



NGO submission to the 58 session
(30 June – 18 July 2014) of
the United Nation's Committee on the Elimination of All Forms
of Discrimination against Women
related to the consideration of the fifth periodic report
submitted by **LITHUANIA**
under Article 18 of the Convention

By the Center for Equality Advancement (Lithuania)

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Though Lithuania made steps towards implementation of certain recommendations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, the failure of the Government of Lithuania to “systematically and continuously implement all the provisions of the Convention” cannot be overlooked as it considerably affects everyday lives of thousands of Lithuanian women.

Until present, a very conservative approach to gender issues prevails in the policy discourse which consequently leads to the introduction of policy measures promoting traditional gender roles and the patriarchal family values.

Public awareness of the CEDAW as one of the fundamental human rights instruments, and of the Committee’s concluding observations, **remains very low** and Lithuania has failed to take any actions to stimulate it. The national case-law in this regards is very telling – as the Government has itself recognized, to date there have been no cases referring to the provisions of the Convention or the Committee’s jurisprudence.

State funded Lithuanian universities that teach Law do not include a course on *Women’s rights* in the curriculum of Law programme. As a result, **law graduates from Lithuanian universities do not have a legal knowledge on women’s rights in general**, nor on particular issues such as domestic violence, human trafficking, reproductive rights, gender based discrimination, etc.

There is no definition of multiple discrimination in the non-discrimination legislation in Lithuania, neither does it stipulate explicitly that discrimination on more than two grounds is considered to be a graver violation of the equality principle than unequal treatment on a single ground. The national courts are still not ready to adjudicate multiple discrimination cases. None of the anti-discrimination policies explicitly recognizes **particular vulnerability of women belonging to sexual minorities and migrants**.

In 2014 the Ministry of Social Security and Labour initiated discussions on **termination of the National Program of Equal Opportunities for Women and Men**, notwithstanding the evidence based research about the absence of systematic gender mainstreaming strategy in the state institutions.

The sex role stereotyping in Lithuania continues to be a serious problem. The state has failed to adopt a thorough national strategy which would promote changes in the social and cultural patterns of behaviour of women and men with a view to eradicating prejudices, customs, traditional and other practices which are based on the idea of inferiority of women and stereotyped roles for women and men.

Up till now **Lithuania has ignored the recommendation of CEDAW Committee** to adopt laws on temporary special measures or quotas to ensure gender balance in political and public life. No legislative initiatives to this end were tabled by any of the stakeholders.

Lithuania **has not followed the recommendation of CEDAW committee to improve reconciliation** of family and professional responsibilities and to promote equal sharing of domestic and family tasks between women and men, reduce sex segregation and pay gap in labour market. Statistics demonstrate that the allocation of child-care leave between women and men remains very uneven; and women are forced to take longer maternity leave due to difficult availability of kindergartens. Access to pre-school facilities in Lithuania is far below the EU average. Women’s roles as primary care-givers are reinforced in the language of legal acts and policy making and in practices of employers who prefer recruit men. Country statistics show that vertical and horizontal gender segregation in the labour market prevails.

The state continues to consider legislative initiatives restricting access to safe and legal abortions and ignores CEDAW Committee's recommendation no. 24 on women and health. In 2013 a new draft law on restricting abortions has been debated in the Parliament. No reproductive health legislation has been adopted, though. Research proves that the access to modern contraception in Lithuania is one of the lowest in Europe. The sexual education at schools is out-dated because it grounds sexuality on chastity, ignores gender and sexual identity and focuses solely on dangers of contraception.

Lithuania continues legislating in a discriminatory manner to protect the concept of a family as a heterosexual married couple. **No legal initiatives have been adopted to provide any legal protection for women in same-sex partnerships.** Although it has been reported that at least 20 percent of lesbian or bisexual women in Lithuania are raising children, the non-biological mother is not allowed to adopt their partner's child under no circumstances. Moreover, there are draft amendments registered which would ensure adoption is denied on the basis of sexual orientation.

By adopting the Law on Protection against Domestic Violence, Lithuania brought certain major changes positive changes in the area of combating domestic violence. However, the first years of **its implementation revealed a number of issues related to both legal loopholes in the Law and implementing legislation and specifically to the poor practice of the application of the Law.** The main concerns include the gender neutrality of the law; absence of the effective monitoring mechanisms of implementation of protection orders; insufficient financial support for victim help centers and NGOs; lack of commitment for prevention of domestic violence; excessive application of reconciliation procedures; inadequate attention to police and judicial trainings.

Sexual violence against women, including intimate partner violence, remains an alarming issue which Lithuania has failed to address duly. The European Women's Lobby 's 2013 Barometer on Rape in Europe identifies Lithuania as one of six European countries whose legislation is far below the minimum standards as set forth in the Council of Europe Convention on combating and preventing violence against women and domestic violence. No strong condemnation of marital rape and lack of its explicit criminalization are the main issues of concern.

The drafters of this Shadow Report express a hope that the information provided will assist the Committee in assessing Lithuania's achievements and failures so far, and this assessment will result in the set of strong recommendations guiding the Government in implementing its obligations under the CEDAW.

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Introduction

In the concluding observations regarding Lithuania's third and fourth period reports, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (Committee) recalled Lithuania's obligation "to systematically and continuously implement all the provisions of the Convention". The Committee regarded "the concerns and recommendations identified in the present concluding observations as requiring the State party's priority attention between now and the submission of the next periodic report."¹

Lithuania should be commended for making steps towards implementation of certain Committee's recommendation, and in particular for adopting in 2011 a long awaited Law for Protection against Domestic Violence. The strong lobby from women rights NGOs has achieved the adoption of the Law which defines domestic violence as an act of violation of human rights and freedom, which, due to damage caused to society, is attributable to acts of public significance.

Nevertheless, the failure of the State to "systematically and continuously implement all the provisions of the Convention" cannot be overlooked as it considerably affects everyday lives of thousands of Lithuanian women. Until present, a very conservative approach to gender issues prevails in the policy discourse which consequently leads to the introduction of policy measures promoting traditional gender roles and the patriarchal family values.

About this report

This Shadow Report has been drafted by the Center for Equality Advancement (CEA), the Lithuania-based non-governmental organization promoting consolidation of equal rights for women and men and their implementation since 2003 (Annex I) in consultation with 17 women rights non-governmental organizations across Lithuania. (Annex II)

The Report answers the Committee's concluding observations regarding Lithuania's third and fourth period report issued in 2008, the *List of issues and questions in relation to the fifth periodic report of Lithuania* prepared by the Committee in 2013; information provided in Lithuania's fifth periodic report as well as in the *Reply to the List of issues* submitted by Lithuania in 2014. In 2013, the CEA has also submitted to the Committee the *List of critical issues*,² however Lithuania has provided only a partial response to those.

