

# Ethnic Intolerance in the Lithuanian Press

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## SUMMARY

### Introduction

Although many forms of ethnic and racial intolerance and xenophobia exist, the verbal expression of ethnic intolerance—manifestations of ethnic intolerance and xenophobia in public discourse (particularly in the press)—became especially important after Lithuania's accession to the European Union. Two major factors influenced the importance of verbal expression of ethnic intolerance: first, as migration flows increased after the opening of the borders, the media started addressing issues of migrant groups (Chechen, Muslim, etc.) more often; and second, after the accession of Lithuania into the European Union, common EU principles of equality and non-discrimination were to be implemented, including policies on the media, which is an important contributor to public attitudes toward ethnic, religious, racial, etc. groups. In accordance with EU directives and recommendations, manifestations of ethnic intolerance and ethnic hatred started being monitored in Lithuania (also in the Lithuanian press). The importance of the verbal form of ethnic intolerance is manifested in contemporary Lithuanian society. For instance, the development of information portals in the Internet and freedom to anonymously comment on press articles has led to a significant increase in exceptionally intolerant and hostile comments, often inciting to others to commit acts of violence against certain ethnic, racial, or religious groups or even murder members of those groups. These comments are often acknowledged as an indicator of ethnic intolerance in Lithuanian society, not only by social scientists analyzing this phenomenon, but also by mainstream society and politicians, who often attempt to deny the existence of ethnic intolerance toward some ethnic groups (especially Roma and Jews).

The significance of ethnic intolerance in the press is also supported by an annually increasing number of registered crimes defined in Article 170 of the *Lithuanian Criminal Code* (Incitement against Any National, Racial, Ethnic, Religious or Other Group of Persons). According to data collected by the Centre of Ethnic Studies of Institute for Social Research, 79 hate crime offences were registered in 2008, whereas only 32 were registered in 2007 and 11 in 2006 (for comparison, two hate crime offences were registered in 2005

and five in 2004) (*National Data Collection Report 2006 Lithuania*: 44; *National Data Collection Report 2007 Lithuania*: 89). Two major factors behind the increased numbers of registered hate crimes could be the significant increase in daily Internet use and the ratification of *the Additional Protocol to the Convention on cybercrime, concerning the criminalization of acts of a racist and xenophobic nature committed through computer systems*; this is the only legal document preventing ethnic and racial intolerance in virtual space.

It is important to understand the role of the media in spreading ethnic intolerance. The importance of the press in this process can be demonstrated by comparing the number of articles published about certain ethnic groups and the data received from surveys of public attitudes toward the same ethnic groups. It can be observed that as the number of articles and news messages about ethnic groups increased in the printed media in Lithuania (513 articles in 2004, 647 in 2005, 931 in 2006, and 1280 in 2007), negative attitudes towards certain ethnic groups also increased (according to the data of the European Values Survey [1990 and 1999] and of surveys of the attitudes of Lithuanian residents conducted by the Centre of Ethnic Studies of the Institute for Social Research in 2005–2008).

Therefore, the issue of defining verbal attacks against any national, racial, ethnic, religious, etc. groups of persons is becoming more and more problematic, especially because the forms of expression of ethnic intolerance are changing over time and are becoming less open and clearly recognizable, hence less easily measurable using empirical methods. Practical application of theory is also problematic because it is difficult to draw a clear line between racist expressions and freedom of speech. Hence, the main problem in this study is the assessment of the concept of ethnic intolerance and measurement of ethnic intolerance in media discourse.

The objective of the research is to examine in what forms and how ethnic intolerance is constructed in the press through presentation of topics, problems, named causers of the problems, and their causality (i.e. by introducing/presenting explanations of causes of the problems).

The main body of empirical data was collected during qualitative research of printed and Internet dailies, which consisted of two parts: (1) press content analysis and (2) structured interviews with experts (politicians, officials, representatives of ethnic minorities, and journalists). A total of 21 interviews were conducted in January and February of 2008 in Kaunas and Vilnius. The texts for the press content analysis were collected from the three main Lithuanian dailies—*Respublika*, *Lietuvos rytas*, and *Lietuvos žinios*—as well as the Internet dailies *Delfi*, *Omni (Balsas)* and *Bernardinai*, covering the period of January 2005–June 2007. The texts from printed and Internet dailies were collected by using a few keywords: ethnonyms (the names of the main ethnic groups—

Roma/Gypsies<sup>122</sup>, Russians, Jews, Polish, Chechen, etc.), labels of various immigrant groups (refugees, immigrants, etc.), and names of religious groups (Muslims, Jews, Orthodox, etc.). A total of 455 texts (of printed and Internet dailies) were collected for the media content analysis. In order to analyze the contents of ethnic intolerance in the Lithuanian press, the research was carried out in several stages. For the research, the qualitative method of content analysis was used. In the first and second stages of the research, the main topics of articles concerning ethnic, religious and immigrant groups were discerned and the visibility of these groups in certain topics was analyzed. In the third and fourth stages, the topics of problematic interethnic relations and their causality, as well as manifestations of ethnic intolerance, were analyzed according to the operationalization scheme created.

