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NATIONAL LIBRARY  
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*"LIBRARIES FOR INNOVATION"*

## **THE RESEARCH REPORT**

**on the sociological research "Utilization  
and Assessment of Municipal Services"**

**of the PROJECT "LIBRARIES FOR  
INNOVATION"**

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## Summary

The research "Utilization and Assessment of Municipal Services" was delivered by Martynas Mažvydas National Library of Lithuania together with the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Lithuania as a part of the project "Libraries for Innovation", which was implemented during the period 2008-2010.

**The aim of the research:** in comparison to other municipally funded services, identify the significance of services provided by public libraries to residents of Lithuanian regions. The specific objectives of the research were as follow: to ascertain utilization and assessment of municipal services; to identify the frequency and methods used by residents to communicate to a municipality; to assess the awareness and utilization of municipal e-services.

**The research methodology:** a quantitative research involving 2025 residents (15-74 y.o.) of Lithuanian regions was delivered to address objectives of the project research. The research was carried out in 5 regions of Lithuania: urban and rural residents of Kėdainiai, Kupiškis, Prienai, Ukmergė, and Šilalė regions were interviewed. Approx. 400 respondents were interviewed in each region. A representative sampling of residents was used, maintaining the ratio of urban/rural residents as well as other socio-demographic characteristics. The research was delivered during the period 19 January-1 February 2009.

**The research results:** the research data provide that municipally funded cultural and leisure services (e.g. public libraries, municipal museums, culture centres, leisure halls, and etc.) are used by half of Lithuanian regional residents. In comparison to other municipally funded services (e.g. environmental protection, social, housing, or sports services), education and leisure services received the most positive evaluation.

Public libraries occupy an important position among all leisure and cultural services. Attendance of regional residents is more regular in libraries than other cultural and leisure sites (22.2% of respondents visit public libraries 1-2 times per month). This is 1-2 times per month more visitors than in cultural centres, museums, or cultural heritage objects. 6.9% of the entire Lithuanian regional population (11.0% of Internet users) have visited websites of public libraries.

According to the level of satisfaction, public library services were also evaluated the most positively among leisure and cultural services: half of all respondents (51.1%) were completely satisfied with services provided by public libraries.

The research revealed that services, which have been used or are currently used, are regarded by residents as the most important ones. If it was possible, residents that visit a library at least once per month would commit the largest share of leisure and cultural services' budget to public libraries.

Only 0.5% of Lithuanian regional residents use computers or Internet to contact their local municipality. They have little knowledge of e-services offered by municipalities. Less than half of all respondents knew about e-services related to a personal social situation, meanwhile, less than one-third have heard of e-services related to assets/property issues, and services offered to residents or legal entities. Less than a tenth of residents had used at least one e-service.

E-services in public libraries are used by 9% of Internet users (i.e. 5.2% of the entire population). 8 out of 10 Internet users in public libraries are rural residents. Almost one fifth (17.9%) of Lithuanian regional Internet users look for Internet access in libraries. This amounts to one tenth of the entire Lithuanian population.

## 1 Introduction

During the period 2008-2010, Martynas Mažvydas National Library of Lithuania together with the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Lithuania shall be implementing the project "Libraries for Innovation". The sociological research "Utilization and Assessment of Municipal Services" was delivered as a part of the project **aiming** to identify the position of public library services among other municipally funded services.

The following specific **objectives** should be underlined:

- to ascertain utilization and assessment of municipal services;
- to identify the frequency and methods used by residents to communicate to a municipality;
- to assess the awareness and utilization of municipal e-services.

## 2 The research methodology

### 2.1 The sample and target group of the research

The research involved 15-74 y.o. residents of 5 Lithuanian regional municipalities. The research was delivered in the following regions: Šilalė, Ukmergė, Kupiškis, Prienai, and Kėdainiai. Approximately 400 respondents were interviewed in each municipality, i.e. 2025 respondents in all.

Both rural and urban residents were interviewed in each municipality. The sampling was structured for the final sample to mirror the statistical distribution of rural and urban residents with reference to the most recent data of the Department of Statistics of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania. Regional municipalities have distributed the selection for respondents to represent the opinion of all urban and village populations in the region. 2000 interviews provided the socio-demographic sample structure with sufficient representation of the entire municipal population, which suggests that results of the research reflect the opinion of the entire Lithuanian regional population.

Interviews of the research took place during the period 19 January-1 February 2009.

### 2.2 The respondent sampling

A stratified multistage random sampling was used to select respondents. Starting sampling points—specific addresses—were randomly selected from data of the Residents' Register Service of the Department of Statistics of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania. Households were selected with the help of route sampling. A route commenced at an indicated starting point (street, house, apartment number) and all interviewers maintained the same sampling interval.

20 starting points—specific addresses—were identified in each region for interviewers to start conducting interviews. In total, 100 starting sampling points were identified.

The target group of the research was the entire regional population of Lithuania in the age group 15-74. Specific respondents in each household were selected on the basis of the rule of the Youngest Male available in the household.<sup>1</sup>

Subsequent to interviews, field work control procedures were performed. During the course of control procedures, 100% of forms were checked for completion errors (completion of demographic data fields, putting all questions listed on the form to a respondent). During the second stage of control procedures, 30% of respondents were contacted by telephone and potential breaches of interview procedures were checked. The telephone verification aimed to ascertain whether an interviewer observed household and respondent sampling rules.

### 2.3 The technical field-work report

During the course of the research, 3627 households were visited and 2025 respondents were interviewed. Next, detailed research field-work report is provided (see Table 2.1.).

**Table 2.1. The technical field-work report**

The technical field-work report	
<b>The total of households visited</b>	<b>3627</b>
<b>The number of respondents interviewed</b>	<b>2025</b>
<b>Not interviewed</b>	<b>1602</b>
Not available at home during 3 visits	616
The household refused participating	406
The respondent refused participating	99
The respondent failed meeting criteria	327
Unfinished interviews	14
Other	140
<i>Number of forms cancelled due to field-work control</i>	<i>45</i>

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<sup>1</sup> The Youngest Male Rule. According to this rule, a family member who meets the following requirements is interviewed in the sampled household:

- the respondent has to be the youngest (corresponding to sampling requirements) of males available at home at the time of the visit;
- if no males meeting sampling requirements are available at home at the time of the visit, the rule is applied to females, i.e. the youngest female available at home at the given time is interviewed;
- if only one male/female is available at home at the given time and he/she meets the sampling requirements, the respondent is interviewed;
- if the sampled respondent refuses to be interviewed, another family member cannot be interviewed. Only one person per family can be interviewed;
- if no respondents meeting sampling requirements are available in a family, the interview is cancelled.

## 2.4 The statistical data error

A statistical error needs to be considered while measuring results. The statistical error occurs due to sampling of respondents rather than a conducting a survey of all population. This error is computed mathematically.

Table 2.2. supplies errors depending on a different number of respondents and distribution or responses.

Interviews of 2000 respondents result in maximum statistical data error of 2.2%.

**Table 2.2. The table of statistical errors**

<b>Distribution of responses%</b>											
<b>Sample</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>55%</b>	<b>60%</b>	<b>65%</b>	<b>70%</b>	<b>75%</b>	<b>80%</b>	<b>85%</b>	<b>90%</b>	<b>95%</b>	<b>99%</b>
<b>25</b>	19.6%	19.5%	19.2%	18.7%	18.0%	17.0%	15.7%	14.0%	11.8%	8.5%	3.9%
<b>50</b>	13.9%	13.8%	13.6%	13.2%	12.7%	12.0%	11.1%	9.9%	8.3%	6.0%	2.8%
<b>75</b>	11.3%	11.3%	11.1%	10.8%	10.4%	9.8%	9.1%	8.1%	6.8%	4.9%	2.3%
<b>100</b>	9.8%	9.8%	9.6%	9.3%	9.0%	8.5%	7.8%	7.0%	5.9%	4.3%	2.0%
<b>150</b>	8.0%	8.0%	7.8%	7.6%	7.3%	6.9%	6.4%	5.7%	4.8%	3.5%	1.6%
<b>200</b>	6.9%	6.9%	6.8%	6.6%	6.4%	6.0%	5.5%	4.9%	4.2%	3.0%	1.4%
<b>250</b>	6.2%	6.2%	6.1%	5.9%	5.7%	5.4%	5.0%	4.4%	3.7%	2.7%	1.2%
<b>300</b>	5.7%	5.6%	5.5%	5.4%	5.2%	4.9%	4.5%	4.0%	3.4%	2.5%	1.1%
<b>400</b>	4.9%	4.9%	4.8%	4.7%	4.5%	4.2%	3.9%	3.5%	2.9%	2.1%	1.0%
<b>500</b>	4.4%	4.4%	4.3%	4.2%	4.0%	3.8%	3.5%	3.1%	2.6%	1.9%	0.9%
<b>600</b>	4.0%	4.0%	3.9%	3.8%	3.7%	3.5%	3.2%	2.9%	2.4%	1.7%	0.8%
<b>800</b>	3.5%	3.4%	3.4%	3.3%	3.2%	3.0%	2.8%	2.5%	2.1%	1.5%	0.7%
<b>1000</b>	3.1%	3.1%	3.0%	3.0%	2.8%	2.7%	2.5%	2.2%	1.9%	1.4%	0.6%
<b>1200</b>	2.8%	2.8%	2.8%	2.7%	2.6%	2.5%	2.3%	2.0%	1.7%	1.2%	0.6%
<b>1500</b>	2.5%	2.5%	2.5%	2.4%	2.3%	2.2%	2.0%	1.8%	1.5%	1.1%	0.5%
<b>2000</b>	2.2%	2.2%	2.1%	2.1%	2.0%	1.9%	1.8%	1.6%	1.3%	1.0%	0.4%

**For example:** Let us assume that 400 Šilalė municipality residents answered a question regarding utilization of municipal services. Approximately 25% indicated using the services. This means that having in mind a 95% probability, it may be maintained that the true value of the level of utilization of municipal services in the regional municipality of Šilalė is situated in the interval  $25\% \pm 4.2\%$ .

## 2.5 Demographic characteristics of respondents

15-74 y.o. residents of 5 municipalities of Lithuania participated in the research. Sampling of respondents was structured for socio-demographic characteristics to correspond to socio-demographic characteristics of the entire population of the regions.

Table 2.3. supplies detailed information regarding the number of respondents involved in the research and the key socio-demographic characteristics.