This Report does not aim at providing a comprehensive overview of all the issues that have arose during the review period as regards implementation of Lithuania's obligations under CEDAW, but rather makes an attempt to highlight the most pressing concerns that require State party's immediate attention and the areas where State party's intervention has been long overdue.

The areas of concern, as outlined in this report, therefore include (i) the situation of vulnerable women experiencing multiple disadvantage; (ii) ineffective national machinery for the advancement of women's rights; (iii) sex roles stereotyping and prejudice; (iv) trafficking in human beings and women exploitation for prostitution; (v) gender imbalance in political and public life; (vi) discrimination in employment, including access to labor market, family-work balance, and retirement schemes; (vii) inaccessibility of reproductive health services; (viii) discriminatory family laws and policies; ix) violence against women, with a specific focus of domestic and sexual violence.

The Report has been made possible thanks to financial support from the EEA GRANTS NGO PROGRAMME in Lithuania.

The situation presented in this Report is of 9 May, 2014.

I. ARTICLE 1 (DISCRIMINATION), ARTICLE 2 (POLICY MEASURES)

I.1. Vulnerable groups of women, multiple discrimination

1. A volume of research conducted across the European Union and beyond suggests that women are subjected not only to unequal treatment on the basis of gender, but also to multiple forms of discrimination.
2. After considering third and fourth periodic reports of Lithuania, the Committee has noted with concern that minority women in Lithuania are being exposed to multiple forms of discrimination.³ The Committee urged Lithuania “to intensify its efforts to eliminate discrimination against vulnerable groups of women”, by *inter alia* (1) increasing awareness of the availability of legal remedies and (2) developing additional policies and programmes aimed at assisting vulnerable women.⁴
3. However, Lithuania has failed to implement either of the Committee’s recommendations. Lithuanian legal system and in particular its anti-discrimination legislation suffers from a number of deficiencies which, in turn, create major obstacles for minority women to seek redress. The anti-discrimination policies adopted after the Committee has issued its recommendations, do not reflect the aggravated vulnerability of women with minority background, nor do they encompass any special measures to address it.
4. State funded Lithuanian universities that teach Law do not include a course on *Women’s rights* in the curriculum of Law programme. As a result, law graduates from Lithuanian universities do not have a legal knowledge on women’s rights in general, nor on particular issues such as domestic violence, human trafficking, reproductive rights, gender based discrimination, etc.

I. 1.1. Availability of legal remedies

5. **Definition of multiple discrimination.** Two main pieces of non-discrimination legislation in Lithuania – the Law on the Equal Treatment Between Men and Women and the Law on Equal Opportunities – do not provide a definition of multiple discrimination,⁵ neither do they stipulate explicitly that discrimination on more than two grounds is considered to be a graver violation of the equality principle than unequal treatment on a single ground.
6. **The role of the national equality body.** The Ombudsperson’s Office is a national equality institution charged with the implementation of the anti-discrimination laws. Although in 2012, the Ombudsperson has acknowledged that “*the negative impact of age on social life is more apparent for women, than for men, i.e. [we] could talk about multiple discrimination, which elderly women face more often than man*”,⁶ it failed to address it in any way. The statistical data shows that the Ombudsperson has not started any investigations regarding this issue *ex officio*.⁷ The reluctance to address such complicated case might also be attributed to the lack of expertise on the topic.
7. **Sanctions in discrimination cases.** Although the Ombudsperson has a power to apply administrative sanctions – order a warning or a fine – it rarely exercises such power in practice. For example, in 2005 the Ombudsperson issued a fine in 4% of all cases, in 2006 – in 2%, in 2012 – in 1% while in 2007-2011 no decisions to issue a fine were taken.⁸ Even in the most severe gender discrimination cases, the Ombudsperson resorts to peaceful resolution of disputes, by recommending to put an end to the violation and to act in the non-discriminatory way in the future.

8. **Adjudication of multiple discrimination claims by courts.** The national courts are still not ready to adjudicate multiple discrimination cases, as the single gender and disability discrimination case has proved.⁹ The applicant in the case has started working as an interpreter in the embassy, but during the probationary period her health seriously deteriorated and she became temporally incapacitated. Later same month, she informed the employer about her pregnancy and was accused of deception, fraud and later on dismissed. Before the national courts the applicant argued unfair dismissal due to discrimination on the grounds of disability and gender, however, the court found only discrimination on the ground of gender, without recognizing unequal treatment on the grounds of disability. Such conclusion fails to acknowledge particular vulnerability of disabled women, where a disability results from temporary incapacitation.

I. 1.2. Anti-discrimination and integration policies

9. The anti-discrimination and integration policies the Government has developed to safeguard the rights of vulnerable groups in practice and facilitate their access to labour market, services, and education fail to acknowledge multifaceted disadvantage of vulnerable women and/or anticipate measures to address it accordingly. None of the anti-discrimination policies explicitly recognizes particular vulnerability of women belonging to *sexual minorities* and *migrants* in Lithuania. In particular:

a. *Programm of Social Integration of Persons with Disabilities 2013-2019* mentions the increase in the number of complaints on two or more grounds before the Ombudsperson, but fails to include any general or special social integration measures tailored to the needs of disabled women.¹⁰

b. *National Program of Equal Opportunities between Men and Women 2009-2014* recognizes the need for more information on the situation of ethnic minority women, women with disabilities and elderly women,¹¹ but fails to outline the structural problems such women face and foresee measures which would add to effective resolution of the problems.¹² Contrary to the Committee's recommendation, the Program does not provide for any "comprehensive studies on intersectional forms of discrimination against such vulnerable groups of women".¹³

c. *Inter-institutional Action Plan on Promotion of Non-discrimination* refers to Committee's observations regarding the lack of data on the situation of disadvantaged women and the instances of multiple discrimination,¹⁴ but fails to introduce any corresponding measures and any special measures tackling multiple discrimination.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- **To introduce *Women's rights* course into the Law programmes curriculum in state funded universities.**
- **To supplement the *Law on the Equal Treatment Between Men and Women* and the *Law on Equal Opportunities* by explicitly including a definition of multiple discrimination.**
- **To build the capacity of the Equal Opportunities Ombudsperson's Office staff to *ex officio* investigate multiple discrimination complaints with a special focus on gender and to issue effective, proportionate and dissuasive sanctions.**
- **To include theoretical and practical modules on the assessment of evidence and the burden of proof in multiple discrimination cases into the curriculum of judicial training.**
- **To acknowledge the disadvantage faced by women belonging to *sexual minorities* and *migrants* in the national anti-discrimination policies.**
- **To provide concrete and effective measures to tackle multiple discrimination with a special focus on gender in the national anti-discrimination policies.**

