

# GLOBALIZATION DRIVERS AND THEIR IMPACT ON LITHUANIAN ECONOMIC GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

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*The article offers a discussion focusing on the concept of globalization discussed from different perspectives on the global scale. The fundamental elements of the global business drivers, which identify where domestic, multinational, global companies and countries can benefit most from globalization processes likely to affect the future development perspectives are presented. Special attention is given to understanding globalization as a bundle of processes rather than an end-state. The importance of the Index of Economic Freedom for globalization is discussed on an example of empirical research of the Baltic States, highlighting the Lithuanian positive movements. The current Lithuanian competitive position depends on the capabilities to seize the opportunities offered by globalization and to utilize its core competences in strategic decision-making, leading to the economic development and growth.*

*The methods that were used while preparing the article were analysis of scientific literature, logical analysis of economic indicators, and modeling.*

**Key words:** globalization, globalization drivers, Index of Economic Freedom, economic development and growth

## Introduction

Globalization reflects business orientation based on the belief that the world is becoming more homogeneous and that distinctions between national markets are not only fading but, for some products, will eventually disappear (Czinkota et al., 2004). Globalization processes, driven by rapid and largely unrestricted flows of information, ideas, cultural values, capital, goods and services, and people, lead to the shift toward a more integrated world economy. These processes, promoted by converging market preferences, falling trade barriers, and the integration of national economies is emerging as the norm in

a growing range of economic activities, changing economic theory and practices.

The aim of this article is to reveal the challenges of globalization drivers for Lithuanian business enterprises entering the global competition and to highlight the importance of economic freedom for economic growth and development.

Currently the problem of business globalization has become most essential worldwide. Even the biggest and most successful companies cannot survive on domestic sales alone, if they are in global industries such as banking, travel services, entertainment, consumer electronics, pharmaceuticals, publishing, etc. This leads us to

the question of how to survive and prosper in the global economy, and the ways how enterprises, big or small, will need to learn to cope with the new business environment. The growth of globalization creates both opportunities and threats for individuals, companies and countries, and the conduct of international business is distinct from that of domestic business, because companies must operate in diverse foreign environments. There is no one particular answer for decision-making, thus it requires to research key drivers of globalization. A new global economy is now emerging to confront national or multinational business enterprises of the world with extraordinary threats to their survival, coupled with unprecedented opportunities for survival, growth and profits. Identifying favorable opportunities and possible threats of globalization drivers today requires a global perspective. Thus, the decision to globalize is currently a major strategic decision. The Current competitive position of Lithuanian enterprises entering a new global environment is significantly affected by their possibilities to foster adaptation to worldwide requirements. It allows using favorable global market opportunities to improve economic efficiency, technological and organizational advantages factually in all company's activity, production, supply, etc. on the global scale.

Responses to global challenges surround the issues such as globalization, affecting the political, economic, competitive and other environmental forces which provide favorable opportunities for the growth and development of local, multinational and global business enterprises.

### **Responses to globalization drivers**

Globalization may be very hard to define, because the definition "globalization" could be treated from different points of view. Globalization is perhaps the most important force at work in contemporary society, business, management and

economics (Stonehouse et al., 2004). While some people think of globalization as primarily a synonym for global business, it is much more than that. *Economic globalization* has been joined by *political globalization*, leading to democracy and market-driven, open economies thus providing opportunities to respond to the globalization challenges. *Technological globalization* accelerated the rapid diffusion of free enterprises through new means of communication. Many new opportunities are coming from advances in computer technology. E-commerce and e-mail are changing many sales and purchasing processes. The Internet has emerged as a vital tool linking enterprises internally and linking firms externally with customers, strategic partners, and critical suppliers. The computer network expanded technological possibilities of data exchange with almost 200 countries already linked to it (Krajewski et al., 2005). Together, economic, political, and technological globalization has spawned a new phenomenon: *psychological globalization*, defined as the deepening relationships and broadening interdependence among people from different countries (Kluyver et al., 2003; Daniels et al., 2002).

