



**LIETUVOS BANKAS**  
EUROSISTEMA

# Quarterly assessment of the financial cycle in Lithuania

**December  
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Periods indicated in charts include data for the respective year, quarter, etc.  
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## Introduction

The Quarterly assessment of the financial cycle in Lithuania (formerly – the Credit and Real Estate Market Review) is a quarterly publication issued by the Bank of Lithuania that assesses the state of the financial cycle in Lithuania and the level of cyclical systemic risk: the sustainability of trends in the credit and real estate (RE) markets, imbalances in the financial sector and the risk of their build-up or widening. The information contained in this review forms the basis for a regular assessment of the applicable financial stability instruments: the level of the countercyclical buffer rate and the sectoral systemic risk buffer (applied for mortgage loan portfolio) rate.<sup>1</sup>

*Explanation of the key terms used in this publication:*

**Financial cycle.** *The financial cycle refers to the development cycle of the financial system, comprising four phases: expansion (growth), deceleration, recession and recovery, defined by the overall evolution of the various indicators of the financial system (in particular, those reflecting trends in the credit and real estate markets), which are related, for example, to the perception of the value of financial assets and real estate, the perceived level of risk, the tightening or relaxation of lending standards and the resulting impact on the supply of credit, and the interplay between these phenomena. The literature generally considers that the financial cycle tends to last longer than the business cycle and can significantly amplify economic booms and deepen recessions. The application of CCyB aims at increasing the resilience of the financial system and, to some extent, reducing its pro-cyclicality and, within the meaning of financial cycle, at reducing the size of fluctuations in the financial cycle, especially in the recession phase.*

**Cyclical (systemic) risk.** *Systemic risk is the risk of a disruption to the financial system or a part of the financial system, which could have significant negative consequences for the financial system and the economy. Two types of systemic risk are generally distinguished: cyclical and structural risks.<sup>2</sup> Cyclical risk is related to the evolution of the financial cycle: it rises and falls as the financial cycle unfolds, and is usually associated with changes in the supply of credit and in the risk assessment of financial system participants.*

## Abbreviations

**CCyB** – countercyclical capital buffer

**HPI** – house price index

**GDP** – gross domestic product

**HP** – Hodrick–Prescott filter

**NFC** – non-financial corporations

**RE** – real estate

**HH** – households

**MFI** – monetary financial institutions (e. g. banks and credit unions)

**NFPS** – non-financial private sector

**HICP** – harmonised index of consumer prices

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.lb.lt/en/financial-stability-instruments-1>

<sup>2</sup> Structural (systemic) risk arises from the structural features of the financial system, such as the interconnectedness of financial system participants, concentration and the specific nature of business models.

## Key messages

**Lithuania is still experiencing an upturn in the financial cycle, mainly due to robust corporate and household borrowing, as well as still intense, though recently slowing, annual house price growth.** Rapid borrowing from monetary financial institutions (MFIs) is not yet creating credit imbalances, but overall crediting in the economy is approaching the brink of creating imbalances due to intensive business-to-business lending. In addition, the current account deficit is widening due to faster growth in imports than in exports, increasing the need of Lithuania's economy to borrow. On the other hand, MFIs are not dependent on external funding, as the loan-to-deposit ratio, although increasing, remains at a historically low level (81%). Only house prices are showing limited imbalances, as they are slightly overvalued.

**Despite heightened uncertainty, rising interest rates and the risks of war, companies are borrowing faster than the economy grows.** Nominal annual growth in the MFI corporate loan portfolio is 21%, while the annual growth rate of broad corporate credit (including business-to-business loans) is as much as 31%, outpacing economic growth for three consecutive quarters. Such a significant corporate borrowing has been driven by the need for working capital due to the strong increase in the prices of raw materials and intermediate goods. All this suggests that corporate borrowing is in the phase of high growth. The gap between the broad corporate credit to GDP ratio and its long-term trend is approaching the brink of the build-up of imbalances due to abundant business-to-business lending, but credit imbalances are not yet present.

**Households continue to borrow robustly, both for house purchase and consumption.** Nominal annual growth rate of the MFI housing loan portfolio is 12%, with the growth above 10% being observed from the second quarter of 2021. Rapid household borrowing is occurring together with even higher house price growth (19% per year), and these processes are mutually reinforcing. Despite the high pace of borrowing, there are no household credit imbalances, with the gap between the MFI household loans to GDP ratio and its long-term trend remaining negative and broadly unchanged.

