

DEAL POINTS STUDY 2018



## Baltic M&A Deal Points Study 2018

This fifth edition of the Baltic M&A Deal Points Study is conducted by the legal and regulatory committees and working groups of the:

- Estonian Private Equity and Venture Capital Association
- Latvian Private Equity and Venture Capital Association, and
- Lithuanian Private Equity and Venture Capital Association

together with contributions from the following Baltic M&A law firms and alliances:











#### **Transactions Analysed**

- The study analyses 91 M&A transactions completed during the period January 2016 December 2017.
- This 2018 study compares the results to similar 2016 and 2013 studies.
- The transactions included in the survey have the following characteristics:
  - The survey covered M&A and joint venture transactions, i.e. acquisition or merger of businesses via share or asset transactions, corporate statutory mergers, joint venture agreements or in any other way.
  - Only Baltic transactions were studied, i.e. M&A transactions involving targets operating in one or more of the Baltic States: Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.
  - Transactions had a deal value over EUR 1 million and were completed during the two year period January 2016 December 2017.
  - No additional limitations applied as to deal value, the nature of the parties or the target or the sale procedure of the transaction.

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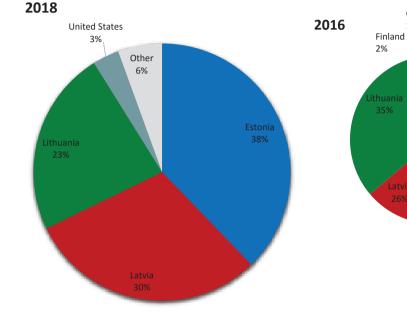


# **The Parties**

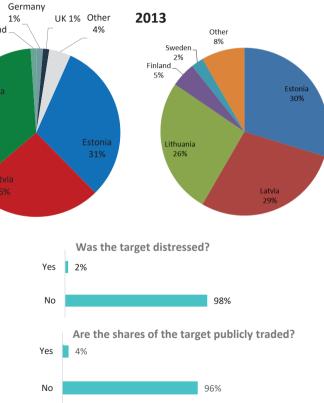
## General Transaction Characteristics



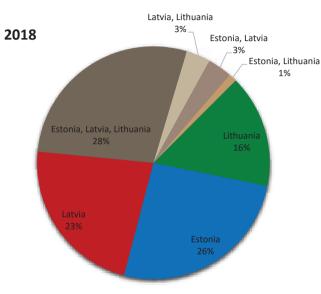
## Country of the Target's Head Office

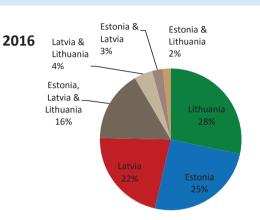


 Targets in the submitted transactions were predominantly Baltic, with Estonia providing 38% of them.



#### **Baltic States Where the Target Operates**

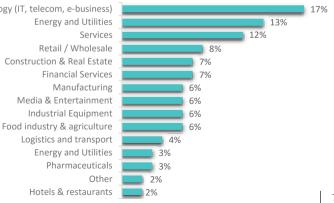




#### **Target's Main Industries**

Technology (IT, telecom, e-business)

- Unlike previous periods, significant proportion • of the transactions (28%) involve targets operating in all three Baltic countries.
- Targets' geographical focus outside the Baltics • includes Finland, Germany, Poland, United Kingdom, the United States and Russia.



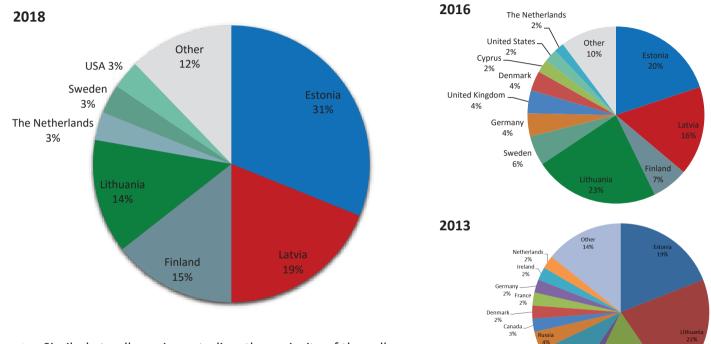
#### Country of the Seller

Finland

Sweden

3%

Latvia 17%

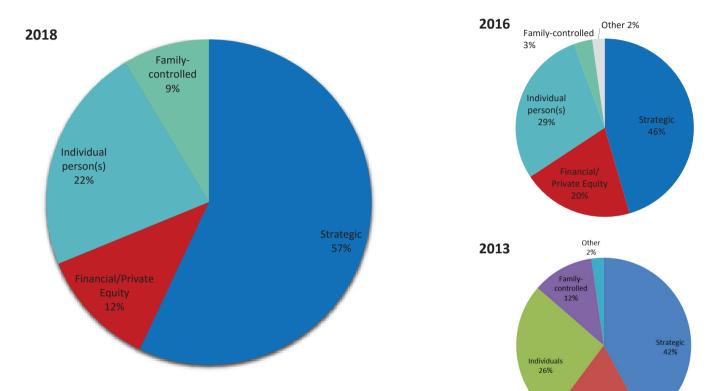


 Similarly to all previous studies, the majority of the sellers are from Baltic states, whereas Estonian sellers comprise 31% and Finnish sellers (15%) are the main sellers outside of the Baltic countries.

#### Nature of the Seller

Financial /

Private Equity 18%



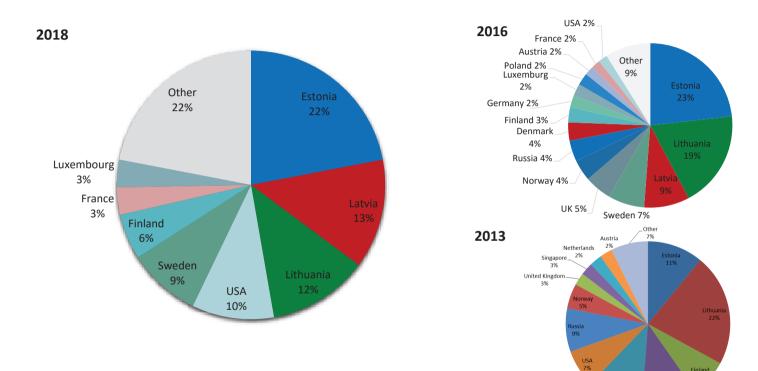
• Over half of the sellers are strategic. Private equity exits constituted only 12% of the transactions.

## Geography of Sellers and Targets

Country of the Seller's group head office									
Country of the Target's head office:	Estonia	Latvia	Lithuania	Finland	Netherlands	Sweden	United States	Other	Total
Estonia	25			7	1	1		2	36
Latvia	1	17	1	4				6	29
Lithuania	3	1	12	3	1	2		2	24
Finland				1					1
United States							3		3
Other								3	3
Total	29	18	13	15	2	3	3	13	96

• The seller's group head office and target's head office are mainly in the same country.

#### Country of the Buyer



The majority of buyers continue to be from the Baltic countries. ٠ However, the US buyers also stand out as a major investor.

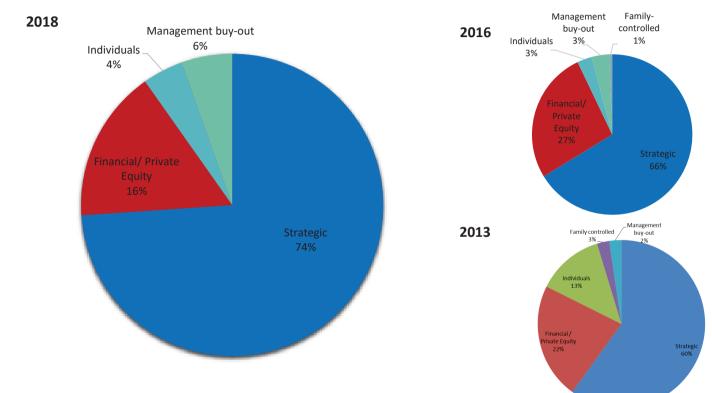
Finland

7%

Latvia 11%

Sweden 11%

## Nature of the Buyer



• The proportion of the strategic buyer has increased and now comprises <sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> of all transactions.

