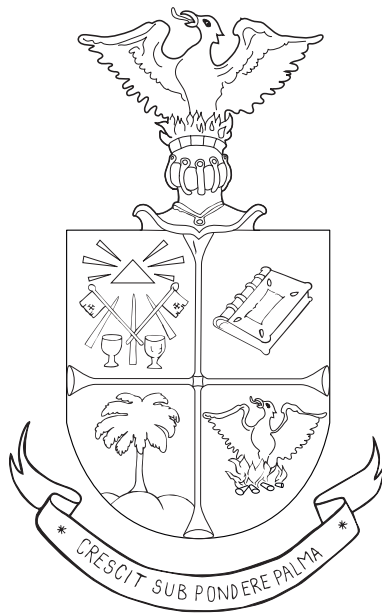


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LEGAL TERMINOLOGY MANAGEMENT IN LITHUANIA

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Abstract

The management of legal terminology in Lithuania boasts a tradition spanning over a century. This period encompasses the emergence and refinement of Lithuanian legal terms. The preparation and translation of Lithuanian legal acts and the publication of legal literature in Lithuanian have played crucial roles in shaping this tradition. However, throughout history, various terminological challenges, including the absence of appropriate Lithuanian terms, have emerged. These challenges have been addressed by terminology commissions, the creators of term dictionaries, database developers, and legal practitioners. This article describes the evolution of legal terminology management in Lithuania across different periods, with a focus on the contemporary situation. Both the practice of legal terminography and the insights gleaned from establishing the Term Bank of the Republic of Lithuania are reviewed.

Keywords: terms of legal acts, history of terminology, terminology management, Term Bank of the Republic of Lithuania

1. Introduction

The article employs a descriptive approach to investigate the management of legal terminology in Lithuania, examining both its historical progression and present state. It aims to illustrate the evolution of legal terminology management in Lithuania, highlighting key stages, encountered challenges, and attained outcomes. Structurally, the article is divided into three main sections based on historical events. The primary focus lies on the contemporary management of legal terms, particularly through the utilization of the information system within the Term Bank of the Republic of Lithuania. Research material draws upon data from the Term Bank, annual reports from the State Commission of the Lithuanian Language, as well as referenced literature and historical documents.

2. Historical background

Legal terminology management in the Lithuanian language traces its roots back to 1918, a significant year marked by Lithuania's declaration of independence and the inaugural use of the Lithuanian language for official state purposes. This pivotal moment gained further momentum with the adoption of the Constitution of the State of Lithuania in 1922, which officially established Lithuanian as the state language, marking its centennial celebration recently. Before this era, the Lithuanian language had a scant presence in legal matters. Legal codes were formulated during the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, notably with the publication of the First Statute of Lithuania in 1529, followed by subsequent statutes like the Third Statute of Lithuania in 1588, which remained in effect until 1840. These documents were published in the Chancery Ruthenian, Latin, and Polish languages. Later, during the Russian Empire's rule, legal acts in Lithuania were published in Russian. Consequently, the historical circumstances left little room for the development of Lithuanian legal terminology. However, despite the absence of a written tradition, certain legal concepts were orally articulated in the Lithuanian language.

To ensure legal continuity after Lithuania declared independence in 1918, many Russian legal acts remained in effect and were gradually translated into Lithuanian, often through private efforts. In 1919, a law mandated that court proceedings be conducted in Lithuanian. However, implementation faced challenges due to a lack of both terms and individuals proficient in Lithuanian, particularly since legal professionals had not been educated in the language. Nonetheless, considerable progress was made in a relatively short time¹. During 1919–1920, the Ministry of Justice commissioned the creation of a manuscript for a Russian-Lithuanian dictionary of legal terms²,

1 More about the state of legal terminology in Lithuania at that time, see: ANDRIULIS, Vytautas: *Pirmosios Lietuvos Respublikos (1918 II 16 – 1940 VI 15) teisinės sistemos kūrimo bruožai*. Vilnius, Lietuvos teisės akademija, 1998, 11–13; UMBRASAS, Alvydas: Teisės terminijos padėtis Lietuvoje 1918–1940 metais. *Terminologija*, 2001/8, 76–94. <http://journals.lki.lt/terminologija/article/view/698> (2024. 05. 02.); MAKSIMAITIS, Mindaugas: Prie lietuviškos teisės kalbos ištakų. *Jurisprudencija*, 2007, 5(95), 7–13. <https://www3.mruni.eu/ojs/jurisprudence/article/view/2720> (2024. 05. 02.); DEVIATNIKOVAITĖ, Ieva: Lietuvių kalba tarpukario teisėje. *Logos*, 2021, (106), 156–172. <http://www.litlogos.eu/L106/Deviatnikovaitė.html>. (2024. 05. 02.)

