Gripas Grips Lithuania

Some Common Sense Advice

Ray Vydriaukas

With all the worry of H1N1, or swine flu, on top of the almost annual flu epidemic we thought we'd talk to Dr Irena Pivoriūnienė, otherwise known as the TV Doctor. While it is very important that you go to your doctor if you are suffering from severe flu or fever symptoms, we asked Irena for her advice on a more holistic approach to coping with the virus around us.

Our first question was about the latest international developments in dealing with the flu.

It is much the same here as in the rest of the world, there are still more questions than answers.

The main danger as always is for people who are suffering from other complicating diseases. These people always have a reduced immune system and are much more vulnerable.

A person with a healthy immune system pretty much won't contract the flu. But what is a good immune system? First of all you have to take into account stress, on the first day of winter we have to remember to wear the right clothes. Your head and feet have to be warm, especially the feet. If your feet get cold it affects the circulation to your nose, which when working properly can protect the body from not onlycontracting flu but any of the other 200 cold affected viruses that can grip us.

And keep your head warm. They say that 13% of your body heat is lost through the head and in cold weather this can hurt you. Below 5°C you definitely need a hat.

Next there is smoking. As I mentioned our nose has many small hairs which work to stop many germs and viruses from entering the body. If you smoke one cigarette you paralyse the work of these hairs for six hours and they don’t work. Smokers suffer flu much more often.

These are the easiest ways to avoid getting sick.

In America every shop has bacterial hand-wash cream and serviettes. They find a lot of germs on the handles of things like supermarket trolleys and in other public places. The H1N1 virus can remain alive outside of the body for six hours so it is important to wash your hands to avoid contracting it through touch.

One of the problems with flu is that you won’t know you have it for the first two days, so it is important to cough into your arm above the elbow so as not to spread the virus through the air, and secondly so that the germs don’t get onto your arms and hands so when you shake hands with people or touch things that other people will also handle, then the virus won’t be passed on.

Try to get into the habit of washing your hands as often as possible after being out in public or before leaving the house, and if you meet people in the street wave to them rather than shake hands.

Masks are good, but they are probably more psychological, and not everyone can wear them.

Beyond these easy measures, if you want to add further protection then consider half a glass of cooled boiled water with a teaspoon of salt added to flush your nasal passages. There was an experiment in the American Army and when half flushed they were 10 times less likely to get a virus. This is a cheap method that has shown to be effective I know many of the pharmacists I work with flush quite often.

These methods help keep it out of our body.

If you have caught the flu you need to strengthen your body defences. Very appropriately for Lithuania, pickled cabbage is a very effective in keeping the colon clean and healthy, and two thirds of the whole immune system is in the colon.

A glass of kefyras, yoghurt, or sour milk and pickled cabbages will do a lot to keep you healthy and ready to fight the flu.

In the kitchen keep ginger handy, and honey is a natural antibiotic, along with lemon and drink them mixed in hot, though not boiling water.

Boil the water, add the ginger after a minute or so when the water is still steaming, then later add the lemon and honey, but never into boiling water.

You should make a large beaker of it in the morning and have it to drink throughout the day.

If you can, buy your honey from a farm or market, as processed honey can be a bit less effective. And even a bit of butter to your diet, with its vitamin A can be very helpful. We are scared of cholesterol these days, but a little can really help.

A flu epidemic was proclaimed in Lithuania on 24 November, and as of 1 December that proclamation still stood.

A government emergency commission has been dealing with the crisis and they notified the public that the rate of infection in Vilnius and Šiauliai is decreasing, but for the moment the numbers are still growing in Klaipėda (where the virus hit last).

The next meeting of the commission is scheduled for 15 December unless things worsen. According to the commission the situation is now stable and hopefully the worst is behind us.

On Wednesday 2 December the Health Ministry and the Ministry of Social Security and Labour made a joint announcement that people contracting the flu can call their doctor in order to get a doctor’s certificate so as to avoid long lines at clinics and help avoid infecting others. The patients must then, within three days, make a personal visit to the doctor to complete the consultation.

The flu epidemic has also taken a heavy toll on the economy. Nerijus Kupréšiūnas, Head of the Infectious Diseases Department at the State Public Health Service (VSPT) first hoped that the economic effects of the virus would be minimal. It was estimated that in the case of heavy pandemic, GDP would decrease by 4%, while in the case of mild pandemic - by 1%.

Six confirmed deaths from H1N1

Artūras Skikas, Deputy Health Minister, said on Tuesday 1 December, that six people in Lithuania had died of complications from the virus to date, adding that there have been 860 such cases in Europe. While others are sick or have died, these were still suspected cases at the time of going to press, and are as yet unconfirmed.

During the last week there were 192 cases of flu registered for every 10,000 people, and an epidemic is declared when the number reaches 100, Raimundas Palaitis, Lithuanian Minister of the Interior, and head of the government emergency commission was quoted as saying.

