

# **Executive summary of the National Report for Lithuania**

**Erasmus+ Project “Youth Positive Potential”  
(Agreement no. 2019-1-MTO1-KA201-051251)**

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## **Introduction**

This executive summary contains the most important information presented in the ‘Report on research conducted in Lithuania within the framework of the Erasmus+ Youth Positive Potential project (Agreement no. 2019-1-MTO1-KA201-051251)’. It presents the results of research on adolescent youth from Lithuania, which was part of a broader project entitled Youth Positive Potential (YPP), under the Erasmus+ programme. Besides Lithuania, the research was carried out in Malta and Poland, that is in all the countries that participated in the project.

In addition to surveys involving young people, the YPP project assumed the adaptation of the Polish Archipelago of Treasures® integrated prevention programme to the conditions of the partner countries participating in the project. The assumptions of the youth study closely corresponded with the goals and content of the Archipelago of Treasures® programme, and study results were to be not only a diagnosis of the psychosocial condition of adolescents, but also teaching material for programme implementations with youth.

## **Information about the research**

The YPP project uses the Polish **Integrated Prevention Model** as the basis for an effective method of comprehensive support for youth development and the prevention of problems and risk behaviours of youth.

According to the definition of the model, integrated prevention is one that aims to **effectively prevent the broadest possible spectrum of youth risk behaviours and problems** (e.g. tobacco, alcohol, drugs, violence, depression, teenage pregnancy, HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases) **simultaneously**.

The study used a research methodology based on the integrated prevention model, developed in Poland over more than 20 years of experience of the Institute for Integrated Prevention staff.

A new Pro-Inte 10 questionnaire was constructed for the study (based on the Polish ProZint-9 questionnaire). In this new version of the questionnaire, the vast majority of questions were common to all the countries participating in the project (i.e. Lithuania, Malta and Poland), but the questionnaires also contained sets of questions directed only at students of a specific country, due to the specificity of national social contexts.

Next, Maltese and Lithuanian partners' teams were trained by the researchers of the European Institute for Integrated Prevention (EIIP) on how to use the research method – conducting surveys in schools and coding data.

The survey was carried out in classrooms and was anonymous and in compliance with personal data protection regulations.

The main purposes of the studies conducted as part of the YPP project were:

1. to identify the positive potential and problems of youth in Malta, Poland and Lithuania,
2. to adapt the Archipelago of Treasures® programme to the national contexts in the partner countries, on the basis of study results,
3. to share the results of the studies with school counsellors, teachers and other school staff in the partner countries so that they can use the knowledge in their work with students and parents.

The survey included students aged 14 to 15. The main research questions formulated for this group of young people were:

- what is their positive development potential?
- what are their values and life attitudes?
- what risk behaviours do they exhibit?
- what risk factors are they exposed to?
- what are the protective factors for their positive potential?

The above questions were operationalized by means of over 80 questions in the Pro-Inte 10 questionnaire. The responses to these questions became important material developed and used in the adaptation of the Polish Archipelago of Treasures® prevention programme to the needs of young people in Malta and Lithuania.

The school surveys were conducted under difficult conditions, as the Covid-19 pandemic was underway (2021-2022). For this reason, data collection in schools took much longer than originally planned, as the national survey teams tried to achieve the maximum of the assumed survey sample sizes.

The Lithuanian study planned a sample of 735 students, including 364 boys and 371 girls. Despite the strong commitment of the Lithuanian research team, Lithuania managed to collect only 62.7%, i.e. 469, of the planned student surveys. The lowest completion rate of the sample compared to other countries is a consequence of the difficult implementation conditions

due to the pandemic and the difficulty in obtaining parental consent for the child's participation in the survey.

The Lithuanian study was conducted between September and November 2021. Six schools from Vilnius took part, including three schools where the language of instruction is Polish and three schools where the language of instruction is Lithuanian. The survey was not representative.

The dominant age group in the sample realized was 15-year-olds (66% of respondents). The second most numerous group was 14-year-olds – 29% of the respondents. The remaining 5% were youth of other ages.

As for the sex breakdown of the sample, girls (52%) outnumbered boys (46%) among respondents. 2% of the surveyed youth did not indicate their sex in the questionnaire.

In the next step, a single cumulative statistical set was created on the basis of the data collected in the surveys in Lithuania, Malta and Poland. Data analysis methods varied from simple frequency analysis through correlation analyses to regression analyses.

Data analysis was conducted at two levels: the general, nationwide level and the level of data obtained at specific schools. For the Lithuanian schools, reports were prepared of the diagnosis, which were given to individual institutions to draw a picture of the positive potential and problems of their students.