2 For more information about the dictionary manuscript, its compilers, see UMBRASAS, Alvydas: Rankraščinio teisės terminų žodyno (1920 m.) sandara. *Terminologija*, 2011, (18), 109–141. <https://journals.lki.lt/terminologija/article/view/418>. (2024. 05. 02.)

titled *Teisės terminų ir kitų reikalingų teismams žodžių žodynėlio projektas* (Eng. The Project of the Dictionary of Law Terms and other Words Necessary in Court). Although this dictionary remained unfinished and unpublished for reasons unknown, some copies were produced, some of which are still preserved today at the Wroblewski Library of the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences and by private individuals. Tailored to court needs, the dictionary not only included legal terms but also other relevant lexicon and word combinations. The manuscript encompasses over 4,000 Russian words and phrases across 120 pages. Remarkably, nearly 3,900 distinct terms or linguistic units were translated into Lithuanian, with close to 5,900 Lithuanian equivalents provided, considering synonyms. This suggests that, within the initial two years of Lithuania's independence, a comprehensive foundation of legal terminology was laid.

In 1921, the Terminology Commission was established under the Ministry of Education, with a broad mandate encompassing multiple fields, including legal terminology³. This commission comprised prominent public figures, including linguists, lawyers, journalists, and educators. Notably, Antanas Smetona, the future president of Lithuania, was entrusted with organizing the sub-commission dedicated to legal terminology. One of the commission's key objectives was to standardize the official language used in state institutions. Operating until 1926, the Terminology Commission encountered challenges, including disagreements over the translation of international terms into Lithuanian, which contributed to its eventual dissolution. Legal terminology was among the commission's initial priorities, albeit with a limited lexicon at the time. Between 1921 and 1922, Antanas Kriščiukaitis, then-chairman of the Supreme Court of Lithuania, compiled two lists comprising approximately 70 numbered units. These lists encompassed not only legal terms but also various linguistic constructions, often featuring synonyms, variants, and Russian equivalents. Following review by the Terminology Commission, these lists were published several times⁴ in the press, serving primarily as

3 For more information about Terminology Commission, see AUKSORIŪTĖ, Albina: Terminologijos komisijos (1921–1926) veiklos apžvalga. *Terminologija*, 2011, (18), 80–91. <http://journals.iki.lt/terminologija/article/view/416> (2024. 05. 02.); UMBRASAS, Alvydas: Teisės terminijos tvarkyba Terminologijos komisijoje (1921–1926): Terminologijos komisijos 100-mečiui. *Terminologija*, 2021, (28), 225–238. <https://journals.iki.lt/terminologija/article/view/2102>. (2024. 05. 02.)

4 The draft terms were first published on December 21, 2021, in the *Lietuva* newspaper, and the final list was published in the same newspaper on March 26, 2022. It was later reprinted in other publications.

educational material. Their purpose was to provide court personnel with examples for crafting case documents, thereby fulfilling a didactic function within the legal domain.

Another Terminology Commission was established in the State Council in 1939 to standardize legal terms, but its activities were interrupted by the occupation of Lithuania. In 1939–1940, the journal *Teisė* published more than 200 legal terms⁵ considered by this Commission (mostly civil law terms). It was not possible to publish all the terms considered (at the beginning of the list it is indicated that more than 300 terms were considered).

During Lithuania's initial period of independence (1918–1940), key legal terms were coined in Lithuanian, legal documents were published in Lithuanian, and legal literature was authored in Lithuanian. Despite the presence of individuals capable of compiling and publishing a dictionary of legal terms during this time, such a project never materialized. It wasn't until the Soviet era that Lithuania saw the publication of its first dictionary of legal terms in 1954⁶. Compiled by Alfonsas Žiurlys, this dictionary was bilingual, featuring Lithuanian and Russian equivalents, encompassing nearly 5,000 terms, compounds, and lexical units (240 pages). In its creation, terminological material originating from independent Lithuania was utilized, alongside terms reflecting the realities of the Soviet system. Remarkably, throughout the entirety of the Soviet era, no additional dictionaries of legal terms were published in Lithuania, making Žiurlys' dictionary the sole resource of its kind during that time.

3. Legal terminography at the beginning of restored independence

Following Lithuania's restoration of independence in 1990, the evolving state system necessitated the introduction of new legal terminology. Many terms previously used in the Soviet era became obsolete, requiring replacements for concepts aligned with the emerging market economy. Additionally, the prominence of the Russian language diminished, with English becoming the primary language of influence, alongside other Western languages. Consequently, there arose a significant demand for bilingual dictionaries of legal terms. The late 20th century and early 21st century in Lithuania marked a period of intensive preparation

5 Teisinės terminijos projektas. *Teisė*, 1939–1940, 48, 384–374; 49, 475–480; 50, 73–74; 51, 184–185.

6 Žiurlys, A. (ed.): *Teisinių terminų žodynas*. Vilnius, Valstybinė politinės ir mokslinės literatūros leidykla, 1954.

for legal dictionaries. This era was characterized by extensive efforts to compile dictionaries that would cater to the evolving needs of the legal community, reflecting the linguistic and conceptual shifts brought about by Lithuania's transition to independence and its integration into the globalized world.

