TOWN and GOWN: GROWING TOGETHER
Vilnius - European Culture Capital - 2009

Alfonsas Daniūnas, Asta Radzevičienė
Vilnius Gediminas technical university
Irena Garbienė
Public institution Vilnius - European Capital of Culture 2009
**Key Historical Dates**

1009 Lithuania was first mentioned in written sources.
1253 Grand Duke Mindaugas was crowned the King of Lithuania.
1323 During Grand Duke Gediminas’ reign Vilnius is first mentioned as the capital of Lithuania.
1522 Francis Skoryna established the first printing press in the city. The city became one of the most famous book-printing centres in Europe.
1579 The Collegium, an institution of higher education, was founded by the Jesuits in Vilnius and was upgraded to the level of Academy, by the Pope. It was the first university in the Baltic countries and became the most important cultural centre in the region.
1795 After the third Partition of the Republic of the Two Nations, Lithuania was annexed by Russia.

**On the 16th February 1918** the Council of Lithuania proclaimed the restoration of an independent Lithuanian state.

1940 Lithuania was incorporated into the Soviet Union.

**World War II**. The Old Town of Vilnius suffered greatly. Fortunately, the majority of the most valuable buildings and monuments survived.

**On the 11th of March 1990** the Supreme Council of the Republic of Lithuania declared the restoration of Lithuania’s independence.

**In May 2004** Lithuania became a member of the European Union and NATO.
University and the town: academic and research cooperation

- 6 state universities
- 2 private universities
- colleges
Vilnius Gediminas Technical University in figures

The beginning – in 1956

Today – the third biggest University in Lithuania with over 16000 students at Bachelor’s, Master’s and Doctor’s degree levels

40 programs for Bachelor’s degree (4 years)

44 programs for Master’s degree (2 years)

30 programs for Doctor’s degree (4 years)
University mission

„The mission of the University is to stimulate, create and disseminate scientific knowledge, latest technologies, and cultural values, to educate members of the society, to cherish democracy and through these efforts to foster the economic growth of the country, competitive spirit in the economy, social welfare and peace as well as a high quality of life”.

Vilnius Gediminas Technical University
Development plan for 2007-2011
The study areas and fields at Vilnius Gediminas technical university

I. Technological Sciences
- Electrical Engineering
- Electronic Engineering
- Civil Engineering
- Safety Engineering
- Transport Engineering
- Environmental Engineering
- Bioengineering
- Energetics
- Informatics Engineering
- Material Sciences
- Industrial Engineering
- Mechanical Engineering
- Measurement Engineering

II. Physical Sciences
- Statistics
- Informatics

III. Social Sciences
- Management and Business Administration
- Educology

IV. Arts
- Architecture

V. Biomedical Sciences
- Ecology
University and the town: Cooperation with the society

Vilnius Gediminas technical university maintains cooperation with
• local community (university image and attractiveness)
• business community (R&D)
• public sector (R&D)
Research cooperation between Vilnius Gediminas technical university and Vilnius city (1)

- Planning of urban transportation systems and engineering infrastructure
- Sustainable development in urban planning
- Territory planning and related documentation
Research cooperation between Vilnius Gediminas technical university and Vilnius city (2)

Theory and practice of urban and regional planning
Intercourse between urban structure and identity of the city
Optimization of relationship between heritage, natural limitations and identity
Urban sociology
Landscape architecture
Architecture of urban complexes
Regeneration of historic environment
Humanization of environment
University and town: socio-cultural cooperation perspective

November 14, 2005
Vilnius (Lithuania) and Linz (Austria) were officially given status of European Capital of Culture - 2009

EU Council decision Nr. 2005/815/EB
The goals of Vilnius ECC-2009 project

• To mould Vilnius into a contemporary center of attraction known worldwide with its own unique and recognizable identity.

• To develop culture as a virtue in modern society and as the driving force in city development.