### **Presentation of study results**

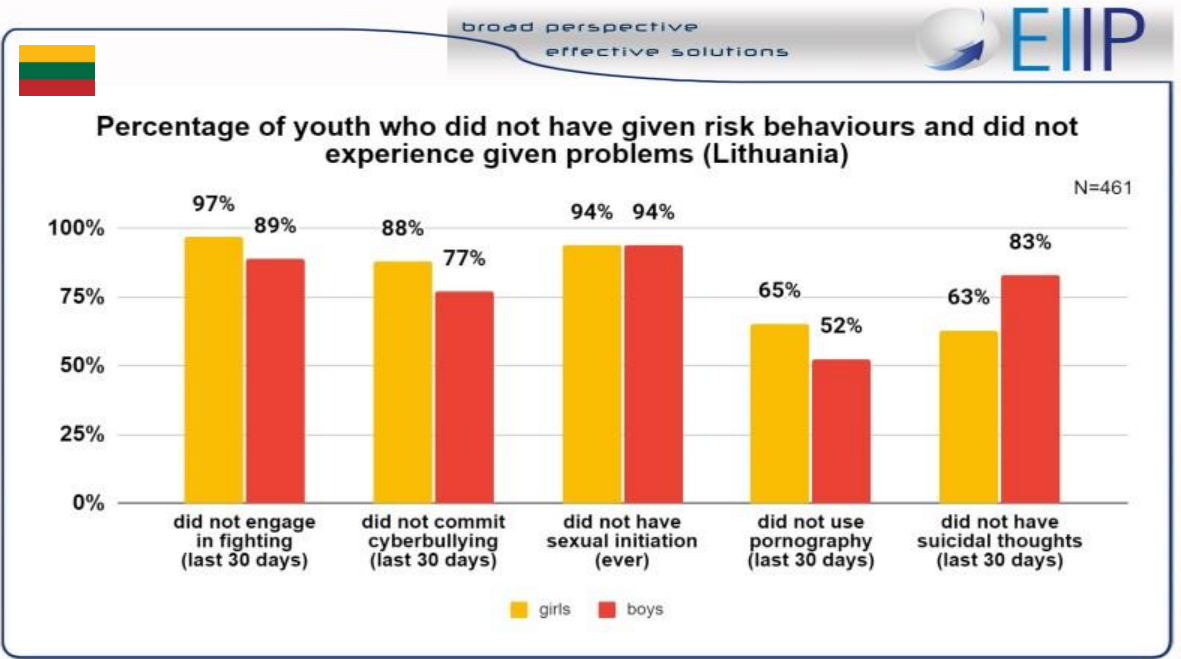
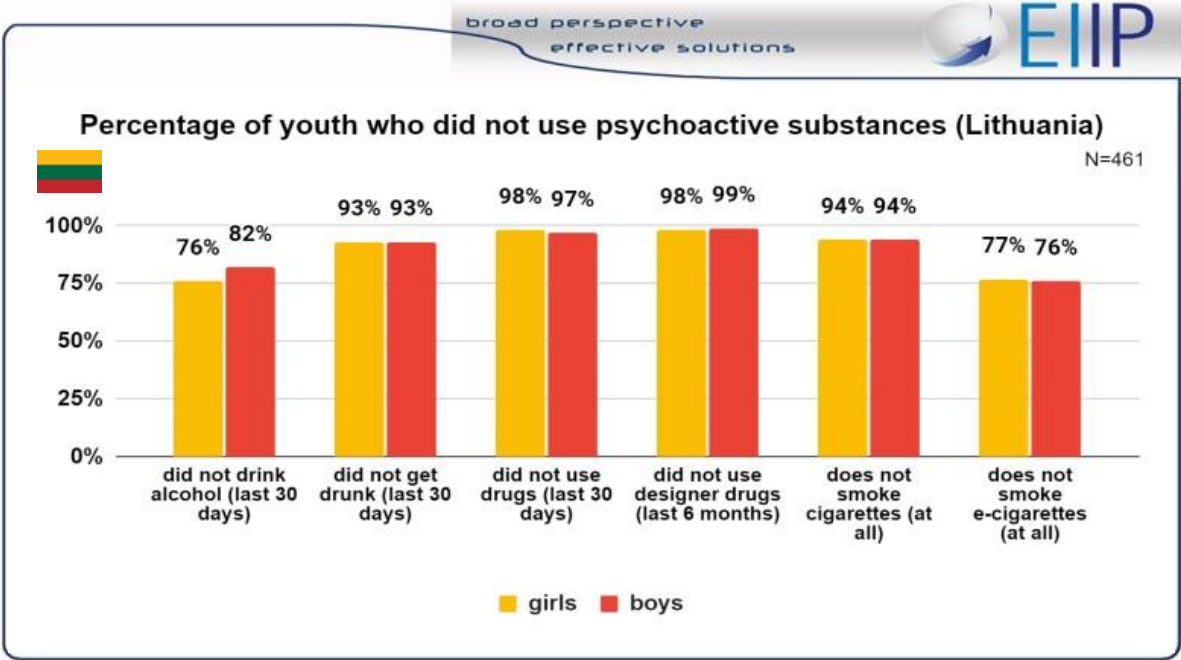
The most important part of the report is devoted to the presentation of the results of the surveys in which Lithuanian youth participated. For the most part, they are in the form of bar charts showing the percentages of surveyed students who gave a certain answer to selected questions. The charts also include information about missing data for particular questions – students sometimes skipped some survey questions.

The results on the charts are shown separately for girls (bar in yellow) and for boys (bar in red). All charts were provided with the necessary explanations to facilitate the interpretation of the results presented graphically.