Data from some surveys on attitudes toward ethnic groups in Lithuania was also used in this study.

This work presents a novel approach to the phenomenon of ethnic intolerance and its research in printed and Internet dailies. It presents a method of discerning the premises of ethnic intolerance by analyzing the presentation of interethnic relations in public discourse (printed and Internet dailies) and defines possible forms and verbal manifestations of ethnic intolerance. Verbal manifestations of ethnic intolerance are defined using empirical studies that present the scale of manifestations of ethnic intolerance in public discourse. Building upon four theoretical perspectives (economic, psychological, cultural, and political) analyzing the causality of ethnic intolerance in interethnic relations, the premises of ethnic intolerance in the Lithuanian press are discerned.

After analyzing previous research of ethnic and racial intolerance and their methodology, it has been decided not to analyze quantifiable ethnic intolerance in separate texts, but to study the context of press content, in which interethnic relations are presented.

The aim of this research is to analyze ethnic intolerance in the press using analytical tools. Normative evaluation of ethnic intolerance and its prevention is not presented.

This research is based on several premises that are examined and grounded in the study. First, the topics of interethnic relations in Lithuanian press are related to economic arguments explaining the causality of describing problems. Second, each ethnic/religious group—Roma, Jews, Polish, Russians, Muslims and immigrants (which involves different ethnic/religious groups)—is linked to different topics in that Lithuanian press. Third, the main agents in the formation of public opinion about ethnic groups and interethnic relations are

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<sup>122</sup> In this study, the names *Roma* and *Gypsies* are used as synonyms for the same ethnic group.

the representatives of the ethnic majority, not of ethnic minorities. Finally, aggressive forms of ethnic intolerance—incitement to discriminate, be hostile, or engage in violence—are not used in press discourse.

The study consists of an introduction, three main parts, and conclusions. The first part is theoretical; it analyzes the definition of ethnic intolerance in media discourse. In the second part, the concepts of ethnic/racial intolerance and xenophobia used in European Union law and the main principles of common policies in the field of racial intolerance and xenophobia are analyzed. The transposition of EU law to national law in Lithuania is examined. The third part presents the data and analysis of the empirical research of the Lithuanian press. In addition to conclusions, policy recommendations for prevention of ethnic intolerance and xenophobia in the Lithuanian press are presented.

## Theoretical framework of the research

The research model was created by combining the study of the theoretical insights of different authors, grouped into theoretical perspectives—economic, psychological, cultural and political—that analyze the causality of ethnic intolerance in interethnic relations (tensions, negative attitudes, incongruity of interests, and confrontation) and the given potential verbal forms of ethnic intolerance (“the discourse of silence”, subtle (hidden) prejudice and stereotypes, harassment (verbal abuse, threats, and disdain, hate speech, and incitement in the media to discriminate, be hostile, and engage in violence).

The economic theoretical perspective is based on the theories of the *split labour market* and *middleman minorities*, cultural theories of *labour market segmentation*, and the *dynamics of ethnic competition and conflict* (Bonacich, Horowitz, Hechter, Olzak). The psychological perspective is based on the cognitive and scapegoat theories (Allport). The cultural perspective is based on ideas of cultural determinism and ethnocentrism (Connor, Smith, van Dijk, Fredrickson, Balibar, Hall, etc.), and the political perspective is based on concepts of the *racial state* (Omni, Winant, Goldberg) and on the ideas of Bourdieu and Murray.

In the context of this research, ethnic intolerance in the press is perceived as symbolic violence directed against ethnic, racial, religious and migrant groups. Based on the French theorist Bourdieu’s statements regarding language as a symbolic expression of power. He has declared that verbal communication (language skills and use) does not only entail the assumptions for social integration and the ability to participate in a public space and to use the media, but may also be the manifestation of the position occupied in the social hier-

archy between the various ethnic and social groups and might also become a part of symbolic capital. Symbolic power is perceived as the transformed form of the other forms of power and dominance.

Ethnic intolerance is defined as the opposite/different opinion/belief, refusal to recognize equal opportunities, and justification of dominance or violence, whereas ethnic intolerance in discourse is defined as negative sentiments/activities directed against ethnic/racial/religious groups, arising from the prejudices towards those groups, and occurring in public discourse (in the media) in the form of verbal harassment (verbal abuse, threats, and disdain), encouragement of ethnic intolerance (hate speech), and incitement to discriminate, be hostile, and engage in violence (see *Table 1*).

