

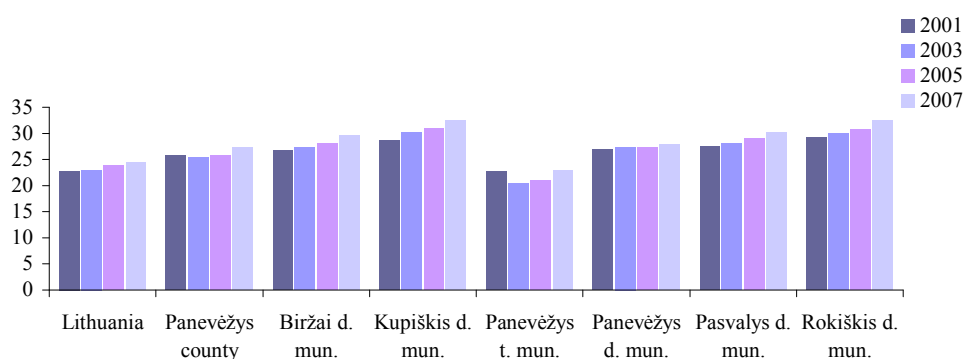
ENVIRONMENT OF PANEVĖŽYS COUNTY

Housing

The provision of the residents of Panevėžys county with living space is relatively good: at the end of 2007, there were 27.3 m² of useful floor area per capita in the county, which is by 2.9 m² more than the national average. The useful floor area per capita was lower than the national average only in a densely populated Panevėžys town municipality. In Rokiškis and Kupiškis district municipalities, useful floor area per capita was by as much as one-third larger than the national average; in other peripheral municipalities, the housing supply also exceeded the national average. A high supply of living space in Panevėžys county municipalities is one of the factors which could contribute to the increasing attractiveness of these areas. Given a sufficiently developed social infrastructure and service sector, most of the county's municipalities could become more attractive for living, as well as to persons arriving from other areas, and stimulate socioeconomic development of the entire region.

Useful floor area per capita, 2001–2007

m²



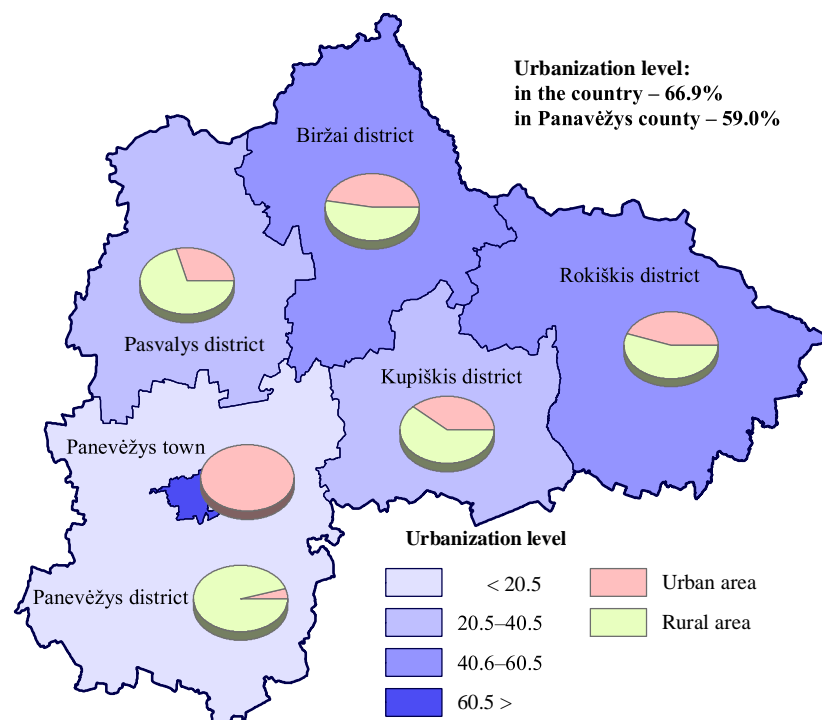
Social infrastructure

Panevėžys county centre – Panevėžys town – ranks fifth in Lithuania in terms of size; in 2008, it was inhabited by 113.6 thousand persons (40 % of the county's population); other larger towns – Rokiškis and Biržai (15.5 and 14.5 thous. inhabitants respectively), whereas Pasvalys and Kupiškis were inhabited just 8.2 and 8 thousand persons. In Panevėžys district municipality, there was just one settlement having a status of a town – Ramygala (1.6 thous. inhabitants); however, the said municipality surrounded the entire Panevėžys town. There was just one urban municipality, while in the rest of municipalities the share of the urban population was smaller than that of the rural population (in the mixed Biržai and Rokiškis district municipalities, the share of the urban population was just slightly lower than half of the total population, while the rest of municipalities were rural).