The first death was of a 14 year old boy in Kaunas, and the latest a 40 year old man also from Kaunas.

\[\text{(Cont page 2)}\]
The Spoilt Suffer Most

One topic of discussion regarding the current economic crisis is - who is worst affected?

Some argue that pensioners brought up in the tough Soviet climate are better able to adapt to the present hardships, others that the 40 - 60 year olds who can’t adapt as quickly to the new way of doing things have been the greatest casualties, not just now but over the last 20 years as well. Deimantė suggests it is the unprepared 25 – 40 generation that is suffering most in this economy. Tell us what you think.

Deimantė Doksaitė

Some say that pensioners, teachers, social workers, librarians or other civil servants suffer from this economical downturn most. But I think that it is my generation - people who are 25 – 40 years old who suffer from it more than others.

A couple of years ago they were living very successful lives. They took loans from the banks and bought cars and flats, and couldn’t imagine a day when their salaries being reduced would ever occur, the prognosis was all just up, up up. They couldn’t imagine that they could lose their jobs, they thought just about the next promotion.

Just imagine a young Lithuanian family, parents in their early 30s, they have two children. They took a loan to buy a flat which cost let say half a million litas several years ago, now worth maybe LTL200,000 (and even worse - nobody wants to buy it anyway). Both parents have cars; they both went to work. They used to go on vacation twice a year – in summer to Turkey and during winter perhaps skiing in Italy or Austria.

And now one of them has lost their job, and for the other a salary reduc- tion of about 20%. It doesn’t sound cool, does it? But this is exactly what is happening in Lithuania nowadays. Of course people try to find ways out of such difficult situations, some move back to their parents where all four share one room at their parents house, some move to a some smaller flat and rent their apartment to someone else.

But the thing is that a couple years ago everything was about this generation. They were the main consumers, paying their money in all the popular wineries, they were the ones attending the theatre, cinema, concerts, sports events, taking danc- ing and photography classes, taking trips and trying unusual foods, buying clothes, shoes (more than one pair per season, usually parents used to do), the latest computers, dishwashers, cosmetics. And yes, they were the ones who helped to create the real estate bubble.

They were sure that things would keep getting better, never worse. Because people of this generation started their working lives in good times, their careers continuously improving. They didn’t live through the tough periods, they were children or teenagers when Lithuania was going through especially difficult times like the Rus- sian blockade, Russian crisis etc. So it wasn’t them who learnt to cope with hardship, it was their parents. They weren’t prepared for this economic crisis, and they never imagined it could be like this.

Hopefully this one lesson will be enough to teach them to understand more about responsibility and how to appreciate values other than just money and work. Maybe the Lithua- nian proverb saying ‘don’t be happy when you find something, don’t cry then you lose something’ suits this situation perfectly.

So perhaps that’s why pensioners and the older generations can cope better, because they are the ones who expect something like this economical downturn to happen. And generation 25-40 were taken suddenly and with- out any preparation.

Ukrainian electricity to be supplied to Lithuania

While on a working visit to Ukraine, President of the Repub- lic of Lithuania Dalia Grybauskaitė has underlined that Ukraine might become a very important energy partner for Lithuania and for the whole European Union but only transparent and open relations will lead to success in this area.

At the session of the Council of Presidents of Lithuania and Ukraine, the delegations of the countries dis- cussed energy issues and the possi- bilities to supply Ukrainian electrici- ty to Lithuania after closure of the Ignalina Nuclear Power Plant.

The Lithuanian and Ukrainian leaders agreed to continue dialogue about the energy security of the region and about possible forms of uranium enrichment in Lithuania. They also agreed to continue the work of the expert group, which was appointed during the previous meeting of the heads of state.

Deimantė suggests it is the unprepared 25 – 40 generation that is suffer- ing most in this economy. Tell us what you think.

Griapos Grips Lithuania

(Cont from page 1)

They even say that dressing nicely can help. You get compliments, you feel good, you make others feel good and it gets rid of the negative energy that can make you weak.

But if you do catch the flu, the symptoms are the same as any other flu and if you have the symptoms of fever and headache, bones, feeling generally bad you need to go straight to bed for three days. Don’t try to be brave and go to work or be a hero, you will just infect the rest of your workers.

Keep drinking plenty of liquids because keeping liquid in the body is very important. If you drink only when thirsty, then that is too late because your body is already warning you, so keep drinking regularly.

And Lithuanian water is quite good, so just fill a bottle with tap water and carry it with you. Of keep some near your computer or chair and you can do it without any problem.

Vaccines are still a mystery. Not everyone believes them to be effec- tive. But most people die of compli- cations from flu and not the flu itself, and I recommend that if you are in a danger group that you take a vac- cine against pneumonia. It lasts for five years and has been around for a long time so is well sorted. I vac- cinate the whole family. It costs about 80 litas, but over five years it is a good investment.

Excuses are needed to talk to your doctor. You need to find out what sort of flu you have, so don’t try to self medicate, and if the symptoms are bad, make sure you seek med- ical help.