The first large dictionary appeared in 1995 – Ema Volungevičienė's German-Lithuanian, Lithuanian-German Dictionary of Legal Terms⁷ (284 pages). The main part contains about 10,000 German words and word combinations, and much less in the Lithuanian part – 2250. The material is taken from the most important branches of law – criminal, civil, financial, commercial and international. Several more dictionaries of legal terms of various quality in German and Lithuanian appeared later. Romaldas Rakučevičius' Dictionary of Lithuanian-German Business and Legal Terms⁸ (218 pages) and German-Lithuanian Dictionary of Law and Business Terms⁹ (296 pages) are worth mentioning. The first of these dictionaries was of very poor terminographic quality, compiled without following the principles of term dictionary compilation. The second one is a bit better and much larger – in total, it contains about 38,000 words and their combinations, of which about 22,000 are from the field of law. The presentation of both dictionaries is in alphabetical order, with groups containing both generic terms and usage examples. Another pair of dictionaries of the same language is the German-Lithuanian Dictionary for Lawyers¹⁰ (170 pages) and the Lithuanian-German Dictionary for Lawyers¹¹ (152 pages), the authors of which are Yvonne Goldammer and Sigitas Plaušinitis. The first of these dictionaries lists words in groups, while the other lists them alphabetically. One contains the lexicon used more in the German legal system and the other – in the Lithuanian legal system. Yvonne Goldammer, Sigitas Plaušinitis and Paulius Jurčys have also published the German-Lithuanian Dictionary for Economists, Lawyers and Businessmen¹² (367 pages), which contain plenty of legal terms. Some of

7 VOLUNGEVIČIENĖ, E.: *Vokiečių-lietuvių, lietuvių-vokiečių kalbų teisės terminų žodynas*. Vilnius, Žodynas, 1995.

8 RAKUČEVIČIUS, Romaldas: *Lietuvių-vokiečių kalbų verslo ir teisės terminų žodynas*. Vilnius, 2001.

9 RAKUČEVIČIUS, Romaldas: *Vokiečių-lietuvių kalbų teisės ir verslo terminų žodynas*. Vilnius, 2004.

10 GOLDAMMER, Yvonne – PLAUŠINITIS, Sigitas: *Vokiečių-lietuvių kalbų žodynas teisininkams*. Vilnius, TEV, 2005.

11 GOLDAMMER, Yvonne – PLAUŠINITIS, Sigitas: *Lietuvių-vokiečių kalbų žodynas teisininkams*. Vilnius, TEV, 2006.

12 GOLDAMMER, Yvonne – PLAUŠINITIS, Sigitas – JURČYS, Paulius: *Vokiečių-lietuvių kalbų*

them are presented with brief explanations. Among the more specialized dictionaries, the German-Lithuanian Dictionary of Law and Order¹³ compiled by Loreta Addo, Laimutė Dantienė, Irena Sagaitienė and Nijolė Slaminskienė (314 pages) can be mentioned. This dictionary contains about 14,000 German head words and word combinations, among which there are not only terms but also other relevant words or their combinations in the legal language.

Fewer dictionaries of English language legal terms have been published. The largest is the English-Lithuanian Legal Dictionary¹⁴ compiled by Olimpija Armalytė and Lionginas Pažūsis (524 pages) in 1998. This dictionary contains approximately 24,000 words and word combinations that are said to form the basis of almost all English and American legal terminology (verbs and their combinations included). In the same year, Vita Bitinaitė's the Educational Dictionary of English-Lithuanian Legal Terms¹⁵ was published (231 pages). Later, two more corrected and supplemented editions of this dictionary were published (250 pages in 2002 and 283 pages in 2008). The latest edition of the dictionary provides around 17,000 words and phrases in the English language with phonetic transcription. Also worth mentioning is the Educational English-Lithuanian Dictionary of Law and Order¹⁶ compiled by Violeta Janulevičienė, Irena Darginavičienė, Nijolė Burkšaitienė, Alvyda Liuliėnė and Vilhelmina Vaičiūniėnė (127 pages). The dictionary contains most of the lexicon needed by the police. It contains both terms and law enforcement words and their combinations, including a good deal of English and American slang. The Explanatory English-Lithuanian Legal and Business Dictionary¹⁷ prepared by Vita Bitinaitė and Diana Snapkauskaitė (613 pages) stands out for its structure. The dictionary comprises not only legal and business terms, but also several tax, banking, trade and other closely related terms. The dictionary is distinguished by the fact that, next to English terms or other

žodynas *ekonomistams, teisininkams ir verslininkams*. Kaunas, Arx Baltica, 2007.