Inhabitants of less populated municipalities are more often faced with problems arising due to insufficiently developed social services; in such municipalities, private enterprises also provide fewer services. Geographic distribution of the social infrastructure in the municipalities of Panevėžys county and integration of their areas with Panevėžys town or other larger towns often conditions the attractiveness of its territories for living. The issues of accessibility of the social infrastructure are of particular importance to the territories where the density of the population and settlements is low, and the objects of the social infrastructure are situated far from each other, which is typical of the rural municipalities of Panevėžys, Kupiškis, Pasvalys districts. Residents of urbanised municipalities can easier access most of the important objects of the social infrastructure; nevertheless, certain problems related to the provision of public services occur there as well.

Urbanization level in municipalities, beginning of 2008

Per cent



Preschool education institutions

Half of the preschool education institutions in Panevėžys county was concentrated in Panevėžys town municipality, whereas in the rest of municipalities their number was several times lower.

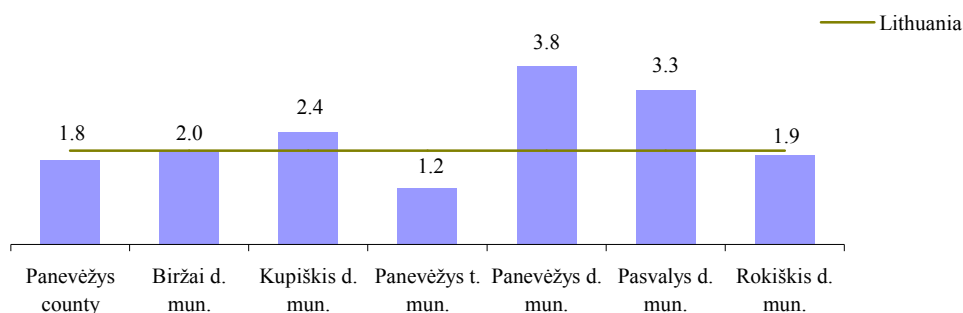
Number of preschool education institutions, 2001–2007

	2001	2003	2005	2007
Panevėžys county	60	59	56	61
Biržai d. mun.	5	5	4	5
Kupiškis d. mun.	4	4	4	4
Panevėžys t. mun.	26	26	26	30
Panevėžys d. mun.	10	10	9	9
Pasvalys d. mun.	6	5	5	5
Rokiškis d. mun.	9	9	8	8

At the end of 2007, there were, on average, 2 children of preschool age per place in the country's preschool education institutions. The Panevėžys county indicator was slightly higher than the national average. The lack of places in kindergartens has been observed in all county's municipalities; however, considerable unevenness in their distribution has been observed – in Panevėžys town municipality, the difference between the number of children of preschool age and that of places in preschool education institutions reached 20 %, in Panevėžys district municipality – almost 4 times, in the rest of municipalities – 2–3 times. The poorest ratio of the number of children of preschool age to that of places in preschool education institutions was in rural municipalities – a large part of their settlements did not have a single preschool education institution. Since 2001, the number of preschool education institutions in most of the county's municipalities has been stable or just slightly decreased; this number has been growing only in Panevėžys town municipality. The growing number of preschool education institutions in the

latter municipality allowed reaching there a sufficient (particularly in comparison with the national average, as well as with the indicators of other county's municipalities) supply of preschool education services. In other more urbanised municipalities and towns, the distance to the nearest preschool education institution is usually relatively short; however, the number of places in preschool education institutions is much lower than the demand.

Number of children aged 1–6 per place in preschool education institutions, end of 2007



The density of the network of preschool education institutions in Panevėžys county is higher than the national average; however, in a couple of municipalities (those of Pasvalys, Panevėžys districts), there is a threat of them becoming less attractive to the youth and women wishing to participate in the labour market. The shortage of preschool education institutions may condition not only insufficient quality of provided services, but also further depopulation of scarcely populated territories and slowdown in their economic development.

General schools

In Panevėžys county, as well as in the entire country, a trend towards the decrease in the number of general schools has been observed. The number of schools decreased both in urban and rural areas.

