Momentum for more open data in Lithuania: Guest Post by Karolis Granickas

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More than 3 thousand participants, over 70 speakers, pouring presentations, start up fair, workshops and awards - all goes under one name in Lithuania: LOGIN. It is the biggest annual tech conference in the Baltic States, which was held in Vilnius last week.There could not be a better spot to raise the issue of public sector information (PSI) and re-use in Lithuania.

Transparency International Lithuania together with the Ministry of Economy put the issue up for a discussion, gathering together folks from the Ministry of Economy, Ministry of Communications, business and the media to talk about the state of open government data in Lithuania. While it was very vibrant and interesting discussion, let me just take out the three main latest updates raised, that largely reflect the state of the PSI and re-use in Lithuania:

#1 THE MINISTRY OF ECONOMY IS CURRENTLY FINALIZING THE FEASIBILITY STUDY ON OPEN GOVERNMENT DATA (OGD) IN LITHUANIA

It is due in July 2013. The good news to the OGD community is that the draft of the study was put on the wiki and open for everybody to contribute. The opportunity was taken by quite a number of lawyers, geeks, and of course, other public institutions. During discussions with the Information Society Development Committee (ISDC - body responsible for the implementation of information society policy) and other ministries, it is appearent that this document may well become a shared strategic reference point for other institutions to ground and formulate their policies on OGD.

#2 THE GOVERNMENT IS DEVELOPING THE OPEN LICENSE FOR PSI

The Information Society development Committee is currently developing a license for PSI, which is due in July 2013. We still do not know what the license will look like, though ISDC agreed to develop the license in close consultation with the OGD community in the country. Let's hear about it

in a due process.

#3 THE GOVERNMENT IS PREPARING FOR A CENTRALIZED PROVISION OF PSI

The ISDC perceives centralized provision of PSI as the way to go in Lithuania. The plan is to build upon the already created opendata.gov.lt and establish the single portal gathering all the available public sector information into one place. The portal should be ready by 2016. This, however, does not preclude any of the public institutions to establish their own venues to provide their data, as some of them did already.

Goes without saying, there are many more things going on at the moment and the climate for more data in Lithuania has never been more favourable – the issue is covered by the media, the most important stakeholders are involved in the conversation and the newly created vibrant community is bubbling with ideas. We all know, open data can never happen with state's effort alone- the business and the society has an ever more important role to play in shaping the demand and pushing for access to more information.