

CONSTRUCTUS

Construction of the new Vilnius Municipal Center: History and key facts in brief

In late 2001, Constructus (then called Skanska Statyba) was declared the winner of a competition organized by Vilnius Municipality. The company signed a contract to build the new Vilnius Municipal Center. Construction started in the summer of 2002 and was finalized in early February 2004. Constructus is now preparing to transfer the Center's buildings to the municipal company Vilniaus Kapitalinė Statyba and to the new owner – VB Lizingas, a subsidiary of Vilnius Bank.

Skanska Statyba was founded in 1994 as the Lithuanian subsidiary of Skanska, one of the world's largest construction companies. In the summer of 2003, the company changed owners and was renamed Constructus as a result of Skanska's withdrawal from the Lithuanian market.

Beginning of the project

- In August 2001, Vilnius Municipality announced competitive negotiations for the design and construction of a complex of buildings on the right bank of the Neris River at the intersection of Ukmergės and Lvovo streets. This competition was rather specific, because under its conditions the winner not only had to erect the buildings, but also had to offer and ensure project financing solutions and perform the design work.
- August 2001 – December 2001. While preparing its tender, Constructus selected two business partners: Vilnius Bank as the project financing partner and VB Lizingas as the future owner of the Center, with a financing solution that would enable Vilnius Municipality to pay for the newly erected Center over a 10-year period. Constructus submitted its tender.
- On December 19, 2001, Constructus was declared winner of the competitive negotiations to build the Center, having submitted the best bid in terms of construction price, interest on the deferred payment over 10 years and VAT.
- Preparation and coordination of a package of more than 10 contracts lasted about six months. Constructus offered a project financing mechanism that proved acceptable to all negotiating parties. During the construction period, Vilnius Municipality would pay 20% of the required funds. Vilnius Bank would provide the remaining sum. Upon completion of construction, Vilnius Municipality could choose one of two options stipulated in the contract: either pay the balance as a lump sum or use the services of VB Lizingas and pay for the newly erected building in installments within 10 years, i.e. by 2014.
- The construction contract was signed on June 3, 2002, and construction began in August. Under the contract, Constructus provided design services, ensured financing solutions and performed the actual construction of the Vilnius Municipal Center. In this project, Constructus has used the Design & Build concept, which is still rare in Lithuania but is widely used in Western Europe and the United States. Using the Design & Build concept, in 1995-1997 Constructus had erected the Philip Morris Lietuva factory in Klaipėda

and extended and modernized the heating, ventilation and air-conditioning systems of the same factory in 2002.

Basic information about the new Vilnius Municipality Center

- For the convenience of visitors, Constructus and the Municipality decided to construct a 20-story tower and expand the complex in width by erecting additional 3- and 5-story buildings, instead of building a single 27-story tower as they had initially discussed.
- These additional buildings and the lower levels of the main tower will house the departments and subdivisions of the Municipality that are most frequently visited by city residents. This solution was adopted in an effort to optimize the flow of visitors to the Municipal Center.
- The initial project envisaged 14,900 sq. m of total floor space in the buildings comprising the new Vilnius Municipal Center. The floor space in the completed buildings is 15,060 sq. m (162,000 sq. ft.), due to changes to the project in the course of construction.
- The new Europe Square, 4,800 sq. m in size, connects the Municipal Center with nearby commercial buildings and the new Vilnius County building, also being erected by Constructus.
- The main 20-story building of the new Vilnius Municipal Center rises to a height of 76.85 m (252 ft.). This is the second tallest office building in Vilnius and Lithuania.
- Constructus has built an 11,500 sq. m underground garage for 344 vehicles under the Municipal Center's buildings, Europe Square and nearby commercial buildings, using the latest technological solutions for installing the necessary fire protection, ventilation and safety systems.
- The new Vilnius Municipality Center was erected on a pile foundation. The frame of the main 20-story building is made of monolithic reinforced concrete, and the frames of the 3- and 5-story buildings are made of precast concrete. Three tower cranes and five truck cranes were used at the construction site.
- 10,700 sq. m of glass were used for the facades of the Center's buildings, glazed with high-quality SUN GUARD shatterproof and energy-saving multiple panes. In case of accident, the glass will break into small fragments, so falling glass will cause no danger to people inside or near the building.
- Constructus was the first builder in Lithuania to apply a new method of erecting glazed high-rise structures. The glazed facade "cartridges" covering the main 20-story building were assembled not at the construction site but at a factory. The Reynaers CW 86 Facade Construction System enables builders to produce large facade elements with built-in multiple glass panes, filler plates and warming materials right at the factory. Then these elements are delivered to the construction site and attached to the frames of buildings. This new method for erecting glazed high-rise structures saves time, ensures higher quality and reduces the chances of error.
- Modern engineering systems have been installed in the new Vilnius Municipal Center. The heating and ventilation systems are equipped with heat

exchangers, and the building will be cooled during summer. Modern electric wiring and a high-speed computer and telephone network have been installed at the Center, which has a computerized building management system. To ensure the safety of employees, visitors and property inside the buildings, fire alarm and sprinkler systems have been installed, in addition to a gas operated fire extinguishing system designed for archive and server station rooms.