Alcohol doesn’t help at all. All the remedies of vodka and balsam are not worth even trying, they dehydrate the body and make you not feel the cold.

And finally breakfast. Make sure you eat breakfast and eat it every day, because there is no better way of running your body down than starting the day without any fuel. It runs your immune system down, makes you eat more at night, which in turns makes you sleep worse, which all adds up to running yourself down.

Eat breakfast you can eat like a king, lunch with a friend, and give your dinner to your enemy.

Activities Pine for Pipiras

More than 100 animal rights activi- lists, citizens and celebrities gathered in front of Seimas on Thursday to protest against animal abuse and ex- press support for an amendment of the penal code which will enforce a maximum of four years jail and a fine of LTL1,600 for harsh treatment of animals.

Lithuania made world headlines recently when Svajunas Beniukas was shown throwing a dog named Pipiras (Pepper) from a bridge. The video was posted on YouTube and had thousands of hits throughout the world, and raised the ire of international and local animal activi- stes. Pipiras died in a Kaunas animal hospital a week later.

Beniukas was sentenced to eight months and 10 days jail on 21 No- vember.

The amendment of the penal code was registered through the efforts of the news portal 15min.lt which was first to inform the public about the cruel case of Pipiras.
Looking for Eric
Director Ken Loach.
Cast: Steve Evets, Eric Cantona, Stephanie Bishop, Gerard Kearns.
Comedy drama, Great Britain, France, Italy, Belgium, Spain. 2009 116’
A man trying to put his life back on track gets some advice from an unexpected benefactor in this comedy-drama from acclaimed British director Ken Loach. Eric Bishop (Steve Evets) is a postman whose life has been slowly going off the rails ever since his wife Lily (Stephanie Bishop) walked out on him. Eric has just been released from the hospital after an auto accident, and to his amazement he’s visited by an apparition of Eric Cantona who periodically appears to coach him in the ways of romance. Looking For Eric was an official selection at the 2009 Cannes Film Festival.

Whatever Works
Director: Woody Allen.
Romantic comedy. USA 2009 92’
Woody Allen writes and directs this “blackish comedy” about an eccentric upper-class New Yorker (Larry David) who abandons his comfortable lifestyle in favour of leading a more Bohemian existence. After meeting a young southern girl (Evan Rachel Wood) and her family, he discovers that life among nonconformists isn’t quite as carefree as he’d envisioned it to be.

International Christmas Charity Bazaar
The seventh annual International Christmas Charity Bazaar was held in the Rotušė on Sunday 29 November.
There were 30 different countries represented at the fair which gave the 2500 guests who attended a good opportunity to buy the Christmas presents and other items they might not be able to get elsewhere.
This year they raised LTL150,000 from sales and the lottery, and another LTL50,000 was provided from the main sponsors.
Alma Adomkienė remains the patron, and was at the opening with her husband Valdas. They bought goods from many of the stalls including origami from the Japanese, a gingerbread house from the Finns and baklava from the Greeks.
The lottery was as popular as ever, as was the singing of Christmas carols, and it always proves a great occasion to catch up with friends before the real rush of the festive season gets into full swing.
The International Christmas Charity Bazaar is organised by the Vilnius International Women’s Association.

Ryanair Cabin Crew Strip For Charity
Ryanair, launched its 2010 Ryanair Cabin Crew Charity Calendar which the airline hopes will raise €110,000 for the UK charity “KIDS” which provides support to disabled children all over the UK.
Ryanair’s CEO Michael O’Leary has already bought the first 100 copies of the 2010 calendar and sent one to “anti-fun” Labour MEP Mary Honeyball who last year wrongly accused Ryanair of “forcing” cabin crew to take part in the calendar. Ryanair’s cabin crew volunteer to take part and this year over 800 of the airline’s 4,000 cabin crew applied for this charity event.
This year a Lithuanian stewardess also made the final cut, and Karolina struts her stuff above on the left.

Vodka museum opens in Riga
Riga Nov 24 (LETA-ELTA) - A vodka museum has opened in Riga at 136f Krisjana Barona Street, the newspaper “Vesti Segodnja” reports today.
The museum was opened by two friends Leonards Jankelovics and Igs Ristolainens.
According to the newspaper, the museum has on display a large collection of vodkas, gathered by the museum’s owners; initially their friends and family helped them expand their collection, but now increasingly more often tourists, who plan on visiting the museum, bring their contribution in form of bottles of vodka from various parts of the world.
The museum is divided in thematic corners, for example, one section is dedicated to “Smirnoff” vodka, another to Putin, yet another to the theme of war.
The museum displays bottles and posters with vodka ads, excerpts from newspapers describing the alcoholic drink and vodka labels. The museum includes several hundred displays altogether.

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Jovaiša: Lithuania – Heart of the Baltics

Deimante Dokšaitė

Marius Jovaiša became quite well known after releasing his photo album “Unseen Lithuania” a couple of years ago.

