe but also worldwide,[17] bringing the country even closer, as
Anna Greta Tsahkna noted, to an online country.[18] Elections using elec-
tronic technology were organised for the first time in 2005[19] and these
were local elections. Estonia became one of the pioneers in introducing
e-voting. Discussions on this topic were initiated in 2001, and the first
electronic vote was scheduled for the 2003 parliamentary elections.[20]
The proposal to introduce electronic voting was put forward by Mart
Rask, the then Minister of Justice, who was supported by Mart Laar, the

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14   Political participation and political culture were classified at the level of 6.67 and 6.88 respec-
tively. For more information see: Democracy Index 2020…, p. 33.

15   Ibid., p. 21-14.

16   A. Szromnik, *Marketing terytorialny*, Kraków 2007, p. 22. For more information see: M. Daszkie-
wicz, op. cit., pp. 52-53.

17   The United States was the first country to hold online elections in 2000.

18   A.G. Tsahkna, *E-voting: lessons from Estonia*, "European View" 2013, vol. 12, pp. 59-60.

19   The first election using e-voting took place on 16 October 2020.

20   Initially, the new form of voting also had many opponents; above all, lack of support in the Es-
tonian Parliament was evident, and Members of Parliament raised such arguments such as no
constitutional regulations to introduce e-voting, no positive experiences in other countries,
technical problems, and no equal access to technology by all citizens of the country. For more
information see: W. Drechsler, U. Madiseb, *E-voting in Estonia*, "TRAMES" 2002, vol. 6 (56/51), no.
3, p. 240.

then Prime Minister.[21] Regrettably, the preparation of legal procedures and suitable applications, not to mention the testing period, took longer than originally planned.[22] In addition, an important objective was to inform the public about the planned alternative form of voting, which required launching an information campaign. Supporters of e-voting saw an opportunity for the country's technological development and increased political participation of citizens through the ability to vote from home.[23] As Magdalena Musiał-Karg argues, the main reasons for the introduction of electronic voting included primarily the wide use of existing digital infrastructure and convenience of voting.[24]

Table 1. Elections in Estonia between 2005-2019

Elections	Year	Voter turnout	E-voters	% of e-voters
Local	2005	47.44%	9317	1.9%
Parliamentary	2007	61.90%	30 275	5.5%
European	2009	26.83%	58 669	14.7%
Local	2009	60.60%	104 413	15.8%
Parliamentary	2011	63.50%	140 846	24.3%
Local	2013	58.00%	133 808	21.2%
European	2014	43.9%	103 151	31.3%
Parliamentary	2015	64.20%	176 491	30.5%
Local	2017	53.30%	186 034	31.7%
Parlamentary	2019	63.7%	247 232	43.75%
European	2019	37.6%	155 521	46.7%

Source: https://www.valimised.ee/en/estonian-elections-nutshell/right-vote, https://www.stat.ee/en [3.05.2021]; A. Lipień, *Głosowanie za pośrednictwem Internetu w Estonii*, "Studia Wyborcze", vol. 28, 2019, p. 32.

21   A. Włodarska, *E-voting in Estonia, current status and future perspectives* [in:] *Social computing: framework, development technology, social and humanitarian effects: the collection of international conference papers*, Moscow 2013, pp. 3-6.
22   F. Breuer, A.H. Trechsel, *Report for the Council of Europe. E-voting in the 2005 local elections in Estonia*. European University Institute 2006. For more information see: W. Drechsler et al., op. cit., pp. 234-244.
23   A. Lipień, *Głosowanie za pośrednictwem Internetu w Estonii*, "Studia Wyborcze" 2019, vol. 28, pp. 24-25.
24   M. Musiał-Karg, *Analiza doświadczeń związanych z wykorzystaniem głosowania internetowego (i-voting) w wybranych państwach*, "Zeszyty Prawnicze BAS1" 2018, vol. 57, pp. 53-54. For more information see: A. Lipień, op. cit., p. 26.

Estonians have already voted eleven times in e-elections,[25] and the forthcoming voting in local elections is scheduled for 17 October 2021. The data presented in Table 1 show that over the 14 years of using the alternative form of electronic voting, more and more voters are choosing this form of voting, yet the form itself does not increase voter turnout as it could have been initially expected,[26] although e-voting gives an advantage to parties that are more effective in mobilising their voters to cast their vote. It is necessary, however, to point out the potential dangers associated with this form of voting, including the possibility of hacking, unauthorised voter data download, sharing ballots with third parties, or lack of independent voting. Despite partial objections from international organisations, namely the EU or the OSCE, Estonia is ahead of other countries in the use of electronic voting.[27]

Estonia is leading the way in the development and creation of its national image, leaving other post-Soviet and post-socialist countries behind. This is largely due to the extensive computerisation of the country, which was initiated at the beginning of the construction of the democratic rule of law when the government was headed by Mart Laar.[28] The extended e-state model enabling every citizen and permanent resident of the country to deal with their official matters electronically was popularised very quickly.[29] It does not come as a surprise, therefore, to see a high third place in the ranking of countries with access to the Internet: according to Internet World Stats, 97.9% of Estonian population is online. In Europe, Estonia is second only to Iceland, where this indicator is reported to be 99%, and to Liechtenstein with a rate of 98.1%. By comparison, Poland and nearby Finland have an Internet access rate of 78.2% and 94% respectively.[30]

