



**Convention on the Elimination
of All Forms of Discrimination
against Women**

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**Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination
against Women**

Forty-eighth session

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**Information provided in follow-up to the concluding
observations of the Committee**

Lithuania

**Response by Lithuania to the recommendations contained in
the concluding observations of the Committee following the
examination of the third and fourth periodic reports of
Lithuania on 2 July 2008.**

**Written information on the implementation of the recommendations
contained in Paragraphs 75 and 81 of the concluding observations of
the Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination
against Women on the third and fourth reports of Lithuania**

Vilnius, Lithuania, September, 2010

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Introduction

The third and fourth periodic reports of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania were considered by the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women at its 834th and 835th meetings, on 2 July 2008.

In the Concluding Observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women concerning Lithuania, paragraph 94, the Committee requested Lithuania to provide, within two years, written information on the steps taken to implement the recommendations contained in paragraphs 75 and 81.

The Paragraph 75 regards violence against women:

„75. In accordance with its general recommendation No. 19, the Committee urges the State party to ensure that comprehensive legal and other measures are in place to address all forms of violence against women, including domestic violence. The Committee calls upon the State party to allocate sufficient financial resources to ensure the effective implementation of the National Strategy for Combating Violence against Women and to closely monitor its results. The Committee also calls upon the State party to ensure that all women who are victims of domestic violence, including rural women, have access to immediate means of redress and protection, including protection orders and access to a sufficient number of safe and adequately funded shelters as well as to legal aid, if necessary. The Committee recommends that the State party elaborate and introduce without delay a specific law on domestic violence against women that provides for redress and protection, and set a timeframe for its adoption. It urges the State party to improve its research and data collection on the prevalence, causes and consequences of violence against women, including information on the relationship between the perpetrator and the victim in instances of violence.“

The Paragraph 81 regards Health issues.

„81. The Committee calls upon the State party to take concrete measures to enhance women’s access to health care, in particular to sexual and reproductive health services, in accordance with article 12 of the Convention and the Committee’s general recommendation No. 24, on women and health. It requests the State party to strengthen measures aimed at ensuring women’s right to decide freely and responsibly on the number and spacing of their children according to article 16, paragraph 1 (e), of the Convention and thus at prevention of unwanted pregnancies. In this context, the State party is requested to make a wide array of family planning methods, such as a comprehensive range of contraceptives, including emergency contraception, more widely available and affordable, to provide mandatory sexual education in schools and to increase knowledge and awareness about family planning among women as well as men. The Committee calls upon the State party to consider the impact on women of the draft law on the protection of human life in the prenatal stage to ensure that the draft law is in line with the Convention and accordingly will not lead to women seeking unsafe medical procedures, such as illegal abortion, which may seriously risk their health and lives.“

In response to the recommendations given in paragraphs 75 and 81, the Government provides the following information on their implementation.

Regarding paragraph 75 Violence against women

Legal and other measures to address all forms of violence against women including domestic violence. Specific Law on domestic violence. Effective implementation of the National Strategy for combating violence against women and monitoring of its implementation

Elimination of domestic violence against women continues to be one of the long-term priorities in Lithuania and attention to this issue was strengthened.

Draft Law on Protection against Domestic Violence has been prepared and approved by the Government on July 2010. This draft Law was presented in the Parliament on September 2010. Majority of parliamentarians voted positively and agreed to discuss this draft Law using accelerated procedure.

The draft Law is based on the holistic approach on the complex problem of domestic violence – prevention, protection of victims, assistance and support to them, sanctions for perpetrators – and aimed to combat physical, psychological, sexual violence that any person experience from his/her spouse or ex-spouse, any other family members or close relatives. Main provisions of the draft Law are in line with the draft Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence. This Convention is to be finalised until the end of 2010.

The draft Law suggests to oblige state institutions and municipalities within their competences to implement preventive educational, awareness raising and information measures, trainings, etc. in cooperation with non-governmental women's organisations. Preventive sanctions for perpetrators, such as official warning, obligation to immediately leave the premises, where perpetrator lives together with the victim, ban to approach the victim and communicate, obligatory courses for perpetrators, as well as the order of application of sanctions in practice, are contained in the draft Law. Separate part of the draft Law covers complex support and assistance to victims, including social services and psychological help, legal assistance, medical assistance, information and consultations, temporary safe accommodation, if needed.