It became one of the most sought after gifts for anyone who was already in love with Lithuania, or for those who had never seen the beauty of the country.

Now Jovaiša has come up with a new project – a trademark for Lithuania as the heart of the Baltics.

Jovaiša hopes that his idea will get public attention and they will start using this trademark in their email signatures, power point presentations, business cards and any other communication.

We asked Jovaiša a few questions about his project and intentions.

You were known for criticizing Lithuanian brands, for example the trademark of Lithuania as a brave country. Why you think your trademark is better?

Absolutely not. I have developed this approach during my numerous worldwide travels. It is a fact that the Baltic sea is much more well known than Lithuania. If you happen to be among people who don’t know the name Baltic Sea, you can easily tell them that it’s a see in northern Europe around which there is Sweden, Finland, and Germany, and then you’ll be OK.

How can you explain your generosity? People find it hard to believe that somebody is doing something for free - just because it is good. What are your intentions?

It is not the first time I am doing something for free. Some people will still never believe that, and will keep looking for hidden reasons, but I honestly just want to solve this problem for once and for all. I feel like I have a strong proposal and I hope it will work.

Any plans to develop this idea of Lithuania – Heart of Baltics? Any future ideas to work with the Lithuanian image?

I have established a public enterprise – a not for profit organization “Lithuania – heart of the Baltics”. It will develop the brand and spread it both in Lithuania and abroad. So far I am sole financier but I hope more sponsors will be attracted and maybe the government will begin to participate in this process eventually.

One hand, we are the biggest of the three Baltic countries, we have the widest heritage of history, culture, architecture and archeology. We were the only ones to have a national state back in thirteenth century.

On the other hand, we were the center of Baltic tribes named after the Baltic sea. Lithuania serves as a bridge from east to west, from north to south.

And yes, we are emotional and so every Lithuanian can easily come up with more explanations as to why it is us and not the Latvians or Estonians who are heart of the Baltics.

Don’t you think that only we believe that the Baltic Sea is well known, but other people, especially those who don’t live in this area have no idea where it is? So is saying the Baltic Sea is even more meaningless than saying Lithuania?

How can you explain the Baltic Sea? Why you think the Baltic sea is much more well known than Lithuania?

Heart is a very powerful symbol with multiple layers of meanings. On one hand, the word heart means life. It is our core and it sustains us. On the other hand, it is a very powerful symbol in love, the symbol of love. On the third hand, it is a very powerful symbol in the national context.

The Baltic Sea is huge, it is the world’s fourth largest and the second most saline sea. Geographical position of Lithuania is a strong proposal and I hope it will work.

It is the heart of the Baltics, we are the center of the three Baltic countries. The Baltic Sea is the sea of the Baltics.

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Human Rights Awareness Month 2009: Artists for Human Rights

In December, for the fifth year in a row, the Human Rights Monitoring Institute together with our partners organizes the Annual Human Rights Awareness Month to commemorate International Human Rights Day and encourage our society to live and act by human rights principles.

There’s a powerful connection between artists of all kinds and human rights. Art and artist sometimes stand up against the establishment to say what needs to be said in the name of humanity. Art communicates across the boundaries of geography, politics, gender and race. Human rights too, cross all divides and belong to every individual on the planet.

Freedom of expression is vital for an artist’s work and human rights activist work to protect that very right. All in the end the relationship is more fundamental. We experience art together. It makes us feel human, and urges us to protest the human rights of others. (Amnesty International Magazine, July/August 2006)

Events exploring the connection between art and human rights are popular all over the world – human rights art exhibitions, film festivals, video installations and public actions have been held in Australia, USA and many European countries. This year we decided to bring this theme to Lithuania, therefore we have Human Rights Awareness Month 2009: Artists for Human Rights.

Regrettably, half of events had to be postponed due to the flu epidemic. They have been moved to the Annual Week Against Racism, March 2010 (including a series of discussions at the National Art Gallery as well as the high-level discussion in Seimas with politicians and Nordic experts).

If you are feeling healthy you are most welcome to attend the events that we still have in our calendar (see below). However please take the necessary precautions.

Entitled Paper Love, the performance piece was improvised during the opening, using the surroundings of Cozy rather than abandoned Belgian building, but Inga and Sarah were very pleased with the response and said that the universal themes of love are just as applicable here as in Western Europe.

“The idea of the ‘paper love’ itself was quite intuitive working with the given space,” Inga said. “Already after creating the paper costumes and the whole performance I have realized that they remind us of something well known - Pierrot and Columbine, the characters of Commedia dell’Arte.”

The artist also says that the clothes worn by her and Sarah were made out of paper to echo the delicate issues addressed in the work, such as the vulnerable nature of human emotions, relations and expectations as well as the ever-changing nature of material things.

“I like the personality of Inga, I do like her work as well and I think the new pictures will contrast quite nicely with the exhibition of paintings we had before,” said Bernie Ter Braak, the owner of Cozy. The pictures from the performance Paper Love will stay in Cozy Spring 2010. There are also “fragments” of Paper Love available in the form of postcards that you can send to family and friends from the café.