25   Four times in parliamentary elections in 2007, 2011, 2015 and 2019, in local elections in 2009, 2014 and 2019 as well as in European Parliament elections in 2009, 2014 and 2019.
26   J. Zbieranek, *Alternatywne procedury głosowania w polskim prawie wyborczym*, Warsaw 2013, p. 225.
27   E. Magkos, P. Kotzanikolaou, Ch. Douligeris, *Towards secure online elections: Models, primitives and open issues*, "Electronic Government an International Journal" 2007, vol. 4, no. 3, pp. 249-268.
28   M. Laar, *Estoński cud*, Warsaw 2006, pp. 10-20.
29   Administrative matters that can be handled online in Estonia include, for instance, vehicles registration, notification of the birth of a child, applications for retirement, marriage and registration of unemployment status, and request for specific documents. For more information see: https://www.eesti.ee/et/ [2.05.2021].
30   Internet World Stats, https://www.internetworldstats.com [2.05.2021].

The growing level of digitalisation and automation of society has led to a number of solutions introducing artificial intelligence. The country has more than 50 artificial intelligence systems used to serve citizens as well as both long-term and short-term residents. One of the systems enables CV analysis and job finding for the unemployed, another one is responsible for registering voters on the voting lists, yet another one analyses applications for crèches and kindergartens. Such measures have definitely reduced the workload of administrative staff and made it possible to generate savings in the state budget.[31] One new solution introduced by Estonians is the use of artificial intelligence in judicial practice. Judgments without the participation of the human factor, namely a judge, may be handed down only in cases of minor importance, but it should be noted that this solution significantly reduces the workload of courts.[32] Appeals against judgments are heard by judges, not artificial intelligence.

E-residency is another new solution proposed by Estonia: this status gives foreigners very flexible possibilities to relocate their companies. In practice, this means that a person living abroad can successfully run a company in Estonia. E-residents receive a digital card to remotely access the Estonian public and private sectors as well as sign and encrypt documents which they send.[33] The first e-resident was Edward Lucas, editor of *The Economist*, who received his electronic document on 1 December 2014.[34] The list of e-residents includes many well-known European and global names, such as Shinzo Abe,[35] Japan's former Prime Minister, and Peter Kentie, a Dutch marketing expert.[36] The Estonian idea of digital nomads has brought expected results, and according to e-Estonia Briefing Centre (IKT Demokeskus), e-residents represent a group of over 70,000 people who come from 165 countries. Moreover, there has been a noticeable increase in the

31 T. Kerikmäe, E. Pärn-Lee, *Legal dilemmas of Estonian artificial intelligence strategy: in between of e-society and global race*, "AI & SOCIETY" (AI Soc), July 2020, pp. 1-3.

32 Artificial Intelligence, Big Data and Fundamental Rights Country Research Estonia 2020, European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, pp. 25-26.

33 https://e-resident.gov.ee/ [3.05.2021].

34 *Edward Lucas to become first e-resident of Estonia*, VM.ee, https://vm.ee/en/newsletter [3.05.2021].

35 Japanese Prime Minister becomes Estonian e-resident, NEWS.err.ee, https://news.err.ee/ [3.05.2021].

36 BestMarketing, https://www.bestmarketing.ee/ [3.05.2021].

number of applications over the past year, which is directly related to the COVID-19 pandemic and the global shutdown.[37] When pointing to areas that make Estonia stand out, one cannot overlook the Estonian Data Embassy in Luxembourg, whose primary task is to secure copies of data in the event of cyber-attacks,[38] safeguarding in this way the continuity of functioning of the state.[39]

The measures taken by the Estonian authorities are consistently leading the country towards even greater modernisation and improvement in the living standards of its inhabitants. e-Estonia has become a widely recognised brand through the implementation of modern and innovative solutions. Therefore, it is possible to multiply the examples of Estonian solutions without forgetting that Estonia was the first country in the European Union with a nationwide fast charging base for electric cars.[40]

1.1. The legal situation of national minorities in Estonia

The fact of belonging to the structures of the USSR and extensive Sovietisation did not remain without influence on the national structure of Estonia. At the beginning of the 1990s, Estonians accounted for 61.5% of the population, the dominant minority group being Russians, who constituted more than 30%.[41] As compared to the period before the World Word II, the national composition of Estonia was quite different: Estonians then constituted 97.7% and 98.8% of inhabitants respectively, according to two interwar population censuses carried out in 1922 and 1938. After regaining independence, the adopted legal regulations allowed granting citizenship only to Estonian citizens from before June 16, 1940 and their descendants; all other inhabitants of the former USSR republic had to meet the requirements of the naturali-

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37 IKT Demokeskus, E-Estonia Briefing Centre, e-Estonia.com, https://e-estonia.com/ [4.05.2021].

38 In 2007, Estonia experienced cyberattacks as a consequence of which official state websites were blocked and websites of banks, newspapers and other entities in the country were hacked.

39 *Estonia to open the world's first data embassy in Luxembourg*, e-Estonia.com, https://e-estonia.com/ [5.05.2021].

40 https://www.energia.ee/et/era/elektriautode-laadimine [5.05.2021].