## Geography of Buyers and Targets

Country of the Buyer's group head office										
Country of the Target's head office:	Estonia	Latvia	Lithuania	United States	Sweden	Finland	France	Luxem- bourg	Other	Total
Estonia	17	1	2	3	3	3			5	34
Latvia	4	11	1	2			1	2	6	27
Lithuania	1		9	3	4	2		1	4	24
United States				1			2			3
Denmark					1					1
Finland		1								1
Japan									1	1
Switzerland				1						1
Total	22	13	12	10	8	5	3	3	16	92

• Most Baltic buyers acquired targets in their own countries.

## Geography of Buyers and Sellers

Country of the Seller's group head office									
Country of the Buyer's head office:	Estonia	Latvia	Lithuania	Finland	Netherlands	Sweden	United States	Other	Total
Estonia	12	3		4					19
Latvia	1	4		4				3	12
Lithuania	3	1	4	2		1			11
United States	3	2		1		1	1	1	9
Sweden	3	1		1	1	1		1	8
Finland	3		2						5
France		1					2		3
Luxembourg					1			2	3
Other	5	4	3	1	1			3	17
Total	30	16	9	13	3	3	3	10	87

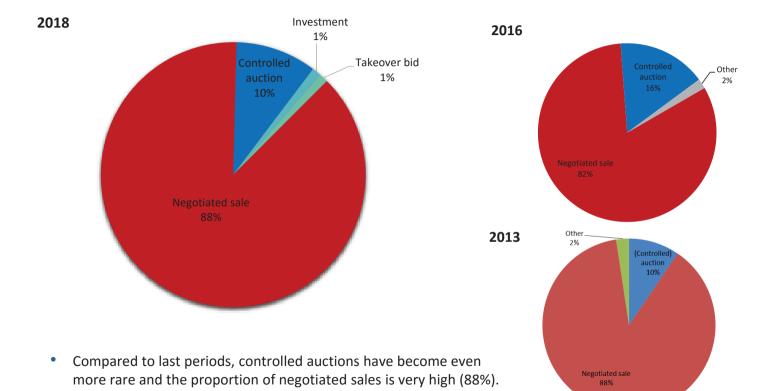
- As regards the origin of both buyers and sellers, intra-Baltic M&A (both parties Baltic) was the most common with 32%. This was closely followed by foreign investors buying from local Baltic seller, which constituted 31% of all transactions (highlighted in green).
- In 14 transactions (16%) foreign sellers sold targets to Baltic buyers (highlighted in orange), almost three fifths of them to Estonian buyers.
- Targets changed hands among foreign parties in 20% of transactions.

# Sales Process and Form of Transaction

General Transaction Characteristics

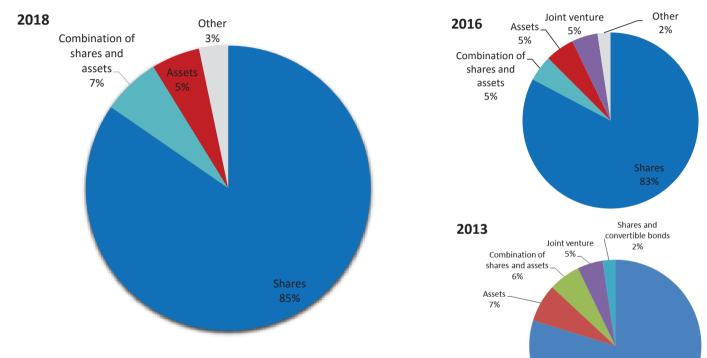


#### Nature of the Sales Process



16

#### Form of Transaction



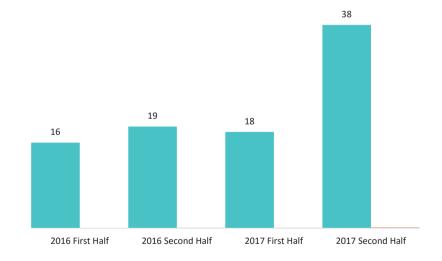
• As in all previous studies, most transactions in the Baltics are share deals.

Shares 80%

## **Timeline of Transactions**

#### Number of transactions by closing date

 The proportion of transactions submitted is greater towards the end of the period surveyed. This, however, does not necessarily show deal activity during the period.



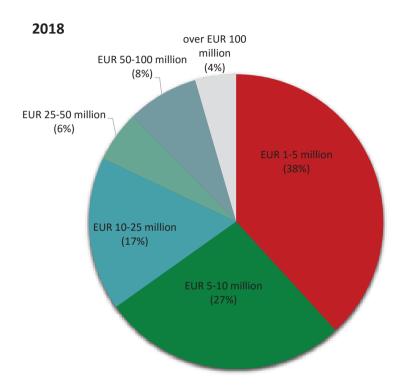


# Transaction Value and Payment

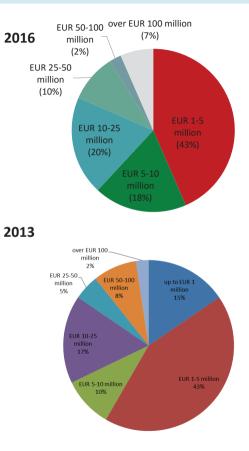
## General Transaction Characteristics



#### **Transaction Value**



 The value of a typical Baltic M&A deal remains in the EUR 1-5 million bracket, although the proportion of transactions in the 5-10 million bracket has increased.



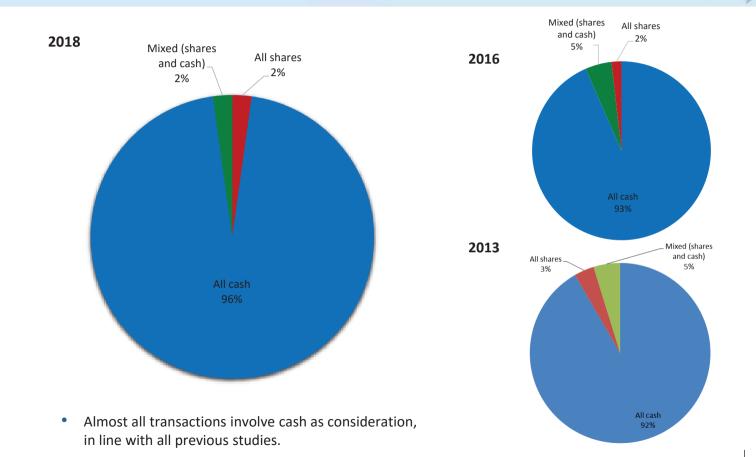


## Distribution of Transaction Value by Buyer and Sales Process

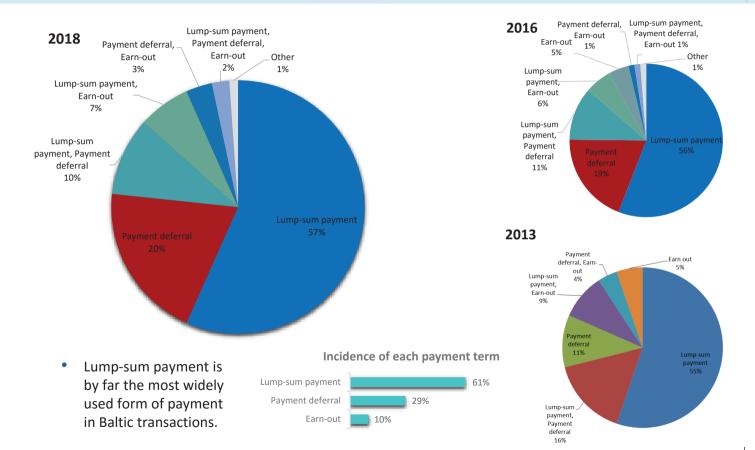
Nature of the Buyer									
Transaction value	Strategic	Financial/ Private Equity	Individuals	Management buy-out	Total				
EUR 1-5 million	29	1	2	2	34				
EUR 5-10 million	15	7	1	2	25				
EUR 10-25 million	10	4	1		15				
EUR 25-50 million	5				5				
EUR 50-100 million	6	1			7				
over EUR 100 million	3	1			4				
Total	68	14	4	4	90				

