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PECULIARITIES OF EMPLOYMENT RELATIONSHIPS OF MINOR EMPLOYEES IN LITHUANIA: LEGAL REGULATION AND PROBLEMATICS

Eglė ŠTAREIKĖ
Mykolas Romeris University
Ateities g. 20, 08303 Vilnius, Lithuania
E-mail: egle.stareike@mruni.eu
ORCID ID: 0000-0001-7992-991X

Austėja ZABARSKAITĖ
Mykolas Romeris University
Ateities g. 20, 08303 Vilnius, Lithuania
E-mail: auzabarskaite@stud.mruni.eu
ORCID ID: 0009-0004-5163-9426

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Abstract. *The employment of minors in Lithuania is characterised by specific legal requirements and safeguards aimed at protecting their health, education, and overall well-being. As the participation of minors in the labour market continues to increase, the practical implementation of these safeguards becomes increasingly important. Although Lithuanian legislation establishes a comprehensive legal framework governing the employment of minors, questions remain regarding the effectiveness of its implementation in practice.*

The aim of this study is to analyse the national legal framework governing the employment of persons under eighteen years of age and to identify the main legal and practical issues arising in employment relationships involving minor employees. The research is based on document analysis, comparative analysis, and a quantitative survey of individuals who worked in Lithuania before reaching the age of eighteen. A total of 103 employment experiences were analysed.

The results demonstrate that Lithuanian legislation generally complies with international and European Union standards and provides a broad system of safeguards for minor employees. However, the empirical study revealed significant shortcomings in the practical implementation of these safeguards. The most common violations were related to employment formalities, working and rest time requirements, occupational safety and health, unofficial wage payments, and age-based discrimination. The findings also indicate insufficient awareness of employment rights among minors and a low tendency to seek assistance when faced with potential violations.

The study concludes that, despite the existence of a comprehensive legal framework, the protection of minor employees in practice remains insufficient. Strengthening supervision mechanisms and improving minors' awareness of their employment rights are essential for ensuring more effective implementation of existing legal safeguards.

Keywords: *labor law, employment conditions of minors, labour law violations, Lithuania.*

Introduction

The relevance of this study is determined by the increasing participation of minors in the labour market in Lithuania and other European Union Member States. According to Eurostat data, an increasing number of young people begin working while pursuing their education, and combining work and studies has become a common part of youth experience (Eurostat, 2025). As a result, the employment of minors is no longer an isolated phenomenon and requires effective legal regulation and supervision.

The relevance of this topic in Lithuania is further reinforced by the fact that minors are most frequently employed in the service, retail, and seasonal work sectors. Violations related to working hours, rest periods, occupational safety, and remuneration occur more frequently in these sectors. Data published by the State Labour Inspectorate indicate that cases of non-

compliance with legal requirements concerning the employment of minors are still identified in practice (State Labour Inspectorate, 2025). This raises questions about the adequacy and effectiveness of the existing legal framework.

Employment relationships involving minors are closely linked to their health, psychological well-being, and educational development. Improperly organised work may negatively affect their physical and emotional condition, academic performance, and social development (Mortimer, 2010, pp. 3-5). Therefore, the regulation of minor employment is important not only in labour law but also in the broader context of child rights protection.

This article addresses the participation of minors in employment relationships and the legal regulation of such relationships in Lithuania. Although the employment of minors is governed by specific legal norms, practical challenges remain in their application and enforcement. Therefore, the study seeks to evaluate the legal regulation governing the employment of persons under eighteen years of age and to identify the main legal and practical issues arising in employment relationships involving minor employees.

The object of the research is the legal regulation governing the employment of minors and the practical issues arising from its implementation in Lithuania.

The aim of this scientific article is to analyse the national legal framework governing the employment of persons under eighteen years of age and to identify the main legal and practical issues arising in employment relationships involving minor employees.

The study employs both theoretical and empirical **research methods**. The document analysis method is used to examine national and international legal acts, scientific literature, and other sources related to the employment of minors. Comparative analysis is applied to assess the Lithuanian legal framework in the context of European and international standards.

The empirical part of the study is based on a quantitative survey conducted through an anonymous online questionnaire. The survey sought to examine how the legal regulation governing the employment of minors is implemented in practice, identify the most common labour law violations, and assess minors' awareness of their employment rights and available mechanisms for reporting violations. Based on the collected data, the study analyses the experiences of individuals who worked before reaching the age of eighteen and evaluates the working conditions provided to them.