The manifestations of ethnic intolerance in the press have been identified on the basis of empirical content analysis (van Dijk, the Moscow Helsinki Group monitoring of the Russian press, and on the ideas of Bourdieu and Murray).

Within the framework of the aforementioned theories, during the organization of the analysis of press content, a scheme considering the assumptions behind ethnic intolerance and possible verbal manifestations in the press was designed. The scheme is applied in the operationalization of the research of the content of ethnic intolerance in the press (see *Table 2*).

TABLE 1. The continuum of verbal manifestations of ethnic intolerance (regarding intensity of ethnic intolerance):

Forms of ethnic intolerance	Possible manifestations in the press (according to Bourdieu, Murray, van Dijk, and the Moscow Helsinki Group);
<b>The discourse of silence</b> applied to a group of people or a member of this group	deliberately construed (by not writing, by omitting, avoiding discussion, selecting, purposeful writing) issues and topics about ethnic, racial, religious and migrant groups, as well as about racial, ethnic and religious intolerance-related phenomena; interethnic relationship problems are associated with biased (economic, psychological, cultural and political) aspects
<b>Subtle (hidden) prejudice and stereotypes</b> targeting an individual or a group of people because of their race, ethnicity, sex, sexual orientation, language, social status, religion, or beliefs	generalization of some individual characteristics and their application to the entire group, dismissing individual qualities and achievements of a group member
<b>Harassment (verbal abuse, threats and disdain)</b> targeting an individual or a group of people because of their race, ethnicity, sex, sexual orientation, language, social status, religion, or beliefs	presenting a minority group as a criminal group statements about the inadequacy or inobservance of moral norms of certain ethnic/religious group mentioning minority groups in a derogatory context (usually in titles of articles or news messages) statements about the inferiority of the members of certain cultural or ethnic groups

TABLE 1 CONTINUE

Forms of ethnic intolerance	Possible manifestations in the press (according to Bourdieu, Murray, van Dijk, and the Moscow Helsinki Group);
<p><b>Hate speech</b>                      targeting an individual or a group                      of people because of their race,                      ethnicity, sex, sexual orientation,                      language, social status, religion,                      or beliefs</p>	<p>creation of a negative image of a minority group                      (accusation is not presented directly, but is conveyed                      in the general tone of an article)</p> <p>justification of historical cases of discrimination and                      violence</p> <p>questioning universally acknowledged historical cases                      of discrimination and violence</p> <p>referring to and/or reproaching the crimes commit-                      ted in the past by ethnic groups</p> <p>bringing discredit to an ethnic or religious group                      by blaming it for links with foreign political or state                      structures</p> <p>alluding to the disproportionate material welfare of                      some group, its disproportionate representation                      (domination) in political institutions, the press, etc.</p> <p>blaming for negative influence on society or the state</p> <p>calls to prevent settlement of a religious/ethnic                      group in a city or a region</p> <p>citation without providing the comment correspond-                      ing to the messages and texts (e.g., the statements                      of a xenophobic person without providing the                      newspaper's position on the matter)</p>
<p><b>Incitement to discriminate, be hos-                      tile, or engage in violence</b>                      targeting an individual or a group of                      people because of their race, ethnic-                      ity, sex, sexual orientation, language,                      social status, religion, or beliefs</p>	<p>direct incitement to engage in violence</p> <p>general calls for violence</p> <p>direct incitement to discriminate</p> <p>general calls to discriminate</p> <p>indirect incitement to discriminate or engage in vio-                      lence</p>

TABLE 2. The operationalization scheme of the content of ethnic intolerance in the media