- 13 ADDO, Loreta – DANTIENĖ, Laimutė – SAGAITIENĖ, Irena – SLAMINSKIENĖ, Nijolė (ed.): *Vokiečių–lietuvių kalbų teisėtvarkos* žodynas. Vilnius, Mykolo Romerio universiteto Leidybos centras, 2004.
- 14 ARMALYTĖ, Olimpija – PAŽŪSIS, Lionginas: *Anglų–lietuvių kalbų teisės* žodynas. Vilnius, Alma littera, 1998.
- 15 BITINAITĖ, Vita: *Mokomasis anglų–lietuvių kalbų teisės terminų* žodynas. Vilnius, Eugrimas, 1998.
- 16 JANULEVIČIENĖ, Violeta – DARGINAVIČIENĖ, Irena – BURKŠAITIENĖ, Nijolė – LIULIENĖ, Alvyda – VAIČIŪNIENĖ, Vilhelmina (ed.): *Mokomasis anglų–lietuvių kalbų teisėtvarkos* žodynas. Vilnius, Lietuvos teisės universiteto Leidybos centras, 2001.
- 17 BITINAITĖ, Vita – SNAPKAUSKAITĖ, Diana: *Aiškinamasis anglų–lietuvių kalbų teisės ir verslo* žodynas. Vilnius, Registrų centras, 2013.

lexical units, it provides both the Lithuanian equivalents and explanations of the meaning in English.

Among other language dictionaries, Janina Juškevičiūtė's Russian-Lithuanian and Lithuanian-Russian Criminalistics Dictionary¹⁸ (783 pages) should be mentioned. The dictionary consists of about 12,000 words used in the field of criminology and their combinations, including colloquial, jargon lexical and syntactic units that are relevant in the practice of crime investigation. In addition to legal terms, medical and other terms relevant to criminology are included. The dictionary is intended for police investigators, prosecutors, as well as students studying criminology.

Dictionaries covering many languages have been compiled. Notable among them is the Dictionary of Five Languages: Economics, Politics, Law¹⁹ (895 pages) compiled by Ema Irenė Volungevičienė, Rasa Laurušonienė, and Rasa Tamošaitienė. Among other areas, the dictionary presents legal terms in Lithuanian, English, French, German, and Russian. It contains about 5,000 headwords and more than 10,000 word combinations, including multiword terms.

The following are the most notable dictionaries mentioned here (although smaller ones also exist). What sets these translation dictionaries of law apart is a common characteristic: they do not strictly adhere to the traditional format of term dictionaries. Some lack the word *term* in their titles altogether. These dictionaries encompass not only terms but also provide examples of usage for other linguistic elements such as adjectives, verbs, and their combinations. Furthermore, many of these dictionaries extend beyond the realm of law, incorporating lexicons from various other fields. This broad inclusion of terminology from diverse domains distinguishes them from conventional term dictionaries. These dictionaries often resort to descriptive translations when exact equivalents are unavailable. Moreover, many of them exhibit structural, hierarchical, and terminological shortcomings and inconsistencies. In terms of their structure, they more closely resemble general translation dictionaries rather than specialized term dictionaries. It is worth noting that comprehensive explanatory dictionaries of legal terms, complete with definitions, are generally not published.

18 JUŠKEVIČIŪTĖ, Janina: *Rusų–lietuvių ir lietuvių–rusų kalbų kriminalistikos žodynas*. Vilnius, Registrų centras, 2013.

19 VOLUNGEVIČIENĖ, Ema Irenė – LAURUŠONIENĖ, Rasa – TAMOŠAITIENĖ, Rasa (ed.): *5 kalbų žodynas: ekonomika, politika, teisė*. Vilnius, Teisinės informacijos centras, 2006.

Since 1997, Lithuania has implemented a procedure for evaluating term dictionaries. Projects for term dictionaries are submitted to the State Commission of the Lithuanian Language for assessment. The Commission commissions terminological and subject expertise for the submitted dictionaries. Following this, the corrected versions, incorporating expert feedback, are deliberated upon in meetings of the Terminology Sub-Commission of the Language Commission. Additional comments and suggestions are typically provided during these meetings, prompting organizers to further refine the dictionaries. The final draft undergoes scrutiny in a Language Commission meeting. If the dictionary aligns with the standards of terminology, terminography, and linguistic correctness, it receives the evaluation mark "The State Commission of the Lithuanian Language does not object." Among the aforementioned legal dictionaries, only the Educational Dictionary of English-Lithuanian Legal Terms by Vita Bitinaitė, published in 1998, bears this evaluation mark. Most of the other dictionaries either were not submitted for evaluation, possibly because they don't meet the criteria for true term dictionaries, or the evaluation process commenced but remained incomplete due to the dictionaries not meeting the requirements.

4. Term management after joining the European Union: Term Bank

Lithuania's accession to the European Union in 2004 signified a pivotal moment in the evolution of legal terminology. The shifting political landscape prompted the emergence of new legal terms, alongside discussions regarding the distinctions between national law terminology and that of the European Union. Simultaneously, this juncture symbolically represents the gradual integration of information technology into terminology. Traditionally, term ordering was primarily linked with the publication of paper term dictionaries. However, in recent years, there has been a growing emphasis on electronic term databases, reflecting the evolving technological landscape and the increasing reliance on digital resources for linguistic and terminological needs.