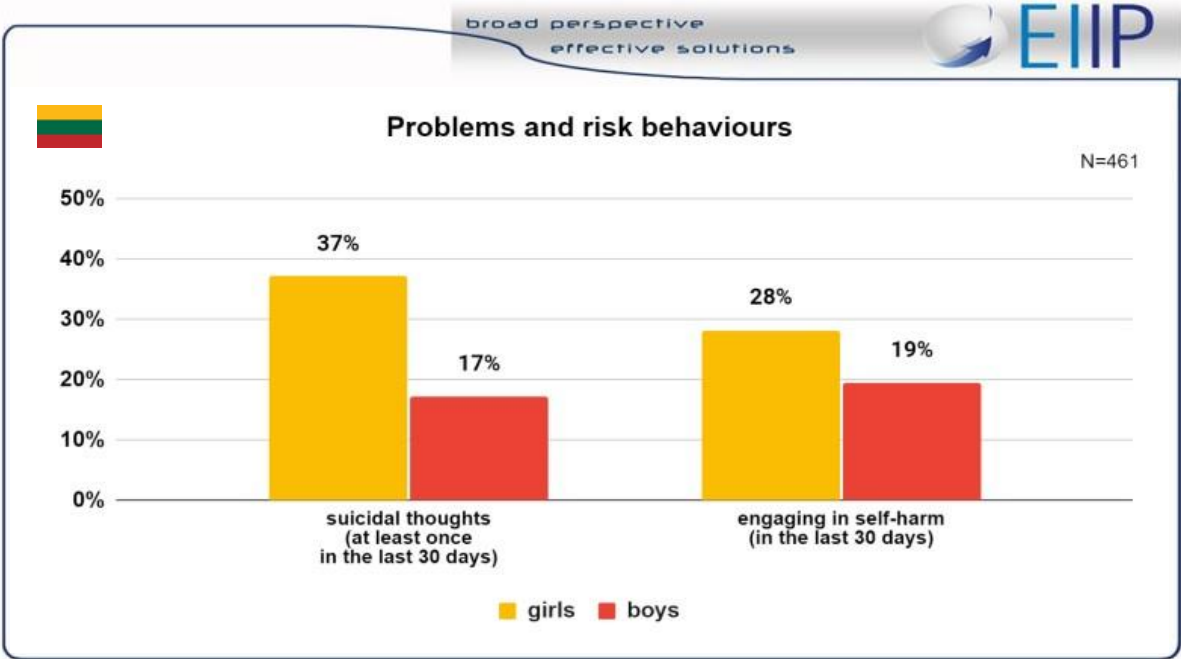
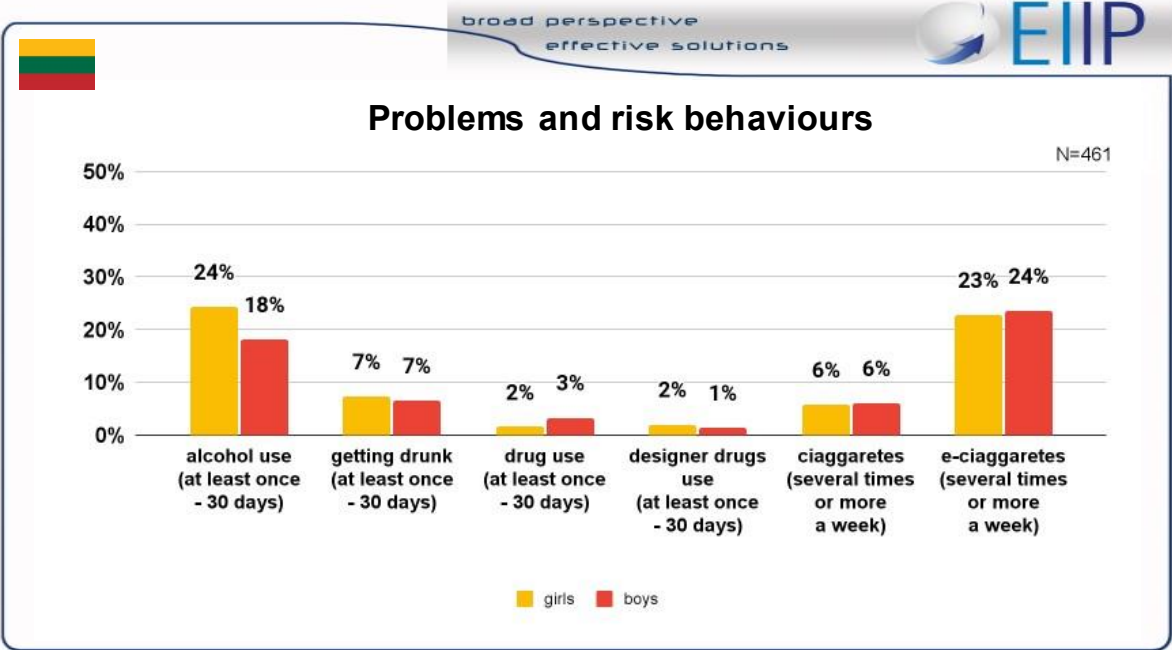
Much attention in the report has been given to the positive potential of Lithuanian youth. On the one hand, this potential can be seen in the dreams and life goals that the youth declare. The most important dreams and life goals of the respondents mainly revolve around lasting interpersonal relationships such as love and friendship, and issues related to work – that it should be interesting and enable a career. At the same time, it is worth noting that 70% of girls and 78% of boys would like to function in a marriage as 30-year-olds. Half of girls and 62% of