Theoretical perspective	Premises of ethnic intolerance	Verbal manifestations of ethnic intolerance in the press (according to Bourdieu, Murray, van Dijk, and the Moscow Helsinki Group)
Economic	<p><b>Conflict (tensions, negative attitudes, incongruity of interests, and/or confrontation):</b></p> <p><b>With an individual/a group (employers, employees, clients) due to:</b>  <i>conflicting/overlapping economic (material) interests/aims; competition (use of economic and human resources); possibility of dense housing; solidarity of minority communities; demonstration of power/status</i></p>	<p><b>“The discourse of silence”</b>  <b>Subtle (hidden) prejudice and stereotypes</b>  <b>Harassment (verbal abuse, threats, disdain)</b>  <b>Hate speech</b>  <b>Incitement to discriminate, be hostile, and engage in violence</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• creation of negative image of minority group by blaming it for fraud or unfair economic activity</li> <li>• creation of negative image of minority group by blaming it for using corruption to its advantage</li> <li>• alluding to disproportionate representation (domination) of some groups in certain spheres of the labour market</li> <li>• creation of negative image of minority group by presenting an it as a competitor in the labour market</li> <li>• calls to prevent the settlement of a religious/ethnic group in a city or a region</li> <li>• creation of negative image of minority group by blaming it for failure/unwillingness to integrate in the majority society</li> <li>• creation of negative image of minority group by blaming it for using up state resources</li> <li>• alluding to disproportionate material welfare and/or political, social or professional self-organization of certain groups</li> <li>• use of economic arguments in direct/indirect/general calls for discrimination, hostility and violence</li> <li>• interpreting interethnic relations only through economic lenses</li> </ul>
Psychological	<p><b>with an individual/a group due to:</b>  <i>frustration: lack of self-confidence (low self-esteem); the endeavour for security; the endeavour for a good reputation;</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• mentioning minority groups in a derogatory context (usually in titles of articles or news messages)</li> <li>• creation of negative image of a minority group (accusation is not presented directly, but is conveyed in the general tone of an article)</li> <li>• presenting a minority group as a criminal group</li> <li>• generalization of certain characteristics, when some individual characteristics are applied to the entire group, dismissing individual qualities of a group member</li> <li>• use of psychological arguments in direct/indirect/general calls for discrimination, hostility and violence</li> <li>• interpreting interethnic relations only through psychological lenses</li> </ul>

TABLE 2 CONTINUE

Theoretical perspective	Premises of ethnic intolerance	Verbal manifestations of ethnic intolerance in the press (according to Bourdieu, Murray, van Dijk, and the Moscow Helsinki Group)
Cultural	<b>with an individual/a group due to:</b> <i>ethnocultural/ religious differences</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• statements about inadequacy or inobservance of moral norms of certain ethnic/religious group</li> <li>• statements about inferiority of members of certain cultural or ethnic group</li> <li>• creation of negative image of minority group by blaming it for lack of official language skills and/or for not using television, radio and printed media in the official language</li> <li>• use of cultural arguments in direct/indirect/general calls for discrimination, hostility and violence</li> <li>• interpreting interethnic relations only through cultural lenses</li> </ul>
Political	<b>with an individual/a group due to:</b> <i>contradiction/ disagreement with aims/ideology of the nation-state; conflicting interpretations of historical events; civil and political disloyalty to the state;</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• questioning of universally acknowledged historical cases of discrimination and violence</li> <li>• justification of historical cases of discrimination and violence</li> <li>• referring to and/or criticising crimes committed in the past by ethnic groups</li> <li>• alluding to the disproportionate material welfare of some group, its disproportionate representation (domination) in political institutions, the media, etc.</li> <li>• bringing discredit on an ethnic or religious group by blaming it for links with foreign political or state institutions</li> <li>• use of political arguments in direct/indirect/general calls for discrimination, hostility and violence</li> <li>• interpreting interethnic relations only through political lenses</li> </ul>

## Results of analysis of Lithuanian press content

After the selection and analysis (according to the described scheme in the content research analysis [see Table 2]) of the printed media and texts published in Internet dailies according to their topics, some of the most frequently mentioned (described, presented) and conditionally defined problems in the Lithuanian press in 2005, 2006, and the first half of 2007 were revealed (see Table 3).

It should be mentioned that some of the problems associated with certain ethnic groups, such as “Manifestations of anti-Semitism”, “Manifestations of racism”, “Tolerance/intolerance”, “Manifestations of intolerance”, and the problems identified in the arguments explaining the reasons for the occurrence of these problems, do not match any aspect of theoretical perspective, since the

TABLE 3. The main topics of articles about ethnic minorities in the Lithuanian press

No.	Topics	No. of articles*, units	No. of articles, units/total**
1.	Immigration	71	72
2.	Minority education	42	42
3.	Manifestations of anti-Semitism	38	38
4.	Muslims and Islam	28	33
5.	Restitution of Jewish property	27	30
6.	Cultural heritage of minorities	20	29
7.	Interpretation of historical/Soviet events/crimes	18	23
8.	Crimes/illegal activity	18	21
9.	Issues of citizenship	20	21
10.	Manifestations of racism	20	20
11.	Minorities in politics	14	19
12.	Manifestations of intolerance	13	13
13.	Housing	7	12
14.	Social welfare	8	12
15.	The problem of using non-Lithuanian alphabet for writing names and surnames	8	12
16.	Interethnic conflicts	10	12
17.	Manifestations of Russophobia	11	12
18.	Tolerance/intolerance	10	10
19.	Communities of ethnic minorities	8	9
20.	Issues of Lithuanian language use	7	8
21.	Riots in Estonia	6	7
Total		404	455

\*All articles selected for the research sample.

\*\*The total number of articles collected for the empirical research.