It is expected, that draft Law, when adopted and implemented, should have double effect. Firstly, awareness raising and information campaigns, trainings, educational activities, and other preventive measures will raise intolerance of all the society to any form of violence. Preventive sanctions for perpetrators should reduce cases of violence. Secondly, safety of victims of violence, complex support and assistance to them and better legal protection will be ensured.

On 22 December 2006 the Government of Lithuania endorsed The National Strategy for the Elimination of Violence against Women. The objectives of the strategy are defined until 2015. Every three years its implementation plans are drafted. The first action plan is implemented in 2007–2009. The second is ongoing – for 2010–2012.

The main objective of the strategy is to reduce, on the national level, domestic violence against women in a consistent, comprehensive and systematic way. The tasks of the strategy include improvement of legal framework, prevention of domestic violence against women, complex support and assistance to victims of domestic violence, free telephone hot-line, work with perpetrators, education and information of the society, public awareness raising, improvement of data collection and building of institutional capacities.

Number of relevant ministries are in charge of implementation of the concrete measures within the given timeframe. Most measures, especially those aimed at prevention of violence, support and assistance to victims, are implemented in cooperation with non-governmental organisations, in particular, women's organisations. Ministry of Social Security and Labour every year supports, by the way of tender, projects of non-governmental organisations, aimed at complex assistance to victims, including psychological and legal consultations, social services and other necessary support and assistance. Separate budget is allocated for the institutional support of activities of non-governmental organisations, in particular women's organisations active in the field of reducing violence. Municipalities are also encouraged to participate in the implementation of concrete measures, especially complex support and assistance to victims.

Ministry of Social Security and Labour coordinating implementation of the Strategy, on the basis of the annual reports of other Ministries implementing concrete measures, drafts annual report on implementation of Strategy and submits this report to the Government annually. Annual reports are placed on the website of the Ministry. Overall implementation of Strategy should be assessed before it's end.

Some information on the implementation of the concrete measures

In 2008:

29 projects of mostly women's non-governmental organisations but also municipal institutions, aimed to ensure complex assistance to women victims of violence, were supported by the state budget. They were selected in accordance with the tender procedure. As a result of the projects, complex assistance was provided to 2,144 women victims of violence. They were provided with psychological and legal consultations, the social services, information and counselling services, temporary safe accommodation and catering services, as well as essential items, first aid, etc. Furthermore, a training programme was developed, aimed at employees and volunteers of crisis centres, who answer free help line calls. Two training sessions were organised in 2008; over 100 persons participated.

The activities of 19 women's organisations, aimed at combating violence against women, were funded from the state budget in accordance with the tender procedure. Supported organisations organised 9 conferences (550 participants), 95 seminars (790 participants) and 39 discussions (355 participants). The events were attended by social workers, non-governmental organisations, as well as police representatives and other interested participants. The events were targeted at raising public awareness about violence problems, urging to combat violence and developing intolerance to violence, thus reducing its extent.

9 projects targeted at work with perpetrators, willing to abandon their violent behaviour, were selected for funding from the state budget in accordance with the tender procedure. 258 men willing to abandon their violent behaviour addressed the organisations. They were provided with individual consultations by psychologists and social workers, and participated in group therapy sessions. Moreover, the Methodology of Changing Violent Behaviour (a practical manual for social workers) was drawn up, published and circulated, aimed at helping organise the work of social workers and their assistants with perpetrators. The methodology was disseminated among organisations working with perpetrators and providing services to women victims of violence.