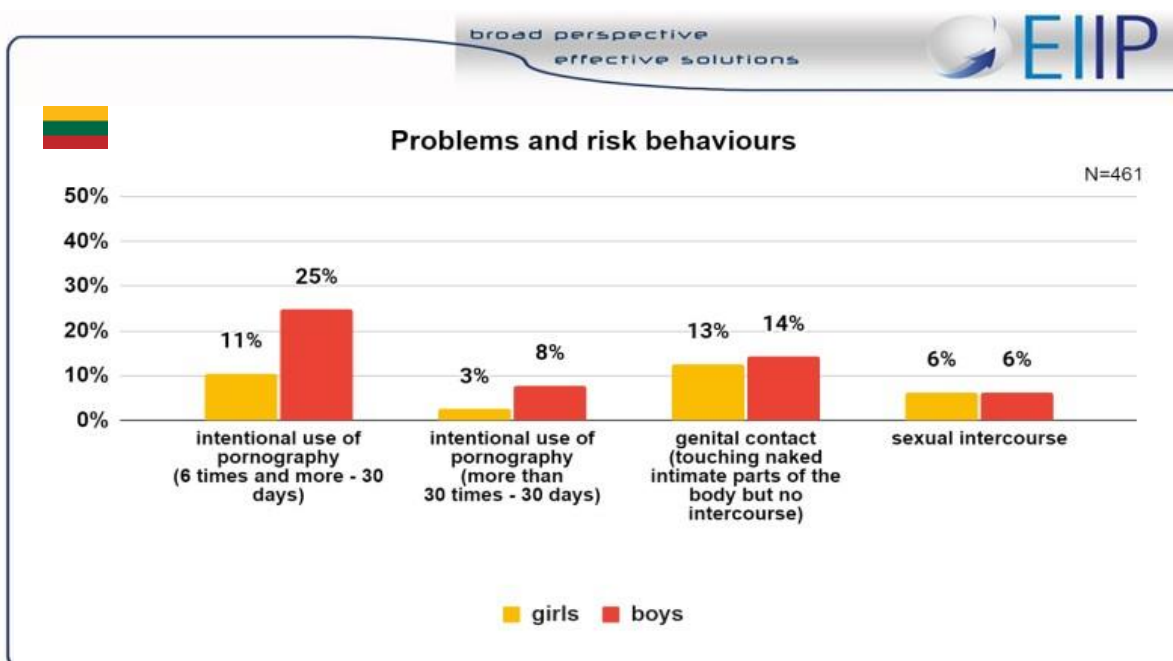
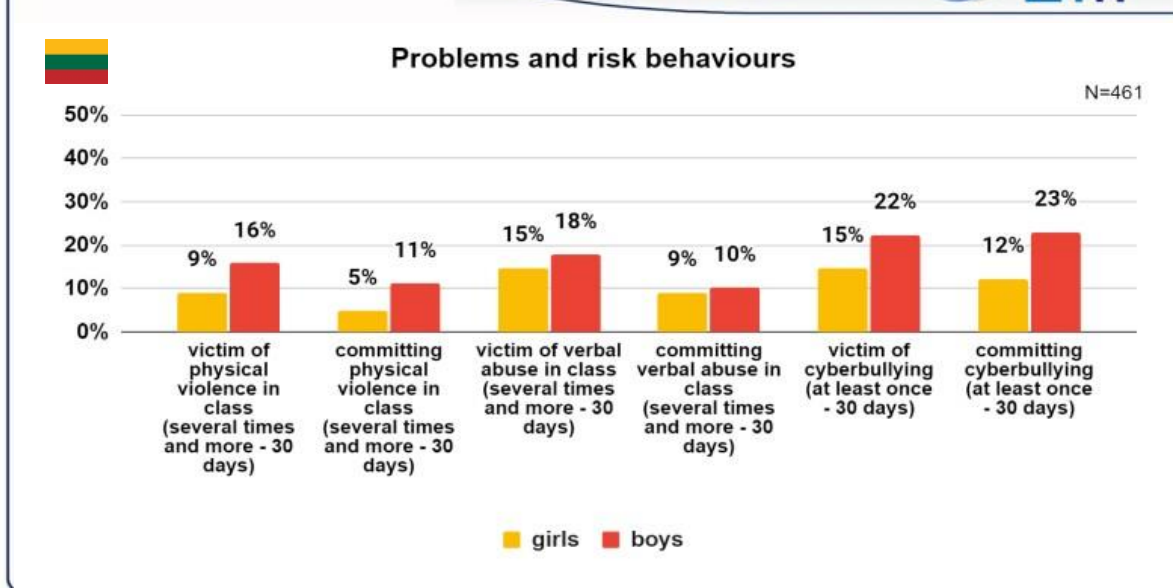
boys would also like to have children at this time. Slightly higher percentages of young people say they would like to have children at all in the future. As for the number of offspring, the most common answer was two children, followed by one child. Less than 7% of respondents said they would like to have three or more children.

On the other hand, the positive potential is the healthy lifestyle displayed by Lithuania’s young people. The charts below show how many of them do not have problems and do not engage in risk behaviours.



Another chapter in the report is devoted to the results of surveys showing the severity of risk and problem behaviours among Lithuanian youth. These cover such areas as peer violence, use of alcohol, drugs, smoking cigarettes, pornography use, and sexual contact. It should also be kept in mind that the data presented here are from six schools located in Vilnius and are not representative. Therefore, great caution should be exercised when generalizing conclusions to the entire population of Lithuanian youth aged 14 to 15.