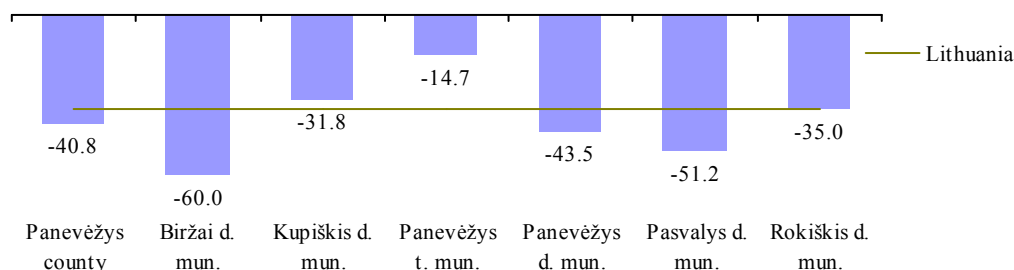
In 2001–2007, the most considerable decrease in the number of general schools was observed in Biržai district municipality – as much as 2.5 times, in Pasvalys district municipality – 2 times; the slowest decrease was observed in Panevėžys town municipality (by 14.3 %).

Number of general schools

	Number of general schools				Number of pupils per general school			
	2001–2002	2003–2004	2005–2006	2007–2008	2001–2002	2003–2004	2005–2006	2007–2008
Lithuania	2270	1932	1534	1472	265.4	301.8	351.1	332.5
Panevėžys county	223	179	141	132	235.3	285.7	336.6	322.8
Biržai d. mun.	40	19	17	16	149.3	308.9	322.8	307.1
Kupiškis d. mun.	22	16	15	15	201.5	267.1	258.1	233.1
Panevėžys t. mun.	34	34	35	29	667.3	655.0	593.8	641.8
Panevėžys d. mun.	46	44	26	26	126.0	126.0	191.9	176.2
Pasvalys d. mun.	41	39	20	20	154.1	158.7	286.7	258.2
Rokiškis d. mun.	40	27	28	26	181.8	259.0	235.8	224.6

Changes in the number of general schools, 2001–2008

Per cent



The number of schools has been rapidly decreasing (schools being amalgamated) in those municipalities where schools having a low number of pupils dominated (in Pasvalys, Biržai, Panevėžys district municipalities). A trend common both to Lithuania and Panevėžys county has been observed – schools serve more pupils, while in more remote areas general educational services become less accessible to pupils. Despite a considerable decrease in the number of schools, in most of the county's municipalities schools remained relatively small, e.g. in Panevėžys district municipality, after a notable decrease both in the number of schools and that of pupils, the number of pupils enrolled per school was almost twice as low as the national average; a similar situation has been observed in the rest of the county's municipalities (except for that of Panevėžys town), where even after a decrease in the number of schools, the share of small schools in 2007 remained relatively high. In Panevėžys town municipality, both the number of schools and that of pupils decreased; however, although the number of pupils per school has been fluctuating, the change, as compared with 2001, was not extensive. In the said municipality, the number of pupils per school has gone to another extreme – the schools in the municipality were almost twice as big as the national average.

With the further decrease in the number of schools and enlargement of the remaining ones, a heavier load in future should fall within educational institutions located in Panevėžys town and other municipal centres; transport issues, related to trips to school of pupils living in more remote areas, will have to be solved; attention will have to be directed towards the demand for the teaching staff, which will be growing in future.

Cultural infrastructure

Panevėžys county is characterised by a relatively well-developed cultural infrastructure, which allows satisfying cultural needs of the locals, as well as provides them a possibility to engage in social activities. At the end of 2007, there were, in total, 162 libraries in Panevėžys county, the major share whereof fell within less populated areas – Rokiškis and Panevėžys district municipalities.

Libraries, end of 2001–2007

	Number of libraries				Number of libraries per 1000 population			
	2001	2003	2005	2007	2001	2003	2005	2007
Lithuania	1449	1418	1396	1395	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4
Panevėžys county	171	170	162	162	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6
Biržai d. mun.	35	35	27	27	1.0	1.0	0.8	0.8
Kupiškis d. mun.	18	18	18	18	0.7	0.7	0.8	0.8
Panevėžys t. mun.	9	8	8	8	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
Panevėžys d. mun.	36	36	36	36	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8