Source: Qualitative analysis of Lithuanian press content January 2005–June 2007.

topics that form these problems, i.e. various forms of hatred—anti-Semitism, racism and intolerance—are being discussed in the press; these topics are associated with certain events that are well known in Lithuanian society. For example, in the topic “Manifestations of racism”, the violent manifestations against black people in Lithuania (the events in Klaipeda), as well as the flag raised by the fans of Lithuanian national football team with the slogan “Welcome to Europe” during the European Championship play-off match between Lithuania and France, are widely discussed. In the topic “Manifestations of anti-Semitism”, the prevailing themes are connected with the Vitas Tomkus case and the waves it has created in society. In the “Tolerance/intolerance” topic, one can also notice the articles-discussions trying to define the concept of tolerance, the relationship between the theory and practice of tolerance in society is discussed and intolerant comments online, as well as the actions that would help to prevent the intolerant comments and overall intolerance regarding certain groups, can be observed.

Moreover, not all the problems, according to argumentation constructed in the text for explaining the causality of the isolated ones, were divided into the aforementioned theoretical perspectives. The “mixed cases”, where the problems appear in several theoretical perspectives, have also occurred. These cases partly demonstrate how the authors of texts and articles construct the problem objectively, providing different arguments and naming several aspects of the problems. Furthermore, articles or messages presenting various (both positive and negative) opinions or attitudes (negative and positive) regarding certain ethnic, religious, racial and immigrant groups or problems associated with these groups were included in the research of the Lithuanian press. In this case, the analysis of the content of ethnic intolerance in the Lithuanian press was not aimed to separate the negative and positive articles and opinions expressed, but to analyze the interethnic problems and the causality of these problems.

In regards to the Lithuanian press texts included in the research, after the main problems and topics related to them were discerned, the main ethnic, racial, etc. groups associated with these problems and topics were disclosed. The Lithuanian press referred to the Roma (Gypsy) and Jewish and Polish and Russian ethnic groups; Muslims and migrant groups were mentioned as well (*see Table 5*).

In the context of Lithuanian press texts, the Muslim religious groups include ethnic groups (including Tatars and Azerbaijani who reside in Lithuania and are adherents of Islam as well) that are described in the press by emphasizing their Islamic faith and the characteristics of their behaviour related to religion. The migrant category includes various ethnic and racial groups of migrants linked to the topic of “Immigration”, e.g., Lebanese, Chinese, black people, Poles, Ukrainian and Moldovan citizens, etc. In most cases in the Lithuanian press, refugees are a group of migrants, i.e. the Chechen ethnic group and asylum seekers from African countries and refugees that participate in the social integration program. Migrant workers are frequently mentioned in the press as well (often identified as citizens of Belarus). The Chechen ethnic group, although Islamic, is presented not in the Muslim, but in the migrant category associated with immigration problems and as a group of refugees. This way the migrant category has been divided into three groups: migrant workers, migrant refugees, asylum seekers and the Chechen ethnic group (usually also identified as asylum seekers in Lithuania).

## Conclusions

The findings of the research of ethnic intolerance in the Lithuanian press consist of four generalizations: 1) the concepts of ethnic intolerance in the sociological theories of ethnicity and in public discourse; the research possibilities

of ethnic intolerance are evaluated; 2) regarding the concept of ethnic intolerance and prevention policy towards ethnic intolerance and xenophobia, an analysis of the correspondence of the legal regulations of ethnic intolerance in Lithuania and the EU; 3) evaluation of qualitative research data of the manifestations of ethnic intolerance in the Lithuanian press; 4) recommendations for the prevention of ethnic intolerance in the Lithuanian press.

## **I. The concept of ethnic intolerance and the perspectives of sociological research**

1. *In the national, racially and culturally homogenous societies of Eastern Europe, it is relevant to discuss ethnic intolerance, xenophobia, the processes of intolerance, anti-Semitism, and discrimination of the Roma as phenomena characteristic to the historical context of this region.*

The definition of ethnic intolerance and the research of the phenomenon of ethnic intolerance are determined by the context. After analyzing the concept of ethnic intolerance in various theories of ethnicity, one can presume that the phenomenon of ethnic intolerance can be theoretically and practically distinguished from other similar phenomena, such as racism, culturalism, ethnoracism, new racism, and ethnicism according to historical, social, political and cultural contexts and according to the object of discrimination.

2. *There are various research perspectives of ethnic intolerance in public discourse, but in analyzing public texts it is important to consider the social context as well, which quite frequently is not revealed while analyzing the lexemes, ideological formulations, stereotypes, provisions, and attitudes according to which ethnic intolerance is being measured in the text.*

A review of various aspects of ethnic intolerance research in public discourse reveals the most important methodological problem—*recognizing* manifestations of ethnic intolerance and measuring them in the text (intolerant/neutral/tolerant), since there is a lack of clear manifestations of ethnic intolerance. Moreover, the researcher's interpretational capabilities and sensitivity have to be taken into account.