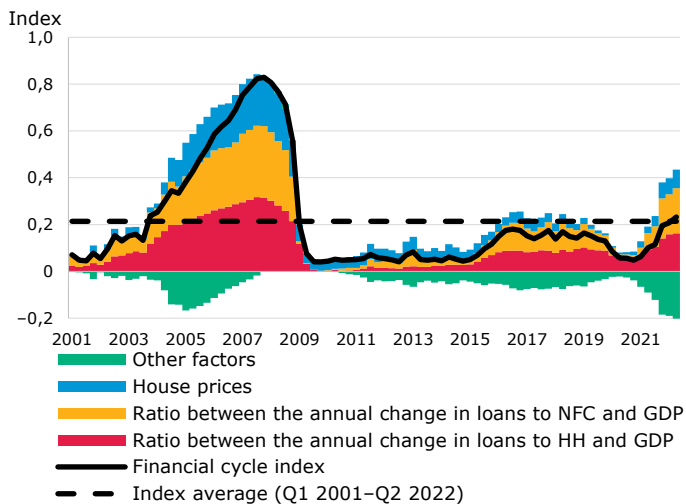
**The annual rate of nominal house price growth is still very high, but there are increasingly more indications that the peak of the growth cycle has been reached.** Such a rate of price growth is outpacing the wage growth, thus housing affordability continues to deteriorate. At the price level, there still are limited imbalances, with prices overvalued by around 4% based on the median of 6 different estimates. However, annual price growth has been slowing down over the last few months and month-on-month changes of the price index even show a slight price decrease. Expectations for the future developments in house prices have changed significantly, with surveys showing that households, banks and property market participants mostly expect a stabilisation of prices or a small price decrease of 5–10% over the next year.

**The countercyclical capital buffer (CCyB) rate is unchanged for the fourth quarter of 2022, with banks and groups of central credit unions being subject to a consolidated CCyB rate of 1% from 1 October 2023.** The Board of the Bank of Lithuania has set this CCyB rate on 30 September 2022, taking into account the broader recovery of the financial cycle and the increased downside risks to economic growth. In the event of a significant economic or financial shock, the CCyB requirement would be released and would help credit institutions to absorb credit losses and sustain lending. At the same time, the 2% sectoral systemic risk buffer for the portfolio of housing loans to natural persons, which entered into force on 1 July 2022, remains in place to ensure resilience to systemic risk arising from imbalances in the housing market, albeit limited in size, and from the high significance and concentration of housing loans in the loan portfolio of credit institutions.



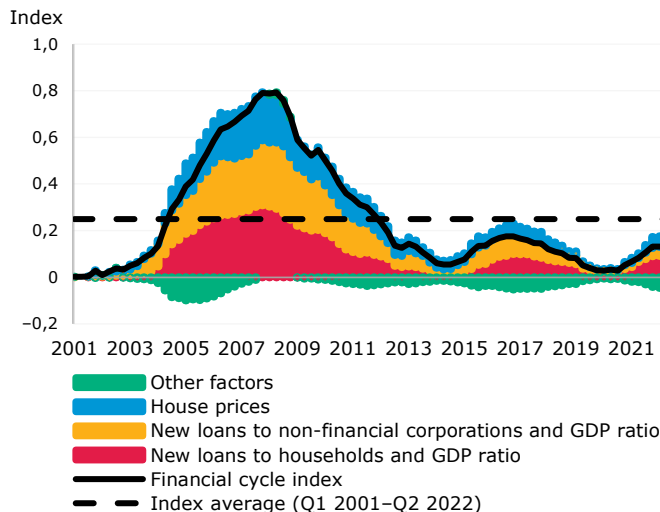
## The financial cycle remains elevated and continues to grow due to business-to-business lending

Chart 3. Lithuania's financial cycle index and its drivers (total credit, Q1 2001–Q2 2022)



Sources: State data agency and Bank of Lithuania.

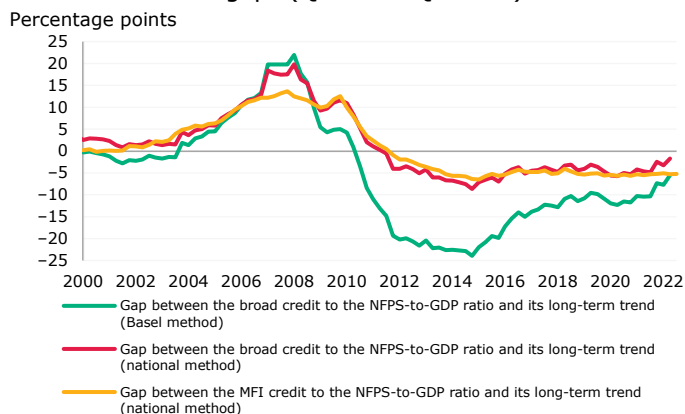
Chart 4. Lithuania's financial cycle index and its drivers (MFI loans, Q1 2001–Q2 2022)



Sources: State data agency and Bank of Lithuania.