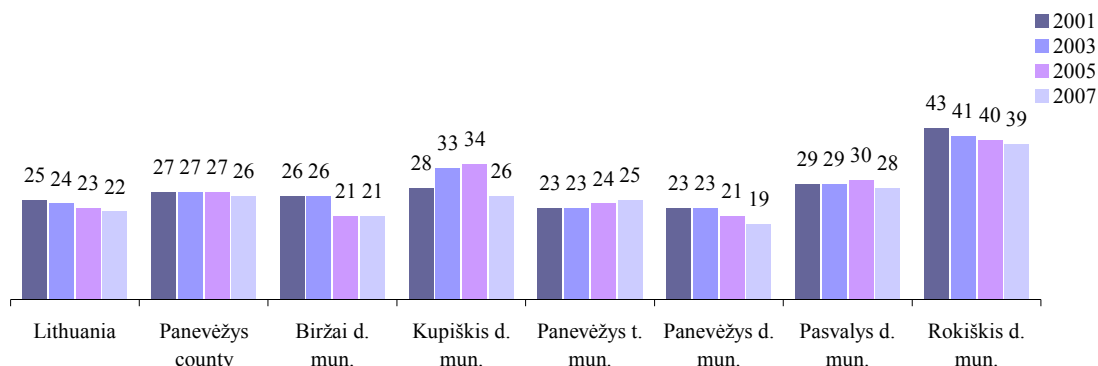
	Number of libraries				Number of libraries per 1000 population			
	2001	2003	2005	2007	2001	2003	2005	2007
Pasvalys d. mun.	34	34	34	34	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
Rokiškis d. mun.	39	39	39	39	0.9	0.9	1.0	1.0

It has been observed that in terms of accessibility of libraries a more densely populated Panevėžys town municipality lags behind less populated, rural municipalities. In all county's municipalities (except for that of Panevėžys town), the number of libraries per 1000 population is twice – or even more – higher than the national average. Libraries are rather easily accessible in Biržai, Kupiškis, Panevėžys, Pasvalys, Rokiškis district municipalities. Most of the residents of peripheral settlements have a possibility to use library services. Panevėžys town municipality is characterised by bigger – regional – libraries, serving a large number of users.

Densely distributed and easily accessible libraries do not attract attention of the locals. In 2007, more than a quarter of the county population used library services (national average – 22 %). The highest number of library users was received by the libraries of Rokiškis district (39 % of the population); residents of Kupiškis, Pasvalys district and Panevėžys town municipalities used libraries more often than a typical resident of Lithuania. Despite the high number of libraries, the share of library users, as compared with the total population, was the lowest in Biržai and Panevėžys district municipalities. It has been observed that libraries situated both in peripheral and in less populated areas of Panevėžys county, as well as in towns, attract attention of the locals; however, in two latter municipalities, the available infrastructure is underused.

Share of library users, 2001–2007

Against the total population, per cent



In addition to their primary function of providing information, libraries have considerable potential for becoming centres of attraction to the population, contributing to the improvement of the residents' qualification and activeness, providing a possibility to use information technologies. Thus, the living environment and quality of life are improving namely in those areas where the supply of other social services is rather poor, whereas residents of the territories where this potential is underused may be faced with a problem of increasing "information exclusion".

The number of cultural centres per 1000 population in Panevėžys county exceeded the national average. In Kupiškis district municipality, the national average was exceeded almost 3 times, in 5 out of 7 municipalities – twice or more (with just Biržai district and Panevėžys town municipalities – where the number of cultural centres is not as relevant – lagging behind). These data allow making a conclusion that main cultural services are provided even in small settlements of Panevėžys county. However, a high number of cultural centres has been observed only in part of the county; this number was low (just 5) in Panevėžys town

municipality, where it was lower due to a higher number of other cultural services offered. From 2001, the number of cultural centres in Biržai district municipality decreased almost 3 times; thus, their current number may be insufficient for the satisfaction of cultural needs of the locals.