As the above results show, some adolescents experience some problems or engage in risk behaviours in various areas. As for the use of psychoactive substances, alcohol and e-cigarettes are the most popular. In this area, there are no significant differences between girls and boys, as in the issue of early sexual behaviour. However, the differences are significant with respect to experiencing suicidal thoughts and committing self-harm, which are more characteristic of girls, and various types of violence or intentional use of pornography, which are more characteristic of boys.

An important place in the report is given to the results of statistical analyses showing that many of the risk behaviours discussed earlier are interrelated, which means that they occur simultaneously. For example, the use of one psychoactive substance greatly increases the risk that a young person will use others. Moreover, the results of the analyses show that the chance that he or she will commit violence or engage in early sexual contact increases, too. The results of the correlation analysis showed significant interrelationships between the above-mentioned risk behaviours of adolescents.


The advantage of the study is that it covered as many as 19 indicators of adolescent risk behaviours and problems from a wide range of areas. This is because the study concept was based on the integrated prevention model, which involves conducting a multidimensional and contextual diagnosis of youth risk behaviours and problems. This broad approach makes the survey data a good source for analysing the relationships between variables describing risk behaviours, with the exception of behaviours that are very rare in the study population. The Table presents the results of analyses conducted on data from the Lithuanian survey of youth aged 14 to 15. The purpose of the correlation analysis was to check whether links exist between various risk behaviours and problems, and if so, what their direction and strength is.

The results in the Table below confirm both many popular observations and those made by specialists dealing with the problems of adolescents. The analyses showed, among other things, a strong relationship between drinking alcohol and being drunk, between drug use and drinking alcohol and smoking cigarettes, and a relationship between depression and self-harm or suicidal thoughts.

The results of the analysis also showed many connections between adolescents' risk behaviours that are strong but less obvious. These include the connection between committing violence and being a victim of violence, or between sexual initiation and drug use. Simple, non-obvious correlations demand explanation. In the first case, further analyses showed that the experience of violence is the experience of both committing violence and being a victim, and this is probably an effect of the school subculture, the unwritten norm of responding to violence with violence. The second example becomes understandable when we see the strong links, visible in the Table, between sexual behaviours and the use of various psychoactive substances, including drug use. Again, a more in-depth analysis showed a more general pattern related to psychoactive substance use, in which reaching for one increases the likelihood of reaching for others.



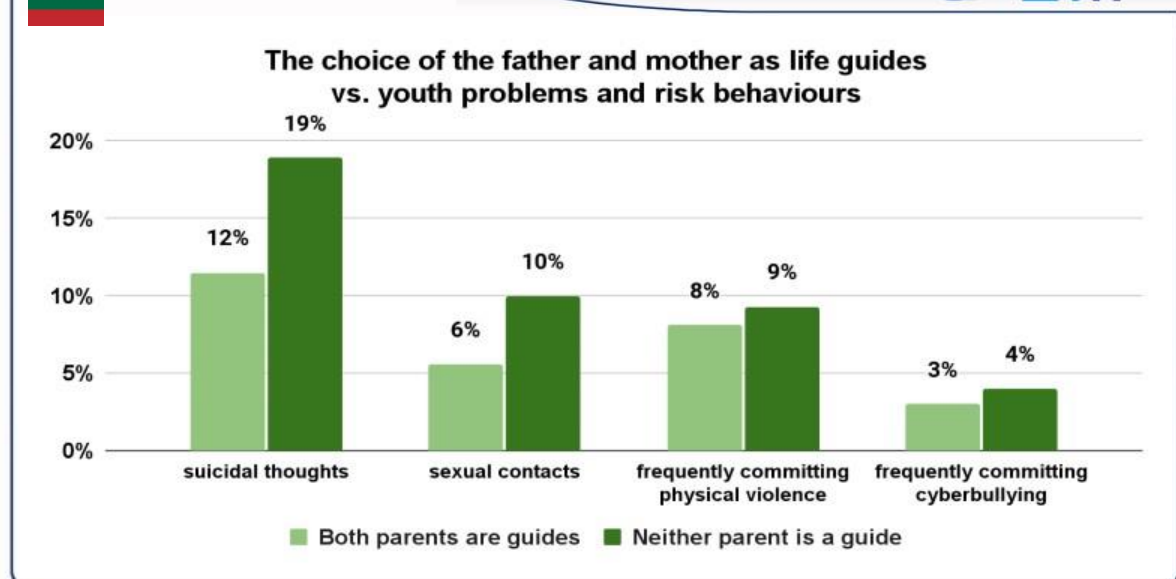
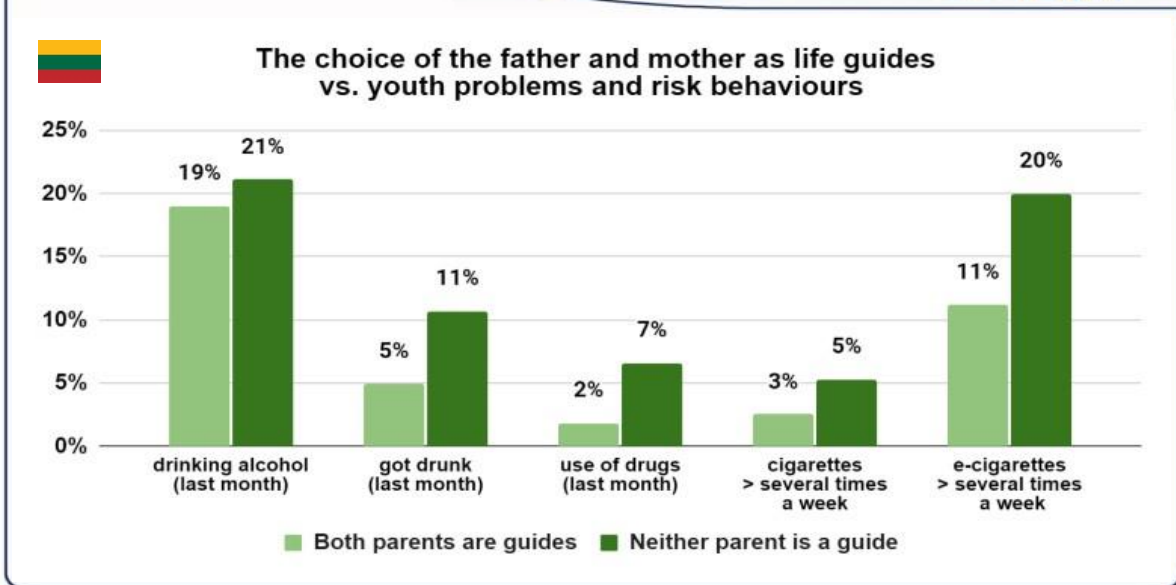
**Table** Correlation matrix between youth risk behaviours – Lithuania