U.S. Embassy Donates 1000 Books to Lithuanian Libraries to Mark Lithuania’s Millennium

On Tuesday, December 1, US Ambassador Anne E. Derse and Lithuanian Minister of Culture Remigijus Vilkaitis participated in a book donation which took place at Adomas Mickievičius Public Library (Traku 10, Vilnius).

The project, “1000 Books for Lithuania’s Millennium,” began early this year, when employees of the US Embassy to Lithuania and their family members shared the titles of their favorite children’s books to be included into the collection.

The entire set of one thousand books consists of new preschool and elementary-school children’s books purchased for the project. The collection is going to be presented to children’s literature departments of Lithuanian libraries. Adomas Mickievičius Public Library among them.

The project aims to reach out to five different libraries throughout Lithuania, donating sets of 200 books to each. The total value of the donation exceeds $8,000.

Native American Poets in Lithuania

Four young poets from Navajo and Tohono O’odham tribes performed their original poems and Native songs in Vilnius and Klaipėda recently.

Led by their coach and writer Timothy McLaughlin and the teacher of music Mali Sato, the young poets from the Spoken Word team of the Santa Fe Indian School, New Mexico, USA struck a chord with mesmerized Lithuanian audiences.

Paper love replaces the beauties of Europe at Cozy

In keeping with Cozy tradition, a new photographic feature adorning the walls of the Old Town café was opened this week. This time around it is the work of Amsterdam-based Lithuanian-born artist Inga Cholmogorova, whose shots of her performance together with a Belgian artist Sarah Benn in an abandoned Belgian factory form the basis of the work.

HUMAN RIGHTS AWARENESS MONTH 2009: ARTISTS FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

Calendar of Events

30 November 17:30 Grand Opening of the Living Space (Artists for Human Rights). Place: Gedimino 9, 4th floor. Visitors to the mall are invited to draw their dreams which will be displayed on the walls and ceilings of the 4th floor. Every day from 10 am - 8 pm.

1 December 17:00 Documentary screening Vilnius Ghetto 2009 (Director A. Leikaitis, 2009). Place: Cinema Pasaka, Šv. Ignoto str. ¾, Vilnius.

2 December 15:00 Discussion. The New Edition of the Law on Protection of Minors from the Negative Impact of the Public Information: Discriminating Protection or Briddle on Art? Place: Mano Guru, Vilniaus str. 22/1.


4 December 15:00 Grand Opening of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, J. Tumo-Vaižganto str. 2, Vilnius.

Registration by mail: hrmi@hrmi.lt


Registration by mail: hrmi@hrmi.lt

21 December 17:30 Closing of the Living Space “Am I Allowed to Dream?”. Place: Gedimino 9, 4th floor.

All Events of the Human Rights Awareness Month 2009 are free of charge.

Everyone is welcome!

Contact: Dovilė Šakaliénė
Ph.: +370 5 2314 681
E-mail: dovile.sakaliene@hrmi.lt

Lithuanian Tourism down 21.8%  

According to provisional data provided by Statistics Lithuania, the first nine-month period of 2009, accommodation establishments had 21.8% less guests than in the same period of 2008.  

Over January–September 2009, accommodation establishments (hotels, guesthouses, motels, health resorts, etc.) had 1.16 million guests, of whom 53.6% were foreigners. Hotels and guesthouses accommodated 847,900 foreign and other establishments – 71,100, health resorts – 79,900 guests.  

Against the same period of 2008, the number of guests in Druskinkai decreased by 13.9%, in Birštonas – 10.3%, in Neringa – 16.8%, in Palanga – 19.8%.  

Over the nine-month period of 2009 against the previous year, hotels and guesthouses accommodated 20.7% less guests; the number of foreign guests decreased by 20%. Less guests arrived from the neighbouring countries such as Latvia (26.8%), Estonia (24.4%), Russia (16.2%), Belarus (6.2%), as well as from Western Europe – Ireland (42.7%), United Kingdom (38.9%), Norway (31.1%), Italy (42.6%), Finland (24.9%), Denmark (21.6%), Sweden (11.6%), Germany (16.5%).  

The number of guests from Belarus increased by 23%, Czech Republic – 11.4%, Iceland – 1.3%. The majority of guests were from Poland (94,900, previously 115,000), Germany (87,400, previously 104,100), Russia (52,400 (previously 75,900), Latvia – 43,100 previously 59,100), Belarus – 21,100 (previously 17,400). The nine-month occupancy rate of hotel and guesthouse rooms was 36.2% (previously 47.9%).  

According to provisional data of 2009, Vilnius hotels and guesthouses accommodated 190,500 thousand guests, or 20.1% less than in the same period of 2008. The number of foreigners was 325,900 or 18%.  

The nine-month occupancy rate of Vilnius hotel and guesthouse rooms was 46.5% (previously 58.2%).