The opinions of separate authors presented above highlight different aspects of globalization definitions, but the uniting feature in all definitions is that they define globalization as the process of increasing the connection and interdependence of the world's markets and businesses, highlighting the trend towards a greater political, economic, cultural and technological interdependence among national institutions and economies. Globalization is a process by which nations, businesses and people are becoming more connected and interdependent across the globe through increased economic integration and communication exchange, cultural diffusion and travel. Due to the increased mobility a national state may create value added elsewhere,

not only in the home country, especially by using the global production system as the basis for the further economic development, leading to the production and distribution of products and services of a homogeneous type and quality on a worldwide basis. It should be also pointed out that it is impossible to stop the powerful trend of globalization, and therefore it is important to consider measures to enhance its positive impacts while minimizing negative effects.

Analyzing globalization as a process it is possible to define its separate areas:

- globalization of economies – increasing interdependence of national economies throughout the world;
- globalization of markets – the increasing homogenization of consumer tastes and product preferences in certain markets, as evidenced by the popularity of global brands in certain markets;
- globalization of industries – the increasing globalization of the productive process, with firms choosing to concentrate or disperse value-adding activities around the world according to the locational advantages to be obtained. Global industries are defined as those where a firm's competitive position in one country is affected by its position in other countries, and vice versa;
- globalization of strategy – the extent, to which an international business configures and co-ordinates its strategy globally. A global strategy will normally include a global brand name and products, presence in major markets throughout the world, productive activities located so as to gain the best advantage, and co-ordination of strategy and business activities throughout the world (Kluyver et al., 2003). The global organization attempts to extend and coordinate internal production / operations to create a new value through a consolidation of manufacturing, reduced

delivery costs and economies of scale. The aim is to create an international network of operations which will sell the same products in several countries, increase overall sales thereby reducing the cost per unit of development, coordinate the work of subsidiaries to provide a product / service to the global customer and shift production in response to exchange rate fluctuations (Greasley, 2006).

Globalization may be regarded as a culmination of the process of international market entry and expansion. During the process of globalization, the strategic characteristics of the organization's global environment need to be systematically analyzed in terms of global players, globalization drivers, and a globally balanced a set of strategies. The analysis results in the integration of the domestic, international and multinational visions and strategies into a single global vision and a set of strategies and the globalization of the organization's long-range strategic decision-making.

The globalization process creates business environment that radically differs from the former, providing new challenges and trade-offs. Discussing the peculiarities of the global economy it is useful to evaluate that it opens new markets, provides an extensive choice of the human and other resources, activates the process of partnership and creates competitive pressure (Kučinskienė et al., 2002). The most general "layer" of the environment is often referred to as the macro environment. Analysis devoted to a country's macro environmental factors explains the many forces to which an enterprise is exposed. Managers also must adapt to the global environment dynamics and resolve conflicts among political, cultural, legal and other forces in order to be successful. The process of analysis of the global environment is concerned with global movements in culture and society, demography, politics, international law, economics and technology. It is such

movements that can create the conditions for breakpoints which may, in turn, drastically alter competitive conditions either in favor of, or against, countries, industries and organizations (Stonehouse et al., 2004). Globalization has changed the boundaries of competition, forcing the realignment of resources, products and services (Jatuliavičienė et al., 2004). The global macro environment will influence the development of individual national conditions, but each nation will have its own unique set of macro environmental conditions related to its history and development. Trends in the global macro environment will play a major part in shaping the global industry and market for particular products. Countries face challenges as they try to maximize positive effects from globalization while minimizing negative ones (Daniels et al., 2002). Similarly, the national macro environment dynamics will substantially shape a national industry and market conditions. Identifying opportunities and threats today requires a global perspective taking into account all environmental levels of a business enterprise. Focusing on players of the economy it is possible to state that opportunities for globalization today affect all of them (see Fig. 1).