Ongoing awareness raising campaign started in 2006 and continued in 2007. In 2008 the Campaign initiated and financed by the Ministry of Social Security and Labour was targeted at the most remote towns and villages. Activities of the Campaign were carried out by women's organisation. Logo and slogan "Violence – don't be indifferent" of the Campaign has been created as well as posters and leaflets published and disseminated, number of seminars, trainings and other activities were arranged for the variety of specialists. The Campaign contained some innovative elements. One of them was a social action. During this action the trucks carried social advertising posters encouraging women victims of violence to speak up and seek for assistance in relevant organizations. The trucks circulated across the smaller towns and villages, delivering goods to smaller network shops, thus the posters were seen by a large number of people. In total 2000 posters and 5000 leaflets, encouraging women suffering from violence to break silence and search for assistance, have been distributed to inhabitants of smaller cities and villages, to employees of all crisis centres of all municipalities. Another one – Mobile experts bureau: most experienced practitioners mostly from women's crisis centres visited number of smaller towns and villages, provided number of consultations including legal consultations on how to recognise violence, how to deal with violence situations, what are the legal remedies, where to seek assistance and support. These consultations were provided for about 2000

women. The third one – slogan and the logo of the campaign together with the advertisement of free telephone line was published on packages the most popular in the smaller villages routine goods, such as bread, flour etc. These goods were distributed by the mobile shops so ensuring broadest dissemination of information where to seek help. In the biggest supermarkets of the cities short video containing logo and slogan of the campaign as well as free telephone help line was demonstrated in the screens for advertisements. So the preventive information reached big number of people in all Lithuania.

In 2008, 10 seminars and legal education trainings were organised in 7 counties (Alytus, Tauragė, Utena, Vilnius, Telšiai, Panevėžys, Šiauliai). Seminars were attended by 357 persons (police officers, medical staff, social workers, social pedagogues, NGO representatives and residents). Seminar participants were acquainted with the social and psychological concept of violence, its legal evaluation, society's attitude towards women victims of violence, liability for violence and the theoretical and practical problems of holding perpetrators liable as well as the peculiarities of application.

The Ministry of the Interior designed and has been regularly updating up to now a website on violence against women "Būk stipri" (Be Strong) in Lithuanian and English <http://www.bukstipri.lt/en/>. The site contains relevant legal and other information, legal and practical advice, statistics and other pertinent facts. The website is very popular. It has already been visited by more than 64,500 visitors.

Order No. 5-V-37 of the Police Commissioner as of 21 January 2008 obliges police units to appoint persons for dealing with domestic violence issues. Every police unit appointed a person responsible for dealing with domestic violence issues: coordination, assistance, information and counselling of officers.

The capacities of the staff of the Joint Emergency Services Centre to adequately respond to the calls for help by women, who suffer from domestic violence, to the emergency telephone number 112 were further strengthened. In 2008, 20 employees of the Centre attended a psychological course on communication during the critical situations at the Fire and Rescue School according to the training programme for the specialists of the Joint Emergency Services Centre. The Centre diverted 10,828 calls for help in case of domestic violence to respective emergency services.

Seeking to establish the effectiveness of application of legal acts, the analysis of criminal cases concerning domestic violence against women in Lithuania was performed. The Institute of Law conducted a survey, which contains a logical-systematic analysis of national criminal (both substantive and procedural) laws, a comparative analysis of these laws and respective laws of the European Union Member States, and a logical-systematic analysis of cases of domestic violence.

In 2009:

29 projects of women's non-governmental organisations and municipal institutions, aimed to provide complex assistance for women victims of violence, were selected for financing from the state budget (LTL 348,500) in accordance with the tender procedure. Complex assistance was provided to 1,548 women victims of violence. Women who suffered from violence were provided with psychological and legal consultations, the services of a social worker, information and counselling services, temporary safe shelter and catering services, they were provided with essential items, first aid, etc.

The activities of 20 women's organisations, aimed at combating violence against women, were funded from the state budget (LTL 348,500) in accordance with the tender procedure. In 2009, supported organisations organised 11 conferences, which were attended by 311 employees from institutions seeking to combat violence against women, social workers, non-governmental organisations, police and prosecutor's office representatives. 64

seminars were organised, and they were attended by 687 social workers and volunteers from different organisations, willing to deal with the issues of combating violence against women. 45 discussions and 106 meetings with the representatives from various organisations operating in the field of violence against women were held. Non-governmental organisations, seeking to combat violence against women, took part in 120 events organised by other organisations.