**Table 2.3. Socio-demographic characteristics of respondents**

		<i>N</i>	Percentage %
<b>Total of respondents interviewed:</b>		<b>2025</b>	<b>100</b>
Gender	Male	978	48.3
	Female	1047	51.7
Regions	Kėdainiai region	403	19.9
	Kupiškis region	413	20.4
	Prienai region	404	19.9
	Šilalė region	416	20.5
	Ukmergė region	390	19.2
Age group	15 - 19 y.o.	316	15.6
	20 - 29 y.o.	253	12.5
	30 - 39 y.o.	367	18.1
	40 - 49 y.o.	371	18.3
	50 - 59 y.o.	300	14.8
	60 - 74 y.o.	418	20.6
Education	Primary education	131	6.5
	Basic education	402	19.8
	General/special secondary education	943	46.6
	Non-higher professional education	301	14.9
	Higher education	247	12.2
Family status	Married	1106	54.6
	Divorced	152	7.5
	Cohabitation	72	3.6
	Single	503	24.8
	Widowed	191	9.4
Average income per family member	Below LTL 201	176	8.7
	LTL 201 – 400	278	13.7
	LTL 401 – 600	415	20.5
	LTL 601 – 800	482	23.8
	LTL 801 – 1000	284	14.0
	LTL 1001 – 1500	173	8.6
	Above LTL 1500	111	5.5
	Not indicated	104	5.2
Individual income	No income	180	8.9
	Below LTL 500	343	16.9
	LTL 501-700	304	15.0
	LTL 701-900	347	17.2
	LTL 901-1100	211	10.4
	LTL 1101-1500	222	11.0

		<i>N</i>	Percentage %
<b>Total of respondents interviewed:</b>		<b>2025</b>	<b>100</b>
	LTL 1501-2100	155	7.7
	LTL 2101 and more	96	4.7
	Not indicated	167	8.2
Children under 15 y.o. living together	Yes	665	32.8
	No	1361	67.1
Age of children under 15 living together	Under 2 y.o.	98	14.8
	2-5 y.o.	189	28.5
	6-14 y.o.	519	78.1
Currently employed?	Yes	907	44.8
	No	1118	55.2
Current job	State institution	304	33.5
	Private enterprise	505	55.6
	Other	44	4.9
	Not indicated	55	6.0
Occupation	A worker/technical employee	435	48.0
	A specialist/public servant	332	36.6
	Senior/mid level manager	58	6.4
	A farmer	38	4.2
	Other	20	4.8
Reason for unemployment	Retirement	337	30.1
	Housewife, maternity leave	140	12.5
	Pupil	217	19.4
	Student	80	7.1
	Disablement	117	10.5
	Other	228	20.4
Size of the place of residence	Town (more than 3 thousand residents)	791	39.0
	Village (under 3 thousand residents)	1234	60.9

### 3 Data analysis

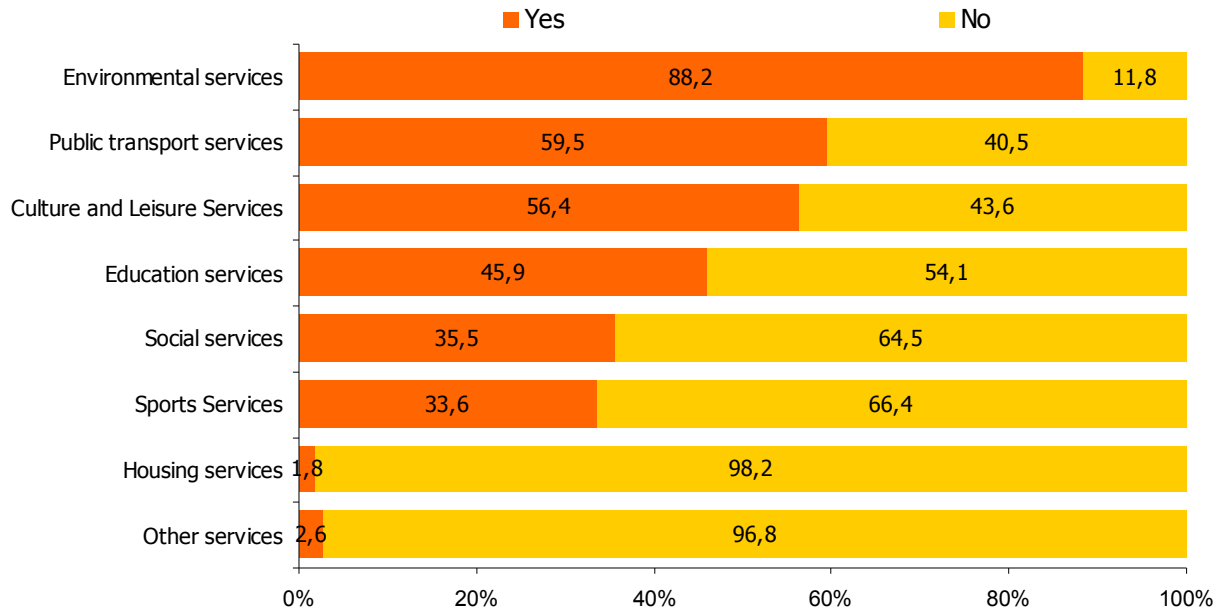
Next, key remarks are provided regarding utilization of municipal or municipally-funded services and e-services provided to residents of Lithuanian regional municipalities. First of all, data on utilization and assessment of services is analyzed; next, analysis of cultural and leisure services and the significance of public libraries among other municipal services is supplied. At the end of the report, data regarding municipal e-services, awareness, and utilization are analyzed.

#### 3.1 Utilization and assessment of municipal services

##### 3.1.1 Utilization of services

- ***A little less than a half of residents of Lithuanian regions use municipally funded cultural and leisure services. This would be mostly females, residents with non-higher professional and higher education as well as residents with the greatest level of income (the average income per family member does not exceed LTL 1000, meanwhile individual earnings amount to more than LTL 2101).***

In general, 98.5% of residents involved in the research indicated using at least one service provided by their regional municipality. The majority of respondents (88.2%) indicated using environmental services, i.e. waste removal, street cleaning, and etc. Retirement age and low-income rural residents mostly indicated not using such services. It could be explained by the fact that rural residents have a less direct encounter with centralized waste removal or street cleaning services. The public transport—a service provided by regional municipalities—was ranked second according to frequency of utilization. Mostly working male residents with high individual earnings indicated not using this service. As the research form did not contain questions regarding ownership of a private car, an assumption could be made that those not using municipal public transport services would own a private car, in which case the municipal service is irrelevant.

**Graph 3.1. Utilization of municipal services***(Did you use the following municipal services within the last 12 months?)*

The fact that more females than males consume municipal cultural and leisure services supports the fact that females in regions lead a more active cultural life and invest more in their leisure and culture. Consequently, it is important to address male interests and education needs in regions. Considering the general situation of males in Lithuania (high alcohol consumption, unemployment, suicide levels and etc.), regional municipalities should focus more on involvement of males in cultural life and offer active leisure forms for men. In this respect, regional communities, cultural centres, and leisure halls as well as public libraries might make an important contribution. Various events—thematically suitable for men and women—could be organized. It should be underlined that municipal cultural and leisure services are mostly consumed by working people, specialists or public servants residing in regional towns, thus as many rural residents as possible should be involved in cultural activity.

**3.1.2 Assessment of services**

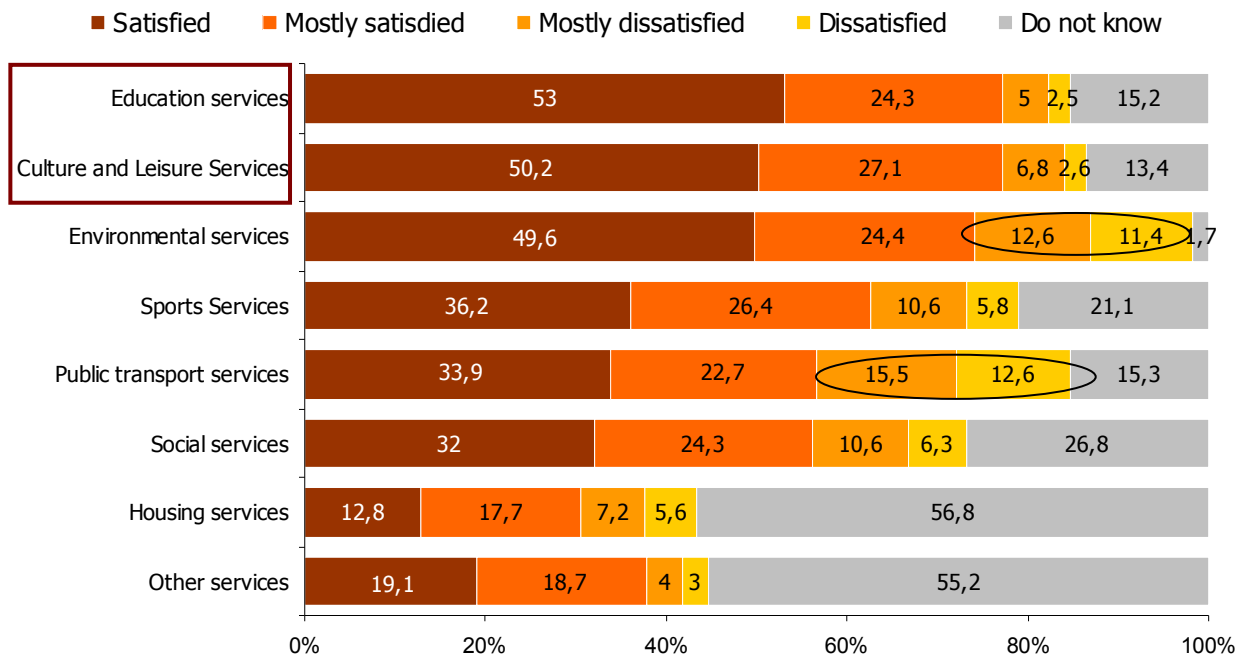
- ***The research results demonstrated that residents of Lithuanian regions were mostly satisfied with cultural and education services.***

During the course of the research, respondents were requested to assess municipal services. Regional residents were most satisfied with education, cultural, and leisure services (see Graph 3.2.). 28.1% of respondents were dissatisfied with quality of municipal public transport services. Despite the fact that 49.6% of respondents indicated being satisfied with municipal environmental services, still, 24% of all respondents indicated their dissatisfaction. Municipal environmental and public transport services are used by residents almost on the daily basis, therefore they are fundamental to residents and their assessment is crucial. Continuous media focus on environmental and public transport services might have some impact on critical assessment as well (e.g. scandal

on landfills in Lithuania, street cleaning in winter, street repairs, condition of city and regional roads in Lithuania). It should be underlined that there were more rural residents dissatisfied with these services, thus, it is especially important to improve the public transport infrastructure, road cleaning, and waste removal services in rural areas.

**Graph 3.2. Satisfaction with municipal services**

*(Despite of whether you have been using the below-listed services within the last 12 months, please indicate how satisfied you were with the below-listed municipal services.)*



Dissatisfaction with municipal public transport services might be influenced by currently growing public transport fares. Thus, in order to increase the level of satisfaction with this service, it is important to explain to the public the reasons for increasing fares and clarify additional advantages offered as a consequence; also efforts should be made to create a visible additional value (e.g.: music or free newspaper on a bus).

People find that the most important services are the ones they use personally. Thus, service-providing municipalities should especially focus on the quality of those services. It is also important to provide regional residents with more detailed information on competences of and services offered by municipalities.

**3.1.3 Funding of services**

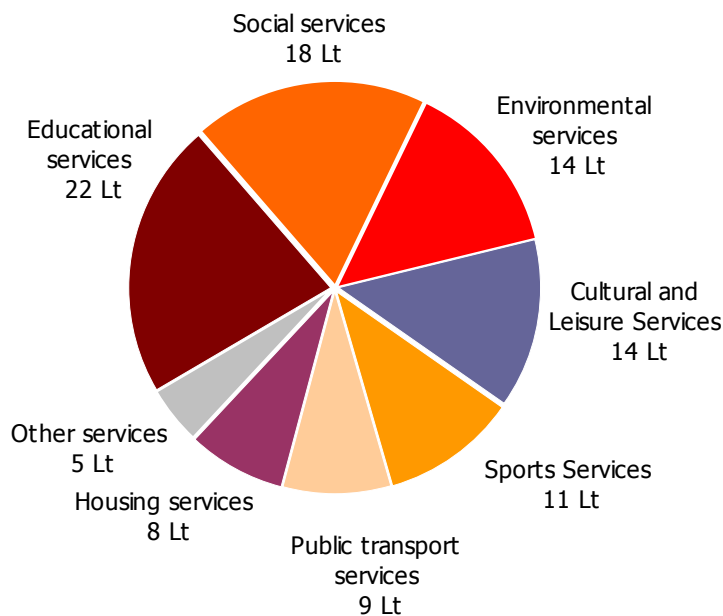
- **The research results revealed that residents of Lithuania find the services they personally use to be the most important.**

In order to identify the most important services to municipal residents, respondents were requested to distribute an assumptive amount of LTL 100 among municipal services according to personally perceived significance. Residents of all researched regions would commit the majority of funding to education services, i.e. LTL 22; the second place would be given to funding of social services (LTL 18); environmental, cultural, and leisure services

would be committed LTL 14 each (see Graph 3.3.). However, it should be underlined that people who were personally using a specific municipal service were inclined to committing a larger amount of money to that particular service rather than to a service they were not consuming. E.g., if every respondent would have committed the average of LTL 22 to educational services, residents of those regions who were consuming educational services would have been inclined to commit LTL 29 (i.e. 30% more); residents consuming cultural and leisure services would commit 20% more than all residents on the average (LTL 14 would be committed on the average, meanwhile LTL 17 would be committed by consumers of services) and approx. 90% more than respondents who were not using cultural and leisure services (LTL 9 by respondents who were not using services).