## **II. EU legislation and the concept of ethnic intolerance and its prevention policy**

3. *The definition of ethnic intolerance in Lithuanian law does not comply with the concept used in EU documents.*

Analysis of EU legislation and the laws of Lithuania in the field of the prevention of ethnic intolerance and xenophobia revealed that the concept of ethnic hatred (intolerance) is defined incoherently not only in the laws of the EU (in guidelines, conventions and declarations), but also in Lithuanian legislation. The EU defines the concept in a wider

sense, however. It covers other phenomena (such as anti-Semitism, Islamophobia, and terrorism), as well as various forms of expression (harassment, calls to discriminate, direct and indirect discrimination, and incitement to hate) and physical (violent) and ideological/rhetorical (verbal, textual, and visual) manifestations, that both instigate and contribute to the dissemination of ethnic hatred and other forms of intolerance. Meanwhile, in Lithuania, the defined forms of ethnic intolerance are prohibited: threats; disdain; incitement to hate or discriminate; and hostility and violence against people on the basis of gender, sexual orientation, race, nationality, language, origin, social status, faith, beliefs, or views, in both physical and verbal forms.

4. *In the legislation of the EU, the measures for preventing intolerance in the media play an important role in other areas such as employment, education, housing, etc.; in Lithuania, the regulation of ethnic intolerance (including the media) and the policy of prevention is a relatively new practice.*

In the legislation of the EU, the media is perceived as playing an active role in forming stereotypes and well-established images or as transmitting prejudices regarding ethnic, racial and religious groups. On the other hand, the media's positive influence in preventing ethnic intolerance is highlighted as well. Analysis of the means of preventing ethnic intolerance and xenophobia in Lithuanian society has revealed that there are no appropriate measures for preventing ethnic intolerance in the media (especially on the Internet). The devaluation of the media as a means for spreading intolerance is confirmed by the data in the interviews with journalists and experts representing the main Lithuanian newspapers.

5. *Guidelines to prevent ethnic intolerance (recommendations for struggling with anti-Semitism and discrimination against Muslims and with the racism and intolerance that the Roma experience) applicable for the prevention of ethnic intolerance in the Lithuanian media.*

Considering the eastern European context and the phenomena of intolerance (anti-Semitism and discrimination against the Roma) identified in it, the EU experience in the development and application of preventive measures for fighting these phenomena in the media is important. The EU's experience in preventing intolerance against the newly emerging religious and ethnic groups (Muslims, etc.) is also important and should be applied.

### **III. Ethnic intolerance in the Lithuanian press—an evaluation of the analysis of qualitative data**

6. *The first premise has been partially confirmed; the topics of interethnic relations in the Lithuanian press are related to economic arguments explaining the causality of describing problems.*

According to the data of qualitative research of press content, the main premises of ethnic intolerance have been revealed based on the given aspects of the theoretical assumptions for ethnic intolerance in the economic, psychological, cultural and political theoretical perspectives. In the press, the threat arising from Roma, Jews and labour migrant groups is based on economic premises regarding the overlapping and conflicting interests/aims between the majority and these groups; the competition with labour migrants and their unwillingness to integrate; and the demonstration of the status/power and influence of the Jewish ethnic group in making decisions economically favourable for the Jewish community. The press is building the threat by providing political assumptions from the Polish side regarding the imposing of political interests and their mismatch; Poles, Russians and asylum seekers are accused of civil and political disloyalty; the Russian influence is feared and anger regarding the conflicting interpretation of historical events is expressed (*see Table 4*).

TABLE 4. The object of ethnic intolerance and theoretical aspects of the premises of ethnic intolerance

Economic premises			Political premises		
Roma	Jews	Migrants (economic immigrants)	Polish	Russians	Migrants (asylum seekers)
conflicting interests/ aims	conflicting interests/ aims	competition	contradiction with aims/ ideology of the nation-state (intrusion of minority interests)	contradiction with aims/ ideology of the nation-state (influence of foreign state)	civil/ political disloyalty
	demonstration of power/status	overlapping interests	civil/political disloyalty	civil/political disloyalty	
		conflicting interests/aims		conflicting interpretations of historical events	
Cultural premises		Psychological premises			
Migrants (asylum seekers)	Muslims	Roma	Jews	Migrants (Chechens)	
ethnocultural/ religious differences	ethnocultural/ religious differences	striving for security because of unreliability, lifestyle/ mentality	striving for security because of unreliability, lifestyle/ mentality	striving for security because of lifestyle/ mentality	

Source: Qualitative analysis of Lithuanian press content January 2005–June 2007.