In 2002, as Lithuania geared up for European Union accession, the notion of establishing a state bank of terms gained traction, spearheaded by the State Commission of the Lithuanian Language. During this period, consultations were held with specialists in information technology and other relevant fields to explore the feasibility of creating a new database of terms. The envisioned Term Bank was intended to serve state administrative needs and encompass terms from legal acts. Building upon these deliberations, the European Affairs

Committee of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania proposed legislation to enact the creation of a state Term Bank. Subsequently, in mid-2003, a working group was assembled to draft the Law on the Term Bank of the Republic of Lithuania. The working group comprises 14 individuals from various institutions, not limited to the Seimas, but also including other state and scientific bodies. The draft law was swiftly prepared, primarily during the summer, due to the pressing need to promptly address terminology management challenges associated with Lithuania's accession to the European Union. By the fall of 2003, the project preparation was concluded, leading to the adoption of the Law on the Term Bank of the Republic of Lithuania by the Seimas on December 23 of that year²⁰. Subsequently, on February 2, 2004, the State Commission of the Lithuanian Language approved the methodology for the Term Bank, delineating its structure in greater detail. Leveraging these legal frameworks, the Term Bank of the Republic of Lithuania's information system was developed in 2004, and it was made accessible online starting from early 2005²¹.

What is the Term Bank of the Republic of Lithuania? This is a centralized system designed to engage various state institutions and other entities in the management of terminology. Its primary objective is to oversee the terms used in legal documents, while also striving for inclusivity by incorporating terms from dictionaries and other sources into its database. It operates as a free system, offering data accessible to specialists across different fields. The system comprises two components: an internal system accessible to registered users who contribute data through passwords, and a public system whose content is openly visible to anyone without requiring registration (accessible via a web address – <http://terminai.vlkk.lt>).

Following the Law on the Term Bank of the Republic of Lithuania and subsequent related legal regulations, both an information system and an organizational framework were established. This organizational structure is

20 <https://e-seimas.lrs.lt/portal/legalAct/lt/TAD/TAIS.248131>. (2024. 05. 02.)

21 For more information on the concept, structure, content and legal basis of the Term Bank of the Republic of Lithuania, see: IVANAUSKIENĖ, Audra: *Lietuvos Respublikos terminų bankas: terminijos tvarkybos galimybės ir problemos*. In: Specialybės kalba: terminija ir studijos. Mokslinių straipsnių rinkinys. Vilnius, Mykolo Romerio universiteto Leidybos centras, 2008, 45–49; UMBRASAS, Alvydas: Lietuvos Respublikos terminų bankas: 10 metų po įstatymo priėmimo. *Terminologija*, 2013, (20), 96–122. <https://journals.lki.lt/terminologija/article/view/475> (2024. 05. 02.); UMBRASAS, Alvydas: Lietuvos Respublikos terminų bankas: 20 metų po įstatymo priėmimo. *Terminologija*, 2023, (30), 142–167. <https://journals.lki.lt/terminologija/article/view/2271>. (2024. 05. 02.)

anchored by terminology commissions, which are formed within ministries, their subordinate bodies, government agencies, and other state institutions. These terminology commissions are empowered by legal provisions to supply terms to the Term Bank drawn from the legal acts falling within their respective areas of oversight. Staff members of these institutions access the internal Term Bank system to input terms and generate sets of term entries. Notably, each institution within the internal system has visibility only to the terms it has contributed, effectively maintaining separate internal databases.

The primary stages of work unfold as follows:

1. *Preparation*. The terminology commission within each institution initiates this phase by assembling a set of term entries. Typically, each set corresponds to the terms extracted from a specific piece of legislation. The size of these sets can vary significantly, ranging from just a few term entries to several dozen.
2. *Evaluation Transfer*. Once the set of term entries is compiled, it is submitted through the Term Bank system for assessment by the State Commission of the Lithuanian Language.
3. *Consideration*. The Secretariat of the Language Commission organises the discussion of terms at the meeting of the Terminology Sub-Commission. Historically, these meetings were conducted in person, but since 2021, they have transitioned to online sessions. Typically, the creators of the term entries, often also the drafters of the respective legal documents, are invited to these meetings. During the session, terminological and linguistic feedback is provided, meticulously documented within the Term Bank system. Following the meeting, the Secretariat staff record the Terminology Sub-Commission's recommendations regarding terms and their definitions in the system. Occasionally, before the Sub-Commission meeting, the Language Commission might opt for a terminological examination of the terms, seeking evaluation from experts. While such examinations were common in the early days of Term Bank, they are now frequently omitted to expedite the process.
4. *Corrections*. The creators of the sets of term entries amend the terms and their definitions based on the feedback from the Terminology Sub-Commission, then resubmit them to the Language Commission for reevaluation.
5. *Inspection*. The Secretariat staff of the Language Commission assesses the implementation of the feedback, ensuring that the comments have been addressed appropriately and the data has been corrected accurately.

