

APPROVED
by Resolution No. TPN-9 of 27 May 2020
of the Council of Vilnius University

THE REORGANISATION PLAN OF ŠIAULIAI UNIVERSITY BY INTEGRATING IT INTO VILNIUS UNIVERSITY

CHAPTER I GENERAL PROVISIONS

1. The Reorganisation Plan of Šiauliai University by Integrating It Into Vilnius University (hereinafter the ‘Plan’) was prepared in accordance with Articles 27(2)(9) and 38(1) of the Republic of Lithuania Law on Higher Education and Research, taking into account Item 2(1)(3) of the State University Network Optimisation Plan approved by Resolution of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania No. XIII-533 of 29 June 2017 “On the Approval of the State University Network Optimisation Plan”, Resolution of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania No. XIII-1230 of 5 June 2018 “On the Approval of the Reorganisation of Šiauliai University by Integrating It Into Vilnius University”, Resolution of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania No. XIII-2083 of 26 April 2019 “On the Terms and Conditions of Integrating Šiauliai University Into Vilnius University”, the agreement of 21 November 2017 on the integration of Vilnius University and Šiauliai University signed between Vilnius University and Šiauliai University, and the agreement of 25 May 2020 on the development plan of Šiauliai Academy of Vilnius University for 2021–2025 signed between Vilnius University and Šiauliai University.

2. The reorganisation of the public institution Šiauliai University (hereinafter ‘Šiauliai University’, the ‘reorganised institution’) by integrating it into the public institution Vilnius University (hereinafter ‘Vilnius University’, the ‘institution participating in the reorganisation’) will allow to consolidate institutional resources, strengthen the potential of science and studies in Šiauliai city, improve the city’s compliance with the needs of the regional community and the labour market. The result of the reorganisation shall be the incorporation of Šiauliai University into the composition of Vilnius University with a status of a *sui generis* core academic unit, which guarantees the academic and economic independence of the unit within the scope established by the Statute of Vilnius University and the Regulations of the Core Academic Unit Šiauliai Academy of Vilnius University.

CHAPTER II THE STATUS QUO AND THE PRECONDITIONS FOR REORGANISATION

3. Vilnius University is the oldest university in Lithuania and one of the oldest universities in Eastern and Central Europe, with deeply-rooted academic traditions that create conditions for the diversity of opinions of the academic community and freedom of academic thought, combined with accountability to the university community, the State and society. The University conducts all kinds of scientific and artistic research, fosters experimental, social, cultural and technological development, promotes creation of art, and carries out university studies of all cycles and forms. The collegial governing bodies of Vilnius University are the Council, the Senate and the single-person management body – the Rector. The organisational structure of Vilnius University consists of core and branch units, while the functional structure consists of academic and non-academic units. Under the conditions and procedure laid down by the Statute of Vilnius University, the greatest internal autonomy is granted to the core academic departments. Currently, the organisational-functional structure consists of 14 core academic units and 13 core non-academic units.

4. Šiauliai University is the largest higher education institution in northern Lithuania, having deeply-rooted academic traditions of teacher training, promoting social, cultural and

economic development of the region, and having close ties with companies in the region and the country. The collegial governing bodies of Šiauliai University are the Council, the Senate and the single-person management body – the Rector. The organisational structure of Šiauliai University consists of academic and non-academic units. The academic units consist of three institutes (the Institute of Education, the Institute of Regional Development, the Institute of Part-Time and Distance Studies), the Botanical Garden, and the Library. There are nine non-academic units at the institution.