I. 2. National machinery for the advancement of women rights

10. Regardless the constant efforts of the Government to improve the national and local governance in Lithuania with regard to gender advancement, gender mainstreaming is poorly integrated in the policy and decision-making process as well as institutional work culture. Data of the World Economic Forum proves reverse trends of gender equality advancement in Lithuania which dropped down from 14th position in 2007 to 28th in 2013.¹⁵
11. The recent monitoring report by the Ombudsperson's Office¹⁶ has identified that state institutions do not follow the equal opportunity implementation strategy within their area of competence, do not analyse the possible positive and negative impact of the drafted legal acts, programmes and applied measures to different social groups. The line ministries in Lithuania have no clear understanding of gender equality, mainstreaming or equal opportunities policies. The majority of line ministries do not include gender and equal opportunity principles into their work/action plans; do not carry out gender and equal opportunities situation analysis and assessments of equal opportunities.¹⁷ It is noteworthy that gender and equality mainstreaming is mostly understood as something different from the daily activities of civil servants, alien and not working in Lithuanian environment.
12. Regardless Lithuania's statements about the importance of gender equality institutional mechanisms¹⁸, in 2014 the Ministry of Social Security and Labour initiated discussions upon closing of the National Program of Equal Opportunities for Women and Men (further – Program).¹⁹ Women's NGOs and human rights organizations consider these policy developments as a huge step backward deleting gender equality from the national policy agenda and negatively affecting sustainability of the national institutional mechanisms.²⁰ The last Program approved by the Government of Lithuania for 2010-2014 requires engagement of all the ministries and social partners into implementation of the Program ensuring the synergy of effort at national level. The Ministry of Social Security and Labour suggests developing only the Action Plan which will be integrated into the function of the only one Ministry of Social Security and Labour. This highlights the neglect of the CEDAW recommendation in 2008 to ensure strengthening the gender equality machinery at the national level and instituting sustainable national program for equal opportunities for women and men.²¹

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- **To undertake the duty to ensure the principle of equality and non-discriminatory provisions in all draft laws, legal acts, programmes and other measures.**
- **To improve the competence of politicians and civil servants in the line ministries on the importance of gender mainstreaming in the daily work.**
- **To institute sustainable national programs of equal opportunities for women and men each five years from 2015 and ensure their effective implementation at national level in terms of both human and financial resources.**

II. ARTICLE 5 (SEX ROLE STEREOTYPING AND PREJUDICE)

13. In 2008, the CEDAW Committee stated that it “continues to be concerned about the persistence of patriarchal attitudes and deep-rooted stereotypes regarding roles and responsibilities of women and men in the family and in society in Lithuania, which threaten to undermine women's exercise and enjoyment of their human rights and [...] influence women's traditional educational choices“.²²

14. The promotion of traditional gender roles and patriarchal family values can be seen in virtually every area in Lithuania. The particular contexts of concern are media, education and violence against women. Prejudice and stereotypes are reinforced continuously both in the press and television. Experts have warned about the TV shows that sometimes feature open sexism, mocking and humiliating women (e.g. very popular show “Radzi is looking for a wife”),²³ however, the TV producers replied the shows are only the reflection of the society, which has a demand for this, and the women have voluntarily agreed to participate.²⁴
15. Regarding violence against women, there is a predominant belief that women provoke violence themselves (by nagging and emotional abuse of partners). As explained further in the report, the Lithuanian approach to violence is completely gender-neutral, which allows the stereotypes and prejudices to continue.²⁵ The opposition against gender sensitivity and women rights are voiced constantly in the media: in articles about the “failure of genderism” in the West²⁶, commentaries on “hidden agenda” behind women rights and anti-violence campaigns.²⁷ Conferences on “genderism ideology” are hosted at the Lithuanian Parliament²⁸ and are widely covered by the media.
16. With regards to education, girls and women in Lithuania choose social sciences and humanities, rather than physical or technical sciences,²⁹ although the grades of girls are higher both in mathematics and social sciences.³⁰ Meanwhile, social sciences and humanities receive the least funding from the state and there is a tendency to reduce the funding of social sciences every year.³¹ Thus, the female students, due to their “traditional” choices, end up receiving less funding for their studies, and subsequently less opportunities after graduation. Moreover, besides the horizontal gender segregation, there is a very prominent vertical segregation: women are under-represented in leading positions, political and public life.³² The only female university Rector in Lithuania was appointed in 2012 – she is a Canadian and leads a small private international university in Klaipėda.³³
17. The study on multiple discrimination in high education institutions (2011) revealed the presence of rooted stereotypes and discrimination associated with gender, “i.e. sexism and homophobic attitudes”.³⁴ Another study on multicultural education in secondary schools (2010) revealed that textbooks “sometimes openly present various xenophobic statements and discriminating stereotypes”,³⁵ especially with regards to gender, sexual orientation and disability. Although the Lithuanian Government claims the textbooks have recently been reviewed³⁶ to ensure they are “impartial as regards sex, age groups, disability, abilities, social status, race, ethnic dependence, religion and beliefs“, there is no reference provided.³⁷ Such information is not known to specialists on education and science either. The “Methodical recommendations on adaptation of textbooks and other training material for competence development” that is presented as the basis for such a review is a general-character document³⁸ aimed at review of textbooks and other materials.
18. Lack of teachers’ knowledge and poor preparation about issues of gender equality, gender identities, gendered regimes affect the reproduction of gender stereotypes at school. Recent research about teachers’ attitudes towards gender equality, equality and diversity education shows strong stereotypical understanding about women and men. Teachers openly ignore the gender inequality issues and express their fears about its harms on girl and boy’s identities which negatively affect girls’ “femininity” and boy’s “masculinity”. They publicly support statements that beautiful girls do not need mathematics or physics, their interests are about fashion and beauty rather than sciences, while boys are much more interested in technological issues.³⁹

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- **To prepare a thorough national strategy for elimination of sex role stereotyping and prejudice which would include:**
 - o **necessary measures to promote changes in the social and cultural patterns of**

behaviour of women and men with a view to eradicating prejudices, customs, traditions and all other practices which are based on the idea of the inferiority of women or on stereotyped roles for women and men;