If necessary, additional comments are communicated via email, and requests are made to rectify any inadequately addressed issues or to discuss and accept the reasoning provided by the drafters of legislation for not making certain corrections.

6. *Approval*. The revised set of term entries undergoes discussion at a meeting of the Language Commission, marking the commencement of the approval process. Once approved, the sets of term entries are made available to the public within the Term Bank. Throughout the preceding stages, terms remain visible solely within the internal Term Bank system.

The status of term entries and their sets within the Term Bank is a crucial data category, indicating the stage of preparation of a set of term entries at any given time. The accessibility of the data depends on the status assigned to it, and data transfer occurs by changing the status accordingly. For unregistered users, only terms with final status are visible in the public database. The Law on the Term Bank of the Republic of Lithuania establishes the following final statuses:

approved term – any term approved by the State Commission of the Lithuanian Language, used or presented for use in the legal acts of the Republic of Lithuania;

acceptable term – a word or a combination of words that corresponds to the basic principles of terminology and correct usage requirements of the Lithuanian language;

deprecated term – a word or a combination of words that do not correspond to the basic principles of terminology and correct usage requirements of the Lithuanian language and must be replaced by a correct (approved or acceptable) term.

As evident, the status *approved* is exclusively assigned to terms derived from legal acts. These terms are integrated into the Term Bank solely with their corresponding definitions. Through the information system, the section concerning terms and their definitions, typically found at the outset of any legal act, undergoes coordination with the Language Commission. Primarily, the focus is on national legislation, albeit often intertwined with European Union legislation. Nonetheless, practical experience reveals that terms employed in national and EU legislation do not consistently align. At times, deliberate decisions are made to employ more precise terms in national legal acts, aligning closely with the specific characteristics of the concept. Terms from European Union legal acts are integrated into the IATE database,

managed by EU institutions. While the IATE database operates independently from the Term Bank of the Republic of Lithuania, discussions concerning terms submitted to the Term Bank consider information provided in the IATE database when necessary. Conversely, translators and terminologists at EU institutions, responsible for managing Lithuanian terms in the IATE database, take into consideration submissions to the Term Bank of the Republic of Lithuania. Indeed, while the IATE database primarily serves translation purposes, the Term Bank of the Republic of Lithuania focuses on organizing Lithuanian terms and their definitions to meet language and terminology standards. It is important to note that in the Term Bank, editors of term entries have the discretion to include equivalents in other languages, but it is not mandatory. The primary objective remains to ensure the clarity and precision of Lithuanian terms and their definitions.

In the Term Bank, every term is categorized by fields and subfields, organized within a hierarchical structure. It is essential to note that a term must be assigned to a specific field to be entered into the bank. The list of fields draws inspiration from the structure of the *Eurovoc* thesaurus but is adapted to better suit the context of Lithuania. It encompasses areas overseen by state institutions where terminology commissions have been established. However, this list is not exhaustive and can be expanded as needed to accommodate additional areas.

The key components of a term entry, besides the Lithuanian term itself, include the field, definition, equivalents in other languages, source, and status. Additional information may be included at the discretion of the organizers, such as abbreviations, short forms, examples, appendices (e.g., images, graphs, formulas relevant to the concept), and internet links. The decision to include such data depends on its relevance to the term and its utility for users. Furthermore, it is possible to establish connections between term entries, linking narrower and broader terms or simply semantically related terms. This enhances the coherence and accessibility of the Term Bank's content.

The Law on the Term Bank underwent a single amendment to date, on July 4, 2017, through the Law No. IX-1950 Article 4 Amendment Law, effective from January 1, 2018. This amendment designated the sole responsibility for the Term Bank to the State Commission of the Lithuanian Language. Before this change, the Language Commission managed only the content of the Term Bank, while the technical and software infrastructure was provided and maintained by the Seimas Chancellery. The informatics team of the Chancellery developed the initial information system in 2004 using Oracle software. In 2018, following

the transition of management responsibilities to the Language Commission, an updated information system for the Term Bank was developed based on PostgreSQL at its behest. Subsequently, in 2019, the updated Term Bank's information system became operational. This update was necessitated by the obsolescence of the software utilized since the inception of the system, posing challenges for compatibility and maintenance.

The Term Bank is primarily designed as a shared information system for state institutions to oversee the terminology used in legal acts. However, it also serves the broader objective of disseminating reliable terms across various fields. Presently, the Term Bank houses over 280,000 term entries, with terminology extracted from legal acts constituting a relatively small portion, numbering slightly less than 20,000. The majority of the Term Bank's content comprises entries sourced from term dictionaries, totalling about 225,000 entries. These entries originate from 53 term dictionaries, all of which have been reviewed and approved by the Language Commission. In 2015, in collaboration with the Lithuanian Standards Board, the Term Bank embarked on publishing data regarding Lithuanian term standards that received a favorable evaluation from the Language Commission. Approximately 10,000 term entries derived from over 70 standards have been published to date. Primarily, these standards comprise translations of ISO standards into Lithuanian. A significant portion of the Term Bank, totalling approximately 24,000 term entries, comprises data prepared under the recommendations of the Language Commission, which have been adopted through the legal acts of the Commission, particularly protocol resolutions. These terms predominantly pertain to biological and zoological nomenclature, encompassing names of plants and animals. Additionally, the database incorporates approximately 1,300 terms sourced from university textbooks, extracted from 13 textbooks in total. It is worth noting that only terms originating from legal acts are published in the Term Bank with the status *approved*. Terms sourced from dictionaries and other references receive the status *acceptable*, which applies to the majority of such terms. There are also around 1,300 terms categorized with the status *deprecated*, originating from various sources.