Data were collected between 24 October 2025 and 14 November 2025 using Google Forms. Respondents were recruited through the administration of Utena Dauniškis Gymnasium, social media platforms (Instagram and Messenger), and fourth-year students of the Law and Criminology study programme at Mykolas Romeris University. The final sample consisted of 103 reported employment experiences involving individuals who had worked in Lithuania before reaching the age of eighteen.

Most respondents were young adults: 66% were aged 21-25 and 24.3% were aged 18-21. In addition, 3.9% of respondents were under the age of 18, while the remaining 5.8% were over 25 years of age. Consequently, more than 90% of respondents were younger than 25 years of age, indicating that the reported employment experiences as minors had occurred relatively recently.

The questionnaire consisted of 57 questions, including two demographic questions, fifty-three closed-ended questions, and two open-ended questions aimed at identifying possible violations of minors' labour rights and assessing awareness of employment rights. The questionnaire was designed using branching logic, ensuring that respondents were presented only with questions relevant to their age, employment period, and employment experience. Consequently, the number of questions answered varied among respondents. Participants who had more than one employment experience while being minors were allowed to complete the

questionnaire more than once. Therefore, the unit of analysis in this study is an individual employment experience rather than the respondent.

The study employed a non-probability convenience sampling method. Therefore, the findings cannot be considered representative of all minor employees in Lithuania. Nevertheless, they provide valuable insights into the practical implementation of legal requirements governing the employment of minors and the challenges encountered by young workers in practice.

During the preparation and implementation of the research, the fundamental principles of research ethics were observed (Gaižauskaitė & Mikėnė, 2014, pp. 45-50). At the beginning of the questionnaire, respondents were informed about the purpose of the study and the intended use of the collected data. Participation was voluntary, and no personally identifiable information was collected, including names, e-mail addresses, telephone numbers, login details, or similar information. The anonymity of respondents was ensured throughout the research process.

The survey results were used to assess the practical implementation of legal requirements governing the employment of minors in Lithuania, identify the most common labour law violations, and evaluate minors' awareness of their employment rights. The findings contribute to a better understanding of the challenges associated with the employment of minors and the effectiveness of the existing legal framework.

Peculiarities and restrictions of employment relationships involving minors

The legal regulation of the employment of minors in Lithuania is based on international, European Union, and national legal instruments. The purpose of this legal framework is to protect minors from economic exploitation and to ensure that employment does not negatively affect their health, development, education, or overall well-being. Therefore, the analysis begins with the international and European legal framework and subsequently examines its implementation in Lithuanian law.

At the international level, the employment of minors is primarily regulated by the conventions of the International Labour Organization (ILO). Among the fundamental ILO conventions, Convention No. 138 concerning the Minimum Age for Admission to Employment and Convention No. 182 concerning the Worst Forms of Child Labour are particularly significant. Convention No. 138 establishes minimum age requirements for employment and provides that the minimum age for admission to employment shall not be lower than fifteen years. However, persons aged thirteen to fifteen may perform light work provided that such work does not harm their health, development, or education (International Labour Organization Convention No. 138 concerning the Minimum Age for Admission to Employment, 1973). Convention No. 182 complements this framework by requiring states to eliminate the worst forms of child labour. Together, these conventions form the core international legal framework for the protection of children in employment relationships (Mačernytė Panomariovienė, 2010, p. 101; Mačernytė Panomariovienė, Wrocławska, 2025, p. 101).

At the European Union level, the protection of young workers is governed by Council Directive 94/33/EC of 22 June 1994 on the protection of young people at work. The Directive establishes minimum standards concerning the admission of young persons to employment, working time, rest periods, night work, and occupational safety. It defines a child as a person under fifteen years of age or a person who is still subject to compulsory full-time schooling under national law. An adolescent is defined as a person between fifteen and eighteen years of age who is no longer subject to compulsory schooling (Council Directive 94/33/EC of 22 June

1994 on the protection of young people at work, 2019). These definitions provide a common framework for the protection of young workers throughout the European Union.

The requirements established by international and European Union law are implemented in Lithuania primarily through the Labour Code of the Republic of Lithuania, the Law on Safety and Health at Work of the Republic of Lithuania, and the Law on Education of the Republic of Lithuania. These legal acts regulate the admission of minors to employment, working and rest time limitations, occupational safety requirements, annual leave, and the termination of employment relationships.

Lithuanian law defines a minor as a person under eighteen years of age, except where a person who has reached the age of sixteen has acquired full legal capacity through emancipation or marriage. The Law on Safety and Health at Work distinguishes two categories of minors: children and adolescents. A child is a person under sixteen years of age, while an adolescent is a person between sixteen and eighteen years of age (The Law on Safety and Health at Work of the Republic of Lithuania, 2026).