- **a revision of all educational textbooks and materials to eliminate gender stereotypes;**
- **the building professional capacity of teachers in formal curricula and at all levels of education, on issues such as equality between women and men, non-stereotyped gender roles, and the right to personal integrity. The same principles should be imbedded in any informal education facilities, as well as in sports, leisure and the media.**

III. ARTICLE 6 (PROSTITUTION)

19. According to the United States *Report on Trafficking in Persons*, in 2013 Lithuania has been moved down from Tier 1 to Tier 2. It is said that ‘law enforcement action decreased from the previous reporting period, and new investigations, prosecutions, and convictions of traffickers all declined’. The report warns about the police treating under-age victims as criminals and notes that despite the funding provided the government ‘did not implement parts of its *2009–2012 Program for the Prevention and Control of Trafficking in Human Beings* due to budget constraints’.⁴⁰ The need to provide compulsory (rather than optional) training of law enforcement officers, prosecutors, and judges on anti-trafficking principles, including the integration of an anti-trafficking module into the basic training of the police has been stressed.⁴¹
20. On 20 November 2013 the NGO Human Rights Monitoring Institute addressed the Commission on the Ethics and Discipline of Judges questioning the public comments of the a judge of Šiauliai Regional Court. The judge rudely commented to the media about under-age victims of prostitution (14 and 15 year olds) noting their „indecent appearance“ and indicating that the victims clearly must have consented to the pimping scheme. The Commission on the Ethics and Discipline of Judges did not find that the remarks in question were unethical and dismissed the request to start a disciplinary procedure.⁴² According to the Human Rights Monitoring Institute, NGOs working in the field of human trafficking claim that human traffickers often receive mild sentences or get away without any real sentences, thus ‘it is doubtful whether pre-trial institutions and courts are capable of adequately understanding and evaluating the nature of this crime’.⁴³

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- **To provide compulsory (rather than optional) training of law enforcement officers, prosecutors, and judges on anti-trafficking principles, including the integration of an anti-trafficking module into the basic training of the police.**

IV. ARTICLE 7 (POLITICAL AND PUBLIC LIFE)

21. **Participation in political life.** Gender statistics in Lithuania show that women are underrepresented in decision-making positions/structures. In 2012 elections, 33 women (24%) and 107 men (76%) were elected to the Parliament of the Republic of Lithuania⁴⁴. Only four out of 15 parliamentary committees (26.7%) and two out of 11 parliamentary commissions (18.2%) are chaired by women. In the Government of Lithuania only one minister out of 14 is the woman (7%). In 2011 municipal elections, 345 women (22%) and 1,184 men were elected to the municipal councils. Women make up only 10% mayors (6 out of 60).⁴⁵
22. **Participation in public life.** In 2008, the CEDAW Committee encouraged Lithuania to systematically adopt laws on temporary special measures, including goals and timetables or quotas.⁴⁶ However, no such laws have been adopted to this date, and the Law on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men has not been amended to simplify the procedure of applying temporary special measures in practice, as recommended. On the contrary,

Lithuania is one of the opposing member states to the Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on improving the gender balance among non-executive directors of companies listed on stock exchanges and related measures.⁴⁷ Meanwhile, the applied research study presented in 2013 has showed that “Lithuania has every opportunity to achieve the goals set in the Directive by 2020“.⁴⁸

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- **To amend the Law on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men and/or adopt necessary legislation providing for temporary special measures, including quotas to ensure gender balance in political and public life.**

V. ARTICLE 11 (EMPLOYMENT)

23. **Gender-imbalance regarding child-care leave.** Statistics demonstrate that the allocation of child-care leave between women and men remains very uneven. It comprises of respectively 88,7 and 11,3%.⁴⁹ Women’s NGOs stated that the Government does not encourage more men to participate proportionately in raising children and take paternity leave more often. There is a lack of information that men can also take some time off for taking care of the children.⁵⁰ Recent research also proves that aspects of balancing family and work are highly underdeveloped. Women are forced to take longer maternity leave due to difficult availability of kindergartens. Working hours of the kindergartens are very inconvenient for working parents.⁵¹
24. **Access to pre-school facilities.** Lithuania is far below the EU average in levels of participation on pre-school education. For 4-6 year olds, Lithuania takes 23rd place, with only 78.3% participation (EU27 average is 92.4%). However, if the general participation were to increase, lack of access to pre-school institutions in the country would reach 20-30%.⁵² There is a big problem with access to pre-school facilities in the largest cities of Lithuania (650 places for 1000 children). 70.3% of children in cities were going to pre-school institutions in 2010, whereas in rural areas only 22,7% of children attend. The access differs depending on the area: e.g. in Alytus district only 16.2% of children under 6 years attend whereas in Palanga city the proportion stands at 79.5%.⁵³ There are also issues with minority languages. Currently there are only 3 pre-school institutions that teach in non-state language. Notably, the pupils who learn in non-state language are mostly from traditional national minorities: 4 % of pupils learn in Russian, 3,3 % in Polish, and other languages-less than 1 %.⁵⁴
25. The tendencies of gender imbalance in care work are reinforced by political actors in the language of legal acts and policy making. There is a very weak connection between family policy making and gender equality, i.e. family policy is based on the traditional patriarchal model rather than gender equality paradigm in Lithuania.⁵⁵
26. **Discrimination in access to labor market.** However, if a woman has not been working for at least a year, she does not have a right to social insurance benefits. The 2008-2010 economic crisis highly affected women by reducing funding for social programs, increasing insecurity regarding their jobs and psychological stress. Women’s NGOs have highlighted that young women are discriminated against when looking for a job⁵⁶, because most employers does not want to “risk” and hire a female employee who is going to have kids.⁵⁷ Academic research indicates that employers still consider women as primary caregivers and the ones responsible for family issues; therefore, they often prefer to recruit men⁵⁸.
27. **Work and family imbalance.** In rural areas it is a very common situation that work shifts and flexible working hours are hardly applied by employers. The single mothers in rural areas find extremely difficult to maintain job and continue care duties to their children and elderly parents. Usually single mothers are forced to quit their jobs.⁵⁹ Once a mother after long years of unemployment gets back to the labour market, most of the benefits for the family are taken away, e.g. they have to start paying for social services such as

kindergarten and other that used to be free for unemployed parents. This strongly discourages women from returning back to labour market, because usually they return to low paid, unskilled jobs which hardly help them to overcome poverty.⁶⁰