As is shown in Fig. 1, the relationship between environmental factors and opportunities for globalization is not so straightforward. Therefore it is useful to identify a number of key drivers of change, which are forces likely to affect the structure of an industry, sector or market. It is widely known that George S. Yip has identified industry globalization drivers in four areas: market, competitive, cost, and government – underlying conditions that create the potential for an industry to become more global (Yip, 1992). In this respect, the drivers of globalization are a combination of many factors which have forced businesses to look outside their domestic markets for growth opportunities. Although there will be many changes occurring in the macro environment of most business enterprises, it will be the combined effect of just some of these separate factors that will be so important, rather than all of the factors separately. For the purpose of deeper research, it is very important to expand the list of key drivers that are increasing globalization of some enterprises, industries and markets (see Fig. 2).

The drivers of environmental change are of particular concern for business enterprises. The regulations, legislation and policies of governments

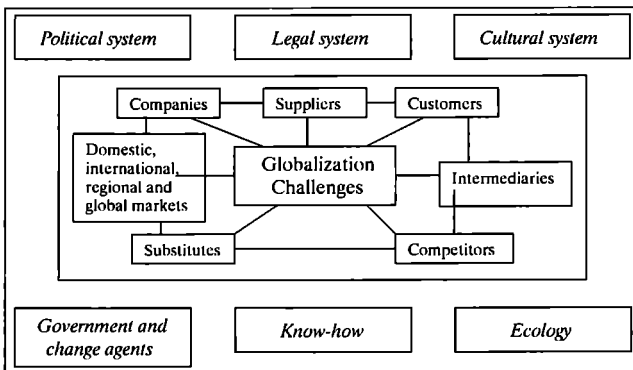
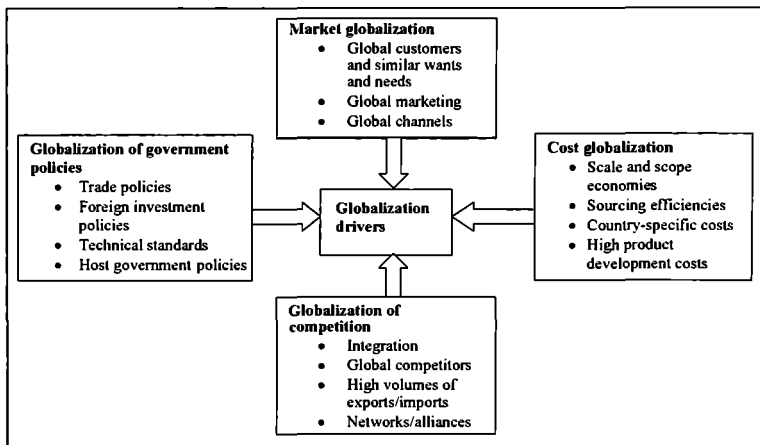


Fig. 1. Relationship among environmental dynamics and opportunities for globalization



*Fig. 2. Key drivers for global challenges*

can drive businesses to potential globalization. The quality of governance, both nationally and internationally, will substantially determine how well states and societies cope with these global forces. Countries will continue to be the dominant players on the world stage, but governments will have less and less control over flows of information, technology, and financial transactions, whether licit or illicit, across their borders. A worrying trend of globalization has been the shift of economic power and decision-making. At the national level, governments have been the primary mechanisms for the defense of the common good in the environmental and social areas. With globalization and the shift of many activities to the global scale, national governments are losing influence. Especially positive was the shift to increasing liberalization of world trade of the countries by lessening trade barriers through reduced import quotas and other international barriers. Political changes of the 1990s led to the functioning of the market-based economies and introducing free trade policies. Empirical researches

have shown that globalization results in more exports to and imports from other countries. Worldwide exports now account for more than 30 percent of the worldwide gross national product. Globalization of services is also widespread. The value of world trade in services is roughly 20 percent of the total world trade. Banking, law, information services, airlines, education, consulting, and restaurant services are particularly active globally. Host government policies towards trade and foreign investments seek to encourage global companies to base and operate in their countries. The fastest globalizing nations have enjoyed rates of economic growth up to 50 percent higher than those that have integrated into the world economy more slowly (Czinkota et al., 2004).