This distinction is closely linked to the Lithuanian education system. Education is compulsory until the age of sixteen (The Law on Education of the Republic of Lithuania, 2026). Consequently, different legal requirements apply to children and adolescents entering employment relationships.

The employment of children is subject to stricter regulation and constitutes an exception to the general rule. Under Lithuanian labour law, a person normally acquires legal working capacity at the age of sixteen. However, children aged fourteen and above may also be employed under specific conditions. In such cases, the consent of parents or legal representatives is required and, where prescribed by law, the consent of the educational institution must also be obtained.

One of the most important safeguards established for minors concerns the regulation of working and rest time. Guarantees may be defined as material and non-material measures established by the state to ensure the effective protection of human rights and freedoms (Bagdanskis et al., 2018, p. 253).

Article 111 of the Labour Code defines working time as any period during which an employee is at the employer's disposal or performs duties under an employment contract. Working time also includes preparation for work, physiological and special breaks, mandatory health examinations, and other periods established by labour law. Rest time, by contrast, is time free from work obligations (Bagdanskis et al., 2018; Davulis, 2018, pp. 348-352; The Law on the Approval, Entry into Force and Implementation of the Labour Code of the Republic of Lithuania, 2026).

Working time and rest time are closely related. The duration of working time determines both the employee's rest period and remuneration. Since education remains compulsory until the age of sixteen and employment must not interfere with the educational process, the legislator has established stricter working time limitations for minors.

The legal requirements differ for children and adolescents. As a general rule, both groups may work during the academic year provided that work is not performed during school hours. Children may work up to six hours per day and thirty hours per week during school holidays. During the academic year, they may work up to twelve hours per week, including no more than two hours on a school day and no more than six hours on a non-school day. Night work is prohibited. Children may not work between 8 p.m. and 6 a.m., and they are also prohibited from working before school between 6 a.m. and 7 a.m. (The Law on Safety and Health at Work of the Republic of Lithuania, 2026).

These restrictions are consistent with European Union requirements. Council Directive 94/33/EC provides that children may work up to two hours on school days and up to twelve hours per week during the academic year. Outside the academic year, children may work up to seven hours per day and thirty-five hours per week, while adolescents aged fifteen and above may work up to eight hours per day and forty hours per week. The Directive also prohibits night work for children between 8 p.m. and 6 a.m. (Council Directive 94/33/EC of 22 June 1994 on the protection of young people at work, 2019).

Lithuanian regulation therefore complies with the minimum standards established by European Union law. In some respects, it provides stronger protection, as the permitted working hours for children are lower than those allowed under the Directive.

Adolescents are permitted to work longer hours than children. Their working time may not exceed eight hours per day, including time spent in education, and forty hours per week, including school hours. Adolescents are also prohibited from performing night work. However, unlike children, they may work until 10 p.m., as night work is prohibited only between 10 p.m. and 6 a.m. (The Law on Safety and Health at Work of the Republic of Lithuania, 2026). These requirements also correspond to Council Directive 94/33/EC of 22 June 1994 on the protection of young people at work (Council Directive 94/33/EC of 22 June 1994 on the protection of young people at work, 2019).

In addition to working time restrictions, minors are entitled to enhanced rest guarantees. Both children and adolescents must be granted at least two rest days per week, preferably consecutively, one of which must be Sunday. Where working time or practical training exceeds four hours, minors must also be provided with an additional break of at least thirty minutes. Furthermore, minors are entitled to a minimum uninterrupted daily rest period within each twenty-four-hour period. Children must receive at least fourteen consecutive hours of rest, while adolescents must receive at least twelve consecutive hours (The Law on Safety and Health at Work of the Republic of Lithuania, 2026). These guarantees correspond to the requirements established by Council Directive 94/33/EC and are intended to ensure that employment does not negatively affect a minor's health, development, or educational process (Council Directive 94/33/EC of 22 June 1994 on the protection of young people at work, 2019).

Minors are also granted broader rights regarding annual leave. Article 126(1) of the Labour Code defines annual leave as time free from work granted to an employee for rest and recovery while maintaining entitlement to holiday pay (The Law on the Approval, Entry into Force and Implementation of the Labour Code of the Republic of Lithuania, 2026). The Court of Justice of the European Union has emphasised that the purpose of paid annual leave is to enable employees to rest and enjoy leisure and recreational activities (Court of Justice of the European Union, Judgment of 10 September 2009 in Case C-277/08, Francisco Vicente Pereda v Madrid Movilidad SA, CURIA).