41 In 1989, Estonia had 1, 565, 700 inhabitants: 963, 300 Estonians (61.5%), 474, 800 Russians (30.3%), and the remaining nationalities inhabiting the country were Ukrainians 3.1% (48, 300 people), Belarusians 1.8% (27, 700 people) as well as Finns and Latvians. Data cited after: *Nacyonalnyj sostaw nasielenija SSSR. Pieriepis nasielenija 1989*, Moscow 1991, pp. 140-141. For more information see: A. Włodarska-Frykowska, *Mniejszość rosyjska w życiu…*, p. 10.

sation process.[42] The Estonian Riigikogu passed a law to change the naturalisation procedure in 1995.[43] The new law stipulated that citizenship could be granted to persons who are at least 15 years old, reside in Estonia on the basis of a permanent residence permit, communicate in Estonian, and can demonstrate knowledge of the Constitution and the history of the country.[44] In 1999, Riigikogu passed a law allowing citizenship to children under 15 whose parents are undergoing the process of naturalisation and have a status of a stateless person.[45] Further changes took place in 2015, granting Estonian citizenship automatically to all children under the age of 15 whose parents are not citizens of another country.[46] Unfortunately, the requirement to know Estonian meant that many Russians living in Estonia were unable to complete the naturalisation procedure and take the legally required exam. Such a situation caused them to have the status of a stateless person for years and use the so-called grey passport. In 2000, 84% of the country's population had Estonian citizenship, which constituted a considerable increase compared to the early 1990s. However, the group of non-citizens was still divided into national minorities, of which the vast majority of approximately 7% were Russians and stateless persons.[47] Data from 2015 indicated no sudden changes in the nationality structure of the country: 84.3% of the population were Estonians, 9.4% were citizens of other countries, and persons with un-

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42 A. Tiido, *The Russian minority issue in Estonia: host state policies and the attitudes of the population*, "Polish Journal of Political Science" 2015, vol. 1, no. 4, pp. 48-49, for more information see: A. Włodarska, *Rosyjska mniejszość narodowa w Estonii jako czynnik dezintegracji społecznej* [in:] *Mniejszości narodowe i etniczne w Polsce i Europie*, Toruń 2014, pp. 236-253.

43 The new act superseded the pre-Soviet regulations adopted in 1938. According to the original regulations, Estonian citizenship by naturalization could be granted to any person that had been residing in the territory of the country for at least 2 years and – after submitting an application for citizenship within the prescribed time limit – provided documents proving knowledge of the Estonian language. Article 6, The Citizenship Act of 1938.

44 Kodakondsuse seadus, (The Citizenship Act) of 31 January 1995, no. 477, https://www.riigiteataja.ee/akt/28732 [7.05.2021].

45 The previous legal regulations violated the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. More information on the subject: P. Järve, *Estonian citizenship: Between Ethnic preferences and democratic obligations* [in:] *Citizenship Policies in the New Europe*, R. Bauböck, P. Bernhard, S. Wiebke (eds.), Amsterdam 2009, p. 49.

46 Kodakondsuse seaduse ja riigilõivuseaduse muutmise seadus (The Citizenship Act and amendment to the Act on State Levies) of 27 January 2015, no. 574, Riigiteataja.ee, https://www.riigiteataja.ee/akt/103022015001 [7.05.2021].

47 As many as 173, 500 of the country's inhabitants (16%) did not hold an Estonian passport in 2000.

determined citizenship accounted for 6.3%.[48] Currently, these figures remain at similar levels.

Language issues deserve special attention as far as the legal regulations on the status of national minorities in Estonia are concerned. It goes without saying that the years of belonging to the USSR had a very negative impact on the perception of the Russian language among Estonians, and the long process of eliminating national languages from the social life of the Soviet republics did take its toll. For this reason, the beginning of the construction of Estonian democratic rule of law saw a reverse process in the formation of the state language policy. The first attempts to protect the Estonian language were made even before independence: in 1989, the Supreme Council of the Estonian Soviet Socialist Republic passed the Bilingualism Act, which aimed to strengthen the position of the Estonian language. With such a high number of speakers of Russian, the problems that would have arisen if Estonian had been introduced as the only official language in the country were evident. The Constitution of Estonia from 1992 stipulates that the state should provide information to every citizen in Estonian, and Estonian is the official language in offices, courts, and other institutions on the territory of the country.

The Constitution also guarantees rights for national minorities, including the right to education in their mother tongue as well as the possibility of establishing educational and cultural institutions. The provisions of Article 52 of the Basic Law stipulate another important issue, allowing the language of the majority to be used by the local authorities for documentation purposes in the regions with a majority of speakers of another language.[49] The reform of education was initiated in 2007, and its aim was to increase the number of hours of the official language in minority schools. Initially, the changes concerned only courses in Estonian language and literature, but they were extended to include such subjects as citizenship education, geography, and

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48 A. Tiido, op. cit., pp. 48-49.
49 The Constitution of the Republic of Estonia of 28 June 1992, http://biblioteka.sejm.gov.pl/ [7.05.2021]. Detailed issues concerning the autonomy of national minorities on the territory of Estonia were determined by Vähemusrahvuse kultuuriautonoomia seadus (The National Minorities Cultural Autonomy Act) of 26 October 1993 as amended in 2002. The act was in force until 14 March 2019. For more information see: https://www.riigiteataja.ee/akt/182796 [2.05.2021].

