Next Generation EU (NGEU) delivery – How are the Member States doing?



# Lithuania's National Recovery and Resilience Plan Latest state of play



#### **OVERALL RESOURCES**



Under the Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF), Lithuania's national recovery and resilience plan (NRRP) had an initial value of €2 224 million. In June 2022, Lithuania's grant allocation was revised downwards to €2 100 million (-5.6 %).¹ In October 2023, however, Lithuania submitted a request to amend its NRRP, which includes an additional grant allocation of €193.7 million for a new REPowerEU chapter and a loan request worth €1 551.7 million. Lithuania also requested to transfer a portion of its share of the Brexit Adjustment Reserve to its plan (€4.7 million). Together, these additional resources have brought the overall EU contribution to Lithuania's amended NRRP to €3 849 million. These resources represent 0.5 % of the entire RRF, equal to 7.9 % of the country's gross domestic product (GDP) in 2019.

In November 2023, the Council adopted an amending implementing decision by which it gave the green light to Lithuania's modified plan. The new plan contains 31 reforms and 10 investments including the REPowerEU chapter with one reform and three investments. Apart from the added chapter, the other modifications submitted by Lithuania affect 46 measures of the initial plan. Moreover, Lithuania proposed to add six new measures (three investments and three reforms), to be funded by additional loan support. Measures under the current NRRP are to be completed by 2026. Lithuania has so far received 25.5% of the resources (in the form of pre-financing and one grant payment). Further payments will depend on progress made in implementing the plan. Lithuania's NRRP is consistent with the challenges and priorities identified in the European Semester, the annual cycle for coordinating and monitoring each EU country's economic policies.

The European Parliament participates in interinstitutional forums for cooperation and discussion on the implementation of the RRF and continues to scrutinise the European Commission's work.



This briefing is one in a series covering all EU Member States.



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## Country-specific challenges

In the context of the European Semester, the Council adopts country-specific recommendations (CSRs), providing Member States with policy guidance on how to implement structural reforms while maintaining budgetary responsibility and sound macroeconomic policies. NRRPs under the RRF are expected to contribute to addressing at least a significant subset of challenges identified in the 2019 2020 CSRs.



The European Commission groups the CSRs issued to Lithuania in 2019 and 2020 in eight broad categories: i) Public finances; ii) Healthcare; iii) Education; iv) Social; v) Labour; vi) Research and innovation; vii) Investment; and viii) Public administration and business climate. In 2020, the Council recommended that, in line with the general escape clause in the stability and growth pact, Lithuania take necessary measures to effectively address the pandemic, sustain the economy and support the ensuing recovery. In particular, Lithuania is recommended to:

- when economic conditions allow, pursue fiscal policies aimed at achieving prudent medium-term fiscal positions and ensuring debt sustainability, while enhancing investment; strengthen the resilience of the health system, including by mobilising adequate funding and addressing shortages in the health workforce and of critical medical products; improve the accessibility and quality of health services;
- 2 mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 crisis on employment; increase the funding and coverage of active labour market policy (ALMP) measures and promote skills; ensure the coverage and adequacy of the social safety net and improve the effectiveness of the tax and benefit system to protect against poverty;
- support liquidity for businesses, especially for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and export-oriented sectors; front-load mature public investment projects and promote private investment to foster the economic recovery; focus investment on the green and digital transition, in particular on the coverage and take-up of very high capacity broadband, on clean and efficient production and use of energy, and on sustainable transport; promote technological innovation in SMEs.

The <u>2023 country report</u> recalls that economic growth in Lithuania was impeded by surging inflation, which reached 18.9% and was among the highest in the EU. The <u>Commission</u> also highlights that, despite this challenging environment, the implementation of Lithuania's RRP is well under way. It concludes that Lithuania should continue the steady implementation of its NRRP. Beyond those tackled in the plan, the report also notes that Lithuania faces additional challenges, such as improving the quality of public finances and public services; decarbonising industrial production and energy generation as well as the transport sector; addressing issues of social inclusion and protection; strengthening primary and preventive care; and closing skill gaps to be addressed in the coming period.