LTL 87,000 were allocated from the state budget for 9 projects, targeted at work with perpetrators. In implementing these projects, 97 abusers willing to abandon their violent behaviour were provided with individual psychological consultations and group therapy (in total, 387 hours of psychologist's consultations and 366 hours of sessions in "help-yourself" groups).

Professional competences, related to violence issues, of police officers, representatives of other law enforcement and law and order institutions, as well as health care institutions, were further developed. The Training Centre of the Ministry of Justice organised a four-academic-hour training course on the issues of violence against women. 35 judges and prosecutors attended the course. The Police School of Lithuania organised 10 seminars "Domestic Violence" in all counties. The seminars were attended by 164 police officers (duty officers, district inspectors, patrols), who deal with the problems of domestic violence. 37 specialists of the Joint Emergency Services Centre were trained to adequately respond to help calls to the emergency telephone number 112 by women who suffer from violence. In 2009, the information system of the Centre received and diverted to respective emergency services 5,967 calls for help, related to domestic violence.

The results of the implementation of measures of the National Strategy for combating violence against women in 2010 would be included into the Fifth periodic report to be submitted in 2011.

Financial resources to ensure the effective implementation of the National Strategy for combating violence against women.

All measures of the Strategy are financed from the State budget. Municipalities are encouraged to contribute from their budgets to the measures, in particular related to support and assistance to victims. Due to the economic recession, the budget for implementation of the Strategy decreased in 2009 and 2010, however means from the state budget were allocated for such a priority issues, as complex support and assistance to victims, as well as financial support of women's NGO's active in the area of combating violence.

Overall needs for funding of the measures of the Strategy in 2007–2009 amounted to LTL 3,959,000: LTL 1,340,000 in 2007; LTL 1,417,000 in 2008; LTL 1,202,000 in 2009. The major share of funds was allocated for complex support and assistance for women victims of violence, the activities of women's NGOs active in combating violence against women, and work with perpetrators. The remaining funds were used for the trainings of various specialists, awareness raising campaigns, free help line and other measures.

In 2007 and 2008, LTL 500,000 annually were allocated for the projects aimed at providing complex support and assistance for women victims of violence. In 2009, allocations amounted to LTL 348,500; in 2010 – LTL 230,000.

In 2007 and 2008, LTL 400,000 (each year) were allocated for supporting the activities of women's NGOs; in 2009, allocations amounted to LTL 348,500; in 2010 – LTL 118,000.

In 2007 and 2008, LTL 100,000 were allocated for the projects related to work with perpetrators; in 2009, allocations amounted to LTL 87,000.

Moreover, the projects of women's organisations, partially supported by the EU DAPHNE programme, targeted at combating violence against women, were co-financed from the state budget: LTL 30 in 2008; LTL 30 in 2009; LTL 13 in 2010.

Access of victims of violence to the protection and shelters

All 10 regions of Lithuania have an opportunity to provide safe shelter for women. Total number of places exceed 300. However distribution of shelters in Lithuania is not even. Bigger shelters are concentrated in the biggest cities – Vilnius and Kaunas, smaller municipalities might provide only 2 or 3 places. Most shelter homes in Lithuania are maintained by non-governmental organisations, mostly women's organisations.

To ensure better access of the victims of violence to the necessary services, including safe shelter, means of EU structural funds were allocated for development of social services. 22 municipalities (out of total 60) used that opportunity and decided to develop multifunctional centres providing services for families at risk, including shelter and services for battered mothers and children. For that purpose more than LTL 31 million have been allocated from the EU structural funds, co-financed by the budget of municipalities or by the state budget, when the project is developed by non-governmental organisations. In addition 3 municipalities decided to develop women's crisis centres. For that purpose LTL 3.4 million have been allocated from the EU structural funds, co-financed by the budget of municipalities or by the state budget when the project is developed by non-governmental organisations. It is planned that projects aimed at prevention of violence through awareness raising, information, trainings etc. will also be supported by the EU structural funds.

In the framework of the National Strategy for combating violence against women, the second action plan for 2010–2012 foresees in 2011 to carry out the research aimed to identify needs of victims of violence, to collect their opinions about existing services, to evaluate accessibility, sufficiency, effectiveness of existing services and their quality, to identify existing gaps and provide recommendations for improvement of complex support and assistance to the victims of violence.