history in subsequent years. As a target, 60% of subjects at secondary level should be taught in Estonian beginning in the 2011/12 school year. Changes of a similar nature were also introduced in the other Baltic republics.[50]

Estonia was also a leader in introducing integration programmes for national minorities living in the country's territory. The first attempts at social integration were made in 1997 as a consequence of noticeable discord between different national groups, particularly Estonians and Russians. The programme called "Integrating Estonia" was launched in 1999, and its overriding aim was to unite the society. Information on the initiatives was reported in both the Estonian and Russian language press, which significantly strengthened the reach of the campaign.[51] Subsequent integration programmes were launched for the years 2000-2007 and 2008-2013, with the main objective of enhancing the platform for communication between different groups and building a strong multicultural nation in civic terms. Another campaign, "Integrating Estonia 2020," continues these activities, with a special focus on young people.[52] The Estonian authorities undertook many measures aimed primarily at improving the lives of the population and integrating the country more strongly, both in internal, intra-societal relations and external, interstate relations. The constant development and dynamism of the activities in question are a good sign for the future. Notwithstanding many difficulties and divisions, Estonia has built a strong brand, which it continues to strengthen.

2. National branding in Lithuania

Lithuania began the process of creating a national brand as early as in the late 1980s, first voicing its intention to become independ-

50   Ministerstwo Edukacji i Badań Naukowych, HM.ee, https://www.hm.ee/et [21.03.2020]. For more information see: A. Włodarska, *Dychotomia społeczeństwa Litwy w obliczu zmian ustawy oświatowej*, "Gdańskie Studia Międzynarodowe" 2014, vol. 12, no. 1-2, pp. 136-146.
51   V. Pettai, *Estonia and Latvia: International influences on citizenship and minority integration* [in:] *Democratic Consolidation in Eastern Europe: International and Transnational*, J. Zielonka, A. Pravda (eds.), Oxford, New York 2001, pp. 271-275.
52   A. Włodarska-Frykowska, *Mniejszość rosyjska w życiu…*, pp. 169-173.

ent from Moscow on the international arena,[53] and then declaring independence in 1990. However, the post-Soviet political legacy, the multi-ethnic and often divided society, the lack of a unified historical narrative, and, above all, the economic backwardness of the region – all this had a negative impact on the fledgling political marketing processes of the young state.

As Judita Akromienė and Dalia Bankauskaitė rightly point out, the driving force behind the activities of the Lithuanian authorities just after regaining independence[54] was an inferiority complex which fuelled the government's foreign policy activities.[55] By the mid-1990s, the authorities in Vilnius were aware that the position of the country in the global economic and political structures depended on its competence in communication. Due to the need to influence its message concerning the state and promote the "good name of Lithuania," President Algirdas Brazauskas signed the decree On the Formation of the Lithuanian State Information Policy Council in 1996.[56]

The efforts to join the European Union were the driving force behind the adoption of the 1997 Resolution on the Programme for Laying the Foundations of the Information Society of Lithuania.[57] In addition, the Resolution on Establishing the State Information Policy Coordination Commission and Approval of the Regulations Thereof[58] was

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53   Lithuanian emigration was active with regard to the so-called Lithuanian issue in the countries of Western Europe and the USA. It is also worth noting here the involvement of Polish émigré intellectual circles and personally of Jerzy Giedroyć. More information on the subject: J. Banionis, *Lietuvos laisvės byla Vakaruose (1975-1990)*, Vilnius 2002; B. Jundo-Kaliszewska, *Zakładnicy historii. Mniejszość polska w postradzieckiej Litwie*, Łódź 2010, pp. 301-303.

54   Lithuania proclaimed the Act of the Re-Establishment of the State of Lithuania on 11 March 1990. In reality, the country regained independence in the autumn of 1991, after the fall of the August *coup d'état* in Moscow (the so-called Yanayev coup) and liquidation of the USSR on 8 December 1991.

55   J. Akromienė, D. Bankauskaitė, *Valstybės įvaizdžio galia*, Vilnius 2007, p. 2.

56   *Dekretas dėl Lietuvos valstybės informacijos politikos tarybos sudarymo*, 1996 m. gegužės 31 d. No. 963, Vilnius, e-seimas.lrs.lt, https://e-seimas.lrs.lt/portal/legalAct/lt/TAD/TAIS.28092 [12.04.2021].

57   *Nutarimas dėl informacinės visuomenės kūrimo Lietuvoje programos*, 1997 m. gruodžio 23 d. No. 1470, Vilnius, e-seimas.lrs.lt, https://e-seimas.lrs.lt/portal/legalAct/lt/TAD/TAIS.47951 [12.04.2021].

58   *Nutarims dėl valstybės informacijos politikos koordinavimo komisijos sudarymo ir jos nuostatų patvirtinimo*, 1999 m. gegužės 6 d. No. 539, Vilnius, e-seimas.lrs.lt, https://e-seimas.lrs.lt/portal/legalAct/lt/TAD/TAIS.79622 [12.04.2021]. In February 2003, another government resolution was adopted, namely On the Approval of Methods of Coordinating the Development of the Information Society: *Nutarimas dėl informacinės visuomenės plėtros koordinavimo metodikos patvirtinimo*, 2003 m. vasario 3 d. No. 182, Vilnius, e-seimas.lrs.lt, https://e-seimas.lrs.lt/portal/legalAct/lt/TAD/TAIS.204938/rZlyLvonIE?jfwid=11dyhed1jo [12.04.2021].

adopted in 1999 so as to enhance both the development and coordination of the implementation processes of the information and IT policy as well as to inform the world objectively about the achievements and development processes taking place in the country. The development of a promotion strategy was entrusted to the Lithuanian Institute (lt. Lietuvos institutas), established in 2001.