### Objectives and structure of the plan

On 14 May 2021, Lithuania submitted its initial <u>NRRP</u> to the European Commission. In October 2023, Lithuania requested to <u>amend</u> its NRRP. Addressing the seven flagship areas for investments and

reforms identified by the <u>Commission</u> for the RRF,<sup>2</sup> the amended Lithuanian plan is structured around **eight components (C1-8**):



1. 'A Resilient and future-proof health system' aims to improve the quality and accessibility of healthcare. Related measures are designed to address challenges in the health sector by promoting innovation, strengthening the resilience of the health system and reforming the provision of long-term care services.



2. 'Green transformation of Lithuania' aims to increase the production of sustainable electricity, greening finance, transport, buildings and urban areas while preserving and restoring some natural habitat, as well as improving resource efficiency.



3. 'Digital transformation for growth' seeks to enhance public information technology management and government services, support innovation in the public sector, improve data management and cybersecurity and step up the 5G rollout in an attempt to increase digital connectivity.



4. 'Quality and accessible education for the entire life cycle' mostly seeks to move towards better general education. Other measures concern better lifelong learning opportunities and vocational training.



5. 'Higher education, a coherent framework for stimulating innovation and high value-added business' aims to promote a knowledge-intensive economy and strengthen the higher education system. Measures focus notably on promoting quality higher education, effective innovation policies, and support for developing the start-up ecosystem and green innovation.



6. 'Efficient public sector and preconditions to recover after the pandemic' aims to implement a series of measures to make the public sector, public procurement and the tax administration more efficient, transparent and digital.



7. 'More opportunities for everyone to actively build national well-being' mainly refers to measures regarding employment support, improved planning and delivery of social services and guaranteed minimum income protection.



8. The '**REPowerEU chapter**' aims at decarbonisation, including by accelerating the renovation of buildings and increasing the generation capacity of the renewables energy system.

The amended NRRP includes additional loan support to finance six new measures, while the modifications concern 46 measures in total. In particular, Lithuania proposed to add the following measures: a reform aiming to mobilise public and private finance in order to meet climate change mitigation and adaptation objectives, and to increase Lithuania's attractiveness for investors in green financial products (in C2); an investment geared towards setting up a financial instrument with the aim of providing either syndicated and subordinated loans or direct loans to, among others, enterprises for the development of green industrial technologies and high value-added industrial development (in C5); a reform to improve centralised public procurement (in C6); a reform aiming to reduce the fragmentation of the planning and delivery of social, employment and other related services, as well as to enhance the competences of social workers (in C7); and an investment consisting of the implementation of a financial instrument to promote the deployment of renewable energy (in the new C8).

Across its components, the Lithuanian plan exceeds the **expenditure targets** the RRF Regulation sets (at 37 % of NRRP resources for the **green transition** and 20 % for the **digital transformation**). Overall, the total allocation for measures supporting the green transition is stable at around 37.4 %. Regarding digital transformation, the total allocation for relevant measures has decreased by 8.2 percentage points to 23.3 % (or 28.9 % when excluding the REPowerEU resources, to which the digital target does not apply).

According to a <u>simulation</u> by the Lithuanian authorities, GDP will be higher by 1.7 % and employment will increase by 1.6 % on average for the 2022-2026 period compared with a scenario without the RRF.

#### **Reforms**

Overall, Lithuania's NRRP includes 31 reforms (see Table 1 below), spread across the eight components. These are an essential part of and a catalyst for the plan's implementation.

Reforms relating to green transformation and to increasing the generation capacity from renewable energy sources (RES) could significantly help to boost investment in this area and to accelerate decarbonisation. In addition, reforms towards greening finance, transport, building and the energy system would contribute significantly to improving Lithuania's green credentials.

Reforms to accelerate the digital transformation, to increase the level of digital skills in the population and to improve higher education and innovation systems could be crucial for moving successfully towards a more knowledge-intensive economy.

Moreover, reforms relating to the education system, targeted social support and lifelong learning and vocational training opportunities should strengthen social cohesion. Reforms to improve the resilience, quality, accessibility and efficiency of the health sector should help to improve the provision of health services and long-term care services. Reforms to ensure a more efficient public sector and to reinforce the tax administration should guarantee a transparent and effective use of resources and a reduction of potential economic and financial waste.