An important trend in globalization is the accelerating technological change affecting the design of new services and products and an enterprise's processes. Many new opportunities are coming from advances in computer technology.

Businesses accept the fact that, to prosper, they must view markets, customers, suppliers,

facility locations and competitors in global terms. There is an increasing trend to market globalization for a variety of reasons. The extent to which customers and their needs, distribution channels, brands are becoming global fosters the globalization process. As some markets globalize, those operating in such markets become global customers and may search for suppliers who can operate on a global basis. Globalization thereby relates not only to contextual factors such as worldwide homogenization of consumer demand but also to adoption of global strategies in which activities are tightly integrated and coordinated on a cross-national basis and the whole world is seen as a potential area of operation. And regional trade blocks, such as the EU and NAFTA, further change the competitive landscape in both services and manufacturing. The WTO provides a forum for its members to reach agreements through negotiation about how international trade should be liberalized for the benefit of its members. It monitors and scrutinizes the trade policies in the various regions of the world and those of member countries. It also facilitates solutions to trade disputes.

Cost globalization provides a potential for acquiring competitive advantage through scale and scope economies, sourcing efficiencies, country-specific costs (such as labor or exchange rates) or high costs of product development. Therefore, enterprises may see advantages in operating globally rather than locally.

### **Tendencies of change in the Lithuanian economy**

A lot of enterprises from small and open economies face the tremendous challenge of moving from the international to the global arena. Limited resources, for example, core competencies in management systems, are often a barrier for such companies to globalization. The tendencies of all

the major globalization drivers encourage in only one, globalization, direction by selecting domestic businesses for globalization. These businesses seek further growth as globalization proceeds. In the global businesses, Lithuanian small and medium enterprises with limited resources meet challenges well beyond those faced by companies domestically. Environmental and psychological matters are becoming more important due to growing physical and cultural distances.

The implications of the major drivers of globalization and their interactions in the global environment are being addressed in the current debates over the tendencies of globalization of Lithuanian macroeconomic indicators. It is important to distinguish between drivers of globalization and global responses to these drivers. The current competitive position of Lithuanian business enterprises entering a new global environment is significantly affected by their possibilities to foster adaptation to worldwide requirements.

The tendencies of change of macroeconomic indicators such as GDP, foreign trade, etc., allow estimating the globalization situation in Lithuania in some aspects. The key indicator pointing to the tendencies in the economy is the GDP of a country. In the current economic environment, economic growth and development is the essential guarantee for the later integration processes resultant from globalization. In respect to the GDP volumes, Lithuania in 2005 (data were published on 13 July 2005) has been ranked 85 out of 229 countries of the world (Home..., 2005). Over the last years the Lithuanian economy has been one of the fastest growing economies in Europe (see Fig. 3).

These figures were reported by the Lithuanian statistics agency, which also noted that in 2003 the country's GDP growth reached 9.7 percent and was the highest among all EU members and

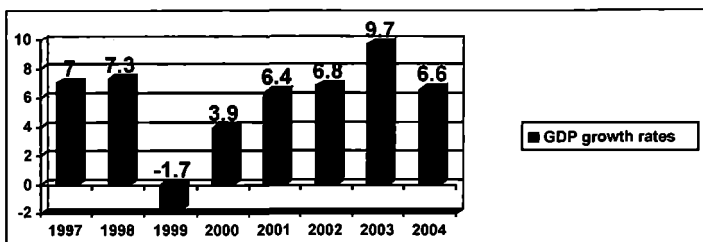


Fig. 3. Lithuanian GDP growth rates during 2000–2004 (per cent) (Main..., 2005)