7. *The second premise has been confirmed; each ethnic/religious group—Roma, Jews, Polish, Russians, Muslims and immigrants (which includes various ethnic/religious groups)—is linked to different topics in the Lithuanian press.*

The summary of press content research data has led to a conclusion that the representation of Roma, Jewish, Polish and Russian ethnic groups is well-established. It has pre-fixed patterns of depiction associated with certain topics, which in their content and elements of problem causality reveal ethnic intolerance toward these groups. Other newly emerging ethnic or religious groups (asylum seekers, Chechens, etc.) in the migrant and Muslim category do not have an established portrait in the press. These groups are associated with a wide variety of topics, most likely because these are relatively new issues and there is limited knowledge of them; moreover, the recognition of migrant groups in Lithuanian society is more complex (*see Table 5*).

TABLE 5. Ethnic groups linked to different topics in the Lithuanian press

Ethnic, religious, migrant groups	Topics in the press associated with an ethnic group
<b>Roma (Gypsies)</b>	Crimes/illegal activity Social welfare Housing
<b>Jews</b>	Restitution of Jewish property Cultural heritage of minorities Manifestations of anti-Semitism Minorities in politics Interethnic conflicts
<b>Poles</b>	Minority education Minorities in politics The problem of using non-Lithuanian alphabet for writing names and surnames
<b>Russians</b>	Interpretation of historical/Soviet events/crimes Issues of citizenship Minority education Riots in Estonia Communities of ethnic minorities Issues of Lithuanian language use Manifestations of Russophobia
<b>Muslims</b> (adherents of the religion of Islam; Tatars and Azerbaijani)	Muslims and Islam Cultural heritage of minorities Interethnic conflicts
<b>Migrants</b> (Chechens and asylum seekers from African countries and refugees participating in the social integration program, labour migrants (usually citizens of Belarus))	Immigration

*Source:* Qualitative analysis of Lithuanian press content January 2005–June 2007.

8. *The third premise has been confirmed; the main agents in the formation of public opinion about ethnic groups and interethnic relations are the representatives of the ethnic majority, not those of ethnic minorities.*

Analysis of the texts included in the qualitative analysis of Lithuanian press content has revealed a biased presentation of the topics concerning interethnic relations, the absence of ethnic groups in the press discourse when interethnic relations are being described, and a lack of dialogue between the majority and minority. The main groups acting as informants in articles about interethnic relations are Lithuanian government officials, business representatives, representatives of the municipality of Vilnius, immigration institutions, and law enforcement agencies. The less represented groups are: Jews and their organizations, Vilnius district politicians (Poles), representatives of the Russian Federation in Lithuania, war veterans, and refugees.

9. *The final premise has been confirmed; aggressive forms of ethnic intolerance—incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence—are not used in press discourse.*

The qualitative analysis of Lithuanian press content in the texts regarding ethnic minority issues and interethnic relations brings to light forms of ethnic intolerance such as hate speech (by the creation of a negative image of a minority group, calls to prevent the settlement of an ethnic group in a certain region, allusion to disproportionate representation in government bodies and educational institutions, discrediting remarks because of relations with foreign political or state institutions, and criticism for historical crimes and cases of violence); harassment (verbal abuse, threats, and disdain) (statements about the inadequacy or inobservance of moral norms and presenting a minority group as a criminal group); subtle (hidden) prejudice and stereotypes (generalizing the characteristics of certain groups and attributing them to individual members of these groups and comparison with other ethnic groups); “the discourse of silence” (by not mentioning/omitting the questions relevant to the Roma, Polish, Muslims, and migrant groups regarding land, property restitution, education, health, housing, and living conditions in the refugee registration centre; and the description of problems regarding the Roma, Jewish, Polish, and Russian ethnic groups are related only to economic, psychological and political arguments explaining the causality of these problems (see Table 6). In fact, against the Roma ethnic and migrant groups, unlike against the other groups, the press expressed all the identified forms of ethnic intolerance.

TABLE 6. Forms and verbal manifestations of ethnic intolerance in the Lithuanian press, regarding various ethnic, religious and migrant groups