Table 1 – Reforms to receive support under Lithuania's NRRP

Components	Reforms			
C1: A Resilient and future-proof health system	A.1.1. Reform 1: Improving the quality and accessibility of health services promoting innovation A.1.2. Reform 2: Provision of long-term care services A.1.3. Reform 3: Systemic improvement of the health system's resilience to deal emergencies			
C2: Green transformation of Lithuania	B.1.1. Reform 1: More sustainable electricity produced in the country B.1.2. Reform 2: Moving without polluting the environment B.1.3. Reform 3: Accelerating renovation of buildings and a sustainable urban environment B.1.5. Reform 5: Towards a circular economy B.3.1. Reform 1: Development of green financial products			
C3: Digital transformation for growth	C.1.1. Reform 1: Transformation of public information technology governance C.1.2. Reform 2: Ensuring the effectiveness of data management and open data C.1.3. Reform 3: Customer-oriented services			
C4: Quality and accessible education for the entire life cycle	,			
C5: Higher education, a coherent framework for stimulating innovation and high value-added business	E.1.1. Reform 1: Quality higher education and strong higher education institutions E.1.2. Reform 2: Effective implementation of innovation policy, increased demand for innovation, developed start-up ecosystem and green innovation development E.1.3. Reform 3: Joint missions for science and innovation in smart specialisation			

C6: Efficient public sector and preconditions to recover after the pandemic	F.1.1. Reform 1: An efficient public sector F.1.2. Reform 2: A fairer and more growth-friendly tax system F.1.3. Reform 3: Long-term sustainability and transparency of the national budget F.1.4. Reform 4: Improving tax compliance F.1.5. Reform 5: Tools available for businesses to manage insolvency risk F.1.6. Reform 6: Smart tax administration to reduce the VAT gap faster F.1.7. Reform 7: Development of an electronic document ecosystem F.1.8. Reform 8: A single window to pay fines F.1.9. Reform 9: Repository system for audit and controls F.3.1. Reform 1: Improving centralised public procurement
C7: More opportunities for everyone to actively build national well-being	G.1.1. Reform 1: Guaranteed minimum income protection G.3.1. Reform: Improving the quality of social and employment services
C8: REPowerEU chapter	H.1.3. Reform 1: Increasing the generation capacity from RES

Data source: Annex to the Council implementing decision.

#### Investment

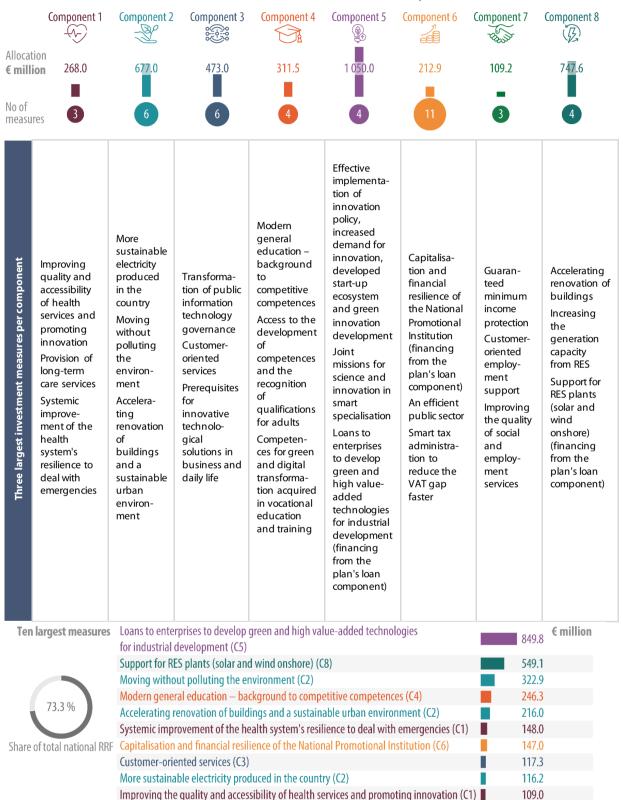
The financial resources of the amended Lithuanian NRRP aim to boost the economy's capacity, focusing on 41 investment measures that should help to increase the country's growth potential in the long term. Table 2 below provides an overview of the largest investment measures as examples for each component, with estimated amounts for the investment measures given per component.

In several cases, the amounts per component vary substantially compared with the initial plan. The main changes concern the green transformation (C2), with a new amount of  $\in$ 677 million (as opposed to  $\in$ 833 million in the initial plan); higher education, a coherent framework for stimulating innovation and high value-added businesses (C5), with a new amount worth  $\in$ 1 050 million (versus  $\in$ 200 million in the initial plan); and the addition of a REPowerEU chapter (C7) worth  $\in$ 748 million.