Sales process									
Transaction value	Negotiated sale	Controlled auction	Other	Total					
EUR 1-5 million	32		2	34					
EUR 5-10 million	22	2		24					
EUR 10-25 million	12	3		15					
EUR 25-50 million	4	1		5					
EUR 50-100 million	4	2	1	7					
over EUR 100 million	3	1		4					
Total	77	9	3	89					

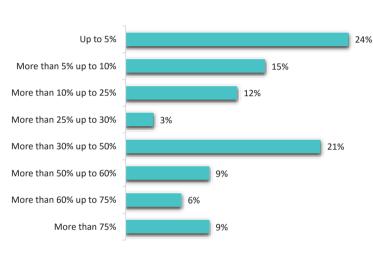
### Form of Consideration



#### **Payment Terms**

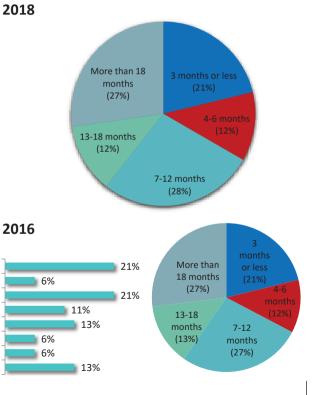


#### Payment Terms (cont)



#### Percentage of price deferred (if deferred)

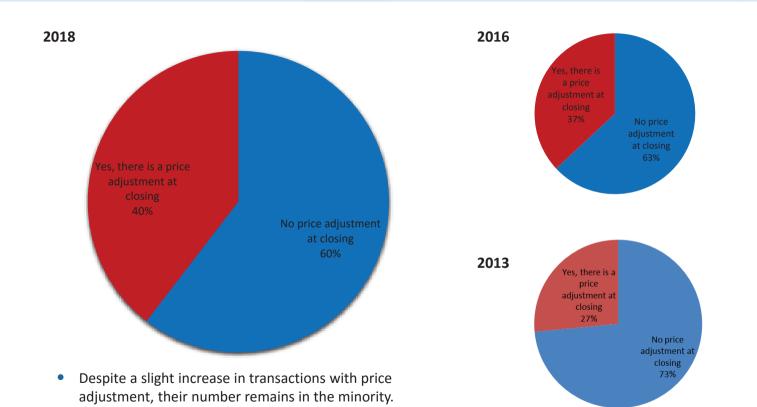
Length of deferral



• Deferred payment proportions have slightly decreased, while deferral periods have stayed the same as in 2016.

Up to 5% more than 5% up to 10% more than 10% up to 25% more than 25% up to 30% more than 30% up to 50% more than 50% up to 60% more than 60% up to 75% more than 75%

## Price Adjustment at Closing

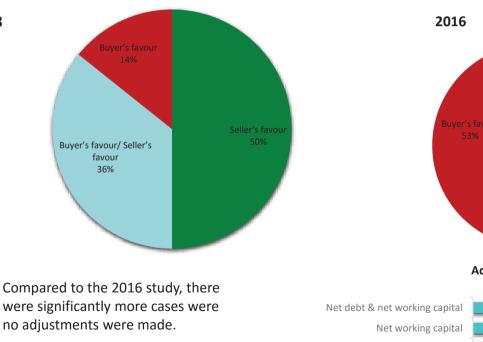


25



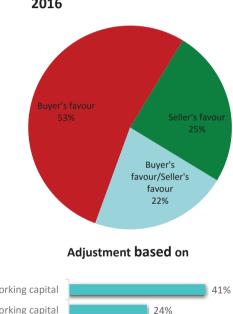
2018

## Price Adjustment at Closing (cont)



If price adjustment was made, in whose favour?

- were significantly more cases were no adjustments were made.
- The most popular adjustment base is • net debt and net working capital combined.



21%

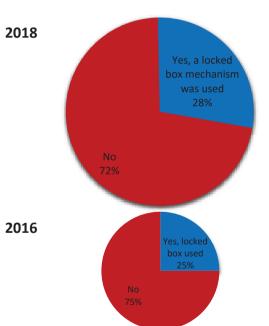
15%

Net debt

Other



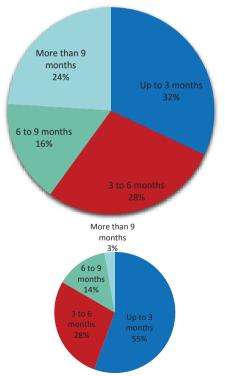
#### Locked Box Mechanism



#### Locked Box mechanism used

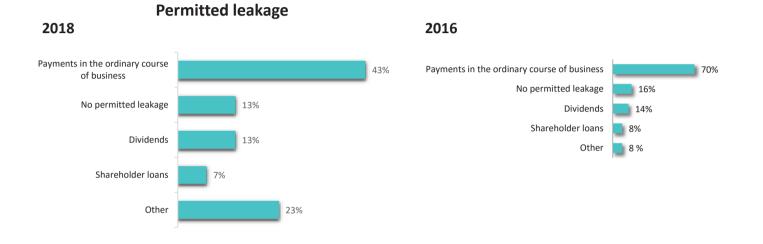
• Similarly to the 2016 survey, about a quarter of transactions used a locked box mechanism. However, the locked box term increased significantly.

# Time between the locked box balance sheet date and the closing date





## Locked Box Mechanism (cont)



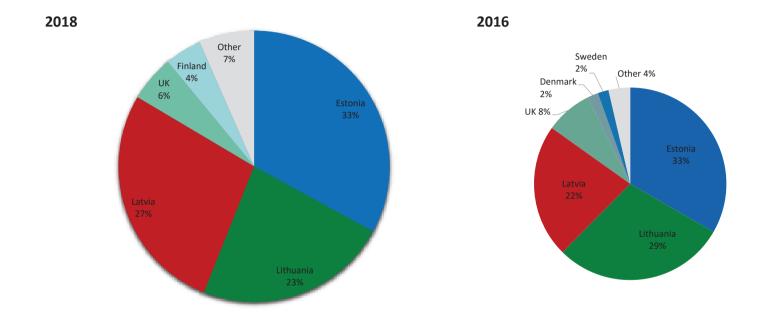
- Similarly to the 2016 survey, most mechanisms allowed only payments in the ordinary course of business as permitted leakage. Other leakage forms (dividends, shareholder loans) were seldom permitted.
- In less than a 10% of cases did the buyer pay interest from the locked box date until closing.

# Governing Law and Dispute Resolution

## General Transaction Characteristics



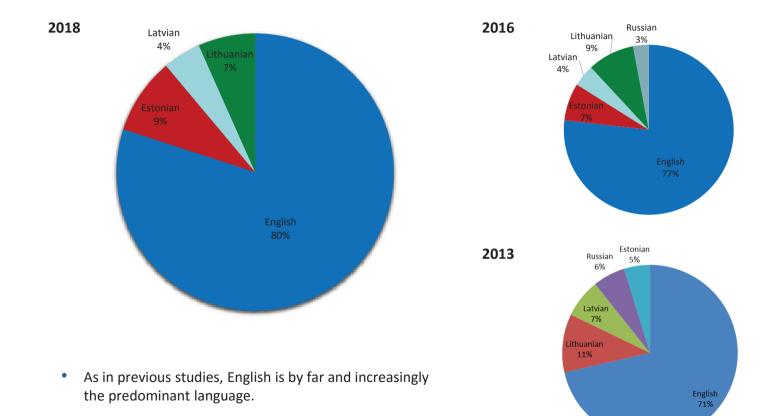
## **Transaction Governing Law**



• Most Baltic M&A transactions are governed by the local laws of the Baltic States.



## Main Agreement Language



#### **Dispute Resolution Mechanism**

Ind.