Although the terms extracted from legal acts constitute a relatively small fraction of the Term Bank's content, they command the most attention during meetings of the Terminology Sub-Commission. Typically convening once a week (excluding summer breaks), the Sub-Commission holds approximately 40–50 meetings annually, each lasting around 2–3 hours. While a range of terminological matters are addressed, the bulk of these meetings are dedicated to evaluating the

terms extracted from legal acts and their corresponding definitions. It is common for each meeting to scrutinize 30–40 such terms. The data undergoes evaluation from linguistic, terminological, and logical perspectives, with the majority of the Terminology Sub-Commission members being linguists. Meetings of the Language Commission, where the final approval procedure occurs, followed by the public announcement of terms, are typically held once a month. During the initial phases of creating the Term Bank, an inventory of terms from legal acts was conducted. During this period, a vast number of terms were scrutinized, making it challenging to implement changes to terms and definitions when necessary. Consequently, term entries were frequently published in the Term Bank with accompanying comments. Subsequently, in the subordinate legislation of the Term Bank Law, a provision was instituted mandating that the terms of all draft legal acts undergo coordination with the Language Commission and be published in the Term Bank. This process enables the receipt of draft legal act terms through the Term Bank system at the drafting stage, facilitating the implementation of terminological changes more efficiently.

Over the past decade (2014–2023), approximately 30 state institutions have been providing data on terms extracted from legal acts to the Term Bank. However, their level of activity varies considerably. Around 10 institutions, primarily ministries, have been notably more active in this regard (see Table 1). Specifically, the Ministries of Agriculture, Environment, Health Protection, and Finance have each contributed over 1,000 terms to the Term Bank during this period. The Ministry of Economy accounts for half of this contribution, while the Ministries of Innovation, Energy, Transport, and others have made relatively lower contributions. This variance in activity levels may be attributed to differences in the volume of legal acts prepared by each institution. Nonetheless, it is important to note that there are still legal acts whose terminology has yet to be included in the Term Bank. The predominance of terms from specific ministries in the Term Bank indeed offers insight into the prevailing areas of legislation within the database. For instance, the significant contribution from the Ministry of Agriculture suggests a focus on agricultural terms. This observation may reflect Lithuania's status as an agricultural country. It is worth noting that Table 1 illustrates the new term entries published in the Term Bank. However, it is important to recognize that each year, several hundred additional terms from draft legal acts are harmonized, often involving clarification of previously published data such as definitions. Consequently, the terminological contribution of certain institutions to the Term Bank may be greater than indicated by these numbers.

Ministry of Agriculture	1438
Ministry of Environment	1329
Ministry of Health Protection	1140
Ministry of Finance	1112
Ministry of Economy and Innovation	594
Ministry of Energy	498
Ministry of Transport	462
Office of the Seimas	411
Ministry of Social Security and Labor	340
Bank of Lithuania	335
<i>Other (21 institutions)</i>	2189

Table 1. The number of legal term entries approved in 2014–2023 (the most active institutions)

Since the enactment of the Law on the Term Bank, the process of approving terms from legal acts commenced towards the end of 2004 and has been consistently operational since 2005. On average, approximately 1,000 term entries are approved and published in the Term Bank each year (see Table 2). While the intensity of this process varies, with a peak observed in 2011 (1448 term entries), the lowest activity was recorded in 2021 (723 term entries). The slight decrease in the number of approved terms over the past few years can be attributed to the fact that the terminology of many significant legal acts has already been approved. As a result, there may be fewer new terms defined in legal acts each year, leading to a lower number of terms requiring approval. Indeed, it is important to note that the number of term entries approved does not necessarily equate to the number of distinct terms. Often, the same term may be defined differently in various legal acts, tailored to the specific requirements of each act. Consequently, different institutions may submit the same term to the Term Bank with varying definitions. This variation underscores the need for meticulous review and coordination to ensure consistency and accuracy in terminology usage across legal documents. Terms that are relevant in various contexts are repeated more often, e.g., *pareiškėjas* (applicant), *paraiška* (application), *atsakingasis asmuo* (responsible person), *atsakingoji institucija* (responsible authority), *priežiūros institucija* (supervisory authority), *ūkio subjektas* (entity), *paslaugų teikėjas* (service provider), *įgaliotoji laboratorija* (authorized laboratory), *ataskaitinis laikotarpis* (reporting period), etc.