### Graph 3.3. Funding of municipal services

*(Let us assume that you have the amount of LTL 100 and have to distribute it for funding of the below-listed services. How would you distribute the given amount?)*



Residents of regional municipalities were inclined to commit least funds to public transport and housing services. Housing services were used by only 2% of residents, thus, the majority of respondents neither found it very important nor too relevant. Therefore, the funding that would be committed by respondents for housing services was somewhat little. A separate comment should be offered on the portion of funding committed to public transport services. Despite the fact that this service is used by more than a half of all residents, the results were not very positive; i.e. approx. LTL 9 were committed to this service. This outcome could be impacted by a predominant understanding that paid public transport services do not provide sufficient quality, thus additional funding for the service is not required.

### 3.2 Utilization and assessment of municipal cultural and leisure services

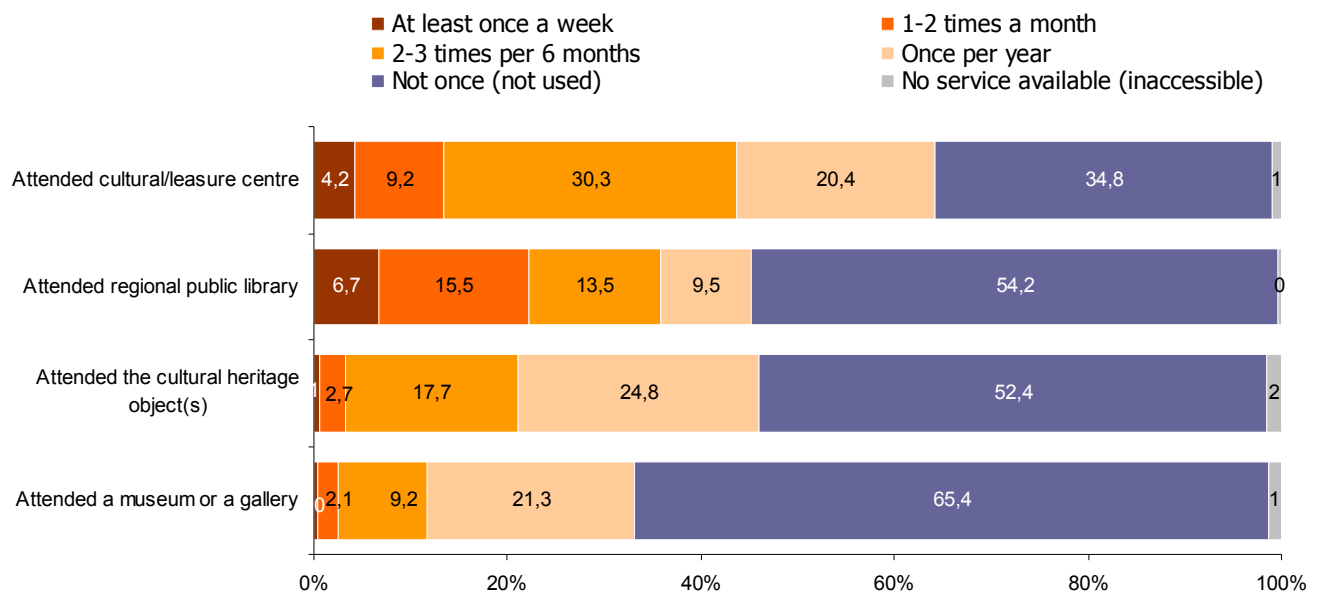
#### 3.2.1 Utilization of cultural and leisure services

- **Public libraries play an important role among other forms of leisure. Public libraries are attended by residents of Lithuanian regions more regularly than other leisure and cultural sites. One out of five residents indicated attending a public library more frequently than once or twice per month.**

As it was mentioned before, within the period of last 12 months, 56.4% of residents of Lithuanian regional municipalities used cultural and leisure services provided by their local municipality. Half of all respondents were fully satisfied with the quality of these services and only 9.4% of respondents indicated being somewhat dissatisfied or completely dissatisfied. The majority of Lithuanian residents were attending leisure halls situated in cultural centres or regions. 64.1% of all respondents indicated visiting such leisure halls at least once per year. According to frequency of attendance, the second place is occupied by public libraries. It should be underlined that 45.2% of respondents pointed out visiting their regional public library at least once per year. This means that in comparison to other municipal cultural and leisure services, residents of Lithuanian regions visit public libraries more frequently than other sites. 22.2% of respondents stated attending a library 1-2 times per month of more often; and 6.7% of respondents visit a public library at least once per week (see Graph 3.4.). This demonstrates that people who attend libraries do so with regularity.

**Graph 3.4. Frequency of utilization of cultural and leisure services**

*(How frequently did you use the below listed municipal cultural and leisure services within the period of last 12 months?)*



It should be mentioned that public libraries were mostly attended by pupils of 15-19 y.o. and employees of public institutions. It is important to underline that there were more rural than urban residents attending libraries

at least once per week, which means that rural residents regard library attendance as an important form of leisure. There are more non-attending respondents in the elderly age group. This target group would require a special form of communication that would promote library attendance. These could be personalized invitations, e.g. "In your local library, you can find..." Also, specialized events could be organized (e.g. reading evenings) in libraries. It is important to encourage residents of regions who have not even once visited a library (54.2%) to visit at least once. It is also recommended to conduct a separate research to identify the key reasons for non-attendance. This should allow for better understanding of whether to target efforts on improvement of work of libraries or focus on changing habits instead. It should be underlined that in comparison to other cultural and leisure forms, public libraries were more frequently visited by respondents that use Internet on a daily basis.

**Table 3.1. Frequency of attendance of public libraries depending on demographic characteristics<sup>2</sup>**

Percentage %		At least once per week	1-2 times per month	2-3 times per 6 months	Once per year	Not once	No service available (the service is inaccessible)	N/N
Total		7%	15%	14%	10%	54%	0%	0%
Gender	Male	5%	10%	11%	10%	63%	0%	0%
	Female	8%	20%	16%	9%	46%	0%	0%
Age groups	15 - 19	20%	28%	16%	10%	26%	0%	0%
	20 - 29	3%	11%	19%	14%	53%	1%	0%
	30 - 39	6%	15%	11%	10%	57%	0%	1%
	40 - 49	5%	16%	12%	10%	57%	0%	0%
	50 - 59	5%	15%	15%	8%	56%	0%	1%
	60 - 74	4%	10%	11%	7%	67%	1%	0%
Education	Primary education	7%	14%	12%	6%	61%	1%	0%
	Basic education	13%	17%	12%	7%	51%	0%	0%
	General/special secondary education	4%	12%	12%	11%	61%	0%	0%
	Non-higher professional education	8%	22%	18%	8%	43%	1%	0%
	Higher education	7%	19%	17%	13%	42%	0%	0%
Current job	State institution	12%	24%	13%	11%	39%	1%	1%
	Private enterprise	3%	10%	12%	10%	64%	0%	0%
	Other	7%	2%	13%	6%	71%	0%	0%
	N/N	3%	16%	14%	16%	52%	0%	0%
Reason for unemployment	Retirement	4%	11%	12%	7%	66%	0%	0%
	Housewife, maternity leave	3%	20%	17%	11%	47%	1%	1%
	Pupil	22%	32%	15%	7%	24%	0%	0%
	Student	7%	13%	28%	21%	31%	0%	0%

<sup>2</sup> In this and the following tables, blue colour is used to highlight values that are statistically significantly higher than the average, meanwhile light brown colour is used to mark values that are statistically significantly lower than the average.

Percentage %		At least once per week	1-2 times per month	2-3 times per 6 months	Once per year	Not once	No service available (the service is inaccessible)	N/N
Total		7%	15%	14%	10%	54%	0%	0%
	Disablement	0%	10%	11%	9%	68%	1%	1%
	Other	12%	3%	16%	4%	65%	0%	0%
	Unemployed, registered in a labour exchange	4%	11%	13%	7%	66%	0%	0%
Town/rural area	Town	4%	14%	13%	11%	58%	0%	0%
	Rural area	9%	16%	14%	9%	52%	0%	0%
Frequency of Internet using	Daily	10%	20%	17%	12%	41%	0%	0%
	Less frequently	8%	19%	14%	9%	49%	1%	0%
	Does not use	3%	10%	11%	8%	68%	0%	0%

Residents with higher education, high level of income, working in public institutions, and residing in towns attend regional museums and galleries more frequently. Residents of Kupiškis region, urban residents with higher education and higher level of income attend cultural heritage objects more frequently.

Pupils attend regional cultural centres at least once per week more frequently. This demonstrates that cultural centres and leisure halls are frequently attended by youth as entertainment and leisure sites. Both urban and rural residents with higher education, high level of income, and employed attend cultural and leisure centre less frequently than youth but more often than unemployed residents with low level of income and a lower level of education.

To sum up, residents of Lithuanian regions the most regularly attend public libraries. In general, municipal leisure and cultural services are more popular among youth and residents with higher social status (i.e. with high level of income, higher level of education, employed in state institutions). Both urban and rural residents alike use municipal cultural and leisure service. It is important to involve regional residents with a lower social status into utilization of municipal cultural and leisure services.

### 3.2.2 Assessment of cultural and leisure services

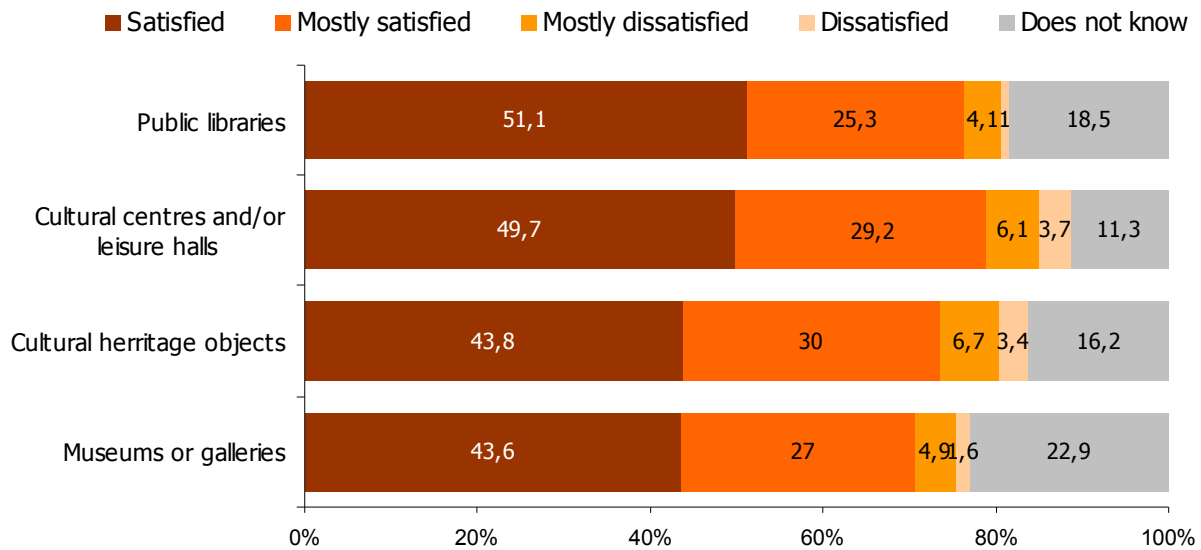
- ***Half of Lithuanian residents are completely satisfied with services provided by public libraries. In comparison to other cultural and leisure services, this share is the greatest.***

Residents of Lithuanian regions have a positive attitude toward municipal cultural and leisure services. More than 70% of residents indicated their satisfaction or near-satisfaction with cultural and leisure services. Public libraries are the service that fully satisfies half of the total number of respondents (see Graph 3.5.). Residents of almost all socio-demographic groups are equally satisfied with work of public libraries. Few social groups—women and younger residents—who evaluated libraries more positively could be singled out. It is noteworthy to consider the fact that 18.5% of respondents could not assess the work of public libraries. These were mostly retirement-age

and urban residents. It is therefore important to ensure awareness and attendance of public libraries among elder and urban populations in an attempt of involving them into special events and activities.