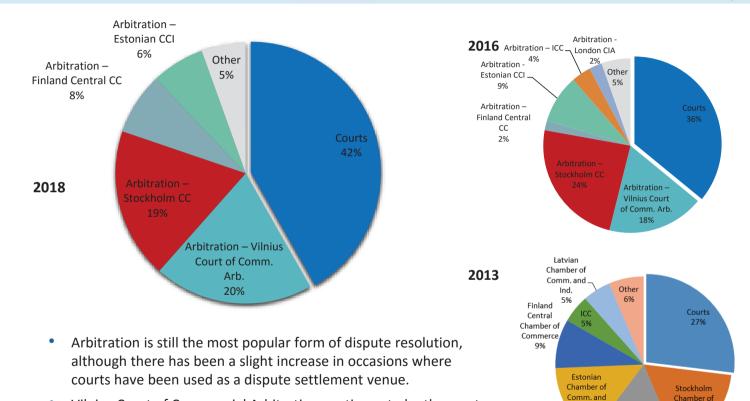
14%

Vilnius Court

of

Commercial

Arbitration

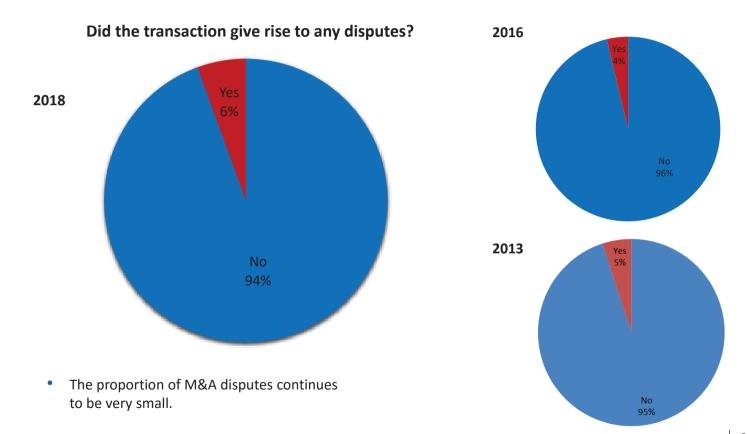


• Vilnius Court of Commercial Arbitration continues to be the most reliable arbitration institution within the Baltic countries and Stockholm Chamber of Commerce is the most preferred choice outside Baltics.

Commerce

17%

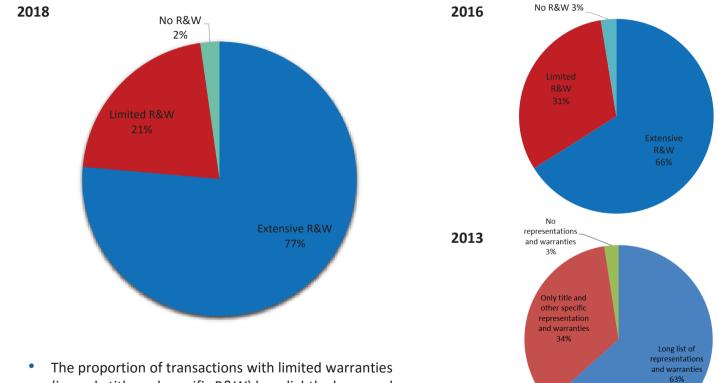
## **Dispute Resolution: Existence of Disputes**



# **Representations and Warranties**

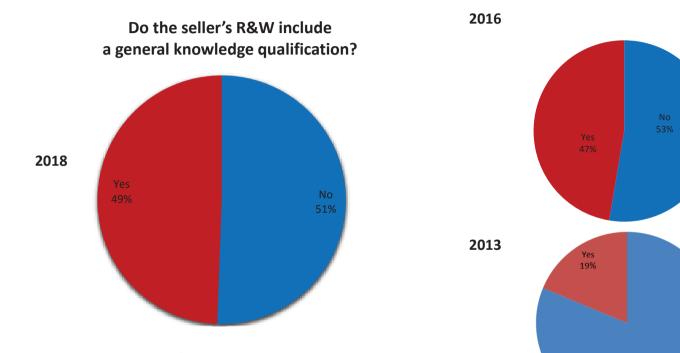


## Seller's Representations and Warranties



(i.e. only title and specific R&W) has slightly decreased compared with earlier surveys.

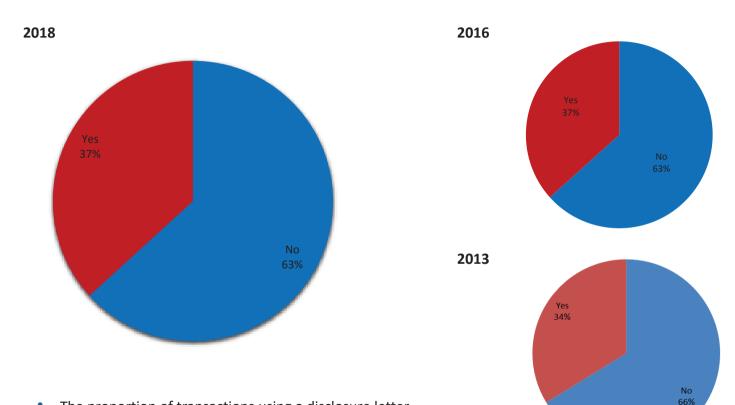
## Seller's Representations and Warranties (cont)



• The proportion of transactions with a general knowledge qualification of the warranties has remained the same as in the 2016 survey.

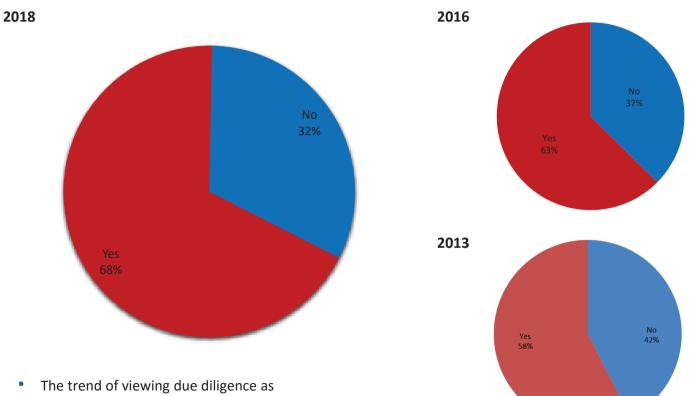
No 81%

# Usage of Disclosure Letter



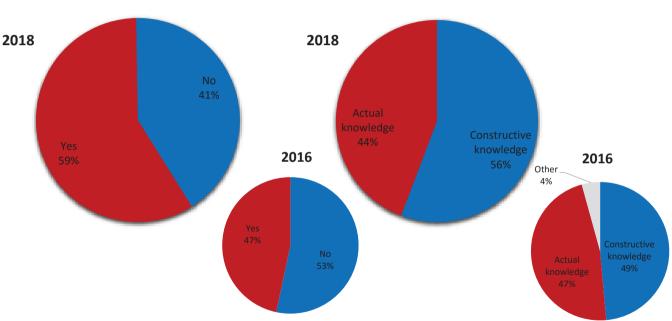
• The proportion of transactions using a disclosure letter has remained the same as in the 2016 survey.

## Due Diligence Disclosures Considered General Qualification to R&W



an alternative to R&W has continued.

## Standard of Knowledge



Definition of the seller's/target's knowledge

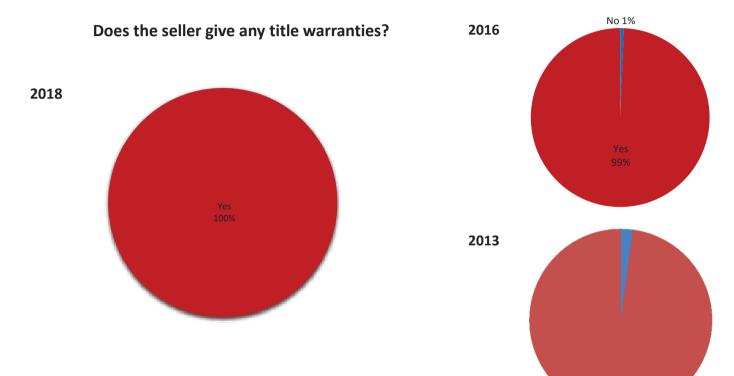
Standard of knowledge

- The seller's/target's knowledge is defined in more than half of transactions.
- The standard of knowledge continues to be almost equally divided between actual and constructive knowledge.