The biggest investment is now related to C5, where Lithuania plans to invest €1 050 million. In particular, it aims to invest €850 million in loans to enterprises, to develop green and high value-added technologies for industrial development.

In addition, looking at the other large investment measures (see graphic underneath Table 2) Lithuania envisages to invest €549 million in support for RES plants (solar and wind onshore) linked to the REPowerEU chapter (C8). Regarding the green transformation component (C2), €323 million will be spent in moving without polluting the environment, €216 million for accelerating renovation of buildings and a sustainable urban environment, and €116 million for more sustainable electricity produced in the country. For quality and accessible education for the entire life cycle (C4), €246 million will be spent towards a modern general education. For a resilient and future-proof health system(C1), €148 million will be invested in the systemic improvement of the health system's resilience to deal with emergencies. For an efficient public sector and preconditions to recover after the pandemic (C6), €147 million will be invested in capitalisation and financial resilience of the National Promotional Institution, which manages financial instruments designed to help entrepreneurs start or expand SMEs. Finally, €117 million will be spent for better customer-oriented services of the public administration as part of the digital transformation of Lithuania component (C3).

Table 2 – Investment measures and resources under each component of Lithuania's NRRP



#### Governance

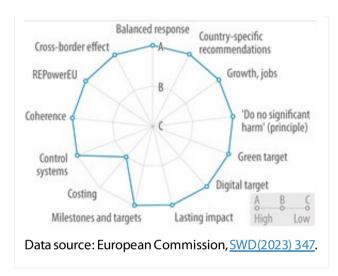
Lithuania has created a governance framework to ensure the implementation, monitoring and control of the plan. Lithuania's <u>Ministry of Finance</u> is the national coordinator for the RRF. It is preparing and adopting the necessary legal acts for the plan's management and control system, and is ensuring a proper audit trail and record keeping. The <u>Central Project Management Agency</u> (CPMA)

is the administrating authority for the plan. It is assessing and selecting projects and ensure they comply with project contracts as well as national and EU legislation. CPMA is monitoring progress in implementing projects and is providing necessary information to the Ministry of Finance.

The Ministry of Finance is working closely with line ministries and other relevant stakeholders to ensure and monitor the implementation of the plan. The plan is <u>implemented</u> under the national strategic management system and revised EU structural funds' management procedures. The strategic planning system should ensure a link between the investments and the country's strategic goals, as well as coherence between investments funded by different funding sources.

#### Commission assessment

Figure 2 – Commission ratings by criteria



On 2 July 2021, the European Commission positively assessed the Lithuanian NRRP, proposing that the Council approve it. For 10 out of the 11 assessment criteria set in RRF Regulation (AnnexV), Commission attributed the highest (A) possible rating to the plan. Criterion No 9, cost justification, was the only one to receive a B (medium).

The Commission issued a <u>second positive</u> <u>assessment</u> on 23 October 2023 (see Figure 2). The amended Lithuanian plan receives an A-rating on all criteria (including the two additional criteria for the REPowerEU chapter), except for costing, where the plan receives a B rating (unchanged from the assessment of the initial plan).

Under criterion No 1, the Commission concludes that Lithuania's plan provides a comprehensive and adequately balanced response to the economic and social situation, contributing appropriately to the six pillars under the RRF (green transition; digital transformation; smart, sustainable and inclusive growth; social and territorial cohesion; health, and economic, social and institutional resilience; and policies for the next generation). The NRRP includes measures that help to address key challenges outlined in the 2019 and 2020 CSRs (criteria Nos 2 and 11).

The Commission finds that the plan focuses on growth-enhancing reforms and investments that are set to improve Lithuania's growth potential, labour market conditions and social resilience (criterion No 3).

NRRP measures in key policy areas aim to address long-standing barriers to economic growth, which should enable the plan to have a lasting impact on Lithuania's economy and society (criterion No 7).

The Commission estimates that the measures supporting climate change objectives in Lithuania's plan account for 37.4% of its total allocation (criterion No 5), which is above the RRF requirement (37%). The plan is consistent with the Commission's 2020 <u>assessment</u> of Lithuania's <u>national energy and climate plan</u>. Lithuania's NRRP devotes 23.3% of its allocation (28.9% excluding the REPowerEU chapter, to which the digital target does not apply) to supporting digital transformation (criterion No 6), thus exceeding the RRF requirement (20%).