**Graph 3.5. Assessment of municipal cultural and leisure services**

*(How satisfied/dissatisfied are you with the below-listed municipal cultural and leisure services?)*



Residents of almost all socio-demographic groups were equally satisfied with cultural centres and leisure halls. 22.9% of respondents could not assess the work of museums and galleries, however, the fact that as many as 65.4% of respondents did not visit their regional museums or galleries demonstrated a considerable problem lurking in this area. Such situation could have been caused by many reasons, e.g. unattractive, non-changing exhibits, a lack of information on new exhibitions (if available), general apathy of people and etc. In order to look into this problem in more detailed integrated research should be conducted on the situation of museums and galleries both in separate regions and in the entire Lithuania.

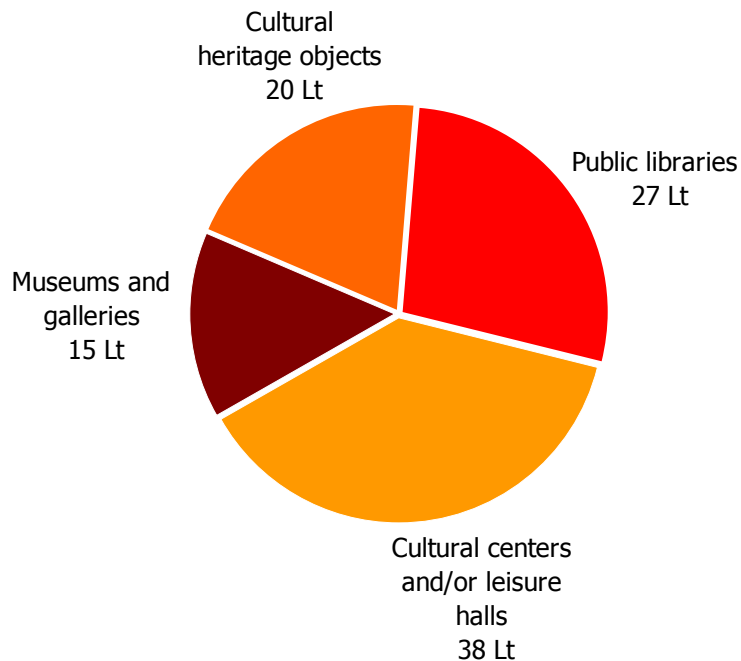
### 3.2.3 Funding of cultural and leisure services

- ***The more frequently people use public library services, the more they justify and support the funding committed to these institutions.***

Approximately every resident of Lithuanian regions would like to commit the greatest portion of funding to cultural centres and leisure halls: LTL 38 of LTL 100<sup>3</sup>. LTL 11 less (LTL 27) would be committed to public libraries (see Graph 3.6.).

#### **Graph 3.6. Funding of municipal cultural and leisure services**

*(Let us assume that you have the amount of LTL 100 and have to distribute it for funding of the below-listed cultural and leisure services provided by your regional municipality. How would you distribute the given amount?)*



It should be noted that the majority of funds would be committed to cultural centres by people who do not use the service or believe that this service is inaccessible (see Table 3.2). Contrarily, regular visitors of public libraries (attending at least 1-2 per month) would commit the largest amount of money to these institutions (see Table 3.2.). For example, regional residents visiting libraries at least once per week would commit the average of LTL 39 to libraries, i.e. 40% more than all residents on the average and 70% more than people who had not even once visited a library.

<sup>3</sup> Respondents were requested to distribute an amount of LTL 100 for funding of cultural and regional service provided by their regional municipality depending on how significant they personally believed each service was.

**Table 3.2. Funding of cultural and leisure services depending on frequency of visits in a library of a region**

Average		Museums and galleries	Cultural heritage objects	Public libraries	Cultural centres and/or leisure hall
Total		15	20	27	38
Visited a public library of the region	At least once per week	10	14	39	36
	1-2 times per month	15	19	36	30
	2-3 times per 6 months	16	18	28	38
	Once per year	13	21	29	37
	Not once	15	21	23	40
	No service available (the service is inaccessible)	18	8	5	69
	Not indicated	18	29	14	23

Respondents were inclined to commit the least portion of funds to museums and galleries (LTL 15). This could be explained by the fact that this service is used by residents of Lithuanian regions the least frequently, thus is regarded as less important as other services that are used more often (i.e. cultural centres, leisure halls, public libraries, cultural heritage objects).

On the basis of research data, it could be presumed that people justify commitment of funds to services, which they know and use as well as understand their benefits. This is the reason why it is always (in the long perspective) important to communicate the direct benefits of services on a personal and public level.

To sum up, leisure and cultural services provided by municipalities are positively viewed, although residents of Lithuanian regions do not use these services frequently. According to the opinion of respondents, cultural centres, leisure halls, and public libraries are the key cultural and leisure objects that are in the greatest need of funding. A more detailed research should be conducted in order to take decisions regarding the methods for promotion of more frequent and varied attendance of cultural leisure services and libraries among rural and urban residents (especially of middle and elder age), and to ensure a better understanding of the specific services required by the population. This could be achieved through strengthening of local communities.

### 3.3 Communication with a local municipality

#### 3.3.1 Frequency, reasons, and methods used to contact a local municipality

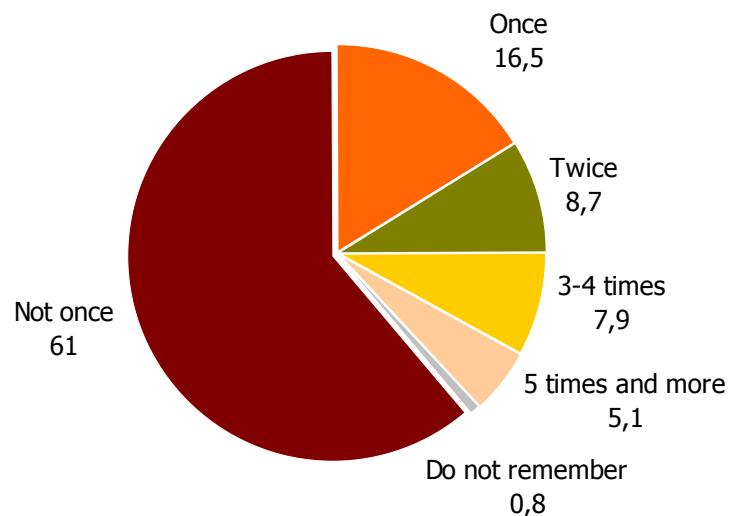
- ***The research results demonstrate that 40% of residents of Lithuanian regional municipalities contacted their local municipalities. More than a half of them contacted a municipality for a specific service. Only 0.5% of residents used Internet or e-mail to communicate their enquiry.***

The research attempted to ascertain the methods employed by residents to communicate with local municipalities. For this purpose, residents were asked questions on contacting a local municipality over the period of last 12 months. In case of a positive response, further questions were asked regarding a purpose and a method and—specifically—use of websites of municipal institutions.

Research results allow for an insight that more than a half (61%) of residents of Lithuanian municipalities did not contact a municipality even once (see Graph 3.7.). There are more male and young (15-19 y.o.) respondents as well as more urban than rural residents among those who have never contacted a municipality.

#### **Graph 3.7. Contacts with a local municipality**

*(How many times did you contact a local municipality within the last 12 months?)*



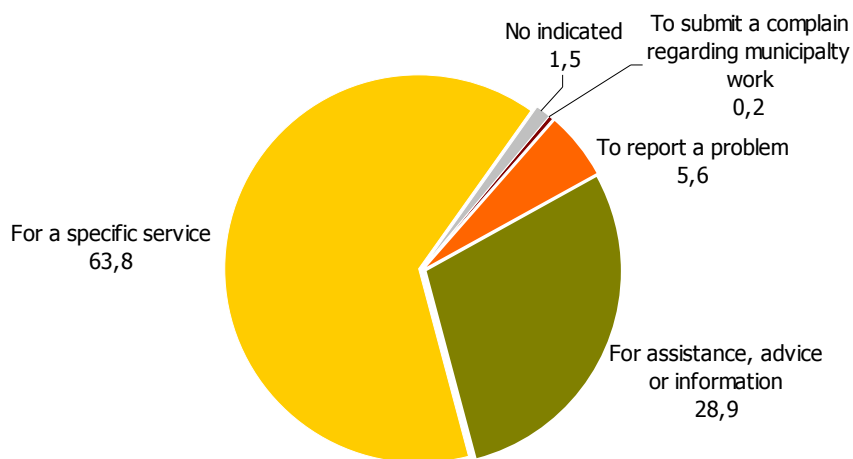
Analysis of people that most frequently contact a local municipality revealed that 40-49 y.o. residents with higher education and high level of individual earnings (exceeding LTL 2101 per month), employed, and working as the top or mid level managers or farmers contacted their local municipality 5 times and more frequently. It can be supposed that representatives of these demographic groups contact their local municipalities with work-related

issues. Other distinctive socio-demographic group of the population that had contacted a local municipality more frequently than others (3-4 times per year) over the period of the last 12 months, would be mostly females, in the age group of 30-39 y.o. and with children younger than 5 y.o., specialists, public servants, housewives, and people on maternity/paternity leave.

The majority of respondents who addressed a local municipality at least once (63.8%) had a specific service in mind. Talking about problems, respondents mentioned addressing a municipality regarding land ownership documents, compensation, welfare benefits, and other specific services.

5.6% of respondents indicated addressing a municipality to report a problem and only 0.2%—to submit a complaint regarding operation of a municipality.

**Graph 3.8. The reason to contact a municipality**  
*(What was your reason to contact a municipality the last time?)*



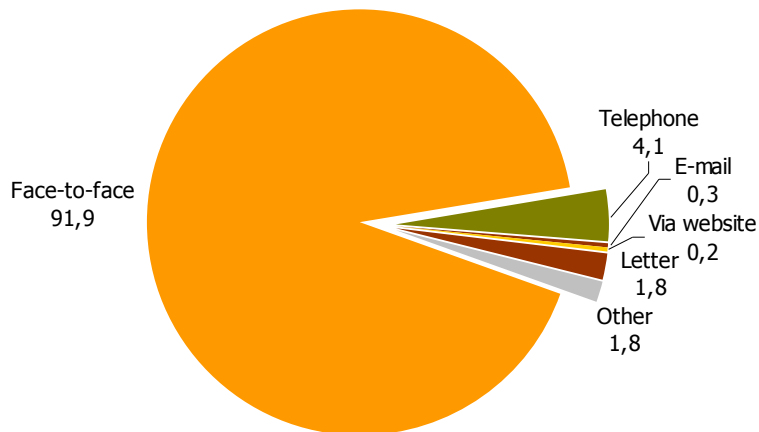
*Valid percent from those, who indicated taddressing a municipality over the last 12 months.  
 Sample– 785.*

Residents with a low level of individual earning (less than LTL 500 per month) contact a municipality to apply for assistance, advice or some kind of information. There were no more statistically significant differences found in answers of respondents.

Despite the fact that more than half of residents of Lithuanian regions use Internet and regional municipalities have their own websites and e-mail addresses, respondents mostly tend to address municipalities face-to-face. 91.9 % of respondents indicated that during the most recent contact with municipalities they approached them face-to-face. Only 0.5% of respondents mentioned addressing a municipality via e-mail or website. This result might be impacted by the general belief that contacts via Internet are not reliable due to intangibility of the addressee and unavailability of an option to control the process.

**Graph 3.9. A method used to contact a municipality**

*(What method did you choose to contact a municipality the last time?)*



*Valid percent from those, who indicated addressing a municipality over the last 12 months. Sample- 785.*

Consequently, the face-to-face method is the most popular among residents of Lithuanian regions.