28. **Pay gap and labour segregation.** A formal rule of equal pay for equal work exists in the laws. However, national statistics show that vertical and horizontal gender segregation in the labour market prevails and women employees in 2012 continued to earn up to 14% less than men employees.⁶¹ The largest pay gap accounted for 16.3% in 2010 was among young employees (the age group 25-34) and the lowest – 10.4% — among 65 years and older.⁶²
29. **Age plus gender discrimination in retirement.** The above described situation has its further negative implications on women. In 2010, the average retirement pension received by women was one-sixth lower than that received by men. The at-risk-of-poverty rate of men and women of retirement age differed significantly and made up 13% and 31% respectively in 2009. A significant share of women of retirement age lived alone. Statistics show that single persons carry a higher risk of poverty than couples.⁶³ Though men more frequently than women experienced negative consequences of economic crisis 2009-2012,⁶⁴ the structural reasons for women's discrimination in labour market have not been removed.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- **To amend the legal acts on child-care leave providing for a mandatory proportional share of child-care leave between a mother and father.**
- **To initiate public campaigns on raising awareness about a father's possibilities to take parental leave and encouraging dual breadwinner family model in society where both a mother and father undertake duties and rights in regard to the child care.**
- **To guarantee accessibility and quality of services for care of children and other family members in order to improve infrastructure for women, particularly rural women, and to reconcile family and work.**

VI. ARTICLE 12 (HEALTH)

VI. 1. Access to health services, reproductive health

30. **Legislative initiatives to restrict access to safe and legal abortions.** In 2008, the CEDAW Committee expressed the concern regarding the pending abortion ban bill.⁶⁵ Although that bill did not pass, in 2013 a new draft law on restricting abortions was registered.⁶⁶ It passed the initial consideration phase at the Parliament, has been further approved by the parliamentary Committee on Health. Currently, the draft law is pending before the Committee on Legal Affairs and the Human Rights Committee. The Confederation of Bishops lobbies strongly to allow the doctors refusing abortion on the basis of consciousness, and even to allow medical students refusing knowledge/skills how to do an abortion. The Government has approved this suggestion in 2009 but so far no amendments followed.⁶⁷
31. **Absence of reproductive health laws.** To this date, Lithuania has not adopted any laws on reproductive health nor artificial insemination. Lithuania does not compensate artificial insemination even partially and under any conditions. A few draft laws on reproductive health (2002⁶⁸, 2013,⁶⁹ 2014⁷⁰), artificial insemination (2002,⁷¹ 2003,⁷² 2004,⁷³ 2010,⁷⁴ 2011⁷⁵) were proposed but none of them passed the initial stage yet.
32. In 2013, it was suggested to criminalise the “trafficking of human organs and data regarding artificial insemination, including germ cells and embryos”.⁷⁶ According to the proposed amendments, criminal liability

was to apply to health specialists, and also to private persons who sold or acquired this data. However, the government decided not to agree with this draft amendment, because the provisions criminalised the very fact of unregulated artificial insemination, rather than illegal activities.⁷⁷

33. **Inaccessibility of contraception.** The access to modern contraception is one of the lowest in Europe. The data of *Barometer on Women's Access to Modern Contraceptive Choice* revealed that Lithuania has the lowest rates of access out of the 10 participating states (Bulgaria, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Italy, Lithuania, The Netherlands, Poland, Spain and Sweden).⁷⁸ For young people it is difficult to get an access to professional consultation on contraception and information on sexual life without a parent knowing about it. If parents are not involved in children's sexual education, youth is forced to seek information online which is often scarce and unreliable. Therefore not all women are aware of proper use of contraception.⁷⁹

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- **To ensure that all women have access to safe and legal abortion.**
- **To adopt comprehensive legislation on reproductive health and artificial insemination in accordance with international reproductive health and justice standards.**
- **To ensure accessibility of modern contraception to women and young girls;**
- **To ensure youth-friendly services in the area of reproductive health.**

VI. 2. Access to information about reproductive health, sex education

34. In 2008, the CEDAW Committee has Lithuania, as a matter of priority, to provide sexuality education systematically in schools.⁸⁰ It called the state "to speedily complete a revision of all educational textbooks and materials to eliminate gender stereotypes". Unfortunately, nothing was done to this regard. On the contrary, rather recent teacher's materials encourage gender stereotyping and provide twisted information on sexuality and family planning.
35. Since 2007, the program on "preparing for family and sexual education" in Lithuania is integrated into secondary school lessons. However, the result of this program might be actually deprivation of up-to-date education. This program is supplemented by methodical guidelines which promote "chastity as the basis for sexuality".⁸¹ Other relevant materials stress that "insufficiencies in gender identity result in homosexual tendencies", relate homosexuality to AIDS and early death, and stress that it can be repaired.⁸² Regarding contraception, these materials warn that hormonal contraception can be very harmful for women's health (cancer, infertility, increased blood pressure, etc.). All measures of contraception are said to be dangerous either physically or psychologically. These materials are distributed by the Ministry of Education and Science and institutions under it. Teachers have very precise lessons' plans how to talk about chastity, "repair" of wrongful sexuality, "different nature" of men and women, and their preparation for marriage.
36. Opposition against any sexual education is constantly stirred in Lithuania: e.g. in the end of 2013, the Lithuanian Parliament adopted a resolution where it urged the European Parliament "to reject the draft European Parliament Resolution on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights proposed by Member of the European Parliament Edite Estrela and to recognise its provisions as detrimental to the European tradition, law and moral".⁸³ It was widely reported in the media and by many society actors (including members of the Parliament) that the Estrela resolution will legalize paedophilia,⁸⁴ and force teachers to teach children under 4 y. to masturbate.⁸⁵

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- **To systematically ensure unbiased and scientifically accurate sex education in the schools.**
- **To recall, as a matter of priority, all sexual education materials that are based on prejudice, stereotyping and disinformation.**