- The interior finish of the main 20-story building is characterized by "cool" colors, whereas the interiors of the 3- and 5-story buildings feature warm pastel colors. Walls are covered with Swedish flat paint. The Center has 9,709 sq. m of plasterboard partitions and 12,600 sq. m of suspended acoustic modular ceilings.
- The indoor fireproof glass partitions and fireproof glass doors were made in Germany, whereas the wooden doors were made in Estonia.
- Offices and corridors in the buildings are floored with tiles made in Lithuania, Italy, France and Portugal, as well as with British PVC flooring and German carpeting. German sanitary engineering is installed in the WCs, whose walls are decorated with Lithuanian tiles.
- The buildings in the new Vilnius Municipality Center are fully finished, and Constructus has also installed all furniture as well as the audio, video, conference and voting systems in the meeting halls of the Municipal Council and Board.
- Design and layout changes occurred from time to time during the construction process, without disrupting the construction schedule. The Municipal Center complex was completed on the agreed date. Constructus has thus demonstrated considerable skill in managing the construction process and the various risks that occur in the course of such a project.

For more effective administration of the city

- The 3- and 5-story buildings and the lower levels of the 20-story building will house the departments most frequently visited by Vilnius residents: the Development, Health and Social Welfare departments, the Municipality Service Center and the Information Office.
- Modern conference and voting system, audio and video equipment have been installed in the meeting hall of the Vilnius Municipality Council on the second floor of the 3-story building. The minimalist style of the hall, with custom-made Lithuanian furniture and warm pastel colors, creates an atmosphere of modernity, lightness and clarity. The City Mayor's Office will be on the 19th floor of the office tower. The Vilnius City Board Meeting Hall, which will also host receptions and similar official events, is just above the Mayor's office on the 20th floor.
- The offices on each floor of the 20-story building will accommodate 30-35 municipal employees, and the buildings at the Center will accommodate approximately 1,000 employees in all. A Card Admittance System has been installed in the buildings to help control the flow of visitors and employees, and to identify people wishing access to higher-security zones. The buildings have five elevators that can simultaneously carry 37 people.

Occupational health, safety and environment protection

- On average, more than 200 workers were present daily at the construction site of the new Vilnius Municipality Center, and nearly 130 subcontractors and suppliers regularly delivered services and products. Strictly regulated and accurate monitoring of construction processes by Constructus and special attention to occupational safety requirements helped eliminate risks which might have occurred in the course of construction and avoid even minor accidents. The construction process was safe, while chaos, stress and tension were avoided.
- There was strict compliance with all environmental protection standards during construction of the Vilnius Municipality Center. Constructus is almost the only Lithuanian construction company that has implemented an ISO 14001 certified environmental management system. Construction of the Center had minimal impact on the environment. For example, waste was sorted at the construction site, steps were taken to prevent emission of hazardous materials into the atmosphere, and only environmentally friendly construction materials were used.

The benefits to the city and its residents

- Over 60% of Vilnius city residents live on the right bank of the Neris River, but an equal percentage work on the other side of the river. Forecasts indicate that the creation of a new downtown district on the right bank of the river, anchored by the new civic center complex, will help ease current transportation problems and traffic jams in the city.
- For the first time, virtually all the employees of Vilnius Municipality will be working in one place. Until now, departments and their subdivisions have been scattered all over the city.
- One of Constructus' main tasks was to ensure that the new Vilnius Municipality Center would meet all the necessary criteria in terms of quality, durability and efficiency and that all technological solutions would guarantee economical, cost-effective operation of the buildings. Yet public buildings should not stand out by virtue of their decoration, grandeur and embellishments. The task was to combine suitable architectural expression with efficient solutions. Consequently, after analyzing the various functions of the buildings together with representatives of the Municipality and the architects, we clearly differentiated the premises that required more decoration and those that could do with less.

Openness and transparency

- The Vilnius Municipality Center construction site was open to the public. More than 1,000 people visited the site and the buildings, and dozens of guided tours were organized. A majority of those interested in the project consisted of Lithuanian and foreign journalists, students, businessmen and politicians. Constructus thus promoted transparency and openness in the construction process. Anyone who wanted could sign up and come to learn about the project, visit the construction site and meet with the company's experts.