candidate countries. In 2004, the Lithuanian GDP growth totaled 6.6 percent, which was almost 30 percent less than in 2003. The main reason for this slackening was an increasing deficit of qualified manpower, related with the membership of the EU and emigration to other countries, favored by the relaxed immigration controls. Lithuanian Ministry of Finance forecasts that Lithuanian GDP is expected to grow by 7.3 percent in 2005, 6.6 percent in 2006 and 6.3 percent in 2007 while the annual average inflation in Lithuania is forecast to be 0.9 percent (Lithuanian..., 2004).

Such a situation allows proposing that formation of the market economy and market changes encourages economic freedom: free choice, free enterprise, free prices, and freedom from direct intervention by government. Empirical research shows that countries with a higher economic freedom have more impressive long-term economic growth indices. The Index of Economic Freedom is an annual report published by the Wall Street Journal The Heritage Foundation and evaluates the level of economic freedom in countries throughout the world. It is scored against a list of 50 independent variables divided into 10 broad factors of economic freedom, ranging from fiscal burdens and government regulation to monetary and trade policy. The higher the score on a factor, the greater the level of government interference in the economy and the less economic freedom a

country enjoys. Thus, low scores are more desirable. Depending on their score, countries are then separated into four categories: Free, Mostly Free, Mostly Unfree, and Repressed. According to the 2005 rankings, Lithuania among 161 countries (the 2005 data) is attributed to the mostly free (2–2.999) category of countries, the same as Germany, Austria, Latvia, Japan and others. To the category of free countries are attributed such countries as Estonia, Hong Kong, Ireland, Singapore, etc. To the mostly unfree category of countries (3–3.99) are attributed Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, Tunis. To the repressed countries (4–5) are attributed Cuba, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Iran, etc. Most attention attracts the fact that the 2005 Index finds that economic is increasing freedom around the globe: 86 countries are more free this year, 57 are worse off, and 12 remain unchanged. Europe and North America are by far the freest regions, with even their median scorers, Spain and the Czech Republic, in the top 33. Notable gains were made by China; it is still a “mostly unfree” economy but moved up 16 places and is continuing a trend toward liberalization. Countries with the most economic freedom also have higher rates of long-term economic growth and are more prosperous than are those with less economic freedom (Economic..., 2005).

The tendencies of the past and present scores of the Lithuanian Index of Economic Freedom are

*Table 1. Evaluation of the Index of Economic Freedom 2005 of the Baltic countries according to the aggregated factors (Index...., 2005)*

Categories	Scores		
	Lithuania	Latvia	Estonia
Trade policy	2.0	2.0	1.0
Fiscal burden	2.8	2.1	2.0
Government intervention	2.0	2.5	2.0
Monetary policy	1.0	1.0	1.0
Foreign investment	2.0	2.0	1.0
Banking and finance	1.0	2.0	1.0
Wages and prices	2.0	2.0	2.0
Property rights	3.0	3.0	2.0
Regulation	3.0	3.0	2.0
Informal (black) market	3.0	3.5	2.5
<b>Total:</b>	<b>2.18</b>	<b>2.31</b>	<b>1.65</b>

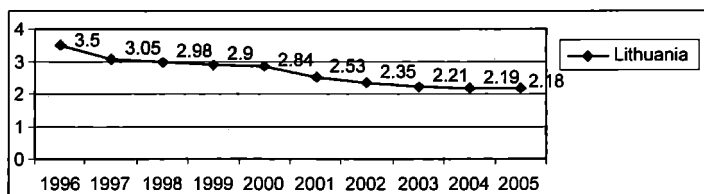
presented in Fig. 4 showing a correlation between the Index improvement and GDP growth.