VII. ARTICLE 16 (MARRIAGE AND FAMILY LIFE)

37. On 28 September 2011, the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Lithuania issued a decision on the compliance of the *Conceptual Framework for National Family Policy*⁸⁶ with the Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania. Notably, the CEDAW Committee in 2008 expressed its concern that the Conceptual Framework relied on a restricted concept of family.⁸⁷
38. The Constitutional Court of Lithuania ruled that by defining the concept of a family as heterosexual married couple, the Conceptual Framework in fact contradicted provisions of the Constitution.⁸⁸ However, the Constitutional Court faced much criticism and currently an amendment of the Constitution is registered.⁸⁹ This amendment would bring back the idea of the Conceptual Framework that “family” can only be based on marriage and parenthood, however, this time it would have a much higher status than framework policy document.
39. Notably, the Lithuanian laws do not provide any legal protection for women in same-sex partnerships. Although it has been reported that at least 20 percent of lesbian or bisexual women in Lithuania are raising children⁹⁰, the non-biological mother is not allowed to adopt their partner’s child under no circumstances. Moreover, there are amendments registered which would ensure adoption is denied on the basis of sexual orientation.⁹¹
40. Various amendments have been presented with the view of bringing the women back to home and keeping the traditional gender roles. E.g., an amendment that entrenches the “child’s fundamental right to a mother and a father” was proposed as one of the fundamental principles of family law.⁹² If adopted, the amendment could have unpredictable results and gravely interfere with women’s exercise and enjoyment of their human rights in marriage and family relations. Theoretically, this could open the door for restrictions of divorce, discrimination of women in various forms of families, and also forced silence, because any discussion about the family would be prevented with the threat of fines. At the moment, the aforementioned amendment has been set aside.⁹³ Nevertheless, *there is a clear tendency for proposing legislation for the protection of the “traditional family.”*
41. The amendment that provides for administrative fines for “contempt to the family”⁹⁴ (by talks, displayed things, posters, slogans and etc.) is in consideration at the Parliament. Although this amendment is not passed yet, even under the present legislation, a brief display of a person wearing a t-shirt with words “For Family Diversity” has been seen as “detrimental to minors”,⁹⁵ and a book of a Lithuanian author which featured (among other tales) a love story of two princesses, has been banned from the bookstores.⁹⁶ If the amendment is passed, administrative fines could potentially be applied in afore-mentioned situations, as well as in case of lesbian mothers simply for speaking about their existence in Lithuanian society.⁹⁷ It is not clear who else could be fined for the contempt of the family,⁹⁸ however, the source of inspiration for such amendments have been identified as the Russian legislation.⁹⁹

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- **To abstain from restrictive legislative amendments which may have a negative impact on women's exercise and enjoyment of their human rights in marriage and family relations;**
- **To adopt legislation that ensures every woman's right to family life.**

VII. COMMITTEE'S RECOMMENDATIONS NOS 12 AND 19 (VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN)

VII. 1. Violence against women, domestic violence

42. The Law on Protection against Domestic Violence (the Law) has entered into force on 15 December 2011 and brought some major changes in the area of combating domestic violence.¹⁰⁰ The strong lobby from women rights NGOs has achieved that the Law now defines domestic violence as an act of violation of human rights and freedom, which, due to damage caused to society, is now attributable to acts of public significance.
43. The Law considerably strengthened the legal protection of domestic violence victims by placing the burden of ending violence on the authorities and equipping the law enforcement authorities with legal tools to respond to the crime.¹⁰¹ In a month after the Law on Protection against Domestic Violence came into force, the police received 3483 notices on alleged incidents of domestic violence and launched 1149 pre-trial investigations. Since 2011, the number of reported domestic violence incidents has been growing annually.¹⁰²
44. Nevertheless, the first years of implementation of the Law revealed a number of issues related to both legal loopholes in the Law and implementing legislation and specifically to the poor practice of the application of the Law.
45. **Gender-neutrality of the Law.** The Law on Protection against Domestic Violence is gender-neutral and does not address the domestic violence in a gender-sensitive way. However, the absolute majority of domestic violence victims in Lithuania are women. The data provided by the Police Department confirms that the vast majority of domestic violence victims in Lithuania are women. In 2013, out of all persons granted the victim status in the domestic violence cases 81,7% were women, 11,1% were men and 7,2% were children (in 2012: 82,7% were women, 9,2% were men and 8,1% were children). The failure to legally recognize gender dimension of the law runs contrary to the concept of domestic violence as gender-based discrimination under the CEDAW¹⁰³ and, consequently, is not reflected in the national-level policies aiming to provide assistance for the victims in need. The last action plan (2009–2012) of the Strategy for combating violence against women (further—the Strategy) expired in the end of 2012. Though the UN Handbook for Legislation on Violence against Women indicates that the legislation on domestic violence does not have to be gender specific; however, it is recommended that the legislation would “be gender-sensitive, not gender-blind”.¹⁰⁴ At the moment, the Lithuanian legislation is completely gender-blind and without any measures aimed at gender stereotyping to prevent violence.
46. **Concerns related to the execution of protective orders.** The practice has proved that two protection measures envisioned by the Law do not effectively safeguard the victims. The effective monitoring mechanism which would allow tracking the perpetrator's location and determining whether he has approached the victim or the victim's premises is non-existent. The media has featured a number of stories when a victim of domestic violence has been repeatedly attacked after the protection order has been issued.¹⁰⁵
47. **Insufficient financial support for victim help centers and NGOs.** The Government does not provide clear systematic financial support for specialized support services for victims of domestic violence. Due to the lack of funds, it is very difficult for NGO's to attract professionals to work for them.¹⁰⁶ Therefore it is not possible

for example to escort women to the police and to provide counselling in order to support her to hold on her testimony.¹⁰⁷ When women come alone to the police office they are often threatened and secondary victimised since they have to face and testify in front of the perpetrator and persuaded to reconcile.¹⁰⁸ In 2014 European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) publicised the results of European survey on violence against women and showed that in Lithuania only 1 percent of victims search for help in social services and 2 percent in crises centres, 24 percent in police. The reasons for not applying to the institutions are the mistrust in institutions (21 percent, the average in the EU – 9 percent), shame (25 percent in Lt – average in the ES – 12 percent) and unwillingness to make their case of violence public (22 percent in LT, the average in the EU – 12 percent).¹⁰⁹