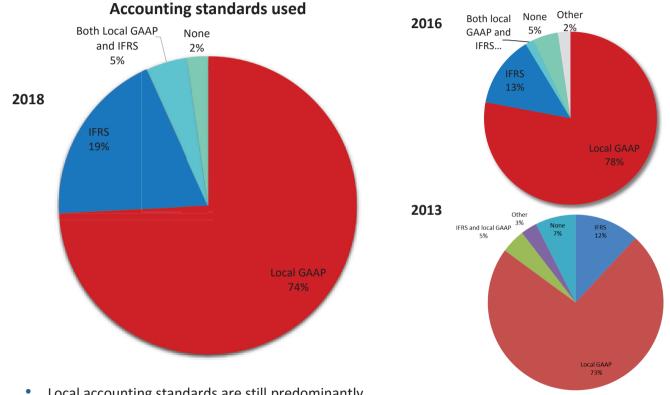
## **Title Warranties**

Yes 98%



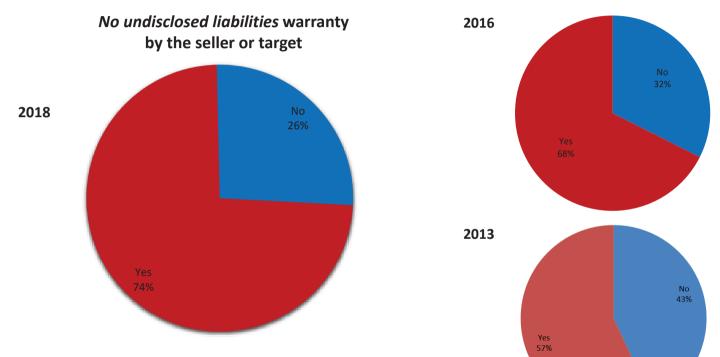
• In all transactions, title warranties were given by the seller with respect to title, ownership and encumbrance of the sales object.

## Warranties: Accounting Standards



Local accounting standards are still predominantly used in warranties.

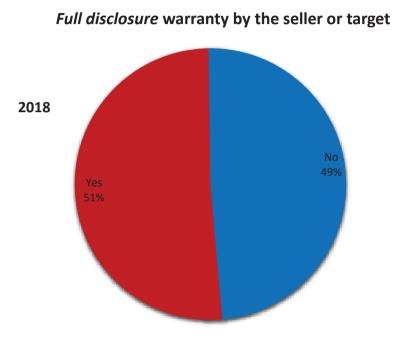
## No Undisclosed Liabilities Warranty



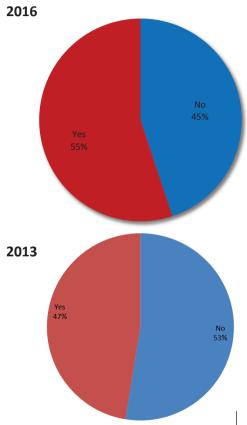
• The proportion of deals using the *no undisclosed liabilities* warranty has increased steadily.



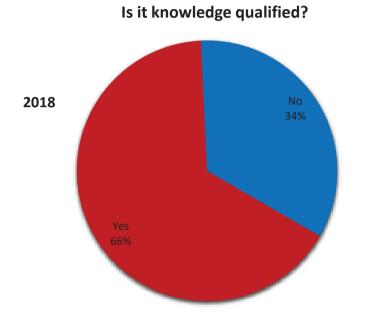
## Full Disclosure Warranty



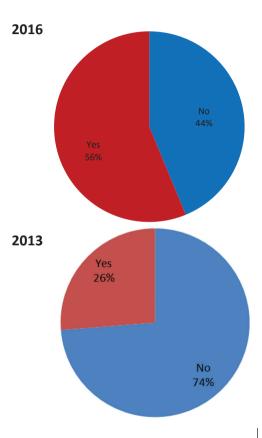
• The *full disclosure* warranty continues to be used in half of transactions.



## Full Disclosure Warranty (cont)



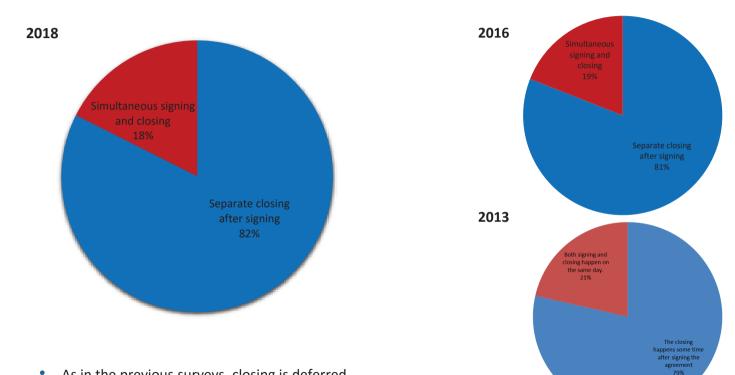
• The proportion of *full disclosure* warranty that is knowledge qualified has increased steadily.



# **Closing and Conditions Precedent**



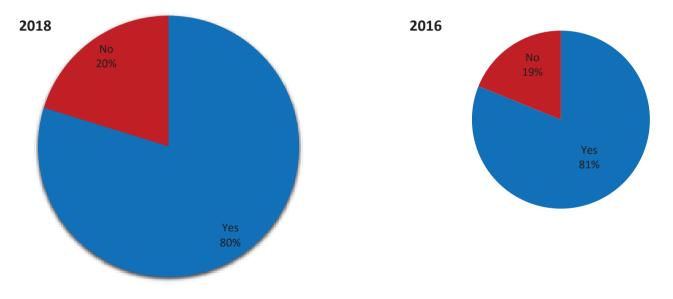
# Timing of Signing and Closing



• As in the previous surveys, closing is deferred in the vast majority of the transactions analysed.

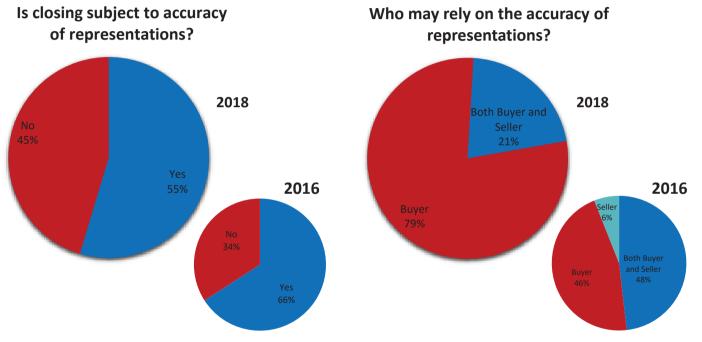
# Closing

# Does closing or its date depend on fulfilling conditions precedent?



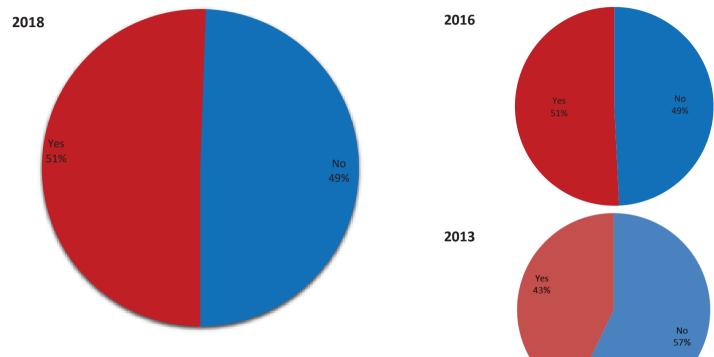
• In vast majority of transactions closing depends on fulfilment of conditions precedent.

