

Lithuania

Laura Ziferman, WALLESS, Vilnius

Guoda Šileikytė, WALLESS, Vilnius

Raimondas Andrijauskas, WALLESS, Vilnius

1. What is the understanding or definition of AI in your jurisdiction?

The Lithuanian Artificial Intelligence Strategy (the 'Lithuanian Strategy')⁴⁸⁹ is using the definition of artificial intelligence (AI) released by the European Commission's Coordinated Action Plan on AI, which defines AI as:

'systems that display intelligent behavior by analyzing their environment and taking actions, with some degree of autonomy, to achieve specific goals. These systems can be purely software-based (e.g., voice assistants, image analysis software, search engines) or embedded in hardware devices (e.g., advanced robots, autonomous cars, drones).'

2. In your jurisdiction, besides legal tech tools (ie, law firm or claim management, data platforms, etc), are there already actual AI tools or use cases in practice for legal services?

Lithuania's legal sector has seen the gradual integration of AI tools into various aspects of legal services beyond traditional legal technology (legaltech) tools.

While legaltech tools like claim management systems and data platforms are common, there are emerging AI tools and use cases tailored specifically to some legal services. For instance, the Lithuanian commercial website for legal news and information, Infolex, has developed a solution using AI to calculate the probability that draft laws will be adopted; legislative news is read by a machine-generated neutral voice rather than a human announcer on the Parliament of the Republic of Lithuania (Seimas) portal; and Dataistic, a private company, has announced the launch of Dataist, an AI-based General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) paralegal.

These examples show Lithuania's pursuit to be a future leader in AI development, especially in the legal sector (both private and public). Lithuania's Artificial Intelligence Strategy emphasises unique and unparalleled advantages, one of which is to improve the efficiency and quality of the public sector. In this context, some of the AI-based tools such as automatic legal consultation and case outcome forecasting systems are thoroughly considered.

489 Ministry of the Economy and Innovation, "Lithuania Artificial Intelligence Strategy 2019", https://wp.oecd.ai/app/uploads/2021/12/Lithuania_Artificial_Intelligence_Strategy_2019.pdf.

3. If yes, are these AI tools different regarding:

- **independent law firms;**
- **international law firms; and**
- **in-house counsel;**

and what are these differences?

Independent law firms in Lithuania are indeed using AI tools to streamline legal processes such as legal research, contract analysis and document review. These tools help lawyers to efficiently manage large volumes of legal documents, identify relevant case law and extract key information from contracts. Independent firms are often looking for cost-effective and scalable AI solutions to increase productivity and competitiveness in the legal market. So today, algorithms are widely used in legal practice. Due diligence tools that automate the screening of a large number of company documents, identifying important references and specific areas of text are gaining popularity in corporate law.

International law firms operating in Lithuania tend to have access to more advanced AI technologies due to their larger resources and global reach. These firms may invest in AI solutions with sophisticated capabilities such as natural language processing (NLP) for complex legal document analysis, predictive analytics for case outcome predictions and AI-powered virtual assistants to enhance client interactions and service delivery.

In-house counsel within corporations and organisations in Lithuania also deploy AI tools to manage legal workflows, compliance tasks and risk assessment processes efficiently. These tools help automate routine tasks, identify regulatory compliance issues and provide data-driven insights for strategic decision-making within the organisation. In-house counsel typically prioritises AI solutions that integrate well with existing systems and address the specific needs and priorities of their organisation.

In summary, while the core functions of AI tools used in legal services may be similar across independent law firms, international law firms and in-house counsel in Lithuania, differences lie in the scale of deployment, resource availability and specific requirements of each context. International firms may have a wider array of AI tools due to their global presence and resources, while in-house counsel may focus on solutions tailored to their organisation's unique challenges and priorities.

4. What is the current or planned regulatory approach on AI in general?

First, Lithuania, a Member State of the EU, is awaiting the Artificial Intelligence Act's official Council approval and publishing in the EU Official Journal. This law will serve as the foundation for any potential national regulatory actions to advance AI development.

On one hand, the Lithuanian regulators are aware that the over-regulation of AI may limit innovation in the country and lead to a loss of competitive advantage. On the other hand, an overly liberal approach can lead to particularly severe consequences when it is difficult or too late to regulate measures that seriously violate human rights.

In Lithuania, regulation is characterised by active efforts to develop a comprehensive framework to address the various aspects of AI implementation. This includes aspects such as data privacy, cybersecurity, transparency, accountability and fairness of algorithmic decision-making. The Lithuanian government is actively engaging with stakeholders, including industry experts, academics and civil society organisations, to gather insight and perspectives to prepare a robust roadmap on the overall developmental direction of AI. The overarching goal is to create an environment that fosters innovation and economic growth, while ensuring that AI technologies are deployed in an ethical manner and in line with fundamental rights and values.

Key areas of focus in the Lithuanian Strategy include fostering AI research and development, enhancing digital literacy, developing AI governance mechanisms and implementing regulatory frameworks that balance innovation with ethical considerations. Additionally, the Lithuanian government is committed to promoting international collaboration and aligning its AI policies with EU standards.

5. What are the current or planned regulations on the general use of AI or machine learning systems?

The Lithuanian Strategy acknowledges the transformative potential of AI whilst also emphasising the need for responsible governance to reduce potential risks, particularly in relation to the ethical application of AI, which should also involve preserving a close watch on how technology is affecting fundamental human rights.

Lithuania, as a member of the EU, will carry out the rules set forth in the EU AI Act. In order to ensure that Lithuania is prepared for a future with AI, the Strategy outlines a goal to improve and evolve the country's current AI ecosystem. As per the Strategy, Lithuania will concentrate its administrative capabilities on the following key domains and directions:

- (i) **Human capital:** the Strategy emphasises the development of AI skills and competences at all levels of education. Education concerns not only the development of technical skills, but also non-technical education in AI and related programs.
- (ii) **Research and innovation ecosystem:** it is a priority to strengthen the national AI research and innovation institutions and promote collaboration between science, industry and government.
- (iii) **Deployment and use of AI:** deployment of AI in all areas of economic activity in both the private and public sectors. As part of the plan, AI start-ups and companies undergoing AI transformation are encouraged and funded.

- (iv) **Ethical and legal framework:** establishment of legal framework for the sustainable and transparent application of AI. Ensuring the responsible development of AI in a way that is consistent with the interests of people is a priority.
- (v) **Data ecosystem:** emphasis is placed on building a responsible and efficient data management system to support AI applications and data interoperability.

Additionally, investment measures are being planned to support language resource development models for AI use and to assist AI start-ups and businesses. While the Lithuanian Strategy provides policy directions, it does not outline specific financial provisions for implementation, which are up to the government to decide.

6. Is free data access an issue in relation to AI?

Free access to data can facilitate AI innovation by providing researchers and developers with access to large datasets for training and testing machine learning models. This can lead to the creation of new AI applications, products and services that benefit various sectors of the economy.

Like other countries in the EU, Lithuania has certain obstacles when it comes to free access to data in the context of AI advancements. First and foremost, Lithuania is bound by laws pertaining to data privacy, such as the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). This regulation, which has an effect on the advancement of AI, sets strict standards for access to personal data. The rules include requirements for consent, anonymisation and data security. However, in order to preserve AI growth in a way that is ethical and upholds fundamental human rights, these conditions must be met.

On the other hand, the EU's digital strategy, as well as the regulations and directives that have been adopted, create more opportunities for access to data, particularly with regard to data generated by internet of things (IoT) devices. For example, the Data Act seeks to ensure the confidentiality of valuable data while facilitating its seamless transfer between data holders and users.

Additionally, the Lithuanian Strategy highlights the necessity for high-quality, readily available data for AI research. The AI system's precision increases with the quality of the dataset. Data inaccuracies and flaws can result in biased AI models, which can have unethical or discriminating effects.

This is why one of the important aspects of the Lithuanian Strategy is to ensure that data used for AI systems complies with the EU's FAIR (findable, accessible, interoperable and reusable) Data Management principles, as well as to develop an open data ecosystem in the public sector. As part of this ecosystem, sandbox environments are being set up to provide public sector data for the creation of AI technologies. The sandbox's goal is to provide access to public data for individuals and organisations interested in developing AI systems.

7. Are there already actual court decisions on the provision of legal services using AI or decisions concerning other sectors that might be applicable to the use of AI in the provision of legal services?

Like many other nations, Lithuania is progressively investigating how AI might be integrated into a variety of fields, including the legal sector. Yet, as of right now, the authors are not aware of any specific court rulings in Lithuania that specifically address AI in the legal services industry – or any other industry, for that matter.

Regarding the more general trends and ideas surrounding this subject, it is noteworthy that the Lithuanian legal system has an extended tradition of utilising technologies, including:

- e-services portal for judicial proceedings (e.teismas.lt), offering online services pertaining to court procedures, such as data transfers between courts, information about proceedings and the judge's activities and the preparation and presentation of procedural documents. Case management and access to legal information are made easier by such an information system; and
- online court hearings including audio and video recordings which enhance the transparency, participation and recording of the proceedings.

8. What is the current status – planned, discussed, or implemented – of the sectorial legislation in your jurisdiction on the use of AI in the legal profession or services that are traditionally provided by lawyers?

The sectorial legislation in Lithuania that focuses on the application of AI to the legal profession or to services that lawyers typically provide is pending.

However, on 22 March 2024, the Lithuanian Bar Association, the Association of Lithuanian Young Lawyers and the Ministry of Justice organised a conference where one of the primary topics was the application of AI in legal activities. The conference covered a range of topics, including potential legal issues and strategies for resolving them, in addition to the practical applications of AI in the day-to-day work of lawyers.

Discussions are expected to continue and policymakers might propose regulatory actions. Government officials, technology professionals and the legal community must work together to find a balance between innovation and legal ethics. Although law has not yet been put into place, the legal community is actively studying both the opportunities and obstacles posed by AI.

9. What is the role of the national bar organisations or other official professional institutions?

Coordination of the efforts of advocates and other lawyers defending their interests in public institutions and international organisations is greatly aided by the Lithuanian Bar Association. Furthermore, it supports their interests in a variety of circumstances, such as when it formulates laws pertaining to the activities of lawyers and their profession and submits them to the Lithuanian Ministry of Justice.

As previously noted, the Lithuanian Bar Association was one of the organisers of the conference on the application of AI in legal activities on 22 March 2024. The Lithuanian Bar Association will represent the legal community as a whole and help shape Lithuania's legal framework in the event that AI policies pertaining to the legal profession are implemented in the future.

Additionally, the Lithuanian Bar Association offers training and capacity building programmes for advocates, which could enhance their professional abilities.