

The Order of Malta Relief Organisation in Lithuania (OMRO): 2024 Activity Report

The year 2024 can be described as a year of stability and continuity for the Lithuanian Maltesers. Assistance to people facing difficulties has been provided for 33 years. Although the country's economy is strengthening, rising energy prices and the geopolitical situation due to the war in Ukraine continue to make life difficult for low-income individuals.

The year 2024 will go down in history for the Lithuanian Maltesers not only as a year of stability but also as the beginning of a new chapter and new opportunities for the organization. On October 13, in Vilnius, a ceremony was held to induct new members into the Order of Malta, coinciding with the feast day of Blessed Gerard, the founder of the Order. Five key persons of the Order of Malta Relief Organisation joined the Order of Malta, marking a significant event not only for the Maltesers community but for all of Lithuania – for the first time since the Soviet occupation of 1940, Lithuania has the members of the Order of Malta.

Lithuanian Maltesers in 2024 – Key Statistics:

- Assistance is provided in **45 locations** across the country.
- The organization has **1,952 volunteers**, **467** of whom are young Maltesers.
- Compared to 2023, the number of volunteers has increased by **6.14%**.
- The first international relief mission took place in November 2024 in **Nysa, Poland**, where Lithuanian Maltesers volunteers helped restore a flood-damaged retirement home. The mission lasted **six days (384 hours)** and assisted **63 elderly residents**.

Spiritual development

As every year, spiritual care remains the guiding force for the Maltesers, helping both volunteers and those in need to deepen their faith and strengthen Christian spirituality and the Charism of the Order: *Tuitio fidei et obsequium pauperum* ([Latin](#)) "Defence of the faith and assistance to the poor". February 2024 began with preparations for a pilgrimage to Lourdes. During this unique fundraising campaign, people could purchase blessed candles outside churches and write down their intentions, which were taken to Lourdes. A total of **€28,961.88** was raised, enabling **76 disabled pilgrims** to travel to Lourdes.

For the first time, after returning from Lourdes, special Masses were held in **three [Lithuanian Lourdes](#) pilgrimage sites**, where water and religious tokens brought back from the pilgrimage were distributed. Every year, Maltesers volunteers accompany people with disabilities on a pilgrimage to **Šiluva**, home to the Feast of Our Lady of Šiluva. In 2024, **200 Maltesers volunteers and their beneficiaries** participated in the annual pilgrimage.

Assistance to Elderly People

The Order of Malta Relief Organisation is the **largest organization in Lithuania providing assistance to the elderly** in various ways. In 2024, **3,000 seniors** received support. The primary forms of assistance include food aid and household support throughout the year:

- **850 low-income seniors** received hot meals (soup in thermoses) **2–3 times per week** (in 2023, this number was **820**).
- Food packages and assistance in meal preparation were provided to more independent seniors.
- **Seven senior day centers and clubs** were operational, offering socialization and activities.

- After a pandemic-related closure, the **Alytus** senior center reopened in 2024.
- The **St. John the Baptist Care Home**, now in its third year, continues to provide care for the most vulnerable seniors. With **28 available spots**, the home is consistently full, and a waiting list has formed.
- A new **care home project** started with design work after the purchase of the premises in northeastern Lithuania, with plans to accommodate up to 40 elderly residents.

The annual fundraising campaign, "Maltesers' Soup," took place in November–December 2024 and raised €830,326.25 from both individual and corporate donors to support senior projects.

Assistance to Children and Youth

Maltesers programs for children ensure **continuous support throughout their development**:

- **12 children's day centers** (for ages 7–14).
- **Teen day home in Kaunas** (for ages 14–18).
- **Open youth space in Vyžuonos, Utena district** (for ages 14–18).
- **Support programs for young people leaving foster care** (ages 16–24) in Kaunas, Telšiai, and Marijampolė.
- In 2024, **516 young people** received support, including food, educational activities, and mentoring.
- A fundraising campaign, "**Step Bolder into Life**", was held in September 2024, raising **€21,057.10**.
- A **hackathon** was organized for the second time, bringing together businesses to develop solutions for vulnerable youth.

Assistance to People with Disabilities

The year 2024 marked a **qualitative breakthrough in services for people with disabilities**:

- The **annual summer camp "Turning Disability into Strength"** gathered **29 participants**, helping them build self-confidence and motivation.
- In Kaunas, the **Disabled Persons' Club** operates with weekly gatherings and a **paralympic boccia team, "Maltesers Knights."**
- **Social rehabilitation services** were provided in Kaunas and Viduklė, benefiting **40 individuals**.
- Home assistance services were offered in **Vilnius and started in Kupiškis**, with **24 assistants** helping **49 disabled individuals**.
- **Day and home social care services expanded to four cities**, reaching **171 people** (compared to 118 in 2023 and 86 in 2022).

Assistance for Refugees

- In 2024, as the war in Ukraine continued, **2,256 Ukrainian refugees** received support, including social and psychological counseling, Lithuanian language lessons, and educational programs.
- Services were provided in **Vilnius, Kaunas, and Marijampolė**, as well as in **Maltesers' children's day centers**.
- Humanitarian aid, including food, hygiene supplies, and SIM cards, was distributed.

- **Case management services** were provided to **70 refugees from other countries**, with a total of **850 services rendered**.
- These services were funded by the **Malteser International** project, running from **August 2023 to May 2025**, with a budget of **€150,000**.
- The Maltesers closely collaborate with the **Ukraine Center**, initiated and supported and founded by the First Ladies of Lithuania and Ukraine, which was established to create an open space for cultural, educational, and community services for the Ukrainian community in Lithuania.

Additional Services

First Aid

- **51 commercial first aid training sessions** were held in 2024 (compared to **46 in 2023**).
- Additional non-commercial training sessions were conducted for volunteers and the public at various events.
- Emergency medical services were provided at **61 events**, including the **Lithuanian Song Festival (100th anniversary)**, which hosted **38,000 participants and hundreds of thousands of spectators**.
- The first aid team conducted **four international medical transfers** (to **Egypt, Tenerife, Turkey, and Germany**).

Civil Protection

- In September 2024, the first **national mobilization exercise, “Vytis Vault 2024”**, was conducted to test Lithuania’s preparedness for emergencies and wartime scenarios.
- The Maltesers were responsible for evacuating **elderly and mobility-impaired individuals from Vilnius**.
- **22 Maltesers’ volunteers** participated in the drills, highlighting the essential role of NGOs in crisis response.

President
Bronius Einars

Secretary General
Edvinas Regelskis