Closing (cont)



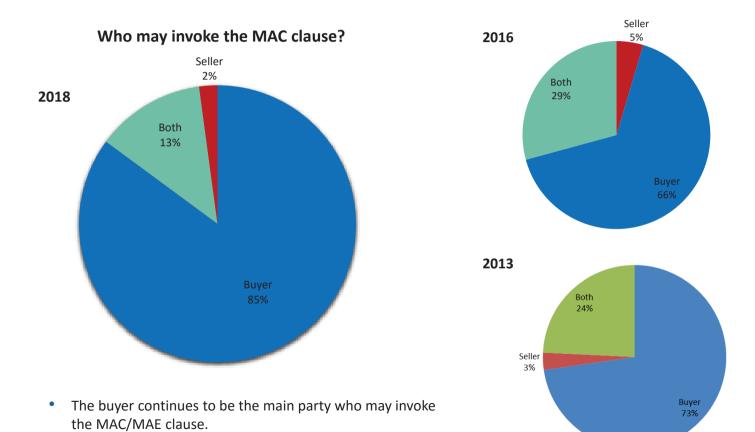
- In most transactions closing is subject to accuracy of representations.
- Unlike earlier studies, in most cases only the buyer can rely on the accuracy of representations.

## MAC ("material adverse change")/ MAE ("material adverse effect") Clause



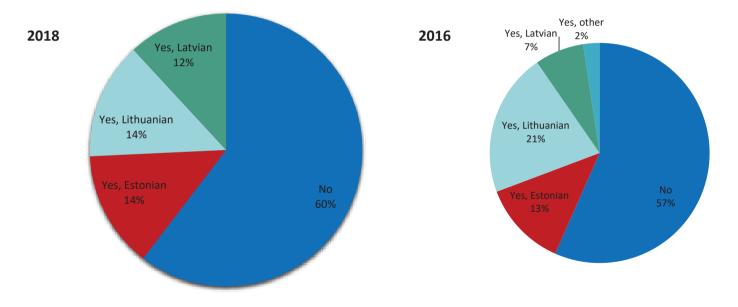
 MAC clauses, which make closing conditional upon nothing material changing for the worse, are used in half of the deals similarly to 2016.

## MAC ("material adverse change")/ MAE ("material adverse effect") Clause (cont)



### **Competition Clearance**

# Did the transaction require approval by the competition authorities?



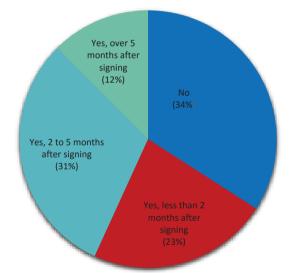
 The proportion of transactions subject to competition authority approval has remained about the same in all studies.

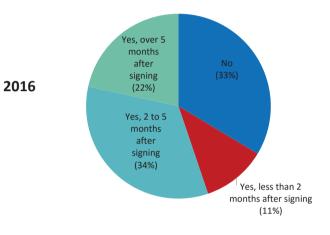
Long-Stop Date



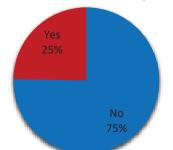
2018







Is there a break fee or exit penalty?



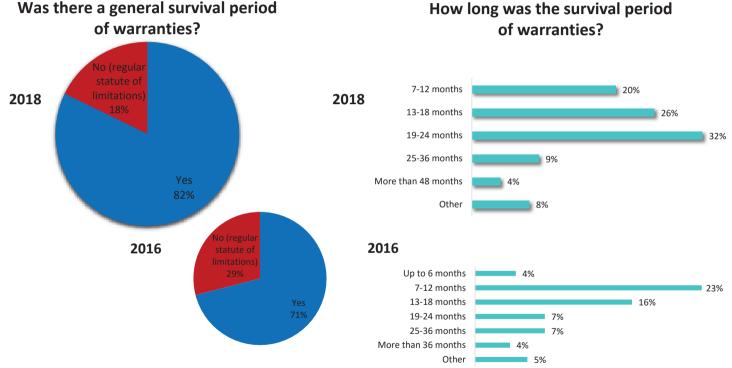
- Use of a *long-stop date* has remained quite similar across all studies.
- The 2-5 month *long-stop date* continues to be the most popular term.
- 25% of transactions analysed imposed a break fee or exit penalty (compared to 41% in 2016).





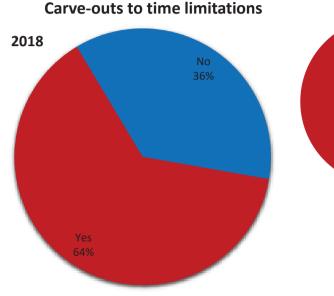


Survival of Warranties

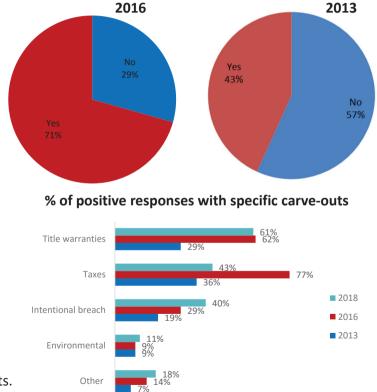


 An increase has occurred in setting explicit general survival periods for R&W compared to the 2016 study.

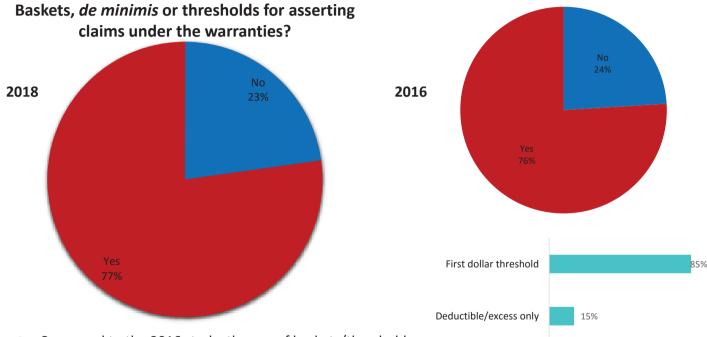
## Survival of Warranties Carve-Outs



- The use of carve-outs continues to be popular.
- Title warranties, taxes and intentional breach are the most common carve-outs.



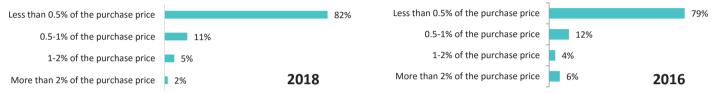
### **Baskets and Thresholds**



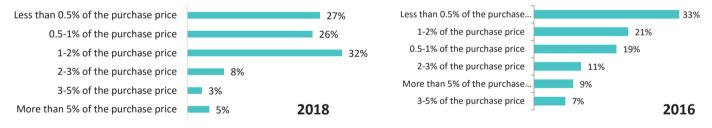
- Compared to the 2016 study, the use of baskets/thresholds has remained the same.
- Typically, baskets/thresholds in the Baltics are *first dollar*, as has been the case in all studies.

### Baskets and Thresholds (cont)

#### Amount of threshold per claim

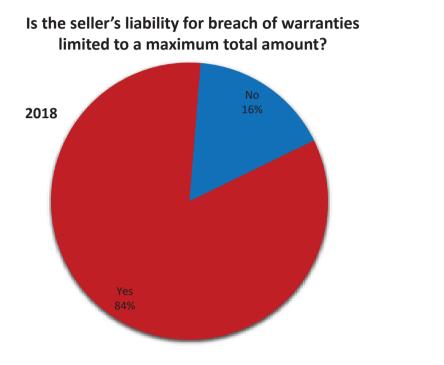


#### Amount of basket/threshold for the aggregate of all claims

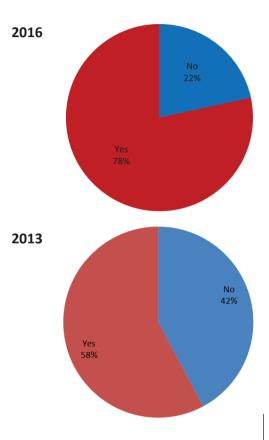


- Typically, the threshold is less than 0.5% of the purchase price per claim. The thresholds continue to be progressively lower.
- The amounts of basket/thresholds for the aggregate of all claims have risen in comparison to 2016.
- The most widely used amount of basket/threshold for the aggregate of all claims is 1-2% of the purchase price.