Both children and adolescents are entitled to extended annual leave of twenty-five working days. Additional safeguards apply to children. At the child's request, annual leave must be granted during school holidays. In addition, an uninterrupted rest period of at least fourteen calendar days during the summer holidays must be ensured. Even where a child works throughout the entire summer holiday period, he or she must still be granted at least fourteen consecutive calendar days of annual or unpaid leave.

Minors also benefit from the general annual leave guarantees applicable to all employees. At least one part of annual leave must consist of no fewer than ten working days. Furthermore, annual leave may not be replaced by monetary compensation, except upon the termination of employment relationships (The Law on the Approval, Entry into Force and Implementation of the Labour Code of the Republic of Lithuania, 2026).

The protection of minors extends not only to the performance of work but also to the termination of employment relationships. As a general rule, the grounds for terminating an employment contract with a minor do not differ from those applicable to adult employees. Article 53 of the Labour Code provides that an employment contract may be terminated by agreement of the parties, on the initiative of either party, at the employer's will, without the will of the parties, upon the death of a party, in other specific circumstances established by law, or on other grounds provided for in the Labour Code and other legal acts (Davulis, 2018, pp. 206-207).

However, Lithuanian law establishes one additional safeguard for children under sixteen years of age. Article 60(1)(3) of the Labour Code requires an employer to terminate an employment contract without prior notice if such a request is submitted by one of the child's parents or legal representatives, the physician supervising the child's health, or, during the academic year, the educational institution attended by the child (The Law on the Approval, Entry into Force and Implementation of the Labour Code of the Republic of Lithuania, 2026).

From the employer's perspective, this provision may appear restrictive. Nevertheless, the rule serves an important protective purpose. Persons under sixteen years of age may lack sufficient life experience to assess whether employment is compatible with their health, education, or overall well-being. For this reason, the legislator grants parents, legal representatives, healthcare professionals, and educational institutions the right to initiate the prompt termination of employment where continued work may be contrary to the child's interests.

In summary, the Lithuanian legal framework governing the employment of minors largely implements the standards established by international and European Union law. In several areas, it provides stronger protection than the minimum standards required by European Union legislation. These safeguards include reduced working hours, restrictions on night work, enhanced rest periods, extended annual leave, and additional guarantees concerning the termination of employment relationships. Compliance with these requirements is a fundamental obligation of employers and serves to protect minors' rights to education, health, and safe working conditions.

Empirical analysis of the experiences and problematics of minor employees in Lithuania

The empirical part of the study examines the practical implementation of the legal safeguards governing the employment of minors in Lithuania. The analysis focuses on compliance with labour law requirements, the prevalence of labour law violations, and minors' awareness of their employment rights.

Of the 103 reported employment experiences, 65% related to female respondents and 35% to male respondents. Most respondents were young adults: 66% were aged 21-25 and 24.3% were aged 18-21. In addition, 3.9% of respondents were under the age of 18, while the remaining 5.8% were over 25 years of age. Consequently, more than 90% of respondents were younger than 25 years of age, indicating that the reported employment experiences as minors had occurred relatively recently.

Respondents were also asked to indicate the age at which the reported employment experience had occurred. The majority of employment experiences (84.5%) concerned adolescents aged 16-17, while 15.5% related to children aged 14-15. This distribution is consistent with the legal framework analysed in the theoretical part of the study. Employment opportunities for adolescents are significantly broader than those available to children, whose

employment is subject to stricter legal restrictions. As a result, adolescents participate in the labour market more frequently and are therefore more strongly represented in the survey results.

The following sections analyse compliance with the legal requirements governing the employment of minors and assess the prevalence of labour law violations identified through the survey.

Among respondents describing employment experiences at the age of 14-15 (n = 16), most reported relatively recent employment experiences, having worked within the previous five years. Employment was concentrated primarily in cities and towns (50%) and most frequently in the trade and customer service sector (50%). Other respondents reported employment in advertising, events, arts or sports activities, agriculture or seasonal outdoor work, and construction or repair work (see Figure 1). The majority of respondents (75%) worked during summer holidays, while the remaining respondents worked during the academic year.