Any improvement in the Index of Economic Freedom means that countries are moving toward higher levels of economic freedom and those with more economic freedoms have higher living standards. Simply starting to adopt economic freedom will provide an almost immediate boost to a country's economic activity. On average, once an economy moves from the "mostly unfree" category to the "mostly free", per capita income increases nearly four times (Wild et al., 2005). One reason for this is that the world is becoming a more and more integrated global market. Economic freedom is crucial to development and sustained prosperity. Commitment to open markets is

essential if a country wants to stay competitive in the global economy and respond positively to continuous changes in the global economy. By reducing obstacles, it creates a framework in which enterprises are able more effectively choose how to use their limited resources for globalization thus enhancing economic growth.

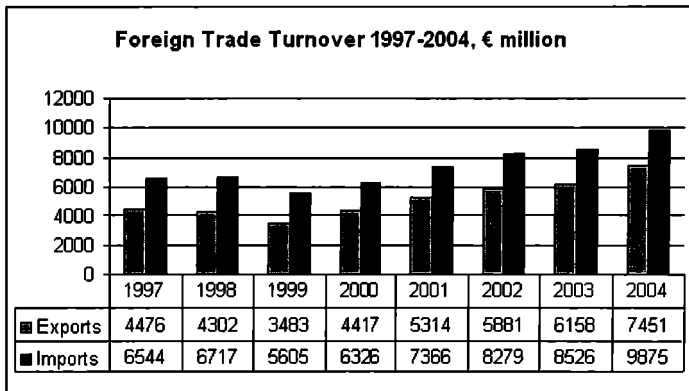
Lithuania, like the other countries that threw open their economy to world trade and investment, experienced faster growth rates than the rich European nations even. So, it is clear that Lithuania has advanced by taking opportunities of globalization, by taking advantage of today's more open trading regimes and newer technologies such as the Internet, e-commerce, etc. In the future, the growth rate depends on the export demand, especially in the light of the opening new foreign markets and improving trading conditions. The GDP growth forecast is based on the assumption that the economic development in Europe will gradually start to accelerate, and on the expected positive impulses of the EU membership. Growth is expected to be mainly led by increasing exports both to the EU countries and especially to the CIS-area.

Trade, especially merchandize trade, is the most important international economic activity and globalization driver for most countries. During global economic integration and growing international competition, foreign trade has become one of the most important factors for Lithuanian enterprises. Because of its small domestic market,



*Fig. 4. Lithuanian Index of Economic Freedom in 1996–2005 (per cent) (Index...., 2005)*





*Fig. 5. Foreign trade turnover in 1997–2004 (Main..., 2005)*

Lithuania is dependent on foreign trade to ensure its prosperity. It has made impressive progress during the last years.

Lithuania pursues a liberal foreign trade policy, and this has stimulated rapid foreign trade growth in the last years. In respect to the foreign trade turnover, in 2003 Lithuanian exports were growing faster than imports and the foreign trade deficit dropped by 1.8%. In 2003, compared to 2002, Lithuanian exports increased by 9.1%, whereas the growth in imports was 6%. Especially successful for Lithuania was the year 2004 when exports went up by 21 percent and imports grew by 15.8% (Lithuanian ..., 2005).

Lithuania, like other EU countries, expects new trade possibilities in traditional and new markets. From May 1, 2004, as a EU member Lithuania also enjoys preferences stipulated in the trade agreements between the EU and third countries. An optimistic outlook for Lithuanian exports in the next few years will depend of the further implementation of structural and technological changes, despite the fact that on becoming a member of the EU Lithuania lost its right to an independent foreign trade policy as the common

trade policy is an exclusive competence of the European Community. The major task of Lithuanian institutions is to take part in the EU decision-making process and influence the decisions to reflect Lithuania's economic interests in exporting areas. In 2004, Lithuania also continued its active involvement in negotiations on the resumption of the WTO Doha negotiation round. In July 2004, WTO member states succeeded in reaching a common agreement regarding the renewal of multilateral negotiation and negotiation conditions. The agreement reflects also Lithuanian priorities in this negotiation round as opening of global markets for industrial products and facilitation of trade conditions. For Lithuania this negotiation is useful because of retention of a sufficient protection level for EU agricultural products to preserve their competitiveness on global markets.