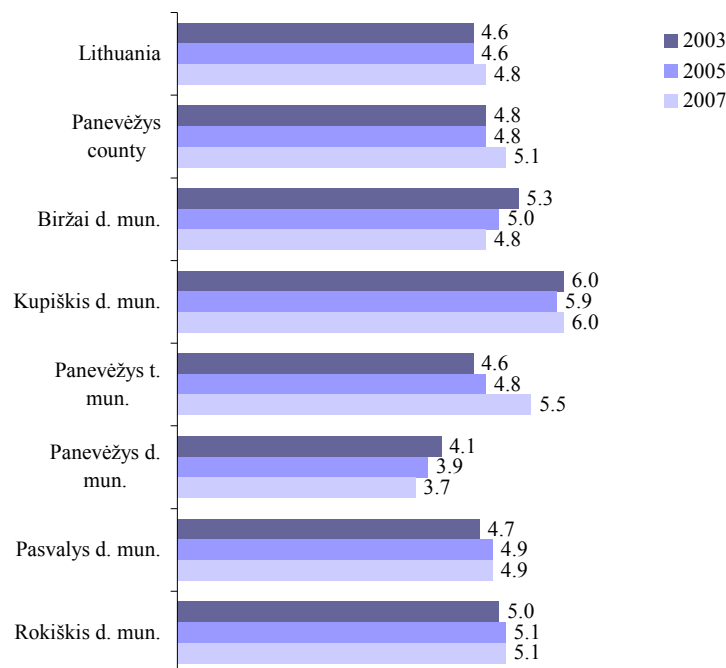
Number of cultural centres, 2001–2007

	Number of cultural centres				Number of cultural centres per 1000 population			
	2001	2003	2005	2007	2001	2003	2005	2007
Lithuania	947	882	850	853	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.3
Panevėžys county	124	116	108	111	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4
Biržai d. mun.	20	18	8	8	0.6	0.5	0.2	0.2
Kupiškis d. mun.	18	16	17	19	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.8
Panevėžys t. mun.	5	3	3	3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Panevėžys d. mun.	31	30	31	32	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7
Pasvalys d. mun.	24	24	24	24	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7
Rokiškis d. mun.	26	25	25	25	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6

Even and dense distribution of cultural centres and a well-developed network of libraries provide favourable conditions for the provision of cultural services in less populated municipalities and form centres of attraction to the population. However, a high number of small cultural establishments causes problems related to the maintenance and renovation of the available infrastructure; both qualitative development of cultural services and public participation in these processes are necessary. The existing infrastructure per se, although affording possibilities for the provision of cultural services and increasing public activity, does not ensure good quality of offered services.

Trade and service enterprises

Number of shops per 1000 population, 2003–2007

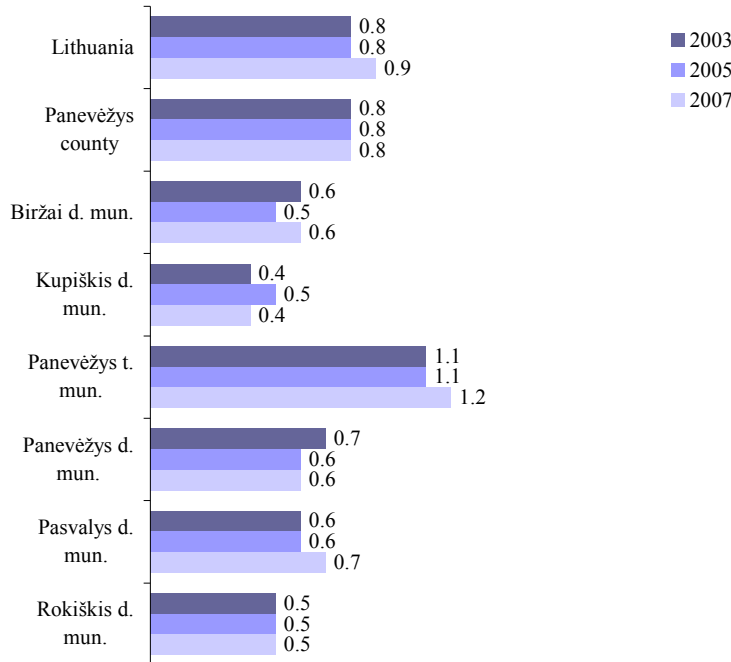


It was observed that at the end of 2007 the number of shops per 1000 Panevėžys county population was higher than the national average; in the major part of the county (except for Biržai and Panevėžys district municipalities), this indicator was increasing or remained stable. The highest number of shops per 1000 population was in Kupiškis district and Panevėžys town municipalities; the rest of municipalities lagged behind just inconsiderably. In all county's municipalities,

except that of Panevėžys district, the number of shops per 1000 population exceeded or equalled the national average – trade services were rather easily accessible in both urban and

rural areas. The indicator of Panevėžys district municipality was lower than the national average; however, in this municipality, the demand for local trade services was not high due to a possibility to do shopping in Panevėžys town, which, in turn, conditioned a lower supply of respective services.