## Extremely intense business-to-business lending is significantly increasing the amount of credit in the economy, but credit imbalances are not yet present

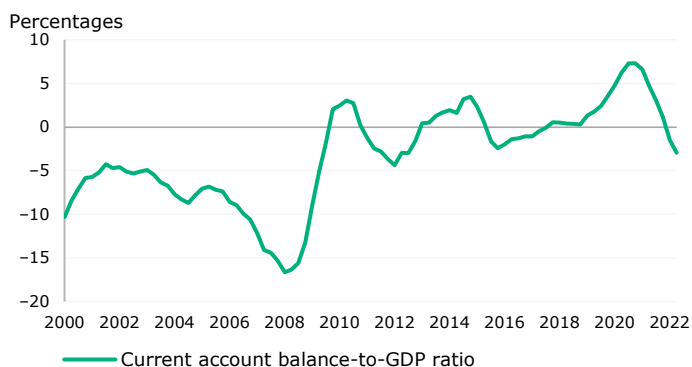
Chart 5. Credit and MFI loans to the non-financial private sector to GDP ratio gaps (Q1 2000–Q2 2022)



Sources: State data agency and Bank of Lithuania.  
Notes: long-term trend is computed using a one-sided HP filter with a smoothing parameter of 400,000; for the national method, before applying the filter, the ratio is modelled for the next 5-year window using a 4-quarter weighted average.

## Current account deficit widens as imports grow faster than exports, thus increasing the economy's need to borrow

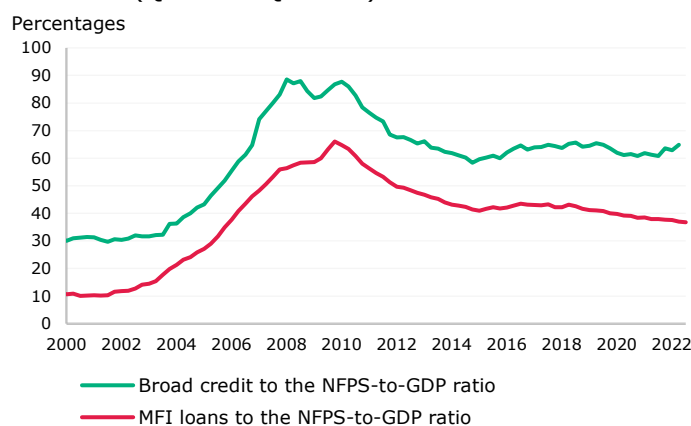
Chart 7. Current account balance to GDP ratio (Q1 2000–Q2 2022)



Sources: State data agency and Bank of Lithuania.

## Private sector indebtedness to monetary financial institutions is declining, but total indebtedness is rising due to intense business-to-business lending

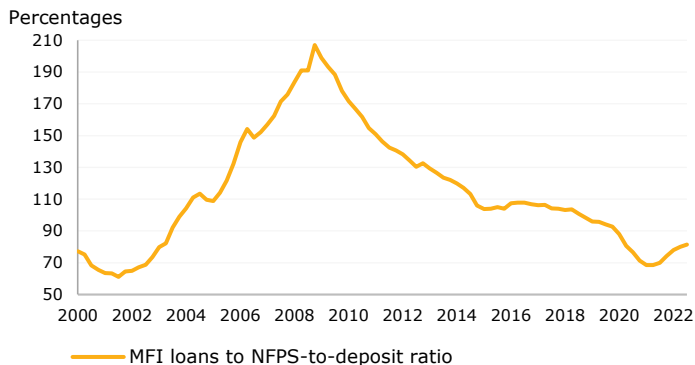
Chart 6. Credit and MFI loans to the non-financial private to GDP ratios (Q1 2000–Q2 2022)



Sources: State data agency and Bank of Lithuania.

## The MFI loans-to-deposit ratio has been rising recently but is still at a historically low level

Chart 8. Ratio of MFI loans to the non-financial private and non-financial private sector deposits (Q1 2000–Q3 2022)



Sources: State data agency and Bank of Lithuania.