Seimas approves cut in corporation tax for small companies  

Vilnius, Nov 24 (ELTA) - Surprisingly, the Seimas approved the amendments proposed by MP Dainius Budrys to reduce income tax for small companies to 5%. The initial government proposal was to reduce income tax from 13 to 7.5%.  

The reduction of income tax to 5% will apply to those companies that employ up to 10 people, and whose fiscal year income does not exceed LTL500,000 (€146,099 euros). It is further proposed to reduce in-  

Vilnius among ten least expensive cities  

Stockholm, Dec 2 (ELTA) - The experts of the British company PriceRunner which compares the prices of goods and services, have named Oslo, the capital of Norway, the most expensive city worldwide. Lithuania’s capital Vilnius entered the top ten of the least expensive world cities.  

The analysts announced their conclusions after comparing prices of the products under 26 different names, including milk, cigarettes, books, computers, BigMac hamburgers, in 33 world cities.  

"Prices in the capital of Norway are higher by 35 percent than the average of prices in other countries," states PriceRunner.  

PriceRunner has ranked Oslo the most expensive city in the world for the third year in a row. The list of the least expensive cit- 

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PriceRunner which compares the prices of goods and services, have named Oslo, the capital of Norway, the most expensive city worldwide. Lithuania’s capital Vilnius entered the top ten of the least expensive world cities. 

The analysts announced their conclu- 
sions after comparing prices of the products under 26 different names, including milk, cigarettes, books, computers, BigMac hamburgers, in 33 world cities. 

"Prices in the capital of Norway are higher by 35 percent than the average of prices in other countries," states PriceRunner. 

PriceRunner has ranked Oslo the most expensive city in the world for the third year in a row. The list of the least expensive cit- 
es includes Buenos Aires, Vilnius, Prague, Warsaw, San Francisco and New York. Mumbai was ranked as the cheapest city. 

Price Runner carried out the study on 17-21 October 2009.

European labour markets deeply hit by crisis, but more resilient than expected  

The current crisis is taking its toll on EU labour markets, reversing most of the employment growth achieved since 2000, according to the 2009 Employment in Europe Report published on 23 November 2009.  

Men, young people, the low-skilled and workers on temporary contracts have borne the brunt of the employment contraction. Employment in the EU has shrunk by over 4 million jobs since the start of the crisis, although the effect has been somewhat mitigated thanks to the use of shorter working hours and other schemes. But these short term measures, however important, are not in themselves sufficient to ensure a successful exit from the crisis. Employment policies must focus on preparing for the transition to a low-carbon economy. 

With this challenge in mind, the 21st annual edition of the Employ- 

ment in Europe report takes a deeper look at two key issues for future EU labour market policy: movements in transitions from inactivity and unemployment towards employment in the EU, suggesting a fundamental structural improvement in our labour markets. 

However, not all workers have benefited equally from this positive trend. Although the number of long-term unemployed has declined since the 1990s, this problem remains a serious challenge. In recent years, as every year, around 22% of European workers change jobs. 

Such dynamism is not just limited to countries usually seen as ‘flexible’, such as the UK or Denmark, but even to countries, although the figures range from 14% of work- 

ers in Greece and 16% in Sweden to over 25% in the UK, Finland, Spain and Denmark. 

This appears to be part of a more sustained rise, since the late 1990s, in transitions from inactivity and unemployment towards employment in the EU, suggesting a fundamental structural improvement in our labour markets.

Reval Hotels promotes Juha Mähönen  

Reval Hotels, has appointed its Country Manager for Lithuania, Mr. Jukka Mähönen, in the position of Regional Director, Estonia & St. Petersburg. In this newly cre- 

ated position Mr. Mähönen also takes responsibility as General Manager of Reval Hotel Group AS chain’s 

subsidiary based in Tallinn, Esto- 
nia, where they have three hotels, and the newly opened Reval Hotel Sokos in St. Petersburg. Reval will also report to Mr. Mähönen who will start in the new position on 18 Janu- 
ary 2010.
In a well-attended seminar held at Reval Hotel recently, over 200 Lithuanian business leaders gathered to hear the prognoses of DnB NORD on the research and forecasts for the Baltic rim countries. With presentation from Royston Rardikis, Chief Analyst, and Jeka Terina Rojaka, Chief Economist, followed by a frank and open question and answer session, the DnB NORD specialists addressed the most pressing economic issues confronting Lithuania and its neighbours over the coming few years.

Essentially DnB NORD’s Economic Research Group predicts that out of the six Baltic rim countries, moderate economic growth will be seen in Poland. Finland and, possibly, Estonia, in 2010, while Denmark, Lithuania and Latvia will need more time to fully climb out of recession. Forecasts are for unemployment rates reaching possibly 20% by next spring in the three Baltic states. This will translate into low consumer expectations, flat domestic consumption and zero growth of earnings, all of which will contribute to the deflationary processes the region is experiencing. Only Estonia, which has been more successful in reforming its public sector, in comparison to Latvia and Lithuania, can expect a substantial fiscal deficit decrease and adoption of the euro in the near to medium term.