• To foster national pride, encourage participation of citizens in cultural and social development of modern society in Europe.

http://www.culturelive.lt/en
Vilnius ECC programme concept

• “Culture live” – ambitious initiative of VECC – 2009, its main statement: culture is live and is developing in forms and content. The main emphasis is on live performances, with maximum interaction with the audience

• Word “CULTURE” comprises according to VECC the following primary elements: LT, EU, CULT
VECC –2009 invites to

PARTICIPATE in the variety of different events, ranging from specialized conferences to street performances;

CREATE within the European art programme;

INTERACT within the programme (to get acquainted with different cultures

REMEMBER within the programme of live History;

ENJOY the action
Distinctive features of Vilnius ECC -2009

• It is the first time such a practical, large-scale, multi-institutional action will be taken to contribute to the creation of the country’s image
• The programme is unique in scope and encompasses all forms of cultural expression and all social groups as participants and audience
• It is the first volunteer programme of such large scale to be implemented in Lithuania, bringing together both residents and emigrants to work in unison for the benefit of the country
• It is the first time a cultural programme will implement economic goals: an increase in tourism of 15%
• It is the first time in Lithuania that a programme will erase boundaries between elite art and popular culture. High class art will be de-classified and low class art will be de-vulgarized
Foreseen outcomes

- Growth of tourism in Vilnius in 2009 by 15% (the average of European Capitals of Culture is 10 percent), 7-10% in 2010
- 70% of the Vilnius population participating in events
- 80% of the Lithuanian population views the 2009 project favourably
- 100,000 unique hits to the Vilnius – ECOC Bureau internet website
- 10,000 ambassadors of the programme
- New cultural event traditions will emerge (Street Musician Day, Culture Night and others).
Expected long term outcomes (1)

Cultural dimension:

- Creation of the background for pragmatic and realistic culture policy, where financial support is based on planned outcomes;
- Creation of new cultural traditions;
- To turn culture from outsiders into mainstream of national priorities.

Socio-economical dimension:

- Increased visibility and improved country’s image in Europe;
- Culture will reach all social layers and geographical areas of the city;
- Turism growth – 15%.
Expected long term outcomes (2)

Infrastructure dimension:

- New and reconstructed, adapted to the needs of handicapped people objects of cultural infrastructure;

- Qualitative and quantitative development of tourism infrastructure;

- New green zones in Vilnius.
University and town: socio-cultural cooperation perspective

Vilnius ECC 2009 - the opportunity to use a „town platform“ for strengthening university’s image nationally and internationally:

• Participation in the official Vilnius ECC programme activities
• Proposing initiatives of university community members within the framework of Public initiatives
• Independent cultural initiatives of university community in parallel with the Vilnius ECC programme
University and town: space of intercultural interactions

• International student communities of the universities are contributing to the image of Vilnius as an international and foreigners-friendly city
• They are the promoters of Vilnius abroad
• They may become a source of new socio-cultural experiences in a rather mono-cultural local community
• They may become active partners and a source of creativity in socio-cultural interactions

only if .....
Only if... they are an integrated part of both academic and local community.
Integration of international students into University community

11 study programmes in English; up to 450 international students per year (80 full-time degree students and 370 international exchange students).

Integration tools:
• Lithuanian language courses free of charge
• Orientation week, which includes an introduction to the university and city and helps settle in quickly;
• Mentor programme, which means that every incoming student has a supervising Lithuanian student usually studying at the same faculty
• Socio-cultural programme during the whole academic year. The main focus - cultural events organised in city
• Meetings with international students at the Embassies of represented countries
• Academic staff training – „Teaching in international classroom”
Integration of local students into social and cultural live of the city

The cooperation is initiated mainly by students not by the local organizations or municipality related bodies
Integration of international students into local community is even less emphasized:

- International students are as underestimated as underused resource in social and cultural live of town
- Socio-cultural events (even international ones) are mainly oriented at Lithuanian speaking audience
- Less information and promotion in foreign languages
- National communities are small, activities are not enough promoted, scarce information for international students to join
How to make interaction between town and academic community more effective?

• Start from the analysis of existing practices:
  – comprehensive discussion of how and why the project was initiated
  – who was involved
  – what techniques were employed
  – what were the pitfalls
  – what was the outcome
  – what was the key element of success

• Multiply interaction areas
• Explore win-win opportunities and make outcomes visible
• Increase university involvement into socially sensible activities (gender issues, minorities, socially excluded groups, etc.) – enhance humanistic dimension of education
• Start from small continue further

• Celebrate together!!!
Thank you!

WELCOME TO: www.vilnius.lt www.vgtu.lt