It is worth noting that already in 2005 Lithuania became one of the leading EU countries in terms of the rate of economic development. Although this had a positive effect on the evaluation of the country by foreign investors,[59] Vilnius continued to struggle for international recognition. A proposal for an image formation strategy for Lithuania[60] was prepared in 2006, and the first comprehensive opinion poll was conducted. It included respondents both at home and abroad. Approximately 42% of inhabitants of Europe showed no basic knowledge about Lithuania, which pointed to its informational isolation within Europe. It is worth mentioning that foreign respondents evaluated the country better than its inhabitants. Lithuania was best viewed by Latvians and Estonians.[61] The worst scores, in turn, were given to it by citizens of the United Kingdom, Spain, Italy, France, and Germany. Negative opinions about the state were expressed by 19% of the Kaliningrad Oblast residents, and the survey coincided with Russian information expansion in Lithuania's public space.

Moreover, 73% of those surveyed declared that they were proud to be citizens of the country, although the achievements of the young democracy were still negatively assessed. As many as 90% of respondents indicated corruption as one of its main problems.[62] The document did not contain any information on the situation of national and ethnic minorities. Given that the majority of local respondents pointed to problems characteristic of post-Soviet states during this period, such

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59 As compared to 2004, in 2005 exports of goods increased by 27% and imports grew by 25%. Lithuania became the regional leader in retail sales in biotechnology and laser industries. More information on the subject: J. Akromienė, D. Bankauskaitė, op. cit., p. 7.

60 The task was commissioned to the Europos Namai international consortium, the Vilmorus public opinion polling centre, and Chime Communications plc., a British company specialising in strategic communications. More information on the subject: *Lietuvos įvaizdžio formavimo strategijos projektas. Santrauka*, Eurohaus.lt, http://eurohouse.lt/wp/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Lietuvos-ivaizdzio-strategijos-projektas.-Santrauka-2006.pdf [13.04.2021].

61 As many as 83% of Latvian and Estonian citizens expressed positive opinions about Lithuania.

62 In comparison, only 18% of respondents outside the country pointed to this problem.

as an unsatisfactory economic situation, dishonesty of officials, and too slow development of the country, one may risk the thesis that the attitude of national and ethnic minorities may have coincided with the assessment of the general public.

Expert recommendations included exposing the uniqueness of the local human potential and showing Lithuania as a young, energetic country, an ideal place to make dreams come true. The state brand, namely "Lithuania: a brave country"[63] was approved at the governmental level in 2008.

The emotions surrounding the attempts to develop a coherent image strategy of the state are evidenced by the scandal that shook Lithuanian public opinion in 2009. An audit of the governmental institution of State Control found that funds of 63 million of Lithuanian litas (approx. 16 million euros) allocated to the implementation of the country's promotion strategy over four years (disbursed by, *inter alia*, the Lithuanian Institute) had failed to produce any tangible results.[64] A new concept for the management of the country brand was commissioned.[65] Despite efforts in this respect,[66] the authors of the image strategy of Lithuania for 2020-2030[67] concluded that Lithuania was still poorly recognised in the world. Among the authors of the document was Simon Anholt,[68] a British political scientist and

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63 Reference was made, among other things, to the period of Lithuania's struggle for independence in the declining period of the Soviet Union. The brand was negatively evaluated not only by the Lithuanian public but also by specialists and some politicians, including Vytautas Landsbergis, the icon "Sąjūdis" (Read more: *Landsbergis: Lietuvai labiau tiktų apibūdinimas ne „drąsi šalis", o „įžūli vyriausybė"*, Maga.lt, https://maga.lt/83628 [8.04.2021]; *M. Jovaiša: „Drąsią Lietuvą" ir naują prekės ženklą reikia padėti į stalčių*, Delfi.lt, https://www.delfi.lt/news/daily/lithuania/mjovaisa-drasia-lietuva-ir-nauja-prekes-zenkla-reikia-padeti-i-stalciu.d?id=17367501 [8.04.2021].

64 *Šalies įvaizdis kuriamas be aiškių gairių*, Vkontrole.lt, https://www.vkontrole.lt/pranesimas_spaudai.aspx?id=15454 [12.04.2021].

65 A new promotional slogan was developed in 2016, i.e. "Lithuania. Real is beautiful." More information on the subject: *Vietoj išpeikto "Lietuva – drąsi šalis" – naujas Lietuvos turizmo prekės ženklas*, LRT.lt, https://www.lrt.lt/naujienos/verslas/4/151794/vietoj-ispeikto-lietuva-drasi-salis-naujas-lietuvos-turizmo-prekes-zenklas [12.04.2021].

66 Government image strategies were implemented, for instance, between 2018 and 2020 (see: *Lietuvos pristatymo užsienyje projektas*, LRVK.lrv.lt, https://lrvk.lrv.lt/lt/apie-vyriausybes-kanceliarija/projektai/vykdomi-projektai/lietuvos-pristatymo-uzsienyje-projektas [12.04.2021].

