

## PREFACE

This study on Lithuania's housing sector is the fourth carried out by the ECE Committee on Human Settlements to analyse housing sector reform in countries with economies in transition. The first focused on Bulgaria and its results were published in 1996 (ECE/HBP/101). The second study, on Poland, was published in 1998 (ECE/HBP/107). The third study, on Slovakia's housing sector, came out in 1999 (ECE/HBP/112).

These country-specific strategic housing sector analyses are intended to assist the Governments of countries with economies in transition in improving performance in this sector. They also aim to provide practical information to those with a special interest in the country, such as international lender and donor organizations, technical assistance agencies, or private sector investors, within and outside the country. The objective is to identify positive trends and problem areas, so as to be able to assess the implementation of national policies and strategies, and the social and economic consequences of housing reform for the population and other major actors in the sector. The studies are the work of international teams of experts. They cooperate with governmental bodies, non-governmental organizations, local authorities and the private sector to mobilize available information sources in the country. An international team of experts also draws up recommendations to guide the housing sector reform towards sustainable patterns of housing development.

The ECE Committee on Human Settlements included the Country Profile on the Housing Sector of Lithuania in its work programme in September 1998. In January 1999, teams of national and ECE experts were formed to carry out the study. The Governments of Bulgaria, Norway, Slovakia, the Russian Federation and the United Kingdom made national experts available for the task. The travel expenses of the experts from countries in transition and from the ECE secretariat were covered by extrabudgetary funds, which had been provided by Finland and the Netherlands. The Governments of Norway and the United Kingdom financed their national experts' participation as their contribution in kind. The successful conclusion of the project would not have been possible without their generous support.

The fact-finding mission of the international team of experts took place from 21 to 24 February 1999, the verification mission from 16 to 19 May 1999. The experts' Lithuanian partners responded to their queries and requests during both these missions.