Globalization drivers, especially foreign trade, enabled Lithuanian export enterprises to widen export market scope, improve technologies and efficiency. The real challenge for Lithuanian business enterprises in entering the global competition is not only to pursue short-term advantages but also to link the long-term

competitiveness of the country in the global markets to living standards and the human development of the population.

## Conclusions

The current processes of increasing the economic, political, technological and psychological globalization transform the international economy into a global economy thus highlighting the trend towards interdependence among national institutions and economies. Globalization drivers influence environmental forces, providing opportunities for the economic growth and development of local, multinational and global business enterprises and countries. Such movements can create conditions for breakpoints which may, in turn, drastically alter competitive conditions either in favor of or against countries, industries and organizations. The competitive position of Lithuanian enterprises entering a new global environment is significantly affected by their possibilities to foster adaptation to globalization challenges and worldwide requirements. Identifying favorable opportunities and setting off threats today require a global perspective taking into account all environmental levels of a business enterprise. The implications of major drivers of globalization and their interactions in the global environment are being addressed in the article

over the tendencies of globalization of some Lithuanian macroeconomic indicators. The GDP is the key indicator reflecting the possibilities for the integration processes resulting from globalization. Over the last years the Lithuanian economy has been one of the fastest growing economies in Europe. Empirical research shows that the market economy countries with a higher economic freedom have more impressive long-term economic growth indices. The dynamics of the Lithuanian Index of Economic Freedom shows a correlation between the index improvement and GDP growth, crucial to the further economic development and living standards. Lithuanian enterprises have advanced by taking opportunities of globalization and by taking advantage of today's more open trading regimes and newer technologies. As a little and open country, Lithuania is dependent on foreign trade to ensure its prosperity and made impressive progress in exporting. The major task of Lithuanian institutions is to take part in the EU decision-making process and influence the decisions to reflect Lithuania's economic interests in exporting areas. The real challenge for Lithuanian business enterprises in entering the global competition is not only to pursue short-term advantages but also to link the long-term competitiveness of the country in the global markets to living standards and further successful responses to the globalization drivers.

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## GLOBALIZACIJOS VAROMOSIOS JĖGOS IR JŲ ĮTAKA LIETUVOS EKONOMIKOS AUGIMUI IR PLĖTRAI

Grazina Jatuliavičienė, Marija Kučinskienė

Sa n t r a u k a

Spartėjantys verslo aplinkoje pokyčiai iškelia būtinybę naujai suvokti ekonomikos plėtra ilgalaikėje perspektyvoje ir įvertinti sparčiai pasireiškiančių rinkų globalizavimą. Šios problemos iškelimą lemia tai, kad ekonomikos augimą globalizacijos sąlygomis vis labiau apsprendžia verslo įmonių konkurencingumo ir jų efektyvumo didinimas. Todėl tenka ieškoti realių ekonominio augimo didinimo galimybių ir priemonių bei numatyti paieškos rezultatus.

Analizuojant globalizacijos apibrėžimų įvairovę, galima pastebėti, kad vienijantis dalykas yra tai, jog globalizacijos procesų, kurie yra skatinami augančių rinkos poreikių, mažėjančių prekybos barjerų tarp nacionalinių ekonomikų, varomoji jėga yra globali ekonomika. Todėl neišvengiamai tenka aiškintis ir analizuoti tokias globalizacijos varomasias jėgas kaip rinkų globalizavimas, vyriausybės politikų globalizavimas, sąnaudų globalizavimas, konkurencijos globalizavimas ir kt. Intensyvėjančios globalizacijos sąlygomis išryškėja, jog globalizacijos varomosios jėgos yra daugybės veiksnių derinys, kuris priverčia verslus paspartintai reaguoti į išorėje esančias palankias verslo augimo galimybes, ypač tokias, kaip didėjančių ekonominių ryšių liberalizavimą. Spartėjanti pasaulinės prekybos liberalizacija sąlygoja mažėjančius prekybos barjerus, įtakančius pasaulinių eksporto ir importo apimčių augimą. Empiriniai tyrimai parodė, kad dabartiniu metu pasaulinis eksportas sudaro daugiau kaip 30 procentų bendro nacionalinio produkto augimo.