 N = 461 <b>Youth problems and risk behaviours</b>		Alcohol use (last 30 days)	Getting drunk (last 30 days)	Cigarettes (several times a week)	Drug use (last 30 days)	Designer drug use (30 days)	Gambling (last 30 days)	Pornography (last 30 days)	Genital contact	Sexual intercourse	Fighting (last 30 days)	Victim of physical violence	Committing physical violence	Cyberbullying victim (30 days)	Cyberbully (last 30 days)	Depression scale	Self-harm (last 30 days)	Suicidal thoughts (30 days)	No children in future
Psychoactive substances	Alcohol use	1.00	0.54	0.36	0.27	0.24	0.18	0.25	0.28	0.18	0.09	0.16	0.17	0.03	0.16	0.12	0.11	0.14	-0.03
	Getting drunk	0.54	1.00	0.27	0.31	0.30	0.24	0.17	0.28	0.19	0.11	0.08	0.13	0.01	0.14	0.01	0.08	0.06	0.01
	Cigarettes	0.36	0.27	1.00	0.46	0.12	0.16	0.19	0.28	0.17	0.16	0.00	0.06	0.06	0.21	0.12	0.07	0.15	0.02
	Drug use	0.27	0.31	0.46	1.00	0.20	0.12	0.08	0.32	0.46	0.14	0.09	0.05	0.12	0.08	0.07	0.11	0.15	0.04
	Designer drug use	0.24	0.30	0.12	0.20	1.00	0.07	0.11	0.19	0.06	0.11	0.06	0.14	0.04	0.14	0.00	0.10	0.09	0.03
Gambling	Gambling	0.18	0.24	0.16	0.12	0.07	1.00	0.19	0.14	0.07	0.20	0.10	0.14	0.17	0.21	-0.05	0.06	-0.03	-0.07
	Pornography	0.25	0.17	0.19	0.08	0.11	0.19	1.00	0.19	0.03	0.13	0.16	0.19	0.08	0.24	0.10	0.10	0.18	0.02
Sexual behaviours	Genital contact	0.28	0.28	0.28	0.32	0.19	0.14	0.19	1.00	0.47	0.00	0.00	0.04	-0.01	0.18	0.13	0.07	0.13	-0.03
	Sexual intercourse	0.18	0.19	0.17	0.46	0.06	0.07	0.03	0.47	1.00	0.08	0.02	0.04	0.06	0.06	0.11	0.13	0.18	-0.05
Violence and fighting	Fighting	0.09	0.11	0.16	0.14	0.11	0.20	0.13	0.00	0.08	1.00	0.06	0.14	0.06	0.17	-0.07	0.09	0.01	-0.03
	Victim of physical violence in class	0.16	0.08	0.00	0.09	0.06	0.10	0.16	0.00	0.02	0.06	1.00	0.49	0.29	0.12	0.13	0.11	0.11	-0.08
	Committing physical violence in class	0.17	0.13	0.06	0.05	0.14	0.14	0.19	0.04	0.04	0.14	0.49	1.00	0.10	0.23	-0.04	0.02	-0.03	-0.11
	Cyberbullying victim	0.03	0.01	0.06	0.12	0.04	0.17	0.08	-0.01	0.06	0.06	0.29	0.10	1.00	0.42	0.14	0.16	0.17	-0.07
	Cyberbully	0.16	0.14	0.21	0.08	0.14	0.21	0.24	0.18	0.06	0.17	0.12	0.23	0.42	1.00	0.04	0.14	0.14	0.00
Depression and self-harm	Depression scale	0.12	0.01	0.12	0.07	0.00	-0.05	0.10	0.13	0.11	-0.07	0.13	-0.04	0.14	0.04	1.00	0.40	0.55	0.14
	Self-harm	0.11	0.08	0.07	0.11	0.10	0.06	0.10	0.07	0.13	0.09	0.11	0.02	0.16	0.14	0.40	1.00	0.46	0.19
	Suicidal thoughts	0.14	0.06	0.15	0.15	0.09	-0.03	0.18	0.13	0.18	0.01	0.11	-0.03	0.17	0.14	0.55	0.46	1.00	0.21
Children	No children in future	-0.03	0.01	0.02	0.04	0.03	-0.07	0.02	-0.03	-0.05	-0.03	-0.08	-0.11	-0.07	0.00	0.14	0.09	0.21	1.00