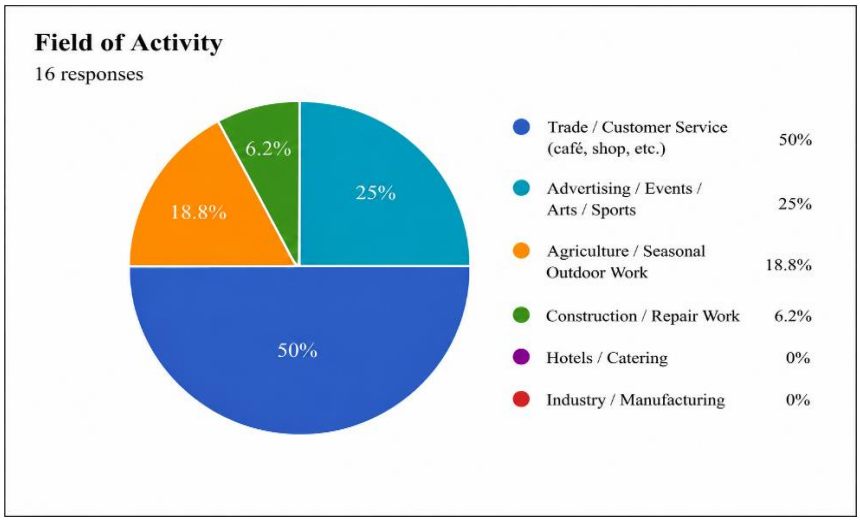


Figure 1. Distribution of employment experiences among respondents aged 14-15 by field of activity, % (n = 16)

The analysis of employment experiences during the academic year among respondents aged 14-15 (n = 4) revealed several significant breaches of legal requirements. Lithuanian law requires the consent of both parents (or guardians) and the educational institution when children are employed during the academic year. However, none of the respondents indicated that all required consents had been obtained. This finding suggests a lack of compliance with formal employment requirements and raises concerns regarding the effectiveness of legal safeguards intended to protect child employees.

Although all respondents stated that they did not work during school lessons and complied with the prohibition of night work, violations related to working and rest time requirements were identified. Twenty-five per cent of respondents exceeded the maximum permitted working time on school days, while 50% exceeded the daily working time limit on non-school days. Most notably, 75% exceeded the maximum weekly working time limit of 12 hours. These findings indicate that, although the fundamental restrictions related to education and night work were generally respected, compliance with working time limitations was considerably weaker.

The survey also revealed shortcomings in the protection of minors' rest time. Most respondents reported that they were not granted the mandatory 30-minute break when working for more than four hours per day. Although the majority indicated that they were provided with at least two rest days per week, some respondents selected the answer option "usually" rather than "always". This suggests that compliance with rest time requirements was inconsistent and depended largely on the practices of individual employers.

A similar pattern was observed among respondents aged 14-15 who worked during summer holidays (n = 12). One-third of respondents reported that the legally required parental or guardian consent had not been obtained before employment. In addition, 50% exceeded the maximum permitted daily working time of six hours, while one-third exceeded the weekly working time limit or worked later than the legally permitted time of 8 p.m.

The results also indicate shortcomings in ensuring adequate rest. Some respondents reported receiving mandatory breaks only rarely, despite the legal requirement to provide such breaks. Although most respondents were granted at least two rest days per week, several cases revealed deficiencies in ensuring proper rest periods. Furthermore, 25% of respondents who worked throughout the summer holiday period were not granted the mandatory uninterrupted 14-day leave period required by law.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that violations among employees aged 14-15 were most frequently related to working time limits, rest periods, and formal employment requirements. While the most fundamental protections, such as the prohibition of work during school hours and restrictions on night work, were generally observed, compliance with several other legal safeguards established specifically for child employees remained insufficient.

A total of 87 respondents described employment experiences at the age of 16-17. Employment was concentrated primarily in cities and towns (63%). The most common field of activity was trade and customer service (46%), followed by industry and manufacturing (18.4%), construction or repair work, and agriculture or seasonal outdoor work (see Figure 2). Smaller proportions of respondents worked in hotels and catering, advertising, events, arts or sports activities, and other sectors, including telephone sales and road maintenance.