SECTION ONE THE ORGANISATION OF STUDIES

5. The institutions participating in the reorganisation and the reorganised institution implement studies of all three cycles as well as professional (pedagogy) studies and non-formal education programmes. In 2019, Vilnius University implemented studies in 12 study field groups, 266 (85 bachelor, 113 master, four integrated, one professional, 63 residency) first and second cycle study programmes and doctoral studies, in 29 science fields. In 2019, Šiauliai University implemented studies in 10 study field groups, 41 (25 bachelor, 15 master, one professional studies) first and second cycle study programmes, and four doctoral programmes. Vilnius University is the most attractive to entrants and has the highest number of entrants (5,754 in 2019) compared to other Lithuanian higher education institutions. At the end of 2019, Vilnius University had 19,632 students, Šiauliai University – 1,629, most of them in bachelor studies. The review and broadening of overlapping study fields and programmes of Vilnius University and Šiauliai University and the development of joint programmes would serve as a precondition for reducing the number of study programmes in Lithuania, improving their quality and international competitiveness as well as training of highly qualified specialists. The long-lasting experience of Šiauliai University in implementing e-studies, non-formal education programmes and applying didactic innovation methods in study programmes will create preconditions for cooperation between the pedagogical centres of Vilnius University and Šiauliai University in training teachers of a new generation.

SECTION TWO THE ORGANISATION OF SCIENTIFIC ACTIVITIES

6. In 2019, researchers from Vilnius University prepared 36 monographs and studies, 1,188 articles referenced in the Clarivate Analytics Web of Science Core Collection (hereinafter the ‘CA WoS’) database, which accounted for 34 per cent of all articles by Lithuanian researchers referenced in this database. In 2019, 108 publications were among the top ten per cent of the most cited publications. . In 2019, 232 scientific international and national conferences, seminars, symposia, schools (91 international event and 141 national event) took place at Vilnius University.

7. In 2017, 383 research projects were carried out at Vilnius University, one third of which – with partners from abroad. The largest number of projects – 223 – were carried out under the programmes administered by the Research Council of Lithuania, for which Vilnius University received EUR 3.84 million: 10 projects funded under national research programmes, 28 – State Lithuanian Studies and Dissemination Programme 2016–2024, implemented projects of 74 groups of researchers, 34 bilateral/trilateral programmes, 34 postdoctoral traineeship projects, research by 23 high-level research groups, 17 projects of the programme of Targeted Research in Smart Specialisation Areas (including 5 under the activity ‘Attracting Scientists from Abroad to Carry Out Research’) and 3 projects under the Measure ‘Development of Scientific Competences of Scientists through Implementation of Individual Horizon 2020 R&D Projects’. In 2019, 23 projects of the Horizon 2020 programme were implemented at Vilnius University, worth EUR 6.3 million. In 2019, EUR 1.9 million was received for the implementation of Horizon 2020 and other international scientific programs (EU Justice Program, LILAN, North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) Science for Peace, etc.).

8. In 2019, the researchers of Šiauliai University prepared and published two scientific

studies, 41 article referenced in CA WOS, and six scientific journals. About 900 events corresponding to regional priorities (educational activities, consultations, exhibitions, public lectures, and other events for the public) were held at Šiauliai University, of which – nine international scientific conferences, one personal exhibition of artists, and two solo concerts.

9. In 2019, several continuous projects were completed at Šiauliai University: ‘Developing of Social Psychological Support Service System Through Implementation of Method of Positive Coping Strategies and Enhancement of Social Inclusion for People in Vulnerable Groups’ (POZCOPING) designed to increase social inclusion, i.e. to increase the accessibility to and the quality of social services;

‘Cooperation Network for Fostering 21st Century (Engineering) Upgraded Skills and Workforce Mobility’ (CONUS), designed to promote modern professional (engineering) 21st century skills and support workforce mobility; ‘Personal Allergy Symptom Forecasting System’ (PASYFO) project, during which a unique product was developed – a personal allergy symptom forecasting system; and ‘Innovative Real-Time Airborne Pollen Recognition and Modelling System for Allergenic Pollen Forecast’ (REALTIME). In 2019, the following projects of the groups of researchers of the LMT were launched: ‘Evaluation of Synergistic Effect of Allergenic Pollen and Air Quality on Human Health’ (LORI), the aim of the project is to create a model to identify the expression of symptoms caused by pollen allergens, creating preconditions to improve the practical treatment of allergic rhinitis and the use of immunotherapy in Lithuania; ‘Study on the Heterogeneity of the Effects of Public Debt on Economic Growth’ (PUBDEB), which aims to theoretically justify the heterogeneity of the effects of public debt on economic growth and, following an investigation into these factors and their interactions with public debt, identify the conditions under which public debt stimulates (slows) economic growth. The INTERREG programme projects are also continuing: ‘Innovative Teacher Education Through Personalized Learning’ (INTERPEARL), ‘Joint and Interdisciplinary Long Life Learning Training for Professionals Working with Neuro Sensomotor Disorders’ (INTERPROF).