Research and data collection on the prevalence, causes and consequences of violence against women

In 2009, national territorial police bodies and their structural units registered 41,982 calls related to cases of domestic violence (33,927 in 2008); police officers from prevention units examined 11,071 complaints and reports of domestic violence (12,506 in 2008), of which 7,423 complaints and reports (8,066 in 2008) concerned violence against women; pre-trial investigation was refused to be started in 4,149 cases related to violence against women (4,355 in 2008), 647 pre-trial investigations were started (680 in 2008), 2,560 protocols for violations specified in the Code of Administrative Law Violations (Article 174 "Petty hooliganism", Article 181 "Failure to exercise parental authority or using parental authority contrary to the interests of the child", Article 183 "Public order offence", etc.) were drawn up.

In 2009, according to the data from the IT and Communications Department under the Ministry of the Interior, 321 women suffered from violence used by their spouses, partners or common-law husbands (359 women in 2008), of them 131 and 158 women respectively in rural areas; 96 women suffered from violence used by their children or adopted children (the same number was recorded in 2008).

With a view to making an exhaustive evaluation of the extent of domestic violence in Lithuania, a survey was carried out in 2008. The purpose of the survey was to analyse and evaluate the prevalence of domestic violence against women by different forms of violence, the status of a victim and an abuser, and the condition of victims of domestic violence, as

well as to conduct a comparative analysis with reference to previous surveys. The objectives of the survey were as follows: to analyse and evaluate prevalence of violence against women; to ascertain the number of women who suffer from domestic violence in Lithuania; to identify and compare the most prevalent forms of domestic violence against women and other manifestations of domestic violence; to identify the factors that make influence on domestic violence against women; to ascertain the frequency of calls for help by women to different institutions; to ascertain and evaluate the situation of victims of domestic violence and their awareness about availability of assistance; to carry out a comparative analysis with reference to the surveys conducted in 1997 and 2002.

The method of the survey was a representative telephone inquiry of 1000 women, aged 18–74, residing in Lithuania. The conclusions of the survey confirmed that violent experience was “transferable”. The analysis of the most frequent forms of violence against women showed that psychological violence was used most frequently. It was used against most women who suffered from violence. As many as half of all women who suffered from violence were abused physically. Typically, violence is used in a combination of forms.

Incidence of violence against women is similar in all social-demographic groups, regardless of income, education, place of residence, etc. However, as many as half of the respondents who reported violence stated that typically the abuser was under the effect of alcohol.

Most women had heard about organisations which provided assistance to women; approximately one-fifth of them knew their names and contacts. On the other hand, one-third of women who suffer from violence said that they never called for help to any organisations or their relatives.

The findings of the survey not only showed the extent of violence, its forms and other characteristics, but also revealed deep and long-standing related problems: violence “transferability” from generation to generation and poor perception of violence, which leads to the problem of tolerance to violence. The fact that violence is usually hidden from society prevents from effective provision of assistance for women victims and abusers.

The findings of the survey were presented during the annual campaign “16 days free of violence against women”. The full report of the survey is available on the website of the Ministry of Social Security and Labour, under the rubric “Moksliniai tyrimai” (*Scientific Research*).

Regarding paragraph 81. Health

Women’s access to health care, in particular to sexual and reproductive health services

Sexual and reproductive health care in Lithuania is integrated in the primary health care. Primary health care services are accessible to majority of population. Free accessible reproductive health services are provided by family doctors (general practitioners).

Woman can directly consult with her family doctor on family planning, sexual and reproductive health issues. In case of reproductive disorders family doctor refers a woman to an obstetrician gynaecologist.

Women’s right to decide on the number and spacing of children

Women have access to modern contraception and safe abortion in Lithuania. There are no special legislations restricting contraception in Lithuania.

The issue related to abortion is regulated by the order No. 50 “On Approval of the Procedure of Abortion” of the Minister of Health from 1994. The Order states that termination of a pregnancy is performed upon the woman’s request up to 12 week of

gestation. After this term abortion might be performed only in cases when pregnancy threatens woman's and foetus life and health. Abortion upon the woman's request is fee-paying procedure. Public health care providers' charge for this procedure is 135 or 211 Litas. The price depends on the extent of procedure and it is affordable for majority of population. Abortions performed for medical reasons are free of charge.