### 3.3.2 Utilization of municipality websites

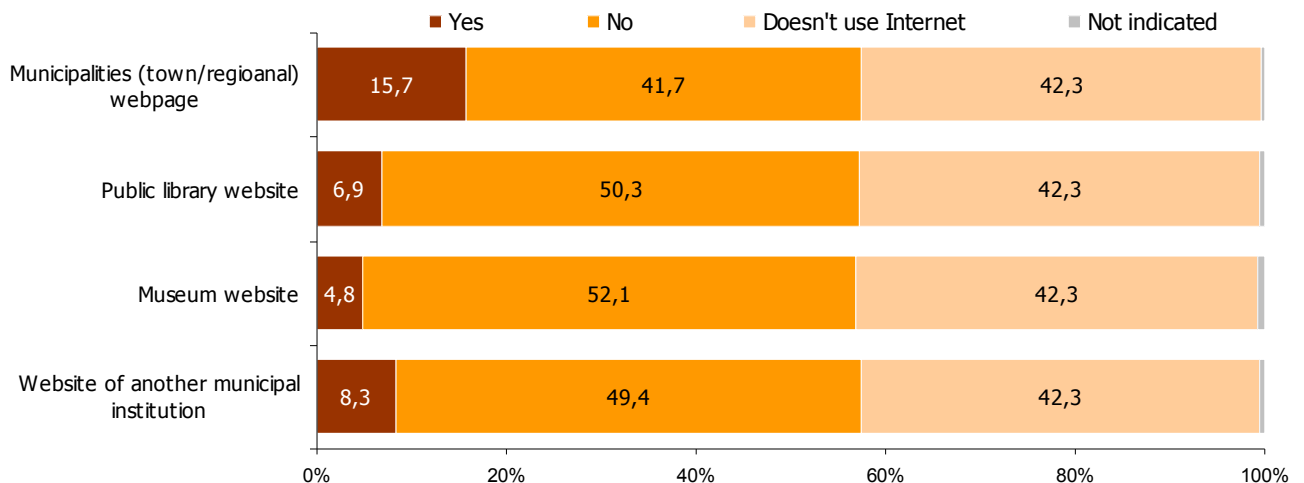
- **Websites of public libraries were visited by 6.9% respondents. This figure amounts to 11.9% of the total number of Internet-using residents of Lithuanian municipalities.**

Respondents were asked whether they used websites of any specific municipal institutions. 42.3% of respondents indicated not using Internet at all. These were mostly elderly residents (over 50 y.o.) with the lowest level of individual earnings (up to LTL 900 per month), living on their own without children, unemployed, retired and mostly residing in rural areas.

Out of respondents that indicated using Internet, 27.1% indicated visiting a (town or regional) municipality website. This figure amounts to 15.7% of the entire population (see Graph 3.10.). Websites of public libraries were used by almost 7% of respondents, which amounts to almost 12% of the total number of Internet users (see Graph 3.10.1). 13.6% indicated visiting websites of other municipal institutions. The following institutions were named in the category: a labour exchange, a forest enterprise, information of an outpatient clinic, a regional newspaper website.

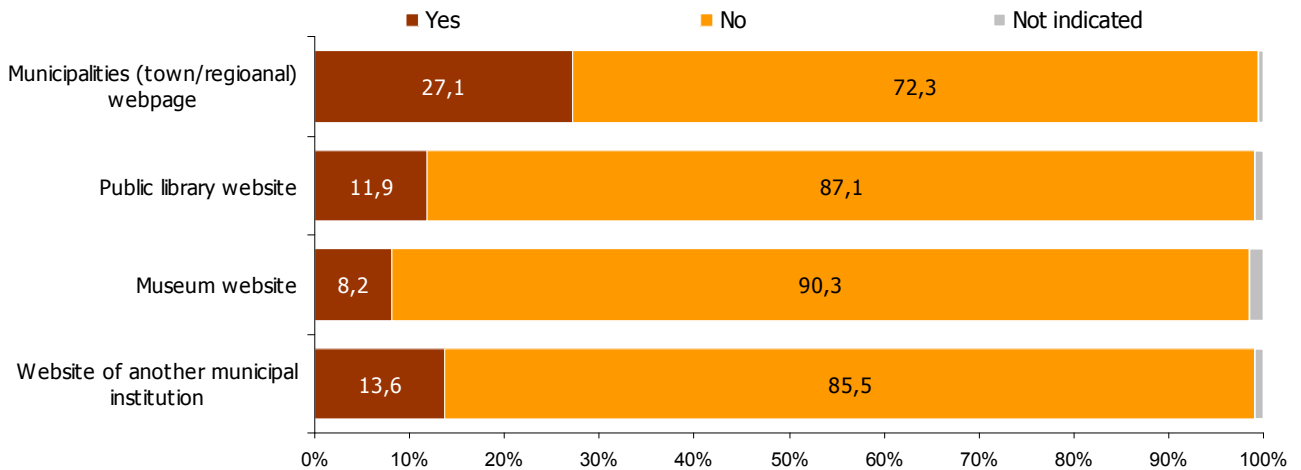
#### Graph 3.10. Traffic in websites of municipal institutions

*(Did you visit websites of municipal institutions within the last 6 months?)*



Municipality website was mostly visited by urban residents with higher social status (higher education, high level of income, employed, specialists, public servants, top and mid level managers).

**Graph 3.10.1 Internet-user traffic in websites of municipal institutions**  
*(Did you visit a website of a municipal institution within the period of 6 months?)*



*Valid percent for respondents who indicated using Internet. Sample - 1168.*

Two groups of residents—who visit websites of public libraries more often than others—could be singled out. One group is pupils and another—employed respondents, specialists, and public servants. Besides, municipality of Ukmergė region stands out as 11% of its residents indicated using the website of the public library, which is statistically more in comparison to municipalities of other regions. The website of this regional public library stands out by its structure, design, and information, which makes it more appealing to visitors. It is also important to check whether any publicity was used in the region to emphasise the website options. Despite the fact, generally traffic in websites of public libraries is somewhat modest. In order to promote better utilization of these websites, not only information on libraries and events organized should be publicized but also a possibility to accommodate links to Lithuanian news portals—such as [lytas.lt](http://lytas.lt), [vz.lt](http://vz.lt)—should be considered. Moreover, information on new books could be publicized. Besides, it would be useful to look into a possibility to provide access to e-books.

### 3.4 Awareness and utilization of e-services

Together with questions on utilization of municipal services, the research also investigated the level of awareness and the extent of utilization of electronic services (e-services) among residents of Lithuanian regions. Questions addressed e-services related to a personal social situation; assets/property management and administration in a municipality; and e-services related to a possibility to provide certain services. Next, the report offers analysis of the research data on the aforementioned groups of e-services.

#### 3.4.1 Awareness and utilization of e-services related to a personal social situation

- ***Less than half of residents of Lithuanian regions are aware about e-services related to a personal social situation and only every tenth has used them at least once.***

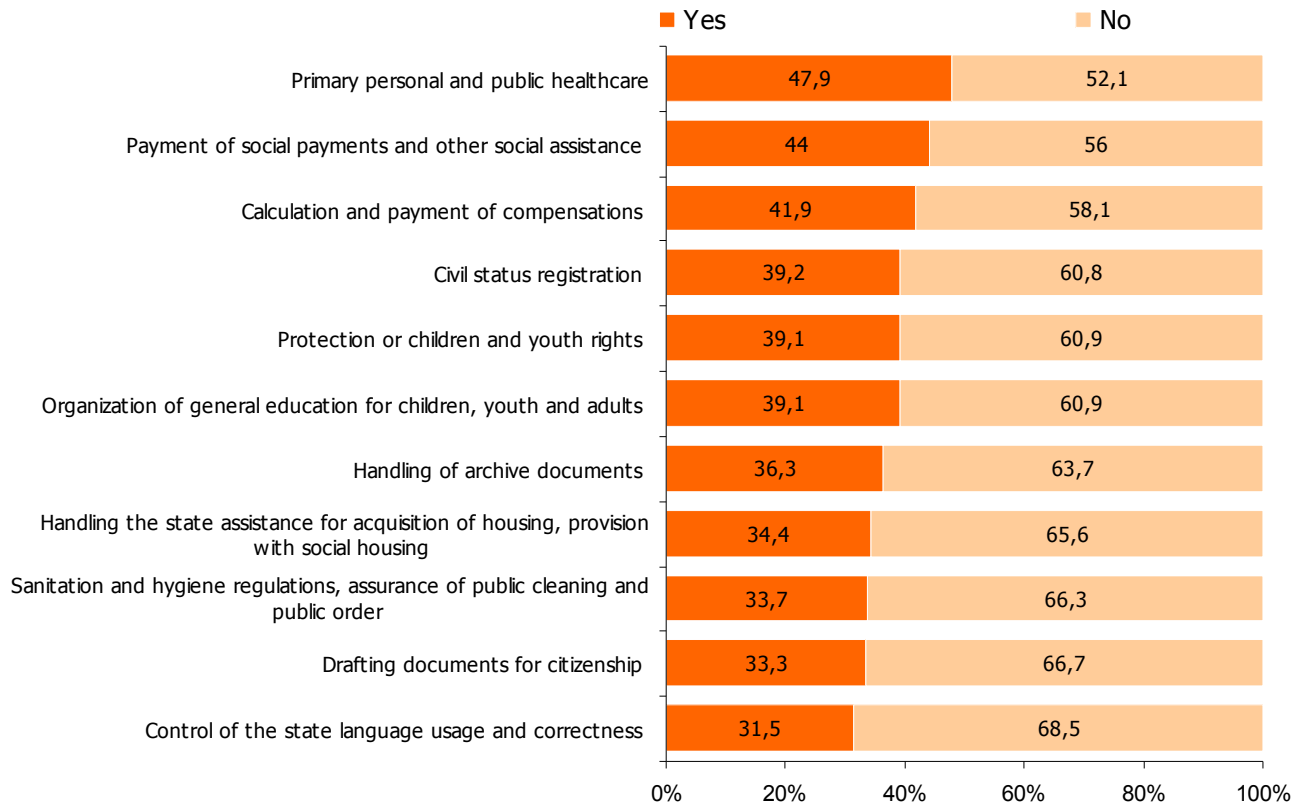
During the research, respondents were asked whether they were aware about a possibility to receive e-services related to a personal social situation. The research results provided that less than half of residents of Lithuanian regions were aware about e-services.

The general awareness of all services related to a personal social situation depends on socio-demographic characteristics of people. The fact that these services can be received electronically was mostly known to 20-29 and 40-49 y.o. residents with non-higher professional and higher education, higher individual earnings and average level of income per family member, working in public institutions, and using Internet.

The majority of people (47.9%) knew about e-services related to primary personal and public health care (see Graph 3.11.). 44% of residents of Lithuanian regions knew that e-services could be used to receive social benefits or other social assistance. It should be noted that the general awareness of services related a personal social situation is low. Thus, the public needs to be better informed about competencies and functions of municipalities as well as information supplied by municipalities. It is also important to better accentuate the type of information supplied on websites of regional municipalities and the kind of e-services available to residents. Municipal websites offer detailed information on document acceptance, forms of applications, open hours of municipal institutions, and other important information that might save time and costs of residents (e.g. telephone of face-to-face consultation related costs).