Number of restaurants, bars, canteens per 1000 population, 2003–2007

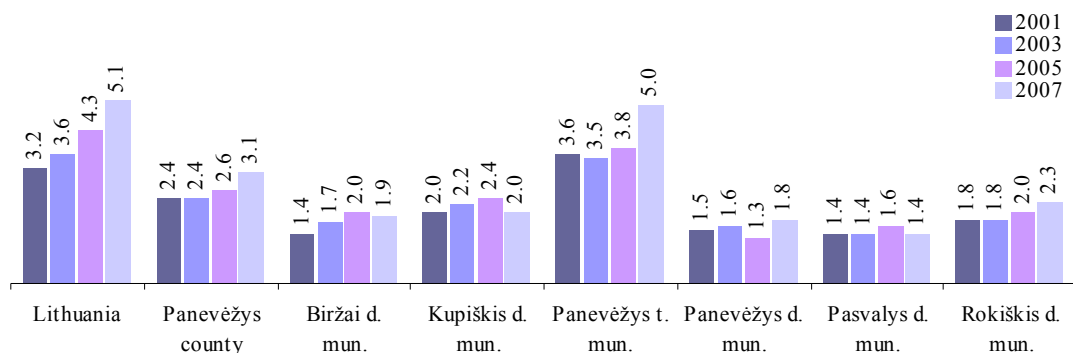


In 2007, the number of restaurants, bars and canteens in Panevėžys county was somewhat lower than the national average. Only in the regional centre – Panevėžys town municipality – the number of restaurants, bars and canteens at the end of 2007 exceeded the national average; the indicator of Pasvalys district municipality lagged behind the national average relatively inconsiderably. In the rest of municipalities, the indicator was 1.5–2 times lower than the national average. In all

municipalities, the indicator in question has been increasing or just slightly decreasing.

In 2007, the number of service enterprises in Panevėžys county (3.1 service enterprises per 1000 population) notably lagged behind the national average (5.1). The best respective indicator was in Panevėžys town municipality (5 service enterprises per 1000 population) – it lagged behind the national average just slightly. The poorest indicators were observed in Pasvalys and Panevėžys district municipalities – just 1.4 and 1.8 service enterprises per 1000 population respectively; in the rest of peripheral municipalities, the indicator in question was also rather low. The shortage of service enterprises in Panevėžys district municipality was partly compensated by respective enterprises operating in Panevėžys town, whereas in the rest of municipalities the locals were offered less services provided by private businesses. Although the number of service enterprises in Panevėžys county has been gradually increasing, this growth was not sufficient for this number to approximate the national average.

Number of service enterprises per 1000 population, 2001–2007



The relatively low number of service enterprises may be an indicator of insufficiently exploited tourism development potential in the region, as well as insufficient income of its residents. On the other hand, service supply and quality may be the decisive factors when choosing the place of residence, particularly in case of the high-income population. Too slow service sector development trends, observed in Panevėžys county in 2001–2007, may mean a notable deterioration in the living environment and quality of life in future.

Communication

The best developed communication infrastructure – in Panevėžys town municipality; however, due to its small area and high population density, the indicators of this municipality are not comparable with national averages. The average density of the road network did not reach the national average in a single municipality (except for that of Panevėžys town). Except for that in Panevėžys town municipality, the best developed communication infrastructure was in Kupiškis and Pasvalys district municipalities; the indicators of the rest of municipalities were similar. Except for Panevėžys town municipality, the share of roads with an improved roadway surface exceeded the national average only in Pasvalys district municipality. When assessing the road infrastructure of the county's municipalities in terms of the density of roads with an improved roadway surface, it may be observed that indicators of all peripheral municipalities are the same – 0.3 km/km² (by one-fourth lower than the national average). The respective indicator of Rokiškis district municipality is twice as low as the national average. Thus, in summary, it may be stated that the road network in the region is even, but sparser than in the country, on average.

Density of the network of national and local roads, 2007

km/km²

	National and local roads			Share of roads with an improved roadway surface, against the total number of roads, per cent
	Total	surfaced	with an improved roadway surface	
Lithuania	1.2	1.1	0.4	29
Panevėžys county	1.1	1.1	0.3	28
Biržai d. mun.	1.0	1.0	0.3	26
Kupiškis d. mun.	1.1	1.1	0.3	27
Panevėžys t. mun.	8.5	8.5	6.0	70
Panevėžys d. mun.	1.1	1.0	0.3	28
Pasvalys d. mun.	1.0	0.9	0.3	30
Rokiškis d. mun.	1.1	1.1	0.2	20

At the end of 2007, there were 422 private cars per 1000 Panevėžys county population (national average – 429). From 2001, this figure grew by 43 % – Panevėžys county had been approaching, but still did not reach the national average. In Panevėžys and Rokiškis district municipalities, the number of personal cars per 1000 population in 2007 was higher than the national average, while the indicator of Panevėžys town municipality, which up to 2005 exceeded the national average, in 2007 already lagged behind it. The indicators of the rest of municipalities lagged behind the national average; however, this gap has been rapidly decreasing.