67 Strategy for the Promotion of Lithuania Abroad 2020-2030 is a part of an EU project connected with developing a single, public interest and results-oriented system for promoting Lithuania abroad.

68 *Valstybių įvaizdžio formavimo specialistas pasakė, kodėl geras šalies vardas – toks svarbus*, Lrytas.lt, https://www.lrytas.lt/lietuvosdiena/aktualijos/2020/10/22/news/zymus-valstybiu-ivaizdziu-

state branding expert, who created the concept of "competitive identity" and the Good Country Index. Lithuania came in 37th place[69] in this ranking in 2020.[70]

Until recently, the country on the Neris river was associated in Western Europe mainly with the success of its basketball players. After August 2020, however, the country appears to be taking the lead in the region in pursuing policies to defend human rights and rights of the repressed in the clash with Alexander Lukashenko's regime in Belarus. There are many factors that help to distinguish the country internationally, including the revival of the Baltic Chain in August 2020[71] and granting asylum to Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya[72], as well as speaking out on the Belarusian issue in the EU. In addition, tangible results – namely a high position in digital rankings – have been achieved through a successful start in the digital race on a supra-regional scale and an effectively implemented cyber security strategy.[73] Successive and comprehensive actions in this field can positively influence the recognition and perception of Lithuania worldwide.

kurimo-specialistas-lietuva-smarkiai-prisideda-ne-tik-prie-savo-bet-ir-kitu-pasaulio-valsty-biu-g-16809893/ [20.04.2021].

69 By way of comparison, Lithuania ranked 67th, Poland was 43rd, and Estonia came 57th in the Overall Best Countries Ranking in 2021. All three countries suffered a drop compared to 2020. See: https://www.usnews.com/news/best-countries/overall-rankings [20.04.2021].

70 As the expert points out, those countries that are able to inspire delight are the most influential in shaping the well-being of the planet. This is not related in any way to their economic situation, military, or democratic potential. See: *Valstybių įvaizdžio formavimo specialistas pasakė, kodėl geras šalies vardas – toks svarbus*, Lrytas.lt, https://www.lrytas.lt/lietuvosdiena/aktualijos/2020/10/22/news/zymus-valstybiu-ivaizdziu-kurimo-specialistas-lietuva-smarkiai-prisideda-ne-tik-prie-savo-bet-ir-kitu-pasaulio-valstybiu-g-16809893/ [20.04.2021].

71 Laisvės kelias. Pasaulis stojasi už laisvę, Laisvės Media Group, YouTube.com, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sF5wZUfmJFM&ab_channel=Laisv%C4%97sTV [20.04.2021].

72 More information on the subject: *Dr Barbara Jundo-Kaliszewska dla PW+ o wyborze Litwy przez Cichanouską*, Facebook.com, https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=337049300814739 [20.04.2021].

73 "One of the priorities of the Lithuanian state is to be active in the sector of combating digital crime. In 2015, Lithuania adopted the Act on Cyber Security and established the National Cyber Security Centre under the Ministry of Defence (Approximately 55,000 cyberattacks are reported annually in Lithuania). In 2018, Lithuania issued a proposal to EU member states to create a so-called *cyber Schengen* zone (...) The state also headed a rapid response team to combat cyber threats, i.e. Cyber Rapid Response Teams (CRRTs), established in Zagreb in March 2020" (cited after: B. Jundo-Kaliszewska, op. cit.).

2.1. National minorities in Lithuania

Lithuania is currently populated by more than 150 national minorities.[74] The policy towards national minorities implemented by the government in Vilnius[75] is primarily conditioned by the geopolitical location as well as the resulting historical and information policy of the state.[76]

In their book, Aleksandra Kuczyńska-Zonik and Katarzyna Szwed rightly enumerate some objectionable issues in Lithuania's nationality policy: "1) lack of comprehensive legislative structures for the protection of national minorities; 2) restricting education in minority languages; 3) administrative changes (formation and liquidation of offices, redistribution of competences to different institutions); 4) restricting access to media; 5) the imbalance between Lithuania's international obligations to promote minority languages and its desire to promote the national language; 6) disputes over the spelling of names, street names and place names in Lithuanian and languages of national minorities; 7) limited participation of national minorities in public life and decision-making processes which affect them; and 8) low political activity of minorities resulting from unfavourable legal conditions."[77]

Current problems in terms of protecting and respecting minority rights date back to the late 1980s. The newly independent Lithuania was an ethnically heterogeneous country. According to the 1989 population census, it was populated by 3,690,000 people. Alongside Lithuanians (79.6%), the most numerous nationality groups were composed of Russians (9.4%) and Poles (7%).[78]

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74 According to the Lithuanian 2011 population census, the Republic of Lithuania was inhabited by 154 nationalities (for comparison, there were 115 nationalities in 2001): Lithuanians – 84.2% (2, 561, 000), Poles – 6.6% (200, 300), Russians – 5.8% (176, 900), Belarusians – 1.2% (36, 200), Ukrainians – 0.5% (16, 400), inhabitants of other nationalities – 0.6% (19, 300) (More information on the subject: G. Kazėnas, A. Jakubauskas, I. Gaižauskaitė, R. Kacevičius, A. Visockaitė, *Lenkų tautinės mažumos Lietuvoje identiteto tyrimas*, Vilnius 2014, p. 166. The most recent digital census took place in 2021. The results were not yet known at the time of preparing the article for print.

