

Comprehensive Report on Gaming Supervision in Lithuania – 2023

1. Introduction

This report provides an in-depth overview of the activities, results, and policy impact of the Gaming Control Authority under the Ministry of Finance of the Republic of Lithuania (hereinafter – Authority) for the year 2023. It focuses on the regulation of the gaming market, protection of the public from gaming-related harm, financial and licensing control, and national and international cooperation efforts.

2. Institutional Role and Strategic Objectives

The Authority acts as the national regulatory institution for the gaming and lottery sectors in Lithuania. Its responsibilities include:

- Licensing and monitoring of gaming operators.
- Ensuring fair, transparent, and responsible gaming environments.
- Reducing social harm associated with gaming.
- Implementing EU and national legislation in the field.

The strategic goals are:

- Enhance regulatory effectiveness.
 - Encourage public safety and responsible entertainment.
 - Promote ethical industry behaviour and reduce problem gaming.
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3. Gaming Participation Trends

In 2023, approximately **12% of the adult Lithuanian population** reported having participated in gaming activities. This figure has remained stable since 2019.

- **Gender gap:** 20% of men versus only 4% of women.
- **Youth prevalence:** Gaming is more common among people aged 18–29.
- **Social familiarity:** 29% of respondents personally knew someone who gambled.

Motivations:

- **56%:** to win money
 - **34%:** for excitement
 - **31%:** to relax
 - **31%:** influenced by friends
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4. Online Gaming Growth

One of the most significant changes in recent years has been the growth of **remote gaming**.

- **55%** of gamblers played online in 2023, up from **40% in 2022**.
 - Popular platforms include sports betting and casino-style games.
 - The increase has been linked to technological accessibility and lifestyle changes post-pandemic.
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5. Problem Gaming and Harm Reduction

Key Findings:

- **2.2%** of respondents are considered problem gamblers.
- **83%** believe gaming can lead to addiction (a 10% rise since 2022).
- **16%** of gamblers have experienced financial issues due to gaming.

While the strategic goal was to reduce the problem gaming rate to **2.1%**, the decline from **2.6% in 2022** still represents meaningful progress.

Prevention efforts included:

- Mass media campaigns.
 - Educational outreach in schools.
 - Direct support services and hotlines.
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6. Licensing and Regulatory Activities

In 2023, the Authority:

- Issued **1 new gaming license**.
- Processed **134 lottery license amendments**.
- Oversaw **189 gaming machine halls, 16 casinos, and 92 betting stations**.
- Approved **38 new gaming machine types** and registered **247 gaming machines**.

Electronic tools such as **LAKIS (Gaming Machine Control Information System)** allowed real-time oversight and data analytics for slot machine activity.

7. Illegal Gaming Enforcement

To combat illegal online gaming:

- DNS and Payment blocking is applied against illegal gaming operators
- **328 illegal domains were blocked in 2023**.

- The **BLOKIS system** was introduced to automate domain tracking and blocking.
- Legal authority was expanded, enabling administrative website restrictions without court approval (in case of mirror sites once already sanctioned by court).
- 1490 domains were backlisted in total by the end of 2023.

This represents a significant leap in regulatory agility and control.

8. Self-Exclusion and Social Support

The **Self-Exclusion Registry**, active since 2017, continued to grow:

- **13,846 new applications** in 2023.
- **15,316 active exclusions** by year-end.

Other support initiatives included:

- Family support groups.
 - Counselling sessions for addicts and relatives.
 - Outreach partnerships with NGOs and schools.
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9. Budget and Resource Management

2023 Financials:

- Approved annual budget: **EUR 992,900**
- Used: **EUR 986,400 (99.3% execution rate)**
- Salaries: **EUR 803,000**
- No EU or external funding was used.

Spending priorities were focused on:

- Human resources
 - Public communication
 - IT infrastructure and training
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10. International Cooperation and Sports Integrity

The Authority is an active member of:

- **GREF** (Gaming Regulators European Forum)
- **ULIS** (United Lotteries for Integrity in Sports)
- **IBIA** (International Betting Integrity Association)

Highlights:

- Hosted the **7th Baltic Gaming Regulators Conference**.
 - Participated in **anti-match-fixing training** in Switzerland.
 - Engaged in cross-border data sharing and monitoring.
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11. Conclusion and 2024 Outlook

The Gaming Control Authority successfully advanced its mission in 2023 by:

- Reducing the national rate of problem gaming.
- Expanding enforcement tools against illegal operators.
- Enhancing digital supervision capabilities.
- Promoting responsible gaming culture.

Key focus areas for 2024:

- Continue to modernize supervision technologies (AI/ML).
- Promote evidence-based policy and regulation.
- Improve education and early intervention programs.