Private cars per 1000 population, 2001–2007

	2001	2003	2005	2007
Lithuania	304	336	395	429
Panevėžys county	296	330	386	422
Biržai d. mun.	268	303	366	400

	2001	2003	2005	2007
Kupiškis d. mun.	279	322	394	426
Panevėžys t. mun.	324	352	396	425
Panevėžys d. mun.	280	323	400	446
Pasvalys d. mun.	270	298	350	388
Rokiškis d. mun.	289	329	387	431

Most of the areas of Panevėžys county municipalities are rather easily accessible by private cars (due to a sufficient quality of roads and a high number of private cars); the public transport system in the county is also rather well-developed. In 2007, more than half of bus routes in Panevėžys county fell within Panevėžys town and district municipalities, whereas in the rest of municipalities (except for that of Kupiškis district) the number of bus routes tallied with their size. The territory per bus route in the county was larger than the national average, while in peripheral municipalities – close to the national median value: in most of the country's municipalities, the density of bus routes was lower. It was only in Kupiškis district municipality that the territory per bus route was three times as large as the national average. Although the number of bus routes across the country has been decreasing, their number in Panevėžys county has been growing (from 2001 – by 18 %). The situation improved considerably in Panevėžys district municipality, where the number of bus routes doubled, and in Biržai district municipality, where it grew by one-third. Even the indicators of those municipalities where the number of bus routes slightly decreased were approaching the national average. Although in a larger part of the county communication by regular buses became easier accessible, Kupiškis district municipality remained problematic in this respect.

Number of bus routes, 2001–2007

	2001	2003	2005	2007
Lithuania	3859	4001	3807	3155
Panevėžys county	322	350	380	380
Biržai d. mun.	35	34	46	46
Kupiškis d. mun.	19	22	23	20
Panevėžys t. mun.	119	118	114	101
Panevėžys d. mun.	54	71	94	103
Pasvalys d. mun.	45	44	42	45
Rokiškis d. mun.	50	61	61	65
Territory per route, km²				
Lithuania (average)	16.9	16.3	17.2	20.7
Lithuania (median)*	30.8	29.9	28.1	29.3
Panevėžys county	24.5	22.5	20.7	20.7
Biržai d. mun.	42.2	43.4	32.1	32.1
Kupiškis d. mun.	56.8	49.1	47.0	54.0
Panevėžys t. mun.	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.5
Panevėžys d. mun.	40.4	30.7	23.2	21.2
Pasvalys d. mun.	28.6	29.3	30.7	28.6
Rokiškis d. mun.	36.1	29.6	29.6	27.8

*the largest share of bus routes falls within the municipalities of major cities/towns; therefore, smaller municipalities may be compared with each other by means of estimation of the country's median – a middle (central) value of indicators of all municipalities.

The indicator of bus trips per capita shows that despite a relatively high density of the network of bus routes, the public transport system in Panevėžys county is underused. The lowest number of bus trips per capita was in Pasvalys (despite a dense network of bus routes)

and Kupiškis district municipalities. In Rokiškis and Biržai district municipalities, public transport systems functioned more effectively. The total relatively high indicator of the county was conditioned by the transport system of Panevėžys town. Positive trends have been observed – in Panevėžys town and district, Biržai and Rokiškis district municipalities, the locals would use bus services more often than in 2001.

Public safety

Although Panevėžys county cannot be characterised as a safe one (the safest regions are usually those which do not cover big cities and towns), the number of registered criminal offences per 100 000 Panevėžys county population in 2007 made 1770, which is by 18.9 % less than the national average. The lowest number of criminal offences and crimes per 100 000 population was registered in Kupiškis, Rokiškis and Pasvalys municipalities, the highest – in Panevėžys town and district municipalities. Panevėžys town and its localities are characterised by a higher crime rate; however, the number of criminal offences and crimes registered there is still slightly lower than the national average.

Registered criminal offences per 100 000 population, 2007

	Criminal offences	Crimes
Lithuania	2185	2014
Panevėžys county	1770	1625
Biržai d. mun.	1633	1350
Kupiškis d. mun.	1207	1121
Panevėžys t. mun.	2100	1965
Panevėžys d. mun.	2077	1956
Pasvalys d. mun.	1365	1261
Rokiškis d. mun.	1260	1105

A usual trend of the number of registered criminal offences being lower in peripheral, rural municipalities proves to be true in Panevėžys county – the number of criminal offences and crimes registered in Panevėžys town and district municipalities exceeds the indicators of the rest of the county's municipalities, which are relatively safe; therefore, the differences in the quality of their living environment are determined by other factors.