According to the Commission, no measures in the plan significantly harm the environment, in line with the 'do no significant harm' (DNSH) principle embedded in the RRF provisions (criterion No 4). While the volume and quality of information about the cost estimates vary between measures, the estimated total costs of the NRRP are deemed to be broadly reasonable, plausible, in line with the

principle of cost efficiency, and commensurate with its expected impact (criterion No 9). The REPowerEU chapter contains measures to help address the key energy challenges Lithuania is currently facing (criteria Nos 12 and 13).

The assessment also stresses that the verification mechanisms, data collection and responsibilities described by the Lithuanian authorities appears ufficient to justify the disbursement requests once the milestones and targets are completed (criterion No 10). The assessment concludes that the plan describes, to a sufficient extent, the institutional actors responsible for implementing the individual reforms and investment under each component. In particular, those actors who will be in charge of implementing the measures (mainly sectoral ministries and authorities under their control) are indicated in the description of the plan's components (criterion No 8).

### **Council decision**

On 20 July 2021, EU economic and finance ministers approved the assessment of Lithuania's NRRP. The initial Council implementing decision of 20 July 2021 confirmed that Lithuania was set to receive €2 224 million in grants over the lifetime of the plan. On 17 August 2021, the Commission disbursed the 13 % pre-financing, amounting to €289 million, which has enabled Lithuania to kick-start implementation of its NRRP. Following the Council's approval, the European Commission and Lithuania signed the financing agreement, which cleared the way for subsequent payment requests.

In June 2022, on the basis of the relevant provisions in the RRF Regulation, the total amount of grants was decreased to €2 100 million. In <u>November 2023</u>, the Council adopted an amending implementing decision by which it greenlit Lithuania's modified plan. It confirmed that Lithuania is now set to receive a non-repayable financial support amounting to €2297.5 million (current prices, rounded), including an additional grant for the new REPowerEU chapter (€193.7 million) and the transfer of part of its remaining allocation from the resources of the Brexit Adjustment Reserve (4.7 million). Furthermore, the requested loan amounting to €1 551 million will be made available to Lithuania. Together, these resources have brought the overall EU contribution to Lithuania's amended NRRP to €3 849 million. The Council's endorsement allowed Lithuania to receive €39.6 million on 21 December 2023 and €109.8 million on 28 December 2023 in pre-financing, equal to 20 % of the REPowerEU grants and loans, respectively.

The pre-financing will be cleared over time, being deducted proportionally from subsequent payments. As envisaged in the <u>annex</u> to the amending Council implementing decision, the EU's non-repayable support will be made available through eight instalments for grants and four for loans. The disbursement of each instalment will be linked to the achievement of the related milestones and targets.

### **European Parliament**

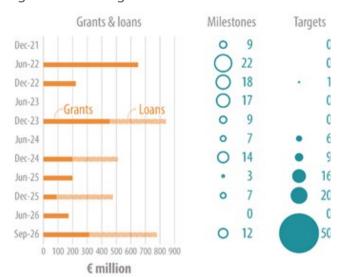
Following the outbreak of the pandemic, the European Parliament was a <u>major advocate</u> of launching a common EU recovery instrument and established the RRF in its capacity as co-legislator with the Council. Parliament also demanded to be involved in the shaping, adoption and implementation of the recovery fund, and to play a role at the centre of the decision-making process to ensure the funding's democratic accountability.

Based on the RRF Regulation and the <u>Interinstitutional Agreement</u> (IIA) on budgetary matters, Parliament can scrutinise the work carried out by the Commission in the assessment of national plans. Within the European Parliament, the Conference of Presidents has established a standing working group on the scrutiny of the RRF, comprising the Committee on Budgets (BUDG) and the Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs (ECON). This working group prepares and follows up on the recovery and resilience dialogue that Parliament holds every two months with the representatives of the European Commission.

In addition, the IIA provides for dedicated interinstitutional meetings between Parliament, the Council and the Commission on the implementation of the broader Next Generation EU (NGEU) recovery instrument. These meetings are organised *in camera* and are to take place at least three times a year. Through the <u>discharge procedure</u>, Parliament also ensures democratic scrutiny of how NGEU resources are spent.