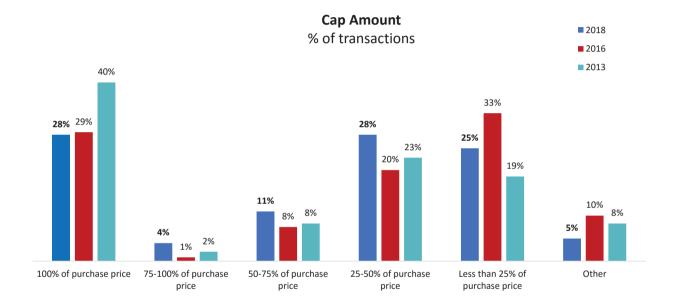
# Overall Cap or Ceiling on Liability



• The proportion of transactions with an overall cap on the seller's liability continues to increase.

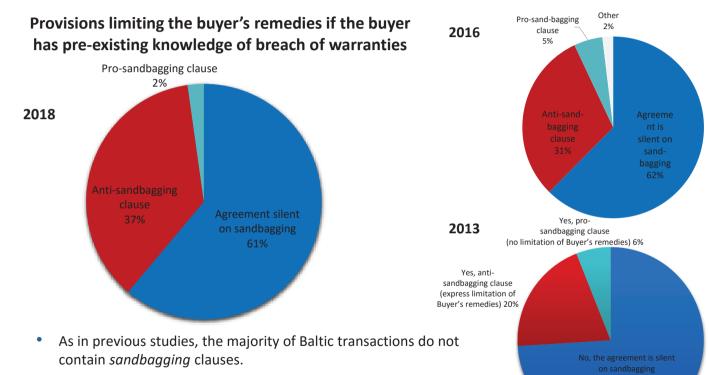


## Amount of Cap on Liability



• Although caps set at 100% of the purchase price continue to be common, the proportion of caps set at 25-50% has increased.

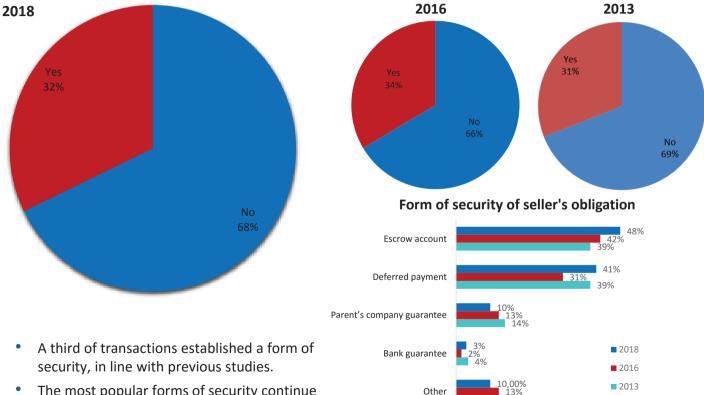
Sandbagging



• However, the trend for explicitly dealing with *sandbagging* is rising, with 37% of transactions including an *anti-sandbagging clause*, up from 20% in the 2013 study.

## Security for Seller's Obligations

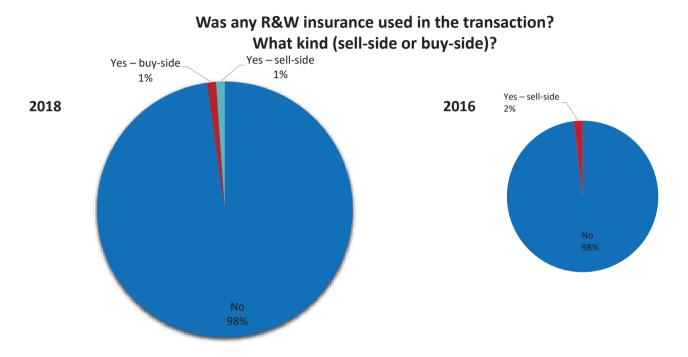
11%



 The most popular forms of security continue to be escrow accounts and deferred payment.



### **R&W** Insurance

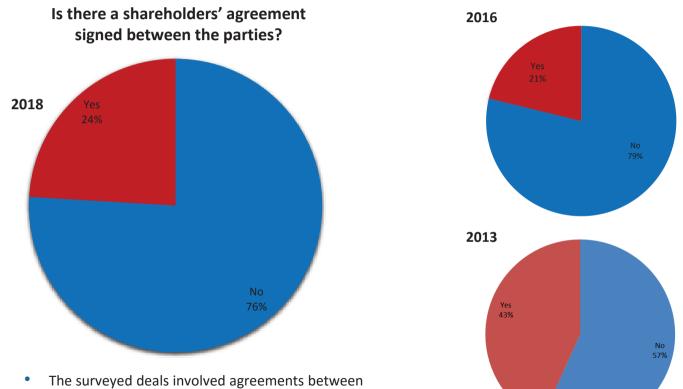


• As in 2016, the use of R&W insurance is not yet common. R&W insurance was used in only 2 transactions.

# Joint Ventures and Shareholders' Agreements

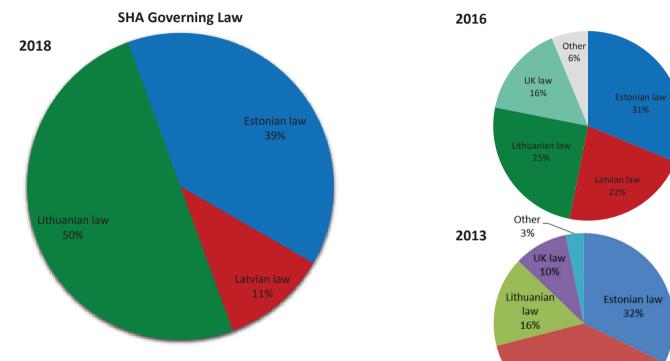


## Shareholders' Agreements (SHA)



shareholders in 24% of cases.

# Shareholders' Agreements (SHA) (cont)

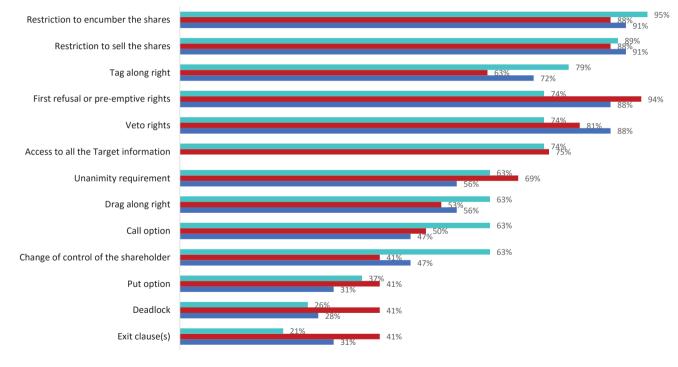


• Compared to previous studies, shareholders' agreements have only used local laws as governing law.

Latvian law

39%

# Shareholders' Agreements (SHA) (cont)



#### **Provisions included in the SHA**

2018 2016 2013

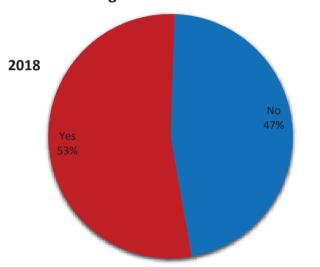


# Covenants





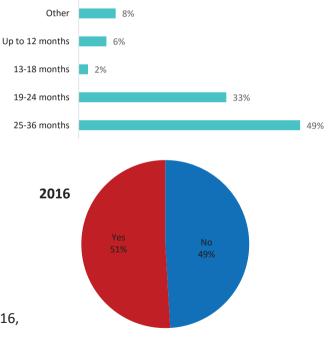
## Seller's Non-Solicitation Obligation



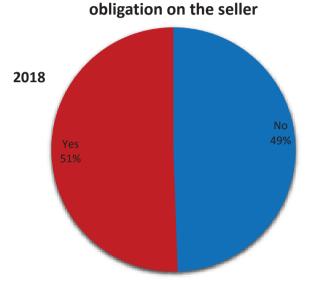
Agreement imposing a non-competition obligation on the seller

- More than half of transactions included a non-competition obligation for sellers.
- The non-compete duration has remained similar to 2016, where the most used duration was 25-36 months, followed by 19-24 months.