Environmental protection and management

In 2007, 4 540 557 thous. m³ of domestic, municipal and industrial waste water was discharged into Lithuanian surface waters, of which 209 073.3 thous. m³ – that requiring treatment. In Panevėžys county, 16 262.3 thous. m³ of waste water was discharged – about 8 % of the total amount of waste water in Lithuania. The amount of waste water generated in the municipality in 2007 was by 12 % higher than in 2005, although in all municipalities, except for that of Panevėžys town, this amount was changing just inconsiderably. In Panevėžys town municipality, the amount of waste water discharged grew by 1169 thous. m³, which was due to the growing economy, i.e. due to an increased amount of water consumed for domestic purposes. The largest share of waste water requiring treatment – 64 % – was generated in Panevėžys town municipality. The amount of insufficiently treated waste water increased because waste water discharged in Panevėžys town is classified as insufficiently treated due to non-removed nitrogen and phosphorus compounds. In II half-year 2007, a private company Aukštaitijos vandenys completed the reconstruction of treatment facilities under the second stage of an investment project of the middle reaches of the Nemunas, and started removing nitrogen and phosphorus.

Domestic, municipal and industrial waste water generated that required treatment, 2001–2007

Thousand m³

	2001	2003	2005	2007	Share of waste water treated to meet standards (MAP) in the total amount of waste water generated, per cent			
					2001	2003	2005	2007
Lithuania	171169.6	167064.5	192212.4	209073.3	17.8	54.6	70.5	72.3
Panevėžys county	15428.2	13538.8	14511.2	16262.3	9.0	22.3	21.0	18.0
Biržai d. mun.	750.0	1286.2	1195.9	1359.0	37.5	85.9	89.2	98.4
Kupiškis d. mun.	698.7	430.4	367.7	625.3	24.6	66.1	100.0	29.8
Panevėžys t. mun.	10343.0	8379.0	9176.0	10345.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Panevėžys d. mun.	584.4	881.9	804.0	519.6	97.8	100.0	97.2	50.0
Pasvalys d. mun.	999.9	742.2	796.6	872.7	15.0	17.5	12.8	16.2
Rokiškis d. mun.	2052.2	1819.1	2171.0	2540.7	10.4	34.0	33.9	39.5

As the economy and consumption have been growing, the amount of municipal waste generated has been annually increasing. In order to reduce the amount of waste taken to the landfill sites of Panevėžys county, container domestic waste collection and secondary raw materials sorting systems were introduced, which is a precondition for liquidating rural landfill sites.

Municipal waste generated, 2004–2006

Tonnes

	2004	2005	2006
Panevėžys county	110266.9	118790.8	167700.2
Biržai d. mun.	24508.6	28718.3	27666.4
Kupiškis d. mun.	13580.0	14100.5	13384.5
Panevėžys t. mun.	56423.3	61732.1	109735.6
Panevėžys d. mun.	413.3	193.1	557.4
Pasvalys d. mun.	6896.3	4759.3	5958.0
Rokiškis d. mun.	8445.3	9287.5	10398.2

Over 2004–2006, the amount of municipal waste collected increased due to improved sorting of waste in situ, as well as waste accounting. In 2006, against 2005, the per capita amount of municipal waste collected in Panevėžys county increased by 43 %, and made 582 kg.

Municipal waste managed, 2004–2006

Tonnes

	2004	2005	2006
Panevėžys county	110221.0	117115.4	120481.6
Biržai d. mun.	24496.0	28003.2	27309.6
Kupiškis d. mun.	13572.0	13921.0	12712.0
Panevėžys t. mun.	4796.8	5311.9	7150.1
Panevėžys d. mun.	52032.3	56708.9	57365.9
Pasvalys d. mun.	6890.0	4446.4	5915.7
Rokiškis d. mun.	8433.9	8723.9	10028.2

The attractiveness of certain territories for living and quality of the living environment may be determined by many other factors, which were not discussed in this chapter. These are

economic development of the region, labour market situation, real estate prices, as well as other subjective factors, which are hardly expressible in quantitative terms. The municipalities analysed are very different: in terms of the population, area, and other characteristics. Smaller municipalities may offer a relatively large living space and are safe; however, despite a relatively high number of general schools and local cultural establishments, which remained in rural areas, they are characterised by a sparser social infrastructure network and a poorly developed service sector. The differences in the quality of life are levelled up by integrating Panevėžys town and its environs; better communication between municipalities and their localities allows making maximum use of advantages of different areas, as well as offering more qualitative services to the locals.