10. The priority fields of research topics developed at Šiauliai University are:

- 10.1. strengthening the inclusive society through socio-educational means;
- 10.2. education and training processes;
- 10.3. socio-economic phenomena in the process of creation of the welfare state;
- 10.4. natural sciences and advanced technologies;
- 10.5. humanities in the development of the culture of society.

11. After integration into Vilnius University, Šiauliai Academy, in seeking international recognition of its scientific activities and realising itself as the leader of progress in the north of Lithuania, plans to develop its scientific potential by joining forces with the groups of researchers operating at Vilnius University. It is also planned that the academic potential of the pedagogical centres of Vilnius University and Šiauliai University, when in cooperation in scientific activities, will create high-quality education science study programmes based on scientific outcomes and applied innovations. All this will reduce the dispersion of scientific potential and strengthen the development opportunities of small but internationally active groups of researchers, and increase the funds raised from projects.

SECTION THREE FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES

12. On 31 December 2019, the capital (net assets) of Vilnius University amounted to EUR 69,150,717.78 (of which the capital of the owner was EUR 50,491,294.10), the fair value reserve was EUR 24,966,228.07. Accumulated surplus or deficit – EUR (-) 6,555,367.30. The capital of Šiauliai University amounted to EUR 2,267,134.60 (of which the capital of the owner was EUR 1,213,602.14), the fair value reserve was EUR 1,104,618.10. Accumulated surplus or deficit – EUR (-) 51,085.64. The own funds income received at Vilnius University was EUR 19,719,736.51, and at Šiauliai University – EUR 1,319,318.92. The own funds income consists of tuition fees, rental income from dormitories, and income from other services provided. Universities also receive other income from stocks, sale of publications, rent of various available premises (Vilnius University – EUR 2,046,779.76, Šiauliai University – EUR 233,094.14). The balance of funding received from the State budget (appropriations), municipalities, the European Union, other foreign countries, and

other organisations for the implementation of the activities of the universities on 31 December 2019: Vilnius University – EUR 134,254,585.67, and Šiauliai University – EUR 11,679,214.17.

SECTION FOUR HUMAN RESOURCES

13. Human resources at both universities are comprised of academic staff (researchers and lecturers), top-level heads and non-academic (other) staff. On 31 December 2017, Vilnius University had 4,823 employees, taking up 3,683.35 posts, whereas Šiauliai University had 331 employees, taking up 254.25 posts. 658 researchers were involved in scientific activities at Vilnius University and 38 researchers at Šiauliai University. The quality of the study process at Vilnius University was ensured by 2,246 lecturers, at Šiauliai University – by 166. There were 86 top-level heads at Vilnius University and 14 at Šiauliai University. The management functions of human resources are carried out at the respective units of the universities in accordance with the powers defined in the Statute and the regulations of the activities of the units. Teamwork is prevalent among the structural units. In order to ensure the efficiency of the employees' activities, a motivation system is in place. It is assumed that the integration of the communities of Šiauliai University and Vilnius University will have a progressive result of scientific activities, improvement of the quality of studies, and strengthening of academic culture.

CHAPTER III THE INTENDED OUTCOMES OF THE REORGANISATION

14. The general objective of the reorganisation is the concentration and efficient usage of the human resources, study and research infrastructure of the higher education system, to creation of preconditions for strengthening the quality of studies, the avoidance of duplication of study and research activities, the efficient usage of public funding and investment funds allocated to science, studies, economy and administration.