### Milestones and targets

Figure 3 – Envisaged instalment schedule



Lithuania has requested pre-financing twice: 13 % of the initial plan and 20 % of the REPowerEU chapter (see annex to this briefing). Apart from these prefinancing payments, all other NRRP payments will depend on progress in implementing Lithuania's plan. In total, eight instalments for grants and four for loans are planned, each linked to the achievement of milestones (qualitative goals) and targets (quantitative goals). Overall, Lithuania will have to meet 118 milestones and 102 targets outlined in the annex to the amending Council implementing decision. As can be seen from Figure 3, milestones are concentrated in instalments and targets more in the last.

Lithuania has so far received €980.4 million in pre-financing and one partial payment for grants, corresponding to around one quarter of the resources under the modified plan.

On 10 May 2023, following the positive opinion of the Council's Economic and Financial Committee on the disbursement of the funds **linked to the 31 milestones**, a <u>first payment</u> of €542 million was made. The first payment for grants was partial because two milestones relating to taxation (M142 and M144) had <u>not yet</u> been satisfactorily achieved (see annex to this briefing for additional details on payments so far).

On 21 February 2024, the Commission endorsed a positive preliminary assessment of Lithuania's second payment request for €360 million in loans. The Commission preliminarily concluded that Lithuania has satisfactorily completed the **five milestones** set out in the Council implementing decision for the first loan instalment. This payment request covers important steps in the delivery of **four reforms** that will drive positive change for both citizens and industry in impacting key areas such as social care, the green transition, public procurement, and the modernisation of industry. The Commission also completed the assessment on the implementation of milestones 142 and 144 from the first payment request for RRF grants, and concluded that milestone 144 is satisfactorily fulfilled, taking into account the justification Lithuania provided. The Commission thus adopted a positive preliminary assessment of this milestone, which would result in unlocking the €8.73 million to Lithuania. The Commission also concluded that Lithuania made progress towards achieving milestone 142. However, progress is still assessed as insufficient, and the procedure is ongoing.

### Views of Lithuanian stakeholders

In April 2021, more than <u>100 non-governmental organisations</u> (NGOs) wrote a letter stressing that there has been a lack of permanent consultation with NGOs in setting the NRRP for Lithuania.

Open Procurement EU, a collaboration of NGOs and professionals, including Transparency International Lithuania, argues that, despite a strong focus in the Lithuanian plan on communicating

positive results of the investments to the wider public, there was no clear commitment to go beyond routine government control mechanisms to ensure proactive publication of information and engage with wider stakeholder groups to plan and monitor RRF spending.

In its 2023 Reform Barometer, <u>industry associations</u> Business Europe and the Lithuanian Confederation of Industrialists carried out a survey on the Lithuanian plan among their members. While underlining the very limited involvement of social partners in implementation, the members expressed confidence in the European Commission's effectiveness in ensuring strong implementation of the reforms in the NRRPs across the EU. They emphasised the insufficient focus on business and the importance to further invest in energy efficiency, digitalisation and the industry's green transition.

### **Expert debate**

The International Monetary Fund (IMF), in its 2023 Article IV consultation <u>report</u>, emphasises the negative impact of inflation. It recommends that fiscal policy take a disinflationary stance, that financial policies address risks from higher interest rates and volatile markets, and that Lithuania implement structural reforms to strengthen education and healthcare and address climate change-related risks. It also stresses that Lithuania should utilise EU funds efficiently to enhance private-sector productivity.

In its 2023 <u>economic outlook for Lithuania</u>, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) recalls that the economy is slowing in the face of geopolitical headwinds but that public investment, strengthened by EU funds, will support growth. The OECD recommends improving the quality of compulsory education to reduce skill mismatches, and improving the management of state-owned enterprises to boost productivity.

The International Energy Agency's latest (2021) <u>Lithuania energy policy review</u> offers policy advice on how to seize the opportunity to use EU funds for economic recovery. It stresses that Lithuania will need to make energy efficiency a priority, design a strong renewables strategy, and reform energy taxes to underpin its ambitious climate targets.

The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), in its most recent (2022-2023) <u>transition report</u>, positively assesses the recent structural reforms achievements, in particular in promoting the greentransition and increasing energy resilience and efficiency.