Kyla klausimas, ar dabartinė Lietuvos įmonių pozicija, įsitraukiant į naują globalią aplinką, yra žymiai paveikiama jų galimybių pagręitintai adaptuotis globalioje erdvėje bei pasinaudoti globalios rinkos teikiamomis palankiomis galimybėmis ekonomikos efektyvumui didinti, o gal būt pasipriešinti trikdžiams? Svarbiausios galimybės, tokios, kaip informaciniai, technologiniai, organizaciniai, ekonominiai pokyčiai, kurie sustiprina vietinių (nacionalinių) įmonių veiklą globalioje erdvėje, neišvengiamai prisideda prie šalies ekonominio augimo. Šalys, surištos globalizacijos saitais, turi aukštesnę ekonomikos augimą (per 50 procentų) negu tos, kurios integruojasi į pasaulio ekonomiką žymiai lėčiau. Svarbiausių globalizacijos varomųjų jėgų reikšmė ir jų sąveika globalioje aplinkoje turi būti įtraukta į dabartinis debatus dėl globalizacijos tendencijų Lietuvoje atsizvelgiant į makroekonominių rodiklių kontekstą. Dabartinė Lietuvos verslo įmonių pozicija, įsitraukiant į globalią aplinką, yra žymiai paveikta jų galimybių padėti prisitaikyti prie globalios rinkos keliamų reikalavimų. Tai leistų, naudojant globalių rinkų palankias galimybes, tokias kaip technologiniai ir organizaciniai pranašumai, padidinti įmonių ir ekonomikos efektyvumą. Globalios plėtos tendencijos ryškiai atspindi Lietuvos makroekonominių rodiklių dinamikoje. Lietuva tarp 229 šalių (remiantis 2005 m. skelbtais duomenimis) užėmė 85 vietą pagal BVP apimtį. Lietuvos ekonomika per pastaruosius metus buvo viena iš sparčiausiai augančių ekonomikų Europoje. Tai leidžia teigti, kad rinkos

ekonomikos kūrimas ir ekonominės laisvės indekso augančios tendencijos yra glaudžiai susijusios su BVP augimu. Ekonominė laisvė yra svarbiausias veiksnys siekiant išlikti konkurencingais globalioje ekonomikoje ir tinkamai reaguoti į palankias pasaulinės rinkos galimybes.

Lietuvos mažos ir vidutinės įmonės globalios plėtros procesuose ypač yra priklausomos nuo užsienio prekybos kaip vienos iš svarbiausių globalizacijos varomųjų jėgų. Dabartinės tendencijos rodo, kad, nežiūrint į mažą

vietinę rinką, didėjantis ekonominių ryšių liberalizavimas sąlygoja spartų eksporto ir importo apimčių augimą. Globalizacijos varomosios jėgos leido Lietuvos įmonėms išplėsti eksporto rinkas, pagerinti technologijas ir pasiekti aukštesnį efektyvumą. Todėl globalios ekonomikos sąlygomis reikėtų siekti ne vien trumpalaikių konkurencinių pranašumų, bet spręsti ilgo laikotarpio konkurencingumo didinimo globaliose rinkose problemas, savalaikiai ir tinkamai reaguojant į globalizacijos varomasias jėgas.

*Įteikta 2005 m. gruodžio mėn.*

*Priimta spausdinti 2006 m. vasario mėn.*