**Graph 3.11. Awareness of e-services related to a personal social situation**

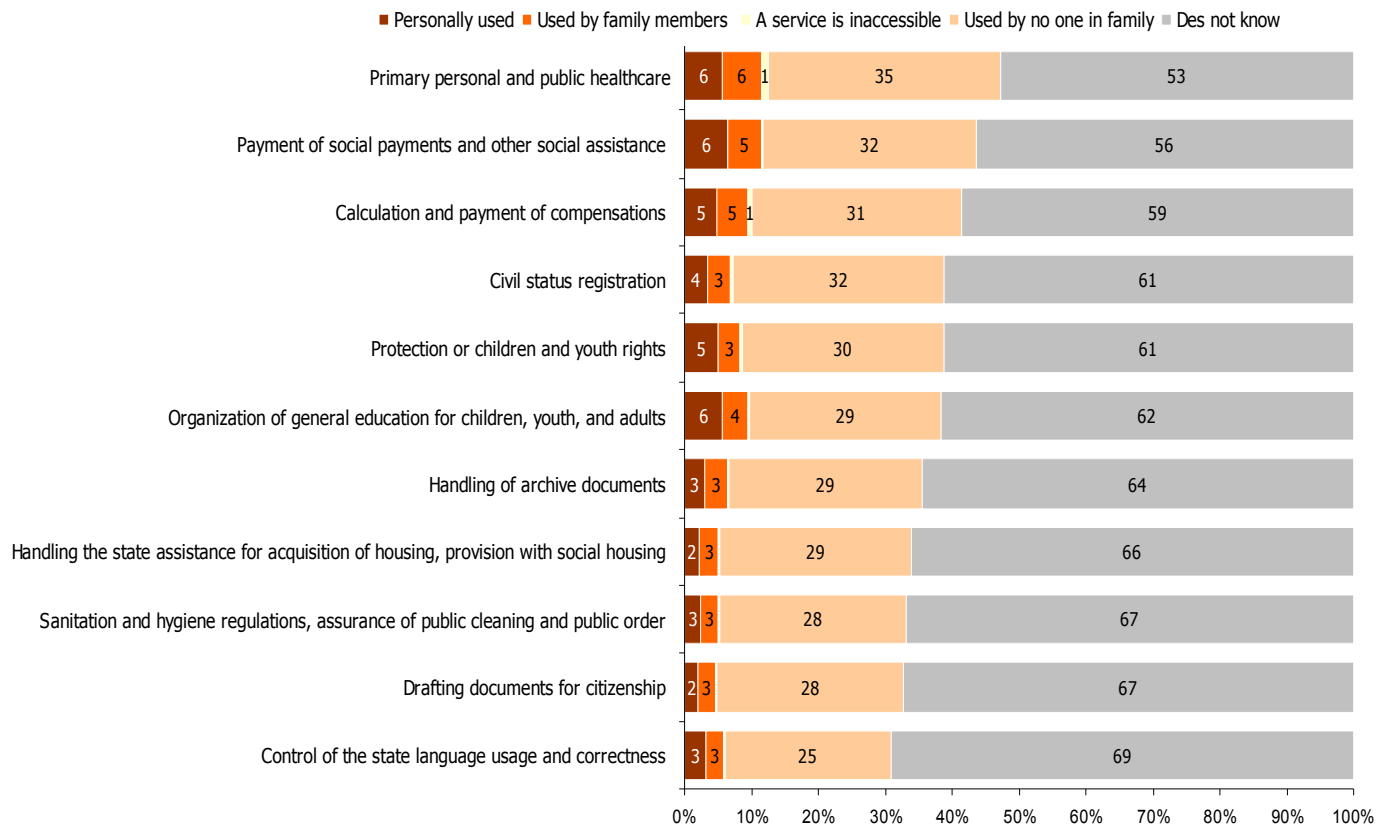
*(Do you know about a possibility for residents to receive the below-listed e-services related to a personal social situation?)*



Assessing the level of utilization of e-services, it could be underlined that it is somewhat low. People mostly use e-services related to public health and social benefits or other social assistance. Still, the general number of users is small, i.e. approx. 12% (of respondents who indicated either using Internet personally or mentioned Internet usage by family members) (see Graph 3.12.). Considering this, regional residents could be better informed about e-services offered accentuating the key benefits, i.e. speed, privacy, promptness, and etc.

**Graph 3.12. Awareness and utilization of e-services related to a personal social situation**

*(Do you know about a possibility available to residents to use the below-listed e-services related to a personal social situation? Did you or your family members use these e-services over the period of last 12 months?)*



The level of utilization of e-services among residents of Lithuanian regions who know about available services is somewhat low as well. From respondents knowing about specific e-services, the greatest portion (27%) indicated that e-services regarding social benefits or other social assistance were used personally by them or by their family members. Analysing the type of people who had the most knowledge about available services, it may be stated that each social group tends to use e-services that are important and relevant for that group. E.g. younger and middle-aged (20-39 y.o.) residents with higher education, working in public institutions and with children at the age 6-14 mostly use e-services related to social benefits and other social assistance. In relation to compensation, e-services are mostly used by unemployed urban residents registered in a labour exchange. It can be underlined that pupils and younger-age (20-29 y.o.) residents of Lithuanian regions mostly use services related to protection of children and youth rights. This demonstrates that residents of certain social groups search for information on the Internet with a specific purpose and that e-services provided on websites of regional municipalities are recognized among other information sources.

Nevertheless, utilization of e-services is still somewhat low. Thus, regional residents should be better informed about the types of services provided by regional municipalities and information available on their websites. Both awareness and utilization of e-services could be promoted by separate institutions of regional municipalities. They could provide exhaustive information about content and e-services available on websites.

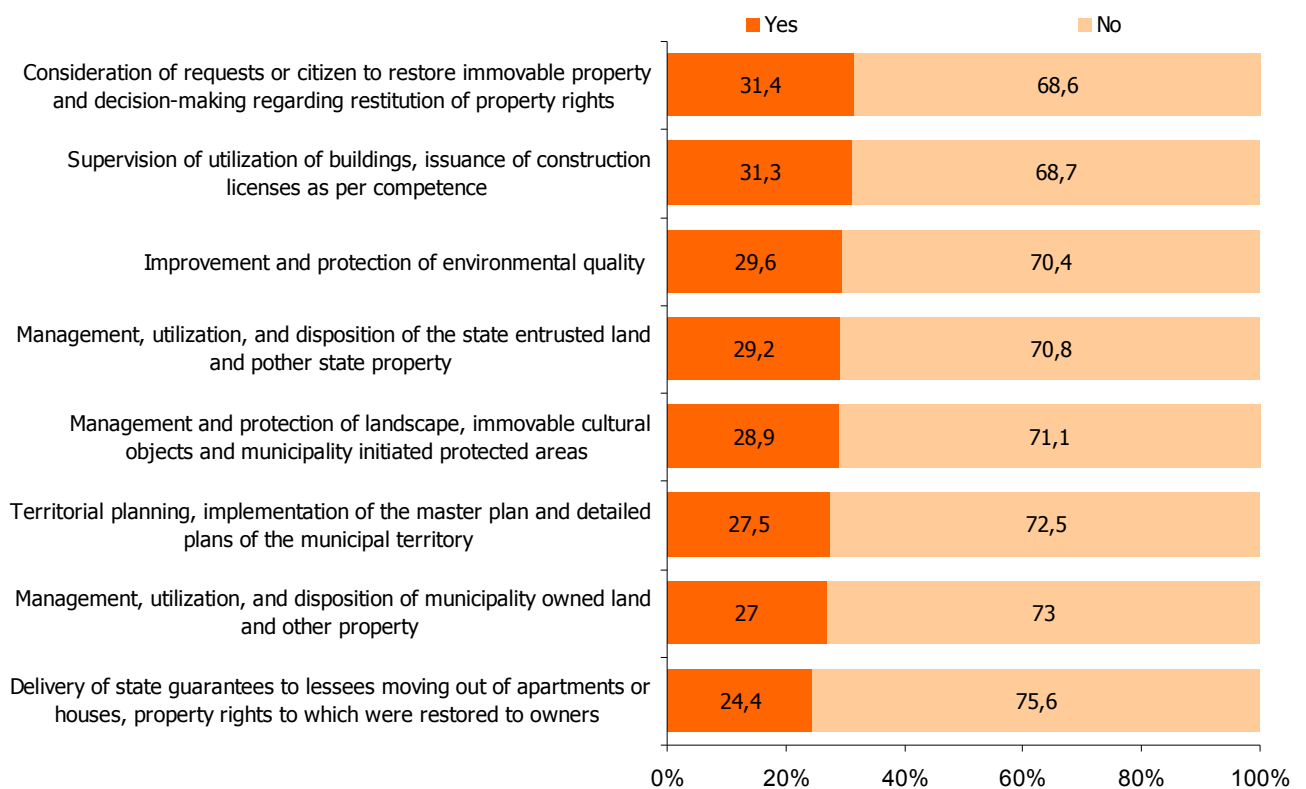
**3.4.2 Awareness and utilization of e-services related to management of personal assets/property**

- **One third of residents are aware about e-services related to management of personal assets/property, although only few percent have used it. This result is the smallest among all e-services.**

The research results support a conclusion that the less a problem is important to a person on a personal level, the less a person takes interest in it or knows about it. This can also be supported by a percentage of people who indicated knowing about availability of e-services related to management of assets/property. One third of respondents indicated their awareness about e-services related to consideration of requests for restoration of immovable property and control of utilization of buildings as well as issuance of construction licences. Other services were indicated as known by less than 30% of respondents (see Graph 3.13.).

**Graph 3.13. Awareness of e-services related to management of personal assets/property**

*(Do you know about a possibility for residents to receive the below-listed e-services related to management of personal assets/property?)*



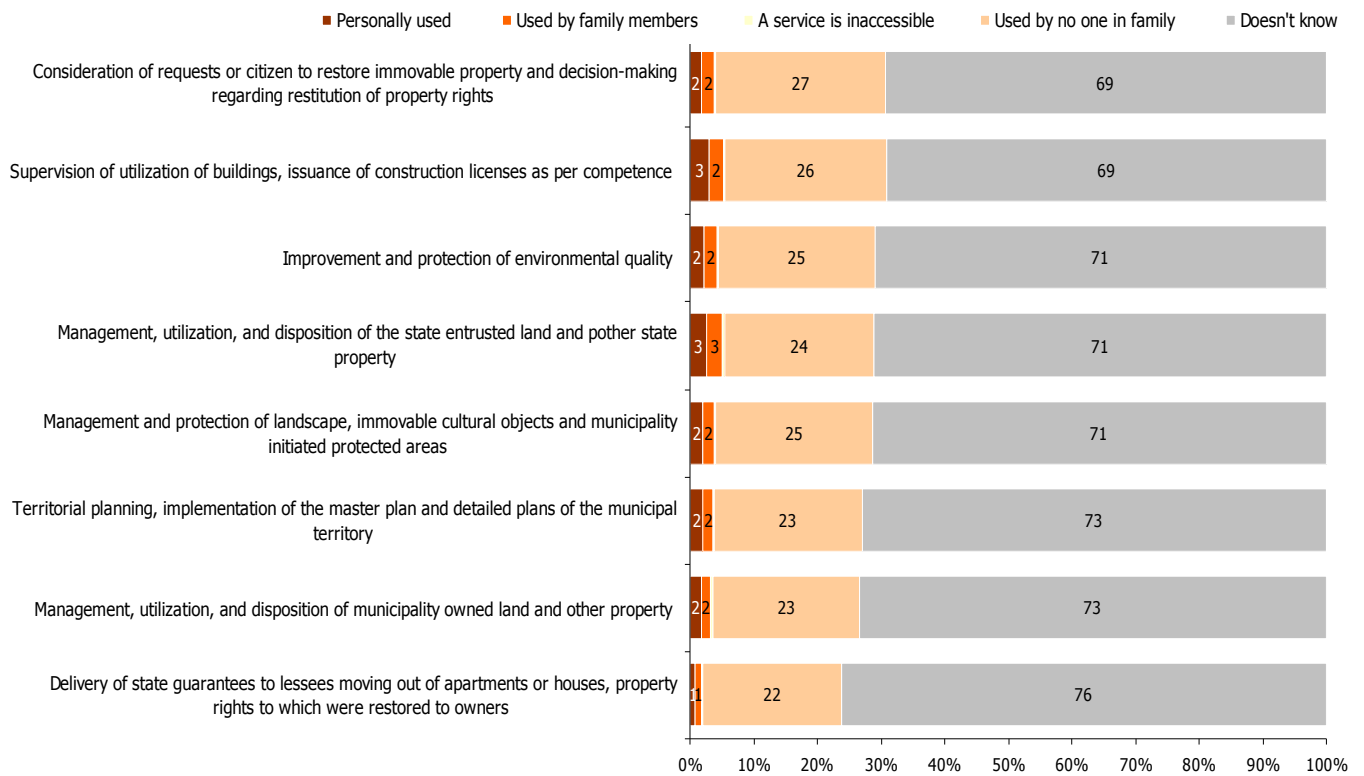
Just as the e-service related to a personal social situation, e-services related to management of assets/property are mostly known to middle-aged (40-49 y.o.) regional residents with a higher social status. This could be due to

the reason that these people use a variety of Internet services more often than representatives of other social groups; therefore they are more inclined to look for information on the Internet. Having this in mind, efforts should be made to encourage middle and lower class people (regional residents with general/special secondary education, medium and lower level of income, and unemployed) and retired people to search for information on the Internet.