Duration of such obligation



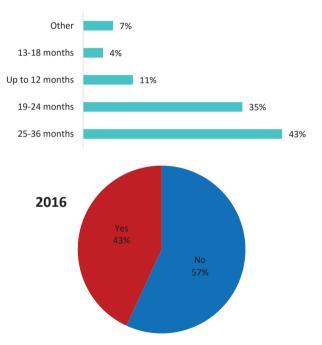
# Seller's Non-Solicitation Obligation (cont)



Agreement imposing a non-solicitation

- Almost half of transactions impose a non-solicitation obligation on the seller.
- The typical duration of the obligation is 25-36 months, which is the same as in the 2016 study, followed by 19-24 months.

#### **Duration of such obligation**



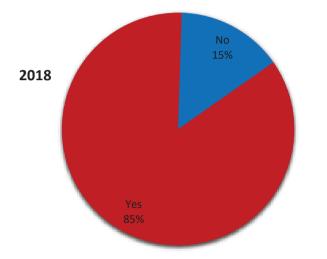


# Due Diligence



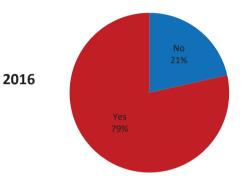


**Due Diligence** 



#### Was the due diligence conducted by the buyer?

- In line with previous studies, buyers conducted due diligence exercises in the vast majority of cases.
- Legal and financial continue to be the most popular types of due diligence performed.



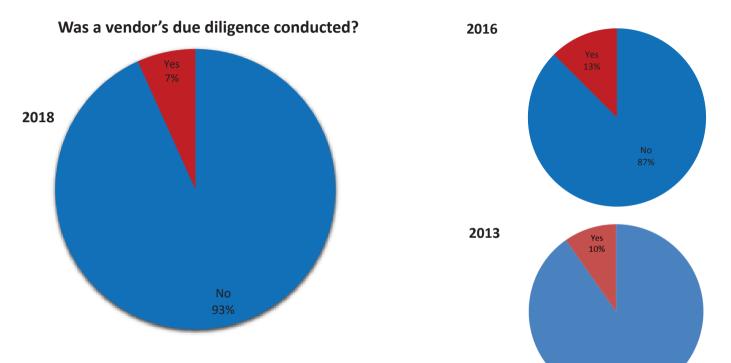
#### Types of buyer due diligence performed





Due Diligence (cont)

No 90%

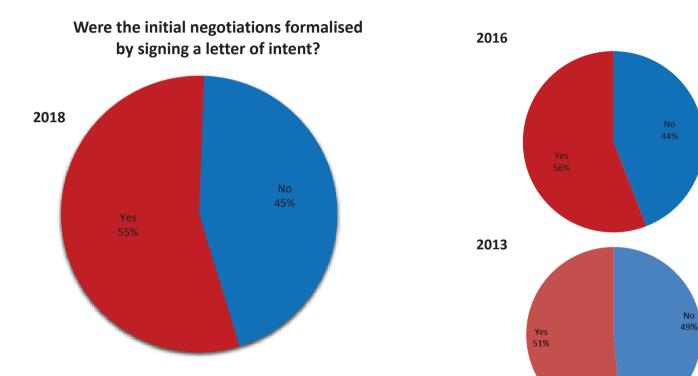


• While buyers routinely carry out a target due diligence, vendor's due diligence is still rare in the Baltic States.

# Duration of Transaction and Letters of Intent

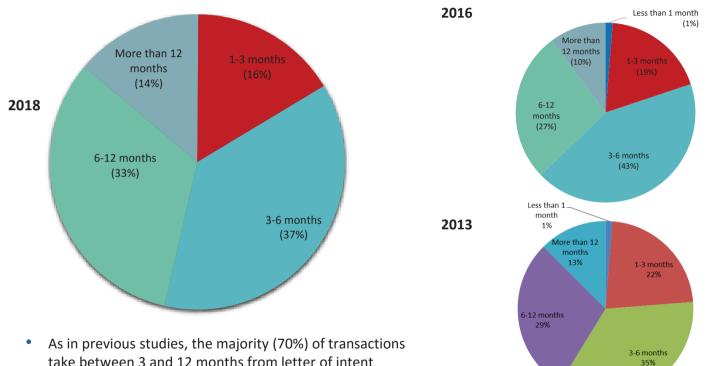


## Use of Letters of Intent



• More than half of transactions in the Baltics were formalised in the negotiations stage by a letter of intent.

### Duration of the Transaction

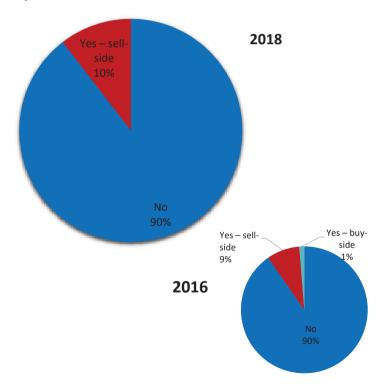


take between 3 and 12 months from letter of intent or due diligence to closing.

### **Transaction Bonus**

#### Were target managers granted any transaction bonuses?

- Similarly to 2016, only 10% of transactions reported using transaction bonuses.
- The number may be affected by underreporting, as deals were submitted by counsel to one of the parties, who may not have known of a bonus being paid by the counterparty.



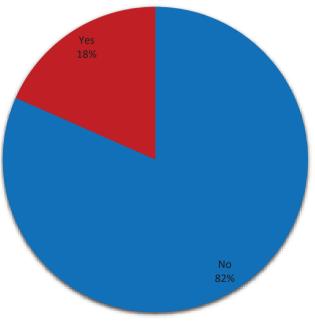
# Financing and Conditions Subsequent



# Financing

# Was the transaction related to acquisition financing or refinancing of the business?

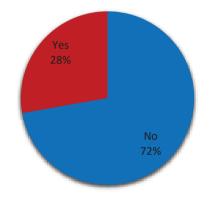
- We introduced a new question, asking whether the transaction involved financing or refinancing of the business.
- 18% of the transactions involved financing.



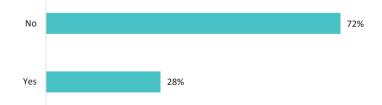
### **Conditions Subsequent**

- We introduced a new question, asking whether the transaction contained any conditions subsequent and if the conditions subsequent were used because of a need to close the transaction fast.
- The majority of transactions did not use conditions subsequent. Also, the main reason for using conditions subsequent was not the need to close the transaction fast.

# Did the transaction contain any conditions subsequent?



# Were conditions subsequent used to close the transaction fast?





### **Final Remarks**

- The survey analysed 91 M&A transactions.
- In 2016-2017, the most active economic sectors in the Baltic M&A market were Technology, Energy and Utilities, Services, Retail/Wholesale and Financial Services.
- Compared to previous periods, there are no major changes as to whether foreign or local shareholders are selling businesses in the Baltics.
- Although transaction values vary greatly, the value of most typical Baltic M&A transaction remains in the EUR 1-5 million bracket.
- It can be generalised that Baltic M&A counterparties are becoming more sophisticated in the use of internationally acknowledged transaction tools, such as price adjustments, MAC clauses, liability limitations (warranty limitation periods, overall caps, claim baskets and thresholds). However, R&W insurance is still very seldom used in Baltic M&A transactions.



### CONTACTS

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