Looking at each country individually:

- **Denmark:** The expansive budget policy will help mitigate the negative effects of the crisis, however a high level of indebtedness amongst businesses and households will cause one of the longest recoveries in the European Union (EU).

- **Finland:** the country faces one of the deepest recessions among the old EU members due to the sensitivity of its exports to the global economic crisis. Finland’s recovery will be gradual, and rather sluggish in 2010, impeded by a high unemployment rate.

- **Estonia:** decisive action in an effort to adopt the euro in 2011 and a clear recession exit strategy will enable the country to take the leading position in the Baltic trio and outrival the other Baltic States in the competition for foreign direct investments.

- **Lithuania:** political disagreements and broadening reforms in the public sector are undermining hopes of rapid economic recovery. The country will not be able to avoid a protracted depression without a targeted investment, small business stimulus package and restructuring of the public sector. The incumbent government has asserted its commitment to launch the necessary reforms next year, but it still lacks political support to do so.

- **Latvia:** lack of political will and rapidly rising sovereign debt may result in the erosion of the public sector, loss of competitiveness and the country’s investment appeal. However, immediate structural reforms of public sector and further improvement of the business environment would help the country move forward.

- **Poland:** the modest level of liabilities amongst both businesses and households, a large domestic market and flexible exchange rate helped the country resist the worst effects of the global economic crisis, and will help insulate Poland from economic problems in the immediate future. They could soon rival Estonia in terms of the average purchasing power. Nevertheless, growing debt of the government sector is a source of concern in the long-term.

You can download the full edition of Baltic Rim Economies: Growth and Constrains 2010 from DnB NORD Bankas’ website: www.dnbnd.lt/publications

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### Revised III quarter GDP estimate

Statistics Lithuania, based on the latest available information for September and more comprehensive business and price statistics, has estimated GDP components for III quarter 2009 by production, expenditure and income approaches and revised the first GDP estimate.

According to the revised data, in III quarter 2009, GDP current prices amounted to LTL23,954 million and, against the respective period in 2008, dropped by 14.2%, while against II quarter 2009 it grew by 13.1% (the changes have been estimated using a chain-linked volumes). (The previously published first GDP estimate for III quarter 2009 was LTL23,713 million and, against July-September 2008, dropped by 14.4%, while against the previous period in 2009 it grew by 1.5%).

Over the nine months of 2009, GDP amounted to LTL64.71 billion, which is by 15.7% less than a year ago.

In III quarter 2009, based on provisional data, negative results were observed for almost all business activities and non-market services. The largest drop in the value added was observed in construction (47%), industry and energy (15.1%), trade, transport and communication (15.7%) and financial intermediation, real estate and other business (12.4%). A slower decrease in the value added was observed in public administration and defence, education, health care and social work activities (1.2%). A growth in the value added was recorded only for agricultural enterprises (4.9%).

Consumption expenditure in July–September 2009, against the respective period in 2008, decreased even more than in the first half of the year.

Over III quarter 2009, household final consumption expenditure dropped by 19%, those of non-profit institutions – by 16%. General government final consumption expenditure was decreasing at a slower rate (by 1.5%). A further rapid decrease was observed in expenditure on capital formation: gross fixed capital formation against the previous year declined by 41.4%. Nevertheless, as compared with II quarter 2009, certain minor positive changes have been observed.

A considerable reduction in consumer demand and the volume of production conditioned a decrease in both exports and imports of goods and services in III quarter 2009, against the same period in 2008, (by 17.4 and 31.3% respectively). As compared with the previous quarter of 2009, exports grew by 11.8, imports – by 3.3%.
Mid Season Round-Up

The basketball season is now in full swing as Euroleague hits the halfway mark in the home and away series, and local bragging rights were decided in the first regular season local derby for the year.

Lithuania’s powerhouse teams met on Žalgiris’ home court, a venue many opposition teams have nick-named The Green Hell, and it was the home team that took the honours. Žalgiris took control of the contest in the second quarter and managed to maintain a double digit lead for almost the rest of the game.

Almost was the operative word though, and in the dying minutes Rytas managed to claw back from a 13 point deficit at the final change, to make the final margin three points with a 67-64 scoreline.

Coach Kurtinaitis was surprisingly upbeat after the game, saying he was reasonably satisfied with the three points, explaining that he believed they could better that advantage on their own home court in order to earn the decisive first home game in the final series.

He suspected that Baynes might have been somewhat overawed by the partisan Žalgiris crowd, who despite the flu epidemic turned out in large numbers, and that Popovich was also well below his best.

He said their game plan was to try to keep with their team leaders like Brown and Saulengis, but make sure that none of Žalgiris secondary players made any major contributions. Essentially that was the problem, with Posina coming off the bench for 17.