Roma	Jews	Poles	Russians	Migrants (economic immigrants, asylum seekers, and Chechens)	Muslims
<p><i>“The discourse of silence”</i> not writing on topics of education and health; associating the topic with the economic and psychological aspects of causality</p> <p><i>Subtle (hidden), prejudice and stereotypes</i> generalization of some individual characteristics and comparison with other groups</p> <p><i>Harassment (verbal abuse, threats, defiance)</i> identification as a criminal group; statements about the lack of moral norms</p> <p><i>Hate speech</i> calls to prevent settlement; creating a negative image</p>	<p><i>“The discourse of silence”</i> associating the topic with the economic and psychological aspects of causality</p> <p><i>Subtle (hidden), prejudice and stereotypes</i> generalization of some individual characteristics</p> <p><i>Hate speech</i> creating a negative image</p>	<p><i>“The discourse of silence”</i> not writing about the restitution of the land that belonged to the Polish ethnic group; associating the topic with political aspects of causality</p> <p><i>Incitement to ethnic hatred</i> alluding to disproportionate representation in government and educational institutions; creating a negative image</p>	<p><i>“The discourse of silence”</i> associating the topic with the political aspects of causality;</p> <p><i>Hate speech</i> discrediting this group because of alleged links with foreign political or state structures; reproaching for crimes committed in the past</p>	<p><i>“The discourse of silence”</i> not discussing the worsened living conditions at the refugee reception centre and the problems of renting housing</p> <p><i>Subtle (hidden), prejudice and stereotypes</i> generalization of some individual characteristics</p> <p><i>Harassment (verbal abuse, threats, disdain)</i> statements about inadequacy of moral norms</p> <p><i>Hate speech</i> calls to prevent settlement; creating a negative image; bringing discredit because of alleged links with foreign political or state structures; reproaching for crimes committed in the past; reproaching and mentioning acts of violence</p>	<p><i>“The discourse of silence”</i> not writing about the restitution of the property of Lithuanian Tatars</p> <p><i>Harassment (verbal abuse, threats, defiance)</i> statements about the lack of moral norms</p> <p><i>Hate speech</i> creating a negative image</p>

Source: Qualitative analysis of Lithuanian press content January 2005–June 2007.

10. *In term of the media's influence on the audience, the media does not only reflect and determine the attitudes of society but also structuralizes them by squeezing the ethnic groups into a certain framework of topics and underlying themes.*

After the qualitative analysis of the press, it was determined that various aspects of the identification of interethnic relations and their problems in the media partly shape public opinion about certain ethnic groups and create premises for ethnic intolerance.

11. *The awareness of topics concerning ethnic groups in society and their presentation in the Lithuanian press comprise a closed circle: the ethnic, religious and migrant group problems in Lithuanian society identified by experts partly reflect the topics regarding ethnic groups constructed by the media.*

Qualitative data analysis of expert interviews and its comparison with the Lithuanian press research, proves that the surveyed experts are only superficially and stereotypically acquainted (often only from the media) with the problems that ethnic groups experience in society. The subjectivity of the selection and presentation of topics regarding ethnic groups has been revealed in the press: the journalists interviewed identify the articles on ethnic minorities not as expressing reality, but as reflecting the writer's pre-formed attitude toward ethnic minorities.

## Recommendations for Prevention of Ethnic Intolerance in the Lithuanian Press

1. *The qualitative interviews of experts and journalists reveal that when developing various anti-discrimination measures (state, media and public), the institutions working in the field of the prevention of ethnic intolerance and xenophobia do not coordinate actions between themselves, and journalists writing about ethnic themes are not familiar with anti-discrimination policy; therefore, the recommendations are as follows:*
1. The state institutions developing anti-discrimination and prevention policies should consistently implement their objectives and develop long-term strategy that would ensure the continuity of the developed programs (e.g. anti-discrimination).
  2. The institutions that work in the field of the prevention of ethnic intolerance and xenophobia should coordinate their actions inter-institutionally to develop preventive measures and should consider the opinions of various social groups (including ethnic groups or experts representing these groups).

2. *After the analysis of existing legal preventive measures for ethnic intolerance and xenophobia in public, it is recommended:*
  1. To improve the legal regulation and application (e.g. regarding the *Law on Provision of Information to the Public*—to define the concept of “hate-inciting information” according to the recommendation of the ECRI; in amendments to the *Law on the Provision of Information to the Public*, to define the term “hate-inciting information” not only as “verbal and written”, but also as “visual” “products, including separate parts such as words, statements, illustrations, and photographs that would incite ethnic hatred”).
  3. *Research of the press demonstrated that the media is an important player in dissemination of both ethnic intolerance and in the prevention of this phenomenon; it is therefore advisable to pay more attention to public education in the media and to promote tolerance:*
    1. to promote public debate about tolerance—to discuss the concept; to emphasize the acknowledgment of the equal opportunities of an individual belonging to a different ethnic, racial, religious, etc. group instead of formal reconciliation and to stress tolerance for people having a different colour, religion, culture or behaviour;
    2. to educate society about the media: to analyze and question the information presented, thus strengthening the capacity of critical evaluation of the information presented in the media.
  4. *Media outlets should familiarize journalists with the measures to prevent ethnic intolerance and xenophobia in the public space.*
  5. *Journalists writing about interethnic relations should avoid the problematization, victimization, criminalization, and stereotyping of ethnic groups and should provide positive examples about ethnic groups more often.*