The colouring of the strength of the interrelationships between the variables in the Table makes it possible to see and name more general groups of youth problems. The results of subsequent analyses that led to the adoption of a more general categorization of adolescents' risk behaviours are described in detail in the report.

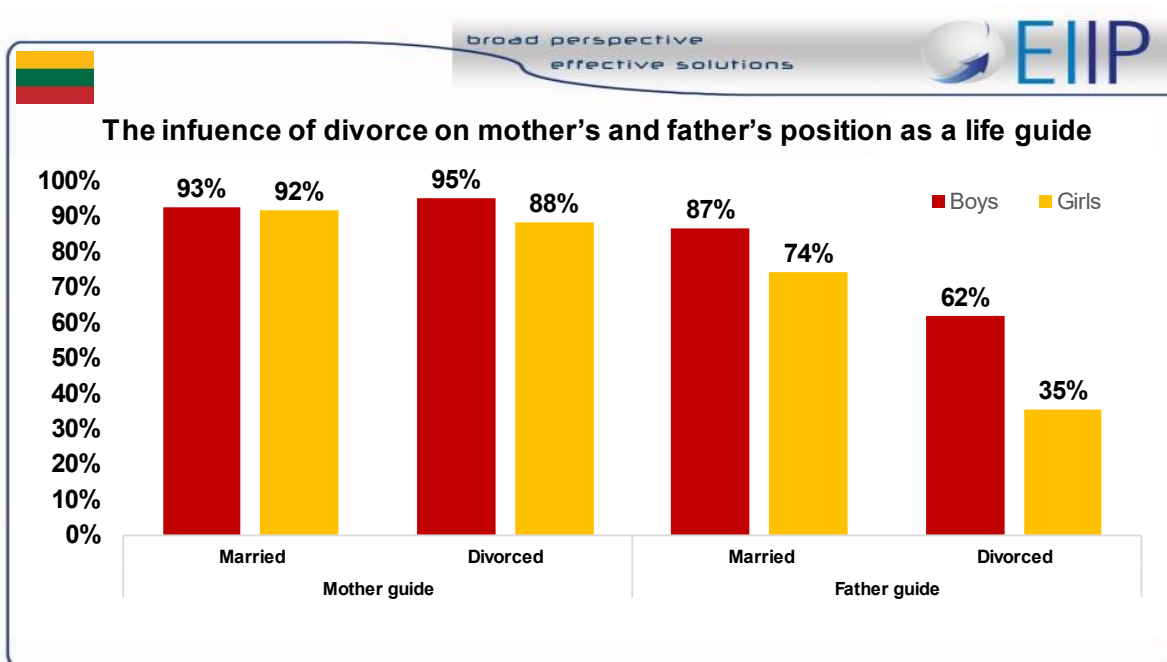
Subsequent analyses of the collected data were devoted to the protective factors, preventing youth from engaging in problem behaviours, and the risk factors that foster them.

It is known from many studies that a good relationship with parents is a strong protective factor. Below are two charts that show the intensity of risk behaviours of Lithuanian adolescents who identify both parents as life guides, compared to teenagers for whom neither mum nor dad is an authority.



As the charts above show, adolescents who identify both parents as important life guides were significantly less likely to report using psychoactive substances, experiencing suicidal thoughts, engaging in sexual contact or committing various types of violence.