75 J. Andrlík, *Ethnic and Language Policy of the Republic of Lithuania: Basis and Practice*, 2009, ALPPI. eu, http:// alppi.eu/wp-content/uploads/2009/11/Andrlik.pdf [3.04.2021].

76 As Alfredas Bumblauskas, one of the best well-known Lithuanian historians, points out, both so-called traditional national minorities have tended to be perceived in Lithania through the prism of a "legacy of bad neighbours." A. Bumblauskas, *Historia Litwy: koncepcje historyków a dominujące wizje przeszłości*, https://etalpykla.lituanistikadb.lt/object/LT-LDB-0001:J.04~2014~1526301946838/ [3.04.2021], p. 73.

77 A. Kuczyńska-Zonik, K. Szwed, *Prawa mniejszości narodowych na Litwie*, Warsaw 2020, p. 27.

78 According to the 2011 census, the number of Russians fell to 5.8% and Poles to 6.6% (based on data from the Lithuanian Department of Statistics). A population census is currently being car-

On the wave of "bilingualism"[79] and the restoration of the rights of the national languages in the federal republics, in January 1989 the Presidium of the Supreme Council of the Lithuanian Soviet Socialist Republic adopted the decree On the Use of the National Language in the Lithuanian Soviet Socialist Republic", which gave Lithuanian the status of a state language.[80] Neither this nor other subsequent documents[81] strengthening the position of the Lithuanian language in the state took into account the postulates of the Polish minority.[82] This decision had a number of far-reaching implications,[83] the most serious of which was the attempt to establish Polish autonomy in the territory of the present-day Vilnius region.[84] The conflict dating back to this period with the Polish minority over the right to use the minority language in administration, bilingual toponyms in places compactly populated by minorities,[85] the spelling of surnames, and the right to education in one's mother tongue is still going on today.

The issue of the so-called Minorities Act remains a source of tension in relations between the authorities and minorities. The first Act was adopted in November 1989 by the Supreme Council of the Lithuanian SSR[86], and it was successively extended following the 1990 amendments. However, it was not renewed by the Lithuanian legislature in January 2010 and ultimately expired, and the topic of adopting a new law has been on the agenda of the Seimas of Lithuania for more than a decade now. These initiatives, however, meet with resistance on the part of successive governments.

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ried out, but official information has not yet been published.

79 In 1988, the postulate to develop national-Russian bilingualism was announced at the February Plenum of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. More information on the subject: B. Jundo-Kaliszewska, op. cit., pp. 88-90.

80 The status of Lithuanian as a state language was guaranteed by the Constitutions of the Republic of Lithuania in 1922, 1928 and 1938.

81 *Lietuvos TSRR ministrų tarybos nutarimas Dėl lietuvių kalbos, kaip valstybinės kalbos,statuso į gyvendinimo eigos Respublikoje*, 7 March 1990, e-seimas.lt, https://e-seimas.lrs.lt/portal/legalAct/lt/TAD/TAIS.3432?jfwid=rivwzvpvg [12.04.2021].

82 More information on the subject: B. Jundo-Kaliszewska, op. cit., pp. 105-107.

83 *Справка об изминениях в оперативной обстановке в Вильнюсском районе*, 05.07.1989, LYA F. K-18, Ap. 2, B. 102, p. 71.

84 Ibid.

85 Poles constitute up to 80% of the population in some areas in Lithuania.

86 *Lietuvos Respublikos Tautinių mažumų įstatymas*, e-seimas.lt, https://e-seimas.lrs.lt/portal/legalAct/lt/TAD/TAIS.18856?jfwid [12.04.2021].

The issues that particularly antagonise society[87] include education in minority languages and the reaction of international public opinion following the adoption of new regulations concerning education in 2011.[88]

The rights of national minorities are guaranteed by the Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania of 1992. Lithuania's Basic Law enshrines the principle of non-discrimination (Article 29) and guarantees "national communities"[89] the right to cultivate their language, culture, and customs (Article 37).[90]

Taking for granted that assessment by its inhabitants is one of the key elements in creating a country's brand,[91] it comes as no surprise that national minorities dissatisfied with their situation have a negative impact on the perception of the country in, above all, their historical homelands.[92] Unlike in the case of the other two Baltic states, where it is the Russian Federation that is the main proponent of ensuring the standards of minority protection on the international forum, the issue of national minorities' rights is also being addressed by Lithuania in its relations with Poland. The core of the problem is that the modern Lithuanian historical discourse promoted during the Gorbachev era turned out to coincide with its interwar historical narrative. Apart from a current of national liberation, which developed on the basis of

87 *Dr Barbara Jundo-Kaliszewska, Waldemar Tomaszewski, Czesław Okińczyc w Studio Wilno – 29.04.2021*, WNET.fm, https://wnet.fm/broadcast/dr-barbara-jundo-kaliszewska-waldemar-tomaszewski-czeslaw-okinczyc-w-studio-wilno-29-04-2021-r/ [29.04.2021].

88 More information on the subject: D. Narbut, *Szkolnictwo polskie na Litwie w latach 1991-2011*, Białystok 2017.

89 No legal document in Lithuania contains a definition of "national community," "ethnic community," "national minority" or "ethnic minority."

