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Summary of Stakeholders' submissions on Lithuania*

Report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

I. Background

1. The present report was prepared pursuant to Human Rights Council resolutions 5/1 and 16/21, taking into consideration the periodicity of the universal periodic review. It is a summary of 14 stakeholders' submissions[1] to the universal periodic review, presented in a summarized manner owing to word-limit constraints. A separate section is provided for the contribution by the national human rights institution that is accredited in full compliance with the Paris Principles.

II. Information provided by the national human rights institution accredited in full compliance with the Paris Principles

2. Seimo kontrolierių įstaiga-Seimas Ombudsmen's Office (SOO) indicated that in 2017, the Seimas Ombudsmen's Office was accredited as a National Human Rights Institution with Status 'A' in line with the Paris Principles. It noted that since 2014, the Seimas Ombudsmen had been carrying out the functions of the country's national prevention of torture mechanism. However, its resources and staffing had not been sufficiently strengthened and, as a result, there was a significant shortage of human resources.[2]

3. SOO stated that the most frequent victims of hate speech were Jewish, Roma, Polish, Russian, Muslims, Jews, persons with dark skin, Jehovah's Witnesses, homosexuals, and transgender persons. Challenges in combating such crimes included the frequent failure to report incitement to hatred, and the insufficient capacity of police officers, prosecutors and judges to properly apply criminal liability. It was necessary to develop a list of criteria for crimes attributable to hate crimes, to provide training on hate crimes for pre-trial investigative officers and prosecutors.[3]

4. The relatively low number of complaints for possible discrimination based on sexual orientation showed that speaking in public about non-traditional sexual orientations and resulting inequalities to which people were exposed was still avoided.[4] Moreover, personal documents of a transgender person could be changed only by a court decision. The adoption of the draft law on the Recognition of Gender Identity could change this situation. However,

* The present document is being issued without formal editing.

the bill, which had been drafted in 2017, had never been submitted to the Seimas (Parliament) for consideration.[5]

5. Positive efforts by the authorities to address problems related to detention were reflected in the reduction in the number of persons arrested and convicts held in prison facilities. However, there were still serious issues to be addressed in correctional institutions such as: the modernisation of prison facilities; the lack of meaningful activities; issues related to isolation in detention; and hygiene conditions.[6]

6. SOO stated that the main document for the protection of victims of trafficking in human beings (THB) was the Recommendations on Identification of Victims of Trafficking in Human Beings, Pre-trial Investigation and Interinstitutional Cooperation, which was non-binding. As a result, there were problems, including in relation to inter-institutional cooperation and limited resources to properly implement these recommendations. SOO also noted the lack of a clear procedure for independently returning victims of trafficking to Lithuania, indicating moreover that persons returning independently risked becoming a victim of trafficking once again during the trip.[7]

7. Unfortunately, stereotypes towards women and gender-based discrimination were still prevalent. SOO stated that within the EU area Lithuanians were more likely to justify sexual and psychological violence in intimate partnerships. SOO also noted the concentration of women working in the fields of education, health and social work compared to men and the gender-pay gap.[8]

8. Lithuania still did not have an appropriate and effective mechanism for preventing violence against women and for organising services adapted to the specific needs of women and girls who had experienced violence.[9] The law provided that persons who have suffered domestic violence shall be granted access to free psychological assistance, temporary accommodation services, and specialised complex assistance. However, the protection of victims of domestic violence was not always adequately guaranteed in practice and not all their needs for assistance were met.[10]

9. The increased demand for services for victims of domestic violence during the COVID-19 pandemic had led