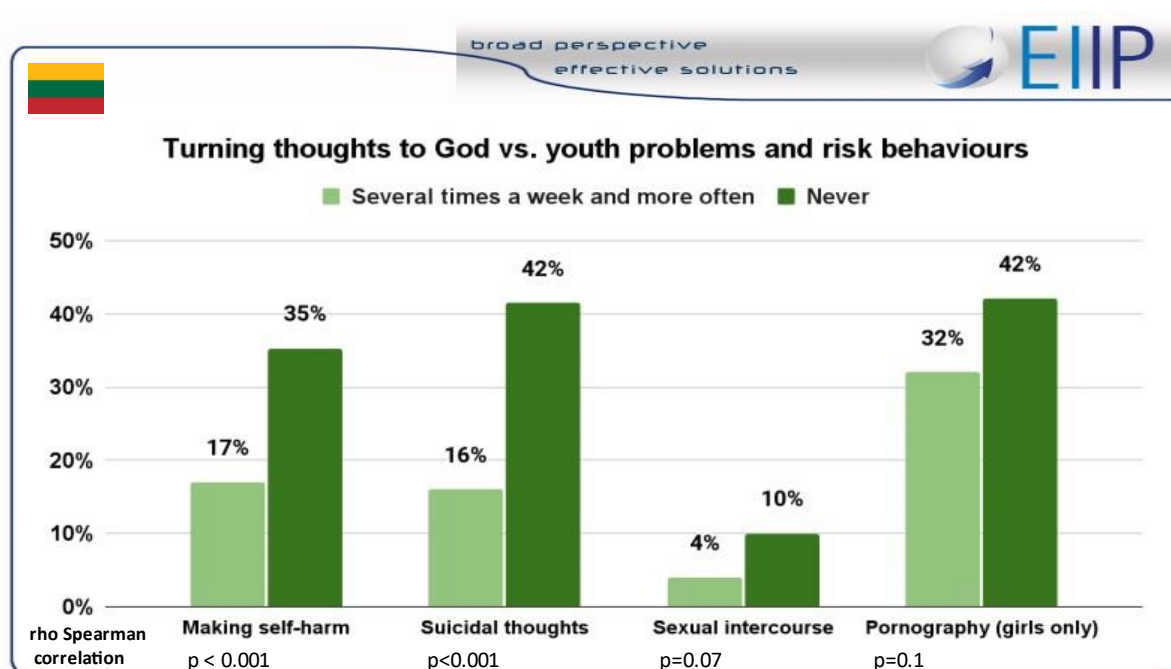
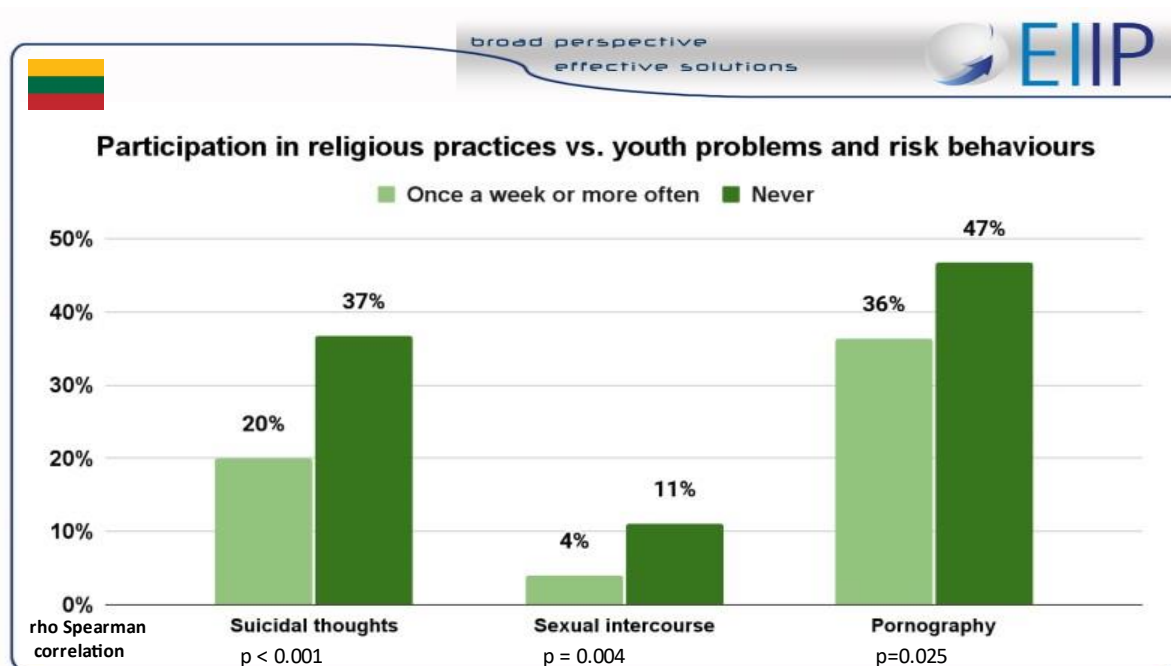
The chart below, on the other hand, illustrates the influence of divorce on the perception of parents as life guides.



The data presented above show that divorce has little effect on the mother's position as a life guide. However, it has a much greater impact on the father's position, which is generally weaker than the mother's, even for married men. Divorced fathers lose the most in the eyes of their teenage daughters, who are as much as twice less likely to indicate them as guides (a drop in choices from 74% to 35%).

Involvement with religion is also a very important protective factor, and it is to this issue that the following analyses are devoted.

The charts below show the intensity of selected problems and risk behaviours of Lithuanian adolescents, depending on the young people's involvement in religious practices and personal contact with God (however understood by adolescents).



The analyses show that adolescents who declared frequent (i.e. at least once a week) participation in religious practices were significantly less likely to experience suicidal thoughts, have sexual initiation or view pornography. In addition, adolescents who frequently turned their thoughts to God were twice less likely to do self-harm.

## Conclusions

The research results obtained in the YPP project enabled a broad diagnosis of the positive potential and problems of Lithuanian youth. Although the study conducted in Lithuania was not representative, it confirmed the links between many risk behaviours and the fact that they have a number of risk factors in common. The data also showed the operation of a number of protective factors, with the dominant role of family and school and the supportive role of religion.

The findings confirmed the usefulness of the Polish integrated prevention model in the national contexts of Lithuania and Malta, and in particular the usefulness of the *Seven Levers of Effective Prevention* strategy and prevention programmes based on it, like the Archipelago of Treasures® programme.

The report also describes strategic recommendations for solutions and long-term activities of a preventive nature. These include the importance of conducting systematic research on youth, implementing prevention activities with proven effectiveness, and greater involvement of parents in schools' efforts for supporting youth development.