2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
26	845	1232	829	1251	1003	1122	1448	1033	896
2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
1289	1287	1090	841	1062	911	954	723	853	838

Table 2. The number of legal term entries approved by year between 2004–2023

Given that European Union regulations are directly applicable, their terms are typically not defined in national legislation. Instead, references to these regulations are provided. However, to accommodate this, definitions of a referential nature are included in the Term Bank. These definitions serve to clarify the terms referenced in legal acts, ensuring clarity and consistency in terminology usage. Indeed, terms found within EU regulations can pose challenges, and altering or clarifying them can be a complex process. While EU directives are transposed into national legal acts, the terms contained in the translations of these directives into Lithuanian may not always be adopted verbatim. When evaluating terms, the focus is on assessing their clarity, accuracy, and consistency. Furthermore, scrutiny is given to how effectively the term reflects the meaning conveyed in its definition. This comprehensive evaluation ensures that the terms used accurately represent the legal concepts they are intended to encapsulate. Practice shows that Lithuanian terms are often longer than English ones because additional features are added to the term. For example, EU legislation may use a generic term *producer* or *supplier*, and the national legal act is written more precisely – *pieno gamintojas* (milk producer), *trąšų tiekėjas* (supplier of fertilisers). Sometimes the difference in words can be much greater, for example, EU legislation reads *unikalus identifikatorius* (unique identifier), while the national law provides *genetiškai modifikuotų organizmų unikalus atpažinties kodas* (unique identifier of genetically modified organisms), etc.

Over the past two decades, the management of legal terminology in Lithuania through the Term Bank’s information system has significantly influenced the language used in legal acts, leading to improvements in their terminological quality. While not all terminological challenges are easily resolved, particularly those arising from EU legislation, there is a noticeable overall trend of enhancement. In the early stages of the Term Bank’s development, certain terms from legal acts were published with the status of *deprecated*. However, this status is now rarely applied, reflecting the progress made in resolving terminological issues.

The Term Bank in Lithuania stands out as the most renowned and dependable source of Lithuanian terms, serving as an indispensable resource for legal drafters, language editors, and anyone with terminological queries. As the data within the Term Bank continues to expand, users are required to scrutinize search results more attentively. This is because the same term may feature multiple definitions from various sources within the database, including legal acts, term dictionaries, and term standards. Additionally, it is not uncommon for different sources to employ different terms to describe the same concept. Nonetheless, having a universal database of terms proves to be immensely beneficial. It is worth noting that while the Term Bank encompasses about 19,500 entries of terms derived from legal acts, it does not currently include an explanatory dictionary of legal theory terms. This absence is primarily because such a dictionary has not yet been published in Lithuania.

5. Conclusions

The evolution of Lithuanian legal terminology spans over a century, beginning after independence was declared in 1918 when Lithuanian became the official state language. Throughout this period, the tradition of employing legal terms was shaped by the texts in which these terms were utilized, including legal acts, books, and textbooks used in legal education. Additionally, institutional efforts have been ongoing to organize legal terms systematically, alongside the publication of term dictionaries, a process known as terminography. This dual approach, involving both institutional ordering and terminography, has contributed to the refinement and standardization of Lithuanian legal terminology over time. The initial Terminology Commission in Lithuania operated from 1921 to 1926, albeit its standardization efforts focused on a relatively limited number of legal terms. Despite long-standing attempts to compile a dictionary of legal terms in Lithuania – dating back to the early 1920s – not all of these endeavours culminated in successful outcomes. The first dictionary of legal terms was eventually published during the Soviet era, in 1954. Following Lithuania's independence in 1990 and the subsequent need for international engagement, numerous legal dictionaries were prepared and published. Nearly 20 such dictionaries, ranging in size, were produced during this period. However, many of these dictionaries were not exclusively focused on terms but instead encompassed broader aspects of legal language, incorporating various words and expressions relevant to legal and business texts. Consequently, not all of these dictionaries meet high standards from terminological and terminographic perspectives.

Following Lithuania's accession to the European Union in 2004, the management of legal terminology entered a new phase. This phase is particularly noticeable in Lithuania through the electronic management of terms. Towards the end of 2003, the Law on the Term Bank of the Republic of Lithuania was enacted, laying the foundation for the creation of the Term Bank information system, which has been operational since early 2005. All major state institutions are mandated to input the terms, along with their definitions, of draft legal acts they are formulating into this database and to seek approval from the State Commission of the Lithuanian Language. This initiative aims to uphold the linguistic and terminological precision of legal terms and their definitions. This effort has shown fruitful outcomes. Annually, around 1,000 legal terms receive approval during the Language Commission's meetings, resulting in a total of over 19,000 entries in the database. Essentially, a tradition of centralized and institutionalized management of legal terms has been established. This practice not only enhances the terminological aspect of the legislative process but also aids in the terminological education of legal act drafters.