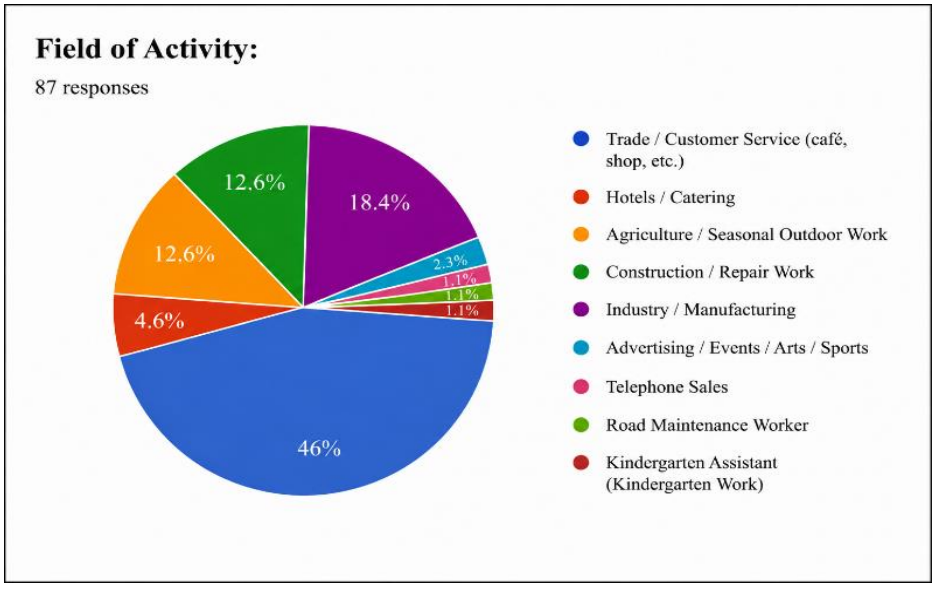


Figure 2. Distribution of employment experiences of respondents aged 16-17 according to field of activity, % (n = 87).

The majority of respondents (83.9%) worked during summer holidays, while 13.8% worked during the academic year and 2.3% reported working after leaving school. This distinction is important because Lithuanian labour law establishes different working and rest time requirements depending on whether a minor is employed during the academic year or outside it.

The analysis of employment experiences during the academic year among respondents aged 16-17 (n = 12) revealed several significant violations of legal requirements. Although most respondents (91.7%) stated that they did not work during school lessons, 8.3% reported that they did. This finding is particularly important because Lithuanian law explicitly prohibits employment that interferes with compulsory education.

The most common violations concerned working time limits. Three-quarters of respondents stated that the combined duration of school lessons and work usually or always exceeded eight hours per day. The same proportion reported exceeding the maximum weekly working time limit of forty hours. In addition, 41.7% finished work at 10 p.m. or later despite the prohibition of night work for minors of this age. These findings suggest that legal safeguards intended to ensure a balance between education and employment are not always effectively implemented in practice.

Shortcomings were also identified in relation to rest time. Some respondents reported that they rarely or never received the mandatory 30-minute break, while 41.6% indicated that they rarely or never had two rest days per week. This demonstrates that compliance with rest time requirements was inconsistent and depended largely on the practices of individual employers.

A similar pattern emerged among respondents aged 16-17 who worked during summer holidays or after leaving school (n = 75). Although the legal restrictions applicable during this period are less stringent than those applicable during the academic year, substantial violations were still identified. Almost half of respondents (48%) worked more than eight hours per day, while 45.3% exceeded the maximum weekly working time limit of forty hours. Furthermore, 24% reported finishing work at 10 p.m. or later.

The survey results also revealed shortcomings in the protection of minors' right to rest. Although some respondents reported receiving mandatory breaks and rest days, 30.6% stated that they rarely or never received a 30-minute break, while 10.7% rarely or never had two rest days per week. These findings indicate that compliance with working and rest time requirements remains problematic even during periods when minors are permitted to work longer hours.

The analysis of employment formalities among all respondents (n = 103) revealed additional concerns. A total of 34% of respondents reported that they had not signed a written employment contract, while 33% indicated that their employer had not notified Sodra of their employment. Given that a written employment contract and notification of employment to Sodra are fundamental requirements of lawful employment, these findings suggest that informal employment remains a significant issue among minor employees despite the legal obligation to formalise employment relationships before work begins.

The survey also identified shortcomings in the protection of occupational safety and health. Only 23.3% of respondents reported receiving proper workplace safety instruction, whereas 35% stated that they had received no safety instruction at all. Personal protective equipment was provided to 37.9% of respondents, while 26.2% received it only partially and 8.7% did not receive it at all. Particularly concerning is the fact that 22.3% of respondents believed that they had probably performed work prohibited for minors. This finding is particularly concerning because the prohibition of hazardous work constitutes one of the key

safeguards established by both Lithuanian and international labour law for the protection of minors.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that the most common violations experienced by respondents aged 16-17 were related to excessive working hours, insufficient rest periods, deficiencies in employment formalities, and shortcomings in occupational safety and health. Although Lithuanian law provides a comprehensive system of safeguards for minor employees, the results indicate that these protections are not always fully implemented in practice.

In terms of remuneration, most respondents were paid either an hourly wage (52.4%) or a monthly salary (34%) (see Figure 3).