15. The specific objective of the reorganisation is a social function, which aims to prevent the emigration trends of the population and create favourable preconditions for business development in Šiauliai region. In the last decade, as negative demographic changes in the entire territory of the Republic of Lithuania are emerging, one of the largest population declines in the Republic of Lithuania is observed in Šiauliai County. These trends had a direct impact on the environment and conditions of the activities of Šiauliai University.

16. The reorganisation intends to:

16.1. to improve the quality of higher education services in Šiauliai region by providing students with the highest level of general and subject-specific competencies (increase of students' level of competency and satisfaction with studies, integration of overlapping study programmes, assurance of the efficiency of the teaching staff's educational and subject-specific competencies' development system);

16.2. to increase the efficiency of scientific research and experimental development activities and to promote science and business partnerships in Šiauliai region (strengthening of the human potential in scientific research and experimental development, increase of international project activity, dissemination of science, competency of scientists, activation of science and business relations). After integration into Vilnius University, the researchers of Šiauliai Academy plan to develop research in the following thematic groups:

16.2.1. teacher training and education. The research will focus on international educational discourses in order to support the diverse contexts of teacher training in theory and based on empirical results. A lot of attention will be paid to the development and application of didactic innovations, methodologies and instruments in educational reality, emphasising the values of inclusive, integrated and personalised education. It is expected to strengthen teacher training in Lithuania that is based on results in science;

16.2.2. development of regions. The research will focus on the assessment of socio-economic phenomena in the process of creation of the welfare state, emphasising regional policy and their problems of uneven development, the quality of human life, good governance. The groups of

researchers will seek to develop innovations that, from a long-term perspective, would have an impact on the competitiveness of the region and the country as a whole. Understanding the need for a dialogue between the research in humanities, social sciences and natural sciences and technology, interdisciplinary research is encouraged and initiated to maintain the role of humanities in the modern scientific paradigm. This concentration of scientific groups is in line with the national scientific priority of striving for international, interdisciplinary research and innovation;

16.3. to promote the development of internationalisation of higher education studies in Šiauliai region (attraction of foreign nationals for studies at Šiauliai Academy, attraction of foreign lecturers and/or scientists, increase of the international mobility of students and teachers);

16.4. to efficiently and properly use the real estate owned by the State in the field of higher education services (improvement of the quality of infrastructure managed by Šiauliai University, more efficient use of infrastructure).

17. The intended outcomes of the reorganisation are possible by ensuring the continuity of the activities of Šiauliai University under the activity conditions as a core academic unit of Vilnius University, ensuring the academic and economic independence of the unit in accordance with the procedure established in the Statute of Vilnius University and the Regulations of Šiauliai Academy of Vilnius University.

CHAPTER IV REORGANISATION STAGES AND TERMS

18. The rights and duties (documents and files necessary for their execution) of Šiauliai University that will cease its activities as a public institution after the reorganisation shall be transferred on 31 December 2020 to the public institution Vilnius University which will continue to operate after the reorganisation. Šiauliai University that will cease its activities as a public institution after the reorganisation must be de-registered from the Register of Legal Entities on 1 January 2021.

19. The integration of Šiauliai University shall be formalised by the activities of Šiauliai Academy, the new core academic unit of Vilnius University, from 1 January 2021. On this date, the employees of Šiauliai University shall be transferred to the structure of Šiauliai Academy and respective agreements shall be concluded with the students of Šiauliai University regarding the transfer of their study process to Vilnius University.

20. After the legal reorganisation processes have ended, integration processes will continue, including the formation of the self-government bodies of Šiauliai Academy and the appointment of the head of the core academic unit. Taking into account Article 28(5) of the Statute of Vilnius University, approved by the Republic of Lithuania Law on the Approval of the Statute of Vilnius University, and the the agreement on the development plan of Šiauliai Academy of Vilnius University for 2021–2025 signed between Vilnius University and Šiauliai University, the Council Šiauliai Academy must be formed within three months from the end of the reorganisation of Šiauliai University by integrating it into Vilnius University, i.e. until 1 April 2021. The head (director) of Šiauliai Academy shall be appointed on 4 January 2021.