90 E. Kuzborska, *Prawa językowe mniejszości narodowych na Litwie – sytuacja faktyczna mniejszości polskiej (w kontekście międzynarodowych standardów ochrony praw mniejszości narodowych)*, "Przegląd Prawa Konstytucyjnego" 2014, vol. 3, no. 19, p. 44.

91 M. Martišius, *Lietuva ir Estija – skirtingi įvaizdžiai: drąsi šalis ir Šiaurė su polėkiu*, "Informacijos Mokslai" 2009, vol. 49, pp. 118-139.

92 Predominantly in the so-called "motherland" of the abused minorities (here: in Poland and in Russia). In this context, it is worth mentioning the Vilnius-based Polish-language literary quarterly "Znad Wilii", which has been working towards a Polish-Lithuanian agreement since the beginning of the 1990s.

the anti-Polish factor,[93] there was an anti-Russian element.[94] Old resentments, including anti-Polish animosities,[95] affected and continue to affect attitudes towards local minorities.[96]

Legal regulation of the situation of the Polish minority[97] – reflected, for instance, in adopting an Act on Minorities that takes into account the demands of minorities – can positively influence the country's reputation, facilitating common understandings and functioning in international systems, especially of Poland and Lithuania. This, in turn, can significantly increase the political impact of the country.[98]

Conclusion

It is difficult not to agree with Alexander Buhmann and Diana Ingenhoff, who argue that in times of globalisation and mediatisation, modern countries increasingly find themselves under the magnifying glass of the world media and society.[99] They tend to be evaluated and compared in terms of their economic performance, political stability,

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93 More information on the subject: B. Jundo-Kaliszewska, *Etnolingwistyczna istota nacjonalizmu litewskiego i antypolonizm Litwinów na przełomie lat osiemdziesiątych i dziewięćdziesiątych XX w.*, "Acta Universitatis Lodziensis. Folia Historica" 2013, vol. 91, pp. 219-240.

94 Despite the close cooperation of Sąjūdis, the Reform Movement of Lithuania, and the Independent Self-Governing Trade Union "Solidarity", as well as disregarding the fact that the historical narrative of the 1980s placed emphasis on issues of resistance, the anti-Soviet underground or non-violent struggle during World War II and the Soviet period, it was still the Polish people that received more criticism from the Lithuanian public than the Russians on the eve of Lithuania's restoration of independence (Discussion on Poles and the Independence of Lithuania in the Polish Discussion Club, KurierWilenski.lt, https://kurierwilenski.lt/2020/03/11/dyskusja-pkd-o-polakach-wobec-niepodleglosci-litwy/ [11.04.2021]).

95 The anti-Polish narrative and the conflict with the local minority impacted the results of a survey conducted in 2014, where almost 30 percent of Lithuanians considered Poland to be an unfriendly country: "Sadly, for the first time, Poland has become enemy number two in the eyes of Lithuanians, right after Russia. We have turned our partner in NATO into an enemy and we owe this to the consistent actions of some of our activists and politicians" (cited after: *Savukynas: Niechęć do Polski zawdzięczamy litewskim politykom*, zw.lt, https://zw.lt/litwa/savukynas-niechec-polski-zawdzieczamy-litewskim-politykom/ [21.04.2021].

96 More information on the subject: A. Włodarska, *Dychotomia społeczeństwa…*

97 Preliminary guarantees for the regulation of the problems of the Polish minority in Lithuania were included in Declaration on Friendly Relations and Good-Neighbourly Cooperation of 1992, and then in the Treaty between the Republic of Poland and the Republic of Lithuania on Friendly Relations and Good Neighbourly Cooperation of 1994.

98 A. Buhmann, D. Ingenhoff, *Advancing the country image construct from a public relations perspective. From model to measurement*, p. 3, https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/79427447.pdf [14.04.2021].

99 Ibid.

effectiveness in taking action, or morality. Their international policies, the attractiveness of their culture, but also their nationality policies have all come under increased scrutiny.

From an external perspective, the image is, *inter alia*, a matter of national security: international backing in times of crisis, membership in alliances, trust and support of global public opinion. In the internal dimension, it is the loyalty of citizens, their commitment and readiness to participate in the life of the state. The Baltic States should consider adopting a new strategy at the governmental level where national minorities will be treated "as one of the manifestations of cultural diversity and democracy." It is necessary to achieve some consensus and eliminate conflict between political players representing the country's ethnic majority and national minorities. It is worth remembering that the so-called mind maps – historical or sentimental maps – turn out to be an inseparable part of the so-called material maps in relations between selected countries and other regional or even global entities, and thus influence the effectiveness of international public relations.

Leaving aside the historical background, it is the politics of the elites that can be a determinant factor in conflicts with minorities. An analysis of an array of decision-making processes or implementation of certain legislative solutions allows the authors to conclude that there is a direct correlation between the influence of local legislation and the low level of confidence in state institutions on the part of representatives of national minorities. One of the key challenges that Lithuania and Estonia are facing nowadays is to include all citizens in the processes of creating the image of the country. If the population identifies with the country of residence and the values declared and promoted by the government coincide with its values, then the inhabitants of the country themselves will be the ambassadors of the state. Should this not be the case, the internationally publicised problems of national minorities will continue to ricochet against the laboriously built image of the young yet progressive democracies of the Baltic States.

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