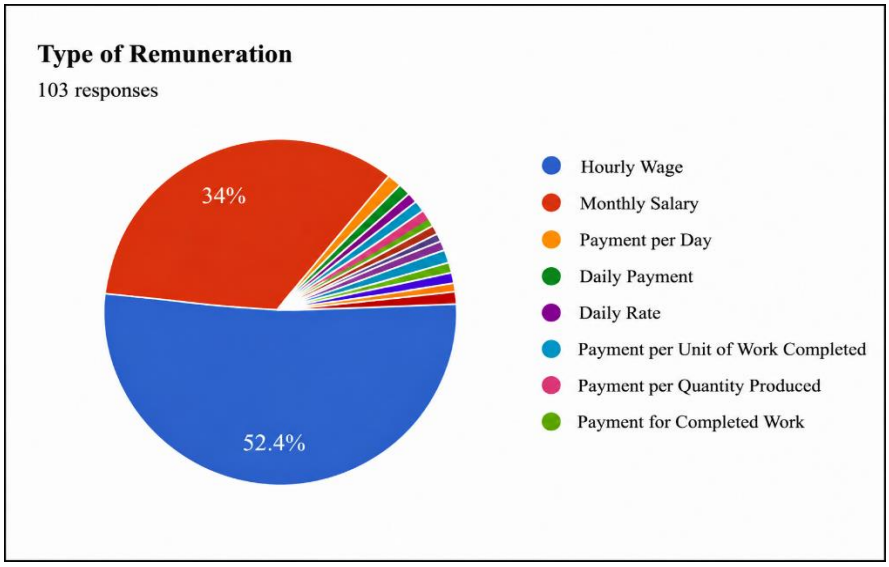


Figure 3. Distribution of respondents according to the type of remuneration received, % (n = 103).

Although remuneration was generally paid using standard payment arrangements, several findings indicate shortcomings in compliance with labour law requirements. A total of 7.8% of respondents reported receiving less than the applicable minimum wage, while 23.3% did not know whether their remuneration complied with the minimum wage requirements. This suggests that a considerable proportion of minor employees lack sufficient information about their employment rights and wage entitlements.

Most respondents (82.5%) stated that their wages were paid on time and in full. However, 41.7% reported receiving part of their remuneration unofficially, commonly referred to as payment "in an envelope". Such practices not only violate labour and tax regulations but may also negatively affect employees' social guarantees, including social insurance contributions and future benefit entitlements.

The survey also revealed manifestations of age-based discrimination. Discrimination during recruitment was reported by 5.8% of respondents, while 21.4% experienced discriminatory treatment in the workplace. These findings indicate that unequal treatment based on age remains a relevant issue for some minor employees.

Among respondents who experienced discrimination (n = 22), the most common forms were degrading remarks and bullying (68.2%), less favourable work schedules or shifts (50%), assignment of more dangerous tasks (22.7%), and lower pay for the same work compared with adult employees (18.2%) (see Figure 4).

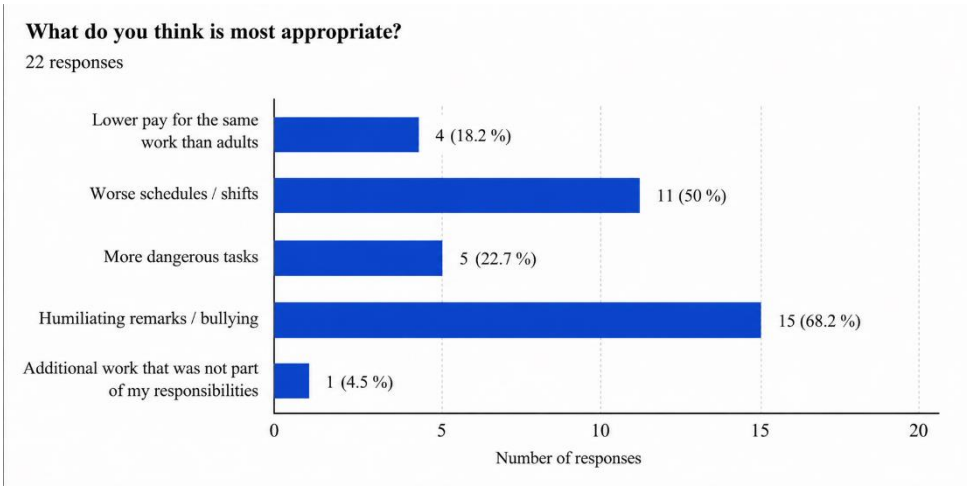


Figure 4. Forms of Discrimination Experienced in the Workplace, % (n = 22)

The prevalence of degrading treatment and unfavourable working conditions suggests that some employers may perceive minor employees as a more vulnerable group with limited ability to defend their rights. Such practices are inconsistent with the principle of equal treatment established in labour law.