The dispute resolution and academic ethics commissions of Šiauliai Academy as well as study programme committees shall be formed by 1 May 2021.

21. The integration of the individual academic and economic processes of Šiauliai University shall be carried out gradually, in accordance with the Integration Administration Plan of Šiauliai University Activities and Processes established jointly by the Rector of Vilnius University and the Rector of Šiauliai University, which, among other things, details the integration processes of science, studies, infrastructure, human, financial and other resources, by dividing them up, determining the terms of their integration and the persons responsible. The main processes of integration of academic and economic activities of Šiauliai University:

21.1. management of the activities of the reorganisation process with the help of the Supervisory Committee of the Reorganisation of Šiauliai University by Integrating It Into Vilnius University and the functions, powers and responsibilities of this Committee;

21.2. the integration of study programmes, consolidation of overlapping and/or partially overlapping study programmes, harmonisation of the study quality standard, integration of services for students and lecturers, integration of study infrastructure;

21.3. the integration of science and doctoral studies, reorganisation of administration of scientific activities, organisation of project and innovative activities, reorganisation of the process of doctoral studies;

21.4. the integration of human resources, harmonisation of qualification requirements for academic (lecturers and researchers) and non-academic staff, harmonisation of staff remuneration policy, evaluation of functions performed by academic and non-academic staff;

21.5. the integration of financial resources, import of banking operations, synchronisation of remuneration and scholarship calculation, import of accounting data;

21.6. the integration of information resources, integration of information, document management and other systems;

21.7. the integration of infrastructure, amendments to trust agreements on State-owned real estate, identification of assets that are not necessary for the higher education process (surplus).

CHAPTER V THE FUNDING NEEDS FOR THE REORGANISATION AND INTEGRATION PROCESSES

22. After the legal reorganisation processes have ended, integration processes will continue – the needs of society, business and public sector of the region for higher education must be constantly monitored and taken into account in order to provide quality and marketable education services that meet the expectations of Lithuania and the region. Another important element after the reorganisation is the increase of the scientific potential of the regional unit of Vilnius University. Both goals are objectively not possible to be achieved in the short term and require systematic and consistent efforts and deeper investment-based changes in activities.

23. The funding needs for the period of 2021–2025 amount to EUR 15,263,265 and are divided into the following main groups:

23.1. additional remuneration requirement according to the Vilnius University price of one post (EUR) and taking into account the 15 per cent coefficient of the region – EUR 5,663,265;

23.2. increasing the volume of scientific results of Šiauliai Academy of Vilnius University and improving the quality of the selected areas, the formation of regional and joint groups of researchers with Vilnius units that have access to the research infrastructure, and the creation of relevant and high-quality scientific production – EUR 1,500,000 (on average – EUR 300,000 per year);

23.3. improving the quality of studies and increasing internationality: updating existing study programmes, updating the content of IT solutions for remote and blended learning, development of new programmes, attracting experts to develop programmes, etc. – EUR 2,800,000;

23.4. renewal of science and study infrastructure (modernisation of learning environment, renewal of learning laboratories and scientific infrastructure), investment in the ageing dormitory fund – EUR 5,000,000;

23.5. increasing academic potential (active activities that attract academic talent) EUR 300,000 (EUR 60,000 per year).

CHAPTER VI FINAL PROVISIONS

24. The plan is an integral part of the reorganisation documentation package, which also includes the Description of the Terms for the Reorganisation of Šiauliai University by Integrating It Into Vilnius University.

25. The activities of the integration processes of the academic and economic activities of Šiauliai University are detailed in the Integration Administration Plan of Šiauliai University Activities and Processes established jointly by the Rector of Vilnius University and the Rector of Šiauliai University.