48. Prevention is not taken seriously, can be seen by the sporadic financing of such activities. 28 NGOs received funding aimed at “decreasing violence against women” in 2013,¹¹⁰ with the view of providing prevention and continuing support services. The sums allocated range from LTL 3,600 (EUR 1,042) to LTL 42,500 (EUR 12,308). The results came in the middle of October and the funds arrived in November, which actually left just two months for project implementation.¹¹¹
49. **Excessive application of reconciliation procedure.** Another issue that remains unaddressed is a reconciliation procedure that is still widely used in domestic violence cases during both, pre-trial investigation and trial stage, without taking into account the specific nature of the domestic violence crime and its repetitive pattern, and without a detailed assessment of the possible risk and danger to the victim. In many cases when the perpetrator of violence and the victim reconcile and the case must be dismissed.¹¹² Sometimes the courts oblige the perpetrators to undergo a therapy on anger management, peaceful conflict resolution. NGOs report, however, that the perpetrators of violence rarely finish these programs.¹¹³
50. **Inadequate attention to police and judicial trainings.** Women NGOs are critical of the Government’s inactivity to organise the broader awareness raising campaign about the Law on Protection against Domestic Violence, specifically focusing on informing about the sanctions and remedies to solve the case of domestic violence. No attention to quantity and quality of police training and sufficient funding for police to implement the Law.¹¹⁴ For example, some women’s NGOs informed that police in small towns does not have enough capacities to ensure safety of the victim of domestic violence, because of the lack of space in the custody.¹¹⁵
51. Although, as outlined above, the tangible progress towards combating domestic violence by means of the law has been done in Lithuania, the state has not taken all available measures to safeguard the lives and the health of women. In 2013 and 2014 Lithuania has lost two cases before the European Court of Human Rights for failing to protect women against repeated incidents of domestic violence despite their numerous requests to launch pre-trial investigation. In both cases, the Court has found violations of Article 3 of the European Convention of Human Rights – protection against torture, inhuman and degrading treatment.¹¹⁶ According to the results of the FRA research on violence against women, 49% of the respondents in Lithuania know at least one female victim of intimate partner violence within their circle of friends and family (the EU average – 39 percent), 66% of the respondents do not know any specific laws or political initiatives in the country for preventing domestic violence against women and 69 percent – for protecting women in the cases of domestic violence (the EU average – respectively 49 percent and 59 percent).¹¹⁷ These are one of the highest figures in the European Union.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- **To acknowledge the gender dimension in domestic violence and reflect it in the national laws, primarily – the Law on Protection against Domestic Violence, - and national and local-level policies.**
- **To put in the place the system allowing for efficient monitoring of the execution of protection orders.**

- **To organize thorough and consistent trainings for law enforcement officers and judges informing about the peculiarities of handling domestic violence cases and the threats of excessive application of the reconciliation procedure.**
- **To ensure the role of women NGOs as equal partners and secure a consistent financial support of their activities aimed at assisting the victims of domestic violence and promoting the principle of zero tolerance to domestic violence in the society in general.**
- **To organize the trainings of health workers on all levels in order to help them to recognize when women may be at risk of partner violence and to know how to provide an appropriate response.**

VII. 2. Sexual violence

52. Sexual violence against women, including intimate partner violence, remains an alarming issues which Lithuania has failed to address duly. The European Women’s Lobby ‘s 2013 Barometer on Rape in Europe identified Lithuania as one of six European countries whose legislation is far below the minimum standards as set forth in the Council of Europe Convention (also known as the Istanbul Convention) on combating and preventing violence against women and domestic violence.¹¹⁸
53. **No strong condemnation of marital rape.** Women, especially in rural areas, are still blinded by stereotypes of marital “duties” and thus do not recognize marital rape as a violation of their human rights.¹¹⁹ The complaints by women who experience sexual violence from their husbands are not usually regarded as a serious crime, either in public institutions or within society as a whole.¹²⁰ The anonymous survey of 300 women (who are married or have lived with partners) in Vilnius Maternity hospital showed that 80% of respondents did not know the difference between consensual sex in marriage and marital rape; 60% experienced sexual harassment and 30% per cent were forced into having sex with their husbands against their will.¹²¹
54. **Lack of explicit criminalization of marital rape.** In Lithuania, sexual violence is outlawed by three articles of the Criminal Code (Rape – Article 149, Sexual assault – Article 150, Sexual abuse – Article 151)¹²² – the classification of the offence essentially depends on the type of sexual intercourse, use of threat, physical or psychological violence. The marital rape is not specifically included in either of the articles, however general understanding among legal practitioners is that it can fall under either one of them depending on the perpetrator’s actions (as listed above).
55. **Unavailability of segregated data on sexual violence.** The real extent of marital rape in Lithuania remains unknown as there is no system in place allowing for collection of statistical data segregated by the type of the perpetrator (e.g. a spouse, a partner, a former spouse, a relative, a neighbor, an acquaintance, a stranger).

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- **To undertake wide awareness raising campaign to educate women, especially living in rural areas and otherwise socially excluded, about their right to bodily integrity/autonomy and avenues to obtain help in cases of marital rape.**
- **To introduce legislative amendments to the Criminal Code explicitly outlawing marital rape.**
- **To put in place a system of data collection on sexual violence crimes segregated by the type of the perpetrator.**

¹United Nations (UN), Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), *Concluding Observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women: Lithuania* 8 July 2008, para. 65, available at www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cedaw/docs/co/CEDAW-C-LTU-CO-4.pdf.

²Center for Equal Advancement (2013), *Critical Issues as regards the implementation of the UN CEDAW Convention in Lithuania*, Vilnius, available at http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CEDAW/Shared%20Documents/LTU/INT_CEDAW_NGO_LTU_15168_E.pdf

³United Nations (UN), Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), *Concluding Observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women: Lithuania* 8 July 2008, para. 84, available at www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cedaw/docs/co/CEDAW-C-LTU-CO-4.pdf

⁴United Nations (UN), Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), *Concluding Observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women: Lithuania* 8 July 2008, para. 85, available at www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cedaw/docs/co/CEDAW-C-LTU-CO-4.pdf

United Nations (UN), Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), 14 January – 1 February 2008, para. 85, available at www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cedaw/docs/co/CEDAW-C-LTU-CO-4.pdf

⁵For the purpose of this report multiple discrimination is used as an umbrella-term which refers to all situations where discrimination occurs on two and more grounds. It covers both instances of compounded (additive) discrimination and intersectional discrimination.

⁶The Office of the Equality Ombudsperson (*Lygi galimybi kontrolieriaus tarnyba*), 2012 annual report by the Office of the Equality Ombudsperson (*Lygi galimybi kontrolieriaus tarnybos veiklos 2012 ataskaita*), Vilnius, 2013, p. 26, available at www.lygybe.lt/lt/metines-tarnybos-ataskaitos.html

⁷The Ombudsperson has been criticized for a lack of pro-active action in mapping violations of the equal treatment principle and conducting investigations on its own.