Krapikas was surprised to be told of Kurtinaitis’ response. A win is a win he said, and he was thankful for the victory. He was especially pleased by the total effort of his team whose overall performance was the foundation for the win.

He was also in greater need of the win. While Žalgiris remains undefeated in the local LKL and Baltic leagues, and with just the one loss in the VTB after a recent win against Azomash where Marcus Brown hit an incredible 37 points with 1/9 two pointers and 7/11 from beyond the arc, the team in green’s problems stem from Euroleague.

With just the one win at the halfway stage, again they played well against Fenerbahce Ulker to go down by only six points, but at one and four they are making it tough to get into the next round. Some good news for the team from Kaunas for a change though was that Asvel Basket defeated Cibona Zagreb, so now three teams are tied on 1-4 in Group A, meaning that these three teams are basically playing for the last position to advance to the Final 16.

Lietuvos Rytas go forward having done everything asked of them. The formula in Euroleague is to defend your homecourt and then try to steal an away win whenever possible, and this is exactly how they managed to be sitting at 1-2. The one bit of bad news for Rytas was that Partizan Belgrade got up to beat Olympiacos in a major upset, bringing them back into calculations to take them into the Final 16.

Rytas has a lot of work to do with a home game against Olympiacos after their humbling 24 point loss in Greece, and in the last game they host Unicaja, again a daunting task. With away fixtures against Efes Pilsen and Partizan there is still quite a bit of work for the boys in red and black (when they not wearing white of course).

Then there is a repeat of the civil conflict on 12 December, when this time Rytas hosts Zalgiris in a Baltic league encounter that should keep fans happy until Christmas.

Main Standings at 1/12/2009

GROUP A
Regal FC Barcelona 5-0
Montepaschi Siena 4-1
Fenerbahce Ulker 3-2
Žalgiris 1-4
Asvel Basket 1-4
Clòseta 1-4
Sūduva 1-4

GROUP B
Unicaia 5-0
Lietuvos rytas 3-2
Olympiacos 3-2
Efes Pilsen 2-3
Partizan 2-3
Entente Orléansais 0-4

Žalgiris 80
Lietuvos rytas 71
Ventspils 53
Sūduva 71
Šiauliai 59

Olympiacos 80
Efes Pilsen 68
Alytus 54
Kalev 41
Šiauliai 25

Partizan 60
Perlas 17
Sūduva 54

Main Standings at 1/12/2009

GROUP A
Regal FC Barcelona 5-0
Montepaschi Siena 4-1
Fenerbahce Ulker 3-2
Žalgiris 1-4
Asvel Basket 1-4
Clòseta 1-4
Sūduva 1-4

GROUP B
Unicaia 5-0
Lietuvos rytas 3-2
Olympiacos 3-2
Efes Pilsen 2-3
Partizan 2-3
Entente Orléansais 0-4

Žalgiris 80
Lietuvos rytas 71
Ventspils 53
Sūduva 71
Šiauliai 59

Olympiacos 80
Efes Pilsen 68
Alytus 54
Kalev 41
Šiauliai 25

Partizan 60
Perlas 17
Sūduva 54

Junior Judo Success
Lithuanian juniors brought home two medals from the European Under 23 Judo Championships held in Turkey recently.
Karolis Bazuja took a gold medal in the up to 90 kg class from 26 competitors, and Raimonda Gedutėtytė brought back a bronze in the up to 78 kg class in a field of 12.

Savickas lifts new record
Žydrūnas Savickas bettered his own world record in Kaunas recently lifting 212.5 kg in the Log Lift in becoming the current European Champion Strongman.
Žydrūnas has been a perennial winner in strongman competitions around the world over the last 10 years. Vidas Bleikaitis took third place in the same event.

Flu brings down Vyšniauskas
Raminas Vyšniauskas was not allowed to enter the World Weightlifting Championships held in South Korea in November.
Despite 11 months of intense preparation and proclaiming his form to be probably the best in his career, three days before being due to start in the up to 105 kg class, he was stricken with the flu and unable to get out of bed.
Still intent on taking his place in the competition he showed up on the day of competition, but the organisers saw his condition, and on measuring his temperature did not allow him to compete.
In fact they didn’t even let him inside the competition hall in fear of him infecting other competitors.
Raminas was understandably upset, and the Lithuanian Weightlifting Federation felt that he was a good chance for the gold, and was lifting enough for the bronze medal in training.

LBBF News
Elsewhere in the basketball world attention is still turned towards the allocation of wildcards for next year’s World Championships. The announcement date remains 13 December and local speculation has varied from optimistic to none, with a few conspiracy theories thrown in for good measure.

The Lithuanian nation awaits news as to whether the national team will play in the world championships. Essentially, we’ll only know on the day, so keep an eye on the next issue.

On 15 December the Lithuanian Basketball Federation will announce the best players for 2009.
A few days later the committee will meet to start the process of choosing the new coach for the Lithuanian National Women’s Team.

We’ll make you the best offer!