Prevention of unwanted pregnancies and family planning methods

The last comprehensive research on contraceptive behaviour of the Lithuanian population was carried out by Demographic Research Centre at the Institute for Social Research in 2006–2007. The research indicated, that general use of contraception in 2006–2007 increased 1,5 times compare to the 1994–1995 and reached 75 percent.

There are many available family planning methods in Lithuania. Commonly-used family planning methods are uterine device and hormone contraception. About 30 percent of couples use these methods to prevent unwanted pregnancies.

The significant decline of abortions upon the woman's request could also be considered as an indirect indicator of increasing use of modern methods of contraception. Over the past 10 years, the number of abortions upon the woman's request has decreased more than twice (Table 1). The same trend is apparent in the abortion rate (Table 2).

Table 1: Number of abortions upon the woman's request

2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
16 174	13 590	12 362	11 434	10 569	9 889	9 427	9 451	8 875	7 891

Table 2: Legally induced abortions per 1000 women aged 15–49

2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
18,4	15,5	14,1	12,9	12,0	11,2	10,8	10,9	10,3	9,3

Source: Institute of Hygiene Health Information Centre

Lithuania improved accessibility of emergency contraception medicines in 2008. The State Medicines Control Agency has changed classification of emergency contraception medicines (Postinor-2 and Escapelle) and they are accessible without prescription.

Awareness about family planning among women and men

The Ministry of Health of the Republic of Lithuania has financed few activities intended for raising awareness about reproductive health, family planning, contraception and prevention of sexually transmitted diseases (especially among women in rural areas) in 2008. 10 000 booklets concerning the reproductive health and family planning were published and distributed through primary health care centres. Young women had possibility to attend lectures on contraception and prevention of sexually transmitted diseases. These activities were implemented under the National program for Equal Opportunities for Women and Men 2005–2009 adopted by the Government of the Republic of Lithuania in 2005.

Impact on women of the draft Law on the protection of human rights in the prenatal stage

The draft Law on the Protection of Human Life in the Prenatal Stage was proposed by members of the former Lithuanian Seimas (Parliament). The discussion on the issue stopped after an election of the present Lithuanian Seimas in autumn 2008. This draft Law is not included in the recent agenda of the Seimas autumn session.

Sexual education in schools

In implementing the measures of the National Strategy for the Demographic (Population) Policy for 2005–2007, approved by Order No. 572 of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania as of 23 May 2005 (Official Gazette *Valstybės žinios*, 2005, No. 66-2367), Order No. ISAK-179 of the Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania as of 7 February 2007 (Official Gazette *Valstybės žinios*, 2007, No. 19-740) approved the Programme of Getting Ready for Family Life and Sex Education, aimed at developing a mature personality and preparing students for a family life. The programme has two closely interrelated and complementary purposes: education and prevention. The purpose of education means to prepare young people for life and marriage, provide knowledge about a family, give an overall concept of sexuality, develop a mature and moral personality who respects human life since the moment of conception and is able to create mature interrelations, look after their sexual health and resist the negative influence of the environment. The purpose of prevention means the prevention of early sexual relations and related problems, sexual exploitation and harassment, as well as discrimination on grounds of sex. The programme targets at students who study according to pre-primary, pre-school, primary, basic and secondary education curricula. It is applied to children with different needs and it is integrated in individual subjects without increasing the number of classes specified for the subject in the General Education Plans.

In August–September 2010, at the initiative of the Ministry of Education and Science, the Education Development Centre, in cooperation with the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Transport and Communications and other stakeholders, prepared the draft Framework Programme of Human Health and Safety (hereinafter referred to as the draft Programme). According to the draft Programme, health promotion programmes will be systematised and updated, the general objectives of human safety, health and sexuality education will be identified and achievements for primary, basic and secondary education will be specified, as well as integral relations to subject, preventive and other programmes will be envisaged. The draft Programme will be implemented as of the school year 2011/2012 during the classes of human safety and will be integrated in other disciplines and non-formal education.