#### **EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT SUPPORTING ANALYSIS**

Agreement on REPowerEU chapters in recovery and resilience plans, EPRS, February 2023.

Economic and Budgetary Outlook for the European Union 2023, EPRS, January 2023.

EU recovery instrument, EPRS infographic, updated weekly.

National Recovery and Resilience Plans: Latest state of play, EPRS blog, February 2024.

Recovery and resilience plans in the 2023 European Semester: Progress and country-specific recommendations, EPRS, June 2023.

#### **OTHER SOURCES**

Article IV consultation with the Republic of Lithuania, IMF, September 2023.

2023 Country Report - Lithuania, European Commission, June 2023.

<u>Economic Outlook Note – Lithuania</u>, OECD, June 2023.

<u>European Union countries' recovery and resilience plans</u>, Bruegel, February 2023.

Recovery and Resilience Scoreboard website, European Commission.

#### **ENDNOTES**

- The graphics and tables in this briefing are based on data from the amended <u>Lithuanian NRRP</u>; the amending <u>Council implementing decision</u> (and its <u>annex</u>) on the approval of the plan's assessment; and the <u>Commission staff working document</u> analysing the plan. Data used reflect their source at the time of extraction; moreover, there may be discrepancies between data from different sources.
- The flagship areas are: (i) Power up Clean technologies and renewables; (ii) Renovate Energy efficiency of public and private buildings; (iii) Recharge and Refuel Sustainable transport and charging stations; (iv) Connect Rapid broadband services; (v) Modernise Digitalisation of public administration; (vi) Scale-up Data cloud capacities and sustainable processors; (vii) Reskill and upskill Education and training to support digital skills.

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Third edition. The 'National Recovery and Resilience Plans in the EU' briefings are updated at key stages throughout the lifecycle of the plans.

### Annex – Payments so far

Table 3 provides an overview of the RRF payments Lithuania has received so far. On 17 August 2021, the Commission disbursed the <u>pre-financing</u> of €289 million (13 % of the initial allocation) to Lithuania. On 1 December 2022, Lithuania submitted a <u>payment request</u> worth €565 million (net of pre-financing) for the first grant instalment linked to 33 milestones.

On 30 November 2022, Lithuania submitted a request to the Commission for the first payment worth €565 million of grants, based on the achievement of 33 milestones. On 28 February 2023, the Commission published a partially positive <u>preliminary assessment</u> of the satisfactory achievement of 31 out of the associated 33 milestones. Two taxation-related milestones (M142 and M144) had not been satisfactorily achieved. These milestones concern the submission to the Lithuanian Parliament of legislative proposals, including relevant impact assessments, on the removal of existing tax exemptions and special tax regimes, and on environmental taxes and taxes that are less detrimental to economic growth, respectively. This was the first time the Commission activated the 'payment suspension' procedure, based on the methodology it elaborated to enable the (partial) suspension of funds envisaged in the RRF Regulation.

On 10 May 2023, following the positive opinion of the Council's Economic and Financial Committee, the first payment of €542 million was made possible by Lithuania's fulfilment of 31 milestones linked to the first instalment. These milestones cover key reforms in the areas of the green and digital transition, such as the adoption of legal acts to promote the production, transmission and use of electricity from renewable sources and the setting up of a competence centre for digital transformation and open data, to facilitate the digitalisation of public services. Lithuania has also put forward reforms to its general and vocational education system, measures in support of innovation and science, social protection and employment, and a measure for digital monitoring of the implementation of the RRF, among other measures.

In November 2023, the Council adopted an amending implementing decision by which it greenlit Lithuania's modified plan. The Council's endorsement allowed Lithuania to receive €39.6 million on 21 December 2023 and €109.8 million on 28 December 2023 in pre-financing of the REPowerEU funds

Table 3 – Lithuania's NRRP: Payments as of 22 February 2024

	Payment	Date	Net resources (€ million)	Share of total
Grants	Pre-financing	17.8.2021	289.0	7.5 %
	First instalment	10.5.2023	542.0	14.1 %
	REPowerEU pre-financing (grants)	21.12.2023	39.6	1.0 %
	Total grants		870.6	22.6 %
Loans	REPowerEU pre-financing (loans)	28.12.2023	109.8	2.9 %
	Total loans		109.8	2.9 %
	Total grants and loans paid so far		980.4	25.5 %

Source: EPRS, based on European Commission data.