⁸The Office of the Equality Ombudsperson (*Lygi galimybi kontrolieriaus tarnyba*), 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012 annual reports by the Office of the Equality Ombudsperson (*Lygi galimybi kontrolieriaus tarnybos veiklos ,2009,2010,2011,2012 ataskaitos*), available at <http://www.lygybe.lt/lt/metines-tarnybos-ataskaitos.html>

⁹Human Rights Monitoring Institute (*Žmogaus teisių stebėjimo institutas*), *Discrimination based on Gender and Disability Case, 2012*, available at <http://www.hrmi.lt/en/our-work/strategic-litigation/>

¹⁰Government (*LR Vyriausybė*), (2012), Lithuania, *Resolution on national social intergration of disabled people in 2013-2019 (Nutarimas dėl nacionalinės neįgaliosios socialinės integracijos 2013-2019 metų programos patvirtinimo)*, No. 1408, 21 November, 2012, available at http://www3.lrs.lt/pls/inter3/dokpaieska.showdoc_l?p_id=437985&p_query=&p_tr2=2

¹¹Government (*LR Vyriausybė*), (2012), Lithuania, *Resolution on national social intergration of disabled people in 2013-2019 (Nutarimas dėl nacionalinės neįgaliosios socialinės integracijos 2013-2019 metų programos patvirtinimo)*, No. 1408, 21 November, 2012, para. 122, available at http://www3.lrs.lt/pls/inter3/dokpaieska.showdoc_l?p_id=437985&p_query=&p_tr2=2

¹²Government (*LR Vyriausybė*) (2010), Lithuania, Ministry of Social Security and Labor of the Republic of Lithuania (*Lietuvos Respublikos socialinės apsaugos ir darbo ministerija*), *Commandment of national equal opportunities for women and men program in 2010- 2014 implementation approval (sakymas dėl valstybinės moterų ir vyrų lygi galimybių 2010-2014 metų programos gyvendinimo priemonių plano patvirtinimo)*, No. A1-323, 7 July, 2010, available at http://www3.lrs.lt/pls/inter3/dokpaieska.showdoc_l?p_id=378165

¹³United Nations (UN), Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), 14 January – 1 February 2008, para. 85, available at www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cedaw/docs/co/CEDAW-C-LTU-CO-4.pdf; the *National Program of Equal Opportunities between Men and Women 2009-2014* is also discussed in para. 11 of this report.

¹⁴Government (*LR Vyriausybė*), (2011), Lithuania, *Resolution on non-discrimination promotion of inter-institutional activity plan approval (Nutarimas dėl nediskriminavimo skatinimo tarpinstitucinio veiklos plano patvirtinimo)*, No. 1281, 2 November, 2011, para. 6, available at http://www3.lrs.lt/pls/inter3/dokpaieska.showdoc_l?p_id=435136

¹⁵World Economic Forum (2013), *The Global Gender Gap*, 2013, p. 8, available at www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GenderGap_Report_2013.pdf

¹⁶Office of the Equality Ombudsperson, (*Lygi galimybių kontrolieriaus tarnyba*), 2011, *Equality mainstreaming: theoretical and practical aspects, (Lygi galimybių integravimas: teoriniai ir praktiniai aspektai)*, Vilnius

¹⁷Ibid.

¹⁸UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (UN CEDAW) (2014). *List of issues and questions in relation to the fifth periodic report of Lithuania. Addendum. Replies of Lithuania*. 16 January 2014 CEDAW/C/LTU/Q/5/Add.1 http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=CEDAW/C/LTU/Q/5/Add.1

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²⁰Center for Equality Advancement (*Lygi galimybių plėtros centras*) (2014), *Kreipimasis dėl valstybinės moterų ir vyrų programos panaikinimo* (Appeal on elimination of national program on equal opportunities for women and men), 6 May 2014

²¹United Nations (UN), Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), *Concluding Observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women: Lithuania* 8 July 2008, p. 4-5, available at www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cedaw/docs/co/CEDAW-C-LTU-CO-4.pdf

²²Ibid. Para. 14.

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ANNEX I. Information about the Center for Equality Advancement

Center for Equality Advancement (CEA) is a Vilnius-based NGO carrying its work since 2003. It aims at changing stereotypes in order to build a safer society. CEA organizes informational and advocacy campaigns, runs training courses and seminars, publishes articles and manuals, carries out research, provides expertise on the themes of gender equality, diversity and human rights.

From its establishment in 2003 CEA, individually and in partnership with other non-governmental organisations as well as governmental institutions, has implemented a large number of projects focusing on gender equality, gender based violence, gender mainstreaming, intersectionality, human rights, non-discrimination, integration of non-EU immigrants and other relevant topics. A significant part of the project work has been devoted to research, data collection and analysis, preparation and publication of various manuals and methodologies and developing the concepts of social campaigns. CEA actively participates in human rights advocacy work, provides position papers on critical issues in policies on gender and other inequalities, participates in drafting legal acts on prevention of domestic violence, non-discrimination and reduction of social exclusion, contributes to shadow and alternative reports to CEDAW, UPR and other international and European bodies.

CEA have participated in variety of professional and civic networks and initiatives, including but not limited to the following:

- ❑ International Gender Policy Network (IGPN);
- ❑ AWID – the Association for Women's Rights in Development;
- ❑ National network of women's NGOs REGINA;
- ❑ National Non-Governmental Development Cooperation Organisations' Platform (NGDO Platform);
- ❑ European Network against Racism;
- ❑ Gender Equality network of women NGOs and politicians of East-Central Europe;
- ❑ Lithuanian Human Rights Coalition;

ANNEX II. List of Women's NGOs contributing to this shadow report

1. Association „Kaunas Women's Society“ (Asociacija „Kauno moter• draugija“);
2. Association „Women's innovation centre“ (Asociacija Moter• veiklos inovacij• centras);
3. Association „Taurage women's employment and information centre“ (Asociacija Taurag•s moter• užimtumo ir informacijos centras);
4. Social service centre in Gargždai (Gargžd• socialini• paslaug• centras);
5. Kaunas women's information and employment centre (Kauno moter• informacijos ir užimtumo centras);
6. Kaunas district men's crisis centre (Kauno apskrities vyr• krizi• centras);
7. Kretinga women's information and training centre (Kretingos moter• infomracijos ir mokym• centras);
8. Women's club “Alanta” in Kartena (Kartenos moter• klubas „Alanta“);
9. Marijampole women's house – crises centre (Marijampol•s moter• namai- krizi• centras);
10. Women's issues information centre (Moter• informacijos centras);
11. Panev•žys women's employment and information centre (Panev•žio moter• užimtumo ir informacijos centras);
12. Welfare society for persons with mental disability “Kretingos hope” (Sutrikusio intelekto žmoni• globos bendrija “Kretingos viltis”);
13. Association of family planning and reproductive health (Šeimoms planavimo ir seksualin•s sveikatos asociacija);
14. Third century university, the faculty in Panev•žys (Tre•iojo amžiaus universiteto Panev•žio fakultetas);
15. Civic organization „Branda“ (Visuomenin• organizacija “Branda”);
16. New generation women's initiatives (Naujos kartos moter• iniciatyvos);
17. Telšiai crisis center (Telši• krizi• centras).