E-services related to management of personal assets/property are not widely used. There is no one service that would stand out as more popular among others. All services have been used by less than 6 percent of respondents or their family members.

**Graph 3.14. Awareness and utilization of e-services related to management of personal assets/property**

*(Are you aware of a possibility for residents to receive the below-listed e-services related to management of personal assets/property? Did personally you or your family members use these services within last 12 months?)*



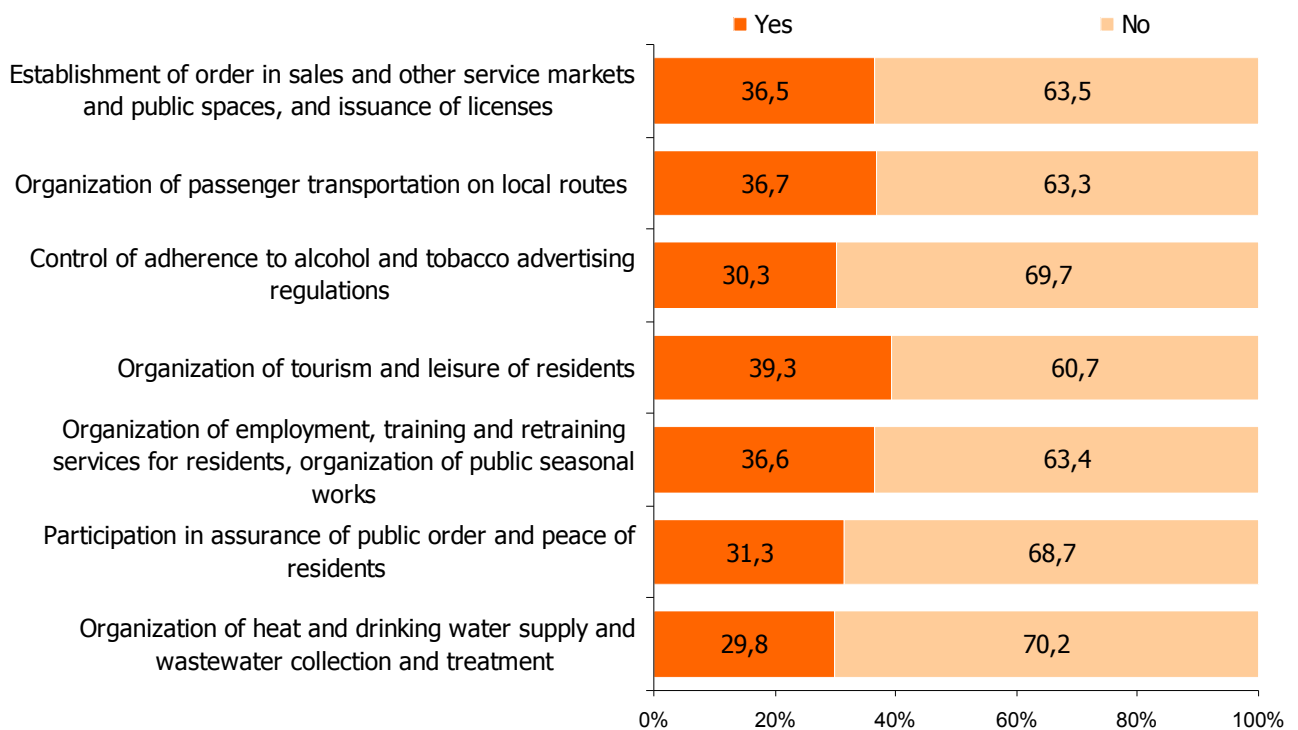
**3.4.3 Awareness and utilization of e-services related to a possibility to provide certain services**

- ***One third of residents of Lithuanian regions are aware of a possibility to use e-service related to a possibility to provide certain services to natural persons and legal entities. Less than a tenth has used at least one of these services.***

The last category of e-services that was addressed by the research was e-services related to a possibility to provide certain services to municipal residents. These services are relevant to residents who own a business or operate on the basis of a business licence. This is the reason for a somewhat low level of awareness of these services. The most well-known service is related to organization of tourism and leisure of residents (awareness amounting to 39.3%) (see Graph 3.15).

**Graph 3.15. Awareness of e-services related to a possibility to provide certain services**

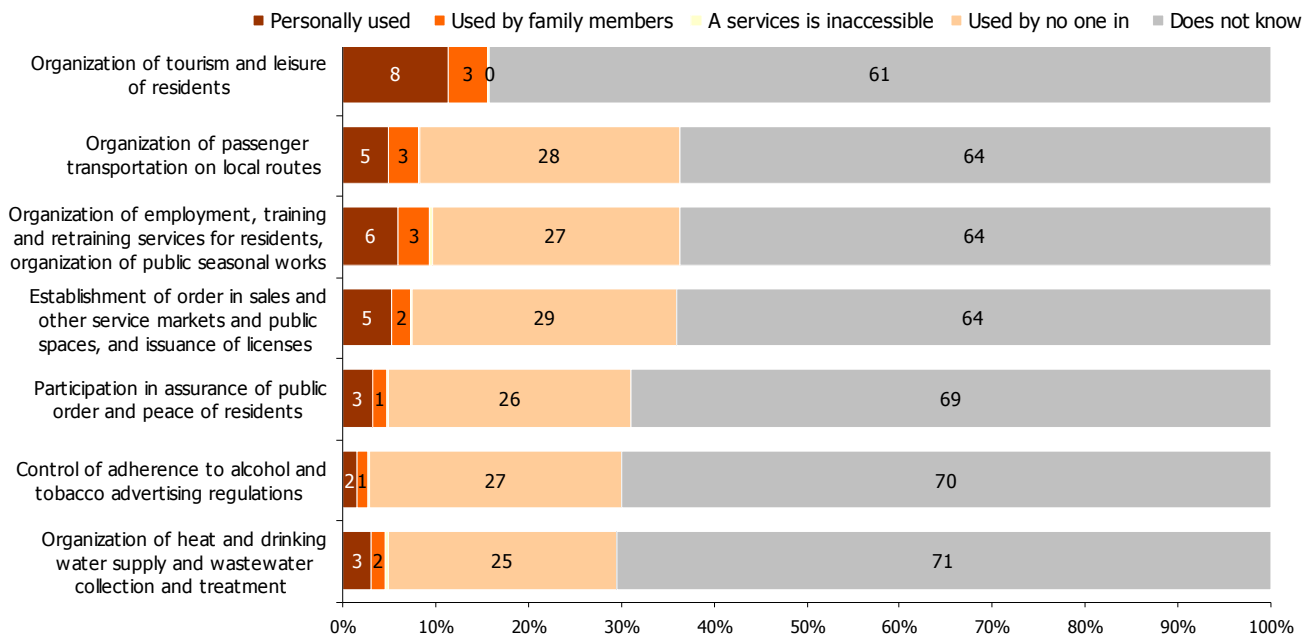
*(Are you aware of a possibility for residents to receive the below-listed e-services related to a possibility to provide certain services to municipality residents?)*



Utilization of these services is a little better than utilization of services related to management of personal assets/property. 11% of respondents indicated that either they or their family members had an opportunity to use services related to organization of tourism and leisure or residents. These were mostly residents with higher education, employed in state institutions. As the research did not identify whether services were used for personal or work-related matters, it is difficult to state the prevailing reason for utilization of services.

**Graph 3.16. Awareness and utilization of e-services related to a possibility to provide certain services**

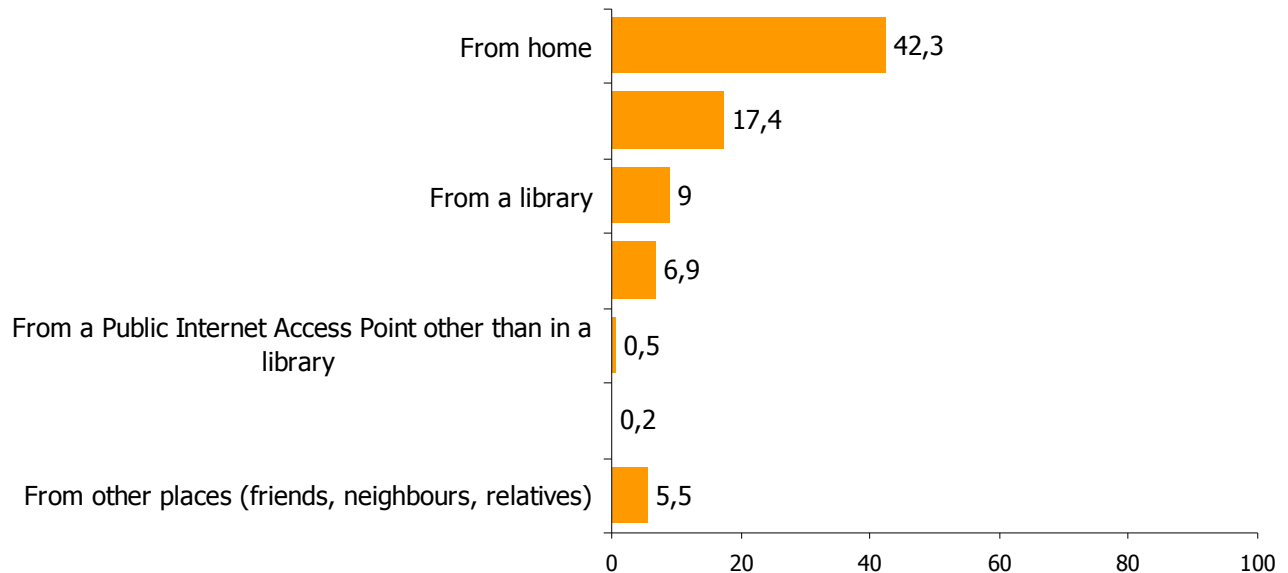
*(Are you aware of a possibility for residents to receive the below-listed e-services related to a possibility to provide certain services to municipality residents? Did you or your family members use these services within the last 12 months?)*



**3.4.4 Location for utilization of e-services**

- ***Almost one tenth of residents of Lithuanian regions that use Internet, used e-services from a public library. 80% of them were rural residents.***

Mostly, residents of Lithuanian regions use e-services from home (24.4% of respondents) (see Graph 3.17.). Residents of higher social status use e-services from home as well as work more frequently. As it was mentioned before, these would be residents with non-higher professional or higher education working in state institutions or private businesses, specialists, public servants, and higher or middle level managers.

**Graph 3.17. Location for utilization of e-services***(From what place(s) do you or your family members use services provide over the Internet?)*

*Valid percent from those respondents who indicated using Internet. Sample - 1168.*

Libraries as locations for the use of e-services are popular among pupils and rural residents. As approx. 9% of respondents indicated using e-services in libraries, 80% of them were rural residents (which is 13.4% of all Internet users) and 20%—urban residents (3.4% of Internet users). Raising the level of computerization of libraries and expansion of the network of Internet access points would promote use of Internet among other social groups of residents. It is important to ensure public access to Internet points. Another solution could be extending open hours of libraries, making them more flexible. Computer training could be organized in public libraries to provide basic skills and introduce available e-services. Libraries could be used to train residents to complete personal income returns. Middle-aged and elderly people could be trained to pay bills for public utilities, etc.

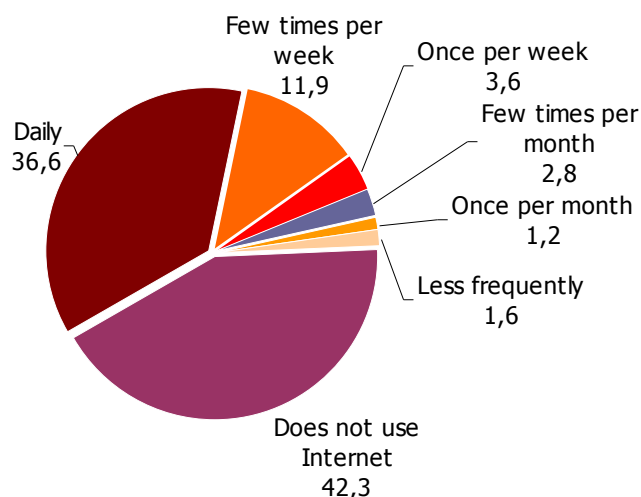
### 3.5 Internet usage

- **More than half of residents in Lithuanian regions use Internet. 17.9% of them use Internet access in public libraries.**

Internet penetration among residents of Lithuanian municipalities is somewhat high, i.e. 57.7%. As many as 36.6% of respondents stated using Internet on a daily basis, and 11.9%—few times per week. On a daily basis Internet is mostly used by pupils and residents of higher social status.

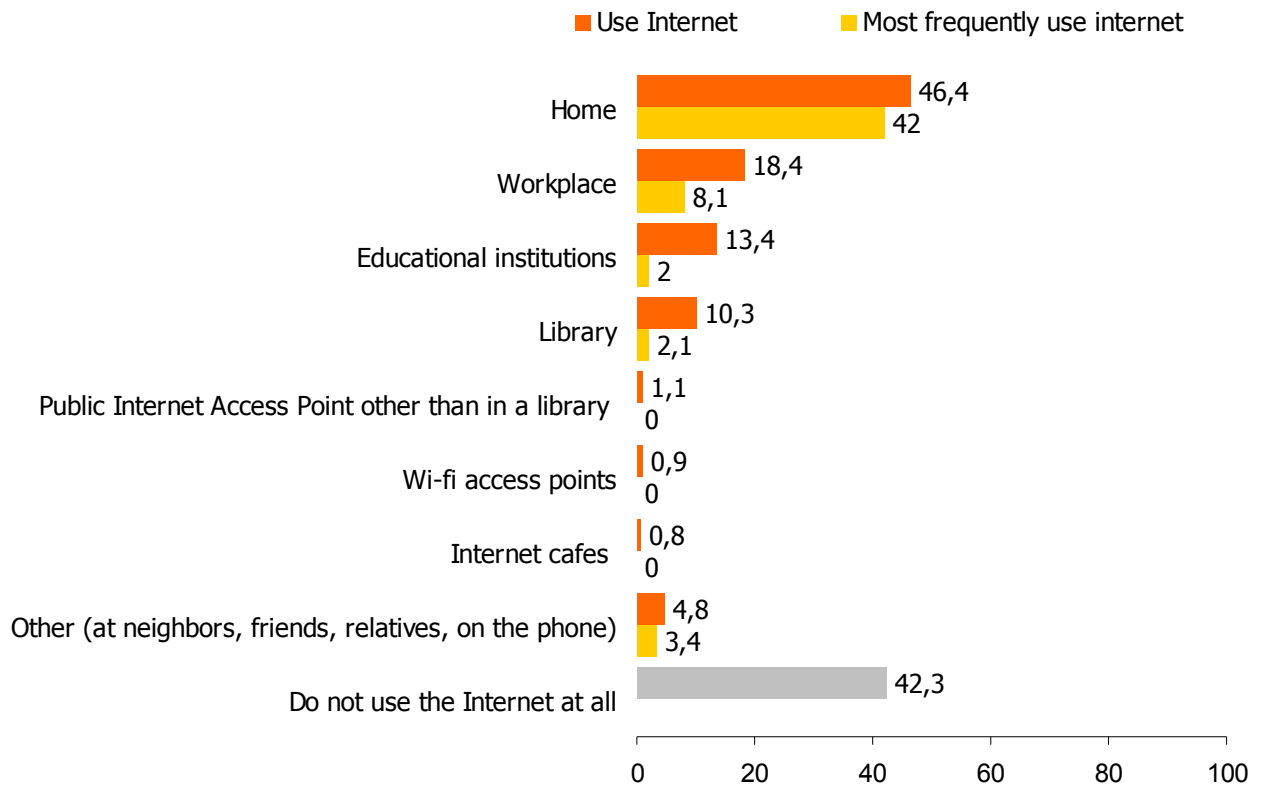
**Graph 3.18. Internet usage**

*(In general, how often do you use Internet?)*



**Graph 3.19. Location for use of e-services**

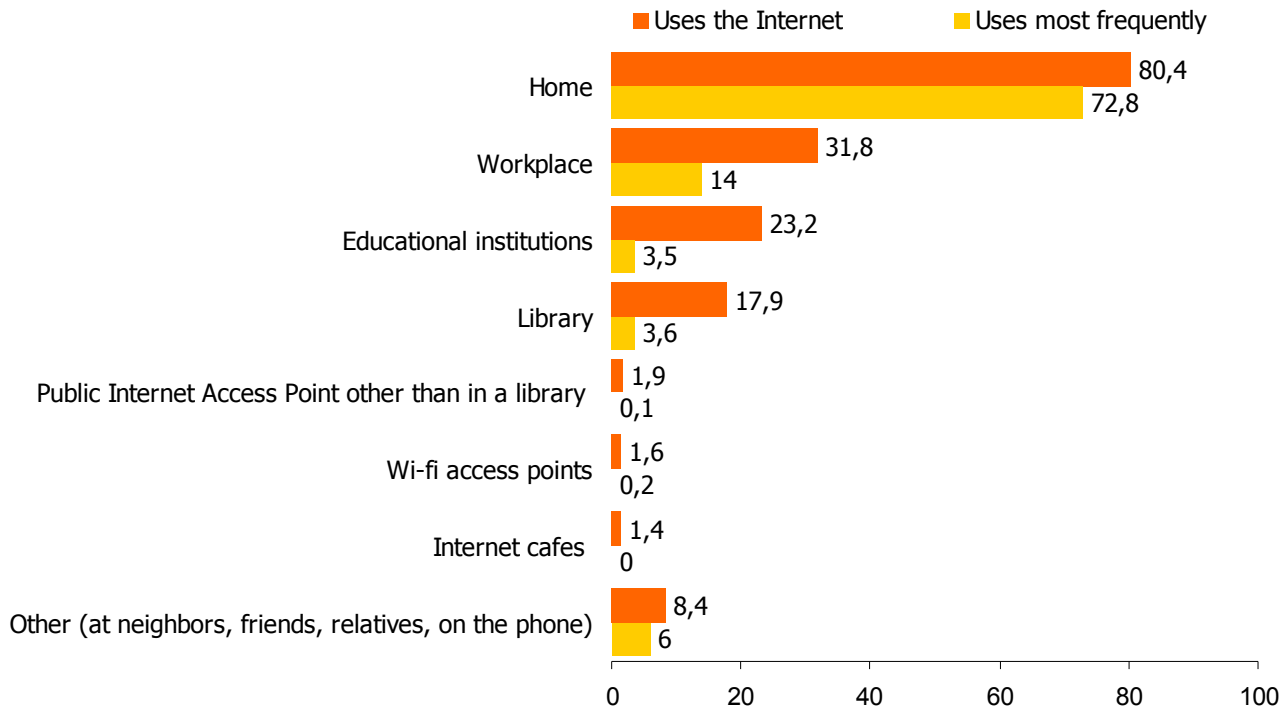
*(From what location do you use Internet in general and most frequently?)*



A tenth of respondents indicated using Internet from libraries, which amounts to 17.9% of Internet users residing in Lithuanian regions (see Graph 3.20).

**Graph 3.20. The location of Internet usage among Internet users**

*(From what location do you use Internet in general and most frequently?)*



*Valid percent from respondents who indicated using Internet. Sample - 1168.*

Currently, residents of Lithuanian regions mostly use Internet from home (42% or 72.8% of Internet users).

## 4 Conclusions

In summary of the research on utilization and assessment of municipal services, the following few key issues in relation to the role of public libraries should be underlined:

- In comparison to other municipal services, cultural and leisure services are used by half of residents of Lithuanian regions who feel mostly satisfied with them. Public libraries are cultural and leisure institutions visited by regional residents most frequently and viewed most positively. Regional residents who visit libraries the most frequently find these services especially important and tend to justify their funding the most. If it was possible, residents who visit libraries at least once or twice per month would commit the greatest share of funds of the leisure and cultural budget to public libraries. It is important to note that more rural than urban residents visit a library at least once per week. This means that libraries act as an important form of leisure for rural residents. One tenth of residents of Lithuanian regions use Internet from public libraries, which is 17.9% of all Internet users.

Talking about other municipal services, the following remarks could be underlined:

- Residents of Lithuanian regions mostly use day-to-day urgency services offered by their local municipality. These are environment and public transportation services. Other services—such as cultural and leisure, social, and etc.—were indicated by more than half of residents of Lithuanian regional municipalities as not used over the last 12 months. The situation could be explained by a number of reasons: residents do not know about the services that are available; residents know about the services but do not want to use them; or see no personal advantage that could be gained from services offered. This is the reason it is important to conduct a more detailed research that would reveal the key reasons for non-utilization of services provided by regional municipalities.
- It should be noted that females are more active consumers of cultural and leisure services than males; thus, considering the general situation of males in Lithuania it is recommended to promote employment of males and their greater involvement in cultural life through specialized male audiences targeting events.
- Public transport and environmental protection are the municipal services that were evaluated less positively by regional residents. This result could have been impacted by the situation that the services are used by people almost on a daily basis; therefore, they are especially important and more critically viewed than other services. Critical attitude could have also been impacted by special media attention on increase of prices for public transport. Rural residents are more dissatisfied with public transport services than urban residents. It is important to identify the key reasons behind dissatisfaction and address them. In general, people find the services important if they use them personally. This is the reason why municipalities should pay special attention to quality of such services. Besides, a more explicit communication regarding competencies and services of municipalities should be undertaken.
- Cultural and leisure services are used approx. by half of regional residents. Cultural centres and leisure halls are visited the most frequently. The key audience is pupils. This demonstrates that cultural centres and leisure halls are frequently chosen by youth as entertainment and leisure sites. Both town and rural

area residents with higher education, high level of income, and employed attend cultural and leisure centre less frequently than youth but more often than unemployed residents with low level of income and lower level of education. It is important to involve regional residents with a lower social status into consumption of municipal cultural and leisure services.

- In general, evaluation of cultural and leisure services is high. Although it should be underlined that more than one tenth of respondents could not assess some services. This is the reason why it is important to raise awareness of cultural and leisure services among regional residents. This could be achieved with the help of regional press, local communities, through events, more frequent renewal of museum exhibitions, and informing regional residents about it.
- A face-to-face contact remains the most popular form of communication among resident and local municipalities. Despite the fact that Internet penetration is somewhat high and websites of municipalities are somewhat well developed, e-mail or Internet communication with municipalities is still rare among residents.
- The level of awareness of e-services in municipalities is rather low. Lithuanian residents possess the most knowledge about e-services related to a personal social situation (e.g. primary personal and public health care, payment of social benefits, calculation and payment of compensations etc.). Services related to management of assets/property are known the least. Middle-aged residents with higher education and high level of income are more aware of e-services. As awareness of e-services is somewhat low, utilization of these services is low as well. Therefore it is especially important to raise awareness of e-services and inform residents about a possibility to complete various applications, receive information, and order services of interest over the Internet.