The survey also demonstrated insufficient awareness of employment rights among minors. Only 15.5% of respondents stated that they knew their rights as minor employees, while 48.5% reported knowing them only partially. More than one-third of respondents (35.9%) indicated that they did not know their rights at all.

A particularly important finding is that only 5.8% of respondents sought assistance when faced with violations of their rights. The most common reasons for not seeking help were lack of knowledge of employment rights (66%), uncertainty about where to seek assistance (28%), fear of losing employment (20%), and disbelief that seeking assistance would be effective (16%) (see Figure 5).

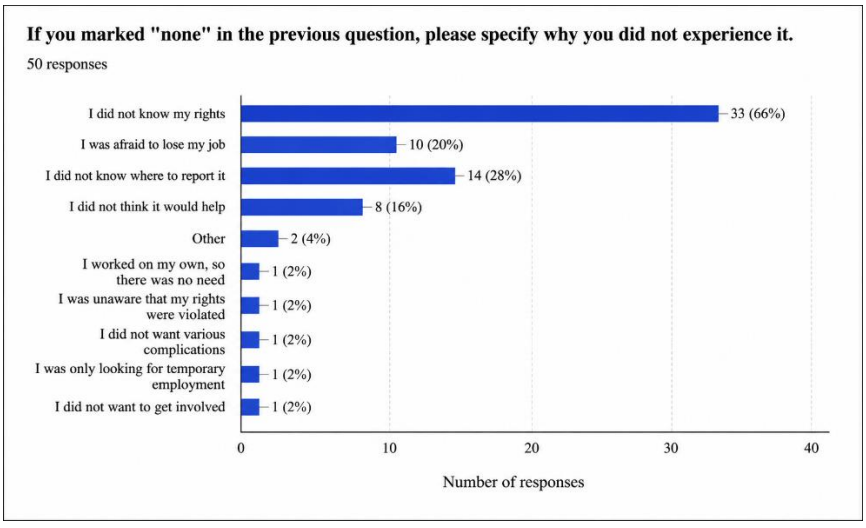


Figure 5. Distribution of reasons for not seeking assistance following violations of minor employees' rights, % (n = 50).

These findings suggest that the protection of minor employees depends not only on the existence of legal safeguards but also on awareness of those safeguards and access to effective support mechanisms. Even where legal protection exists, it may remain ineffective if minors do not know their rights or are reluctant to report violations.

The majority of respondents (91.3%) also indicated that schools should provide more information about the rights of minor employees. This finding highlights the important role of educational institutions in promoting legal awareness and preparing young people for participation in employment relationships.

Overall, the results demonstrate that the legal regulation governing the employment of minors is not implemented consistently in practice. The most common violations were related to working and rest time requirements, employment formalities, occupational safety and health, unofficial wage payments, and insufficient awareness of employment rights. Although Lithuanian law establishes a comprehensive framework for the protection of minor employees, significant shortcomings remain in its practical application. The findings suggest that more effective supervision mechanisms and greater efforts to improve minors' awareness of their employment rights are necessary to strengthen the protection of minor employees in practice.

Conclusions

The analysis of the national legal framework governing the employment of persons under eighteen years of age demonstrated that Lithuanian legislation establishes a comprehensive system of safeguards for minor employees. The Labour Code, the Law on Safety and Health at Work, and the Law on Education regulate the admission of minors to employment, working and rest time, annual leave, occupational safety and health requirements, and the termination of employment relationships. The analysis also showed that Lithuanian legal regulation is generally consistent with international and European Union standards and, in some areas, provides a higher level of protection than the minimum standards established by European Union law.

The empirical study identified several legal and practical issues arising in employment relationships involving minor employees. The most common violations were related to employment formalities, working and rest time requirements, occupational safety and health, unofficial wage payments, and age-based discrimination. Violations were identified among both children aged 14-15 and adolescents aged 16-17, indicating that the legal safeguards established for minor employees are not always effectively implemented in practice.

The results also revealed insufficient awareness of employment rights among minors. Most respondents knew their rights only partially or did not know them at all, while only a small proportion sought assistance when faced with potential violations. The main reasons for not seeking help were a lack of knowledge about employment rights, uncertainty regarding where to seek assistance, fear of losing employment, and doubts about the effectiveness of reporting violations.

The findings suggest that, despite the existence of a comprehensive legal framework, significant shortcomings remain in its practical application. Therefore, more effective supervision mechanisms, greater employer compliance with labour law requirements, and improved awareness of employment rights among minors are necessary to strengthen the protection of minor employees and ensure the effective implementation of existing legal safeguards in practice.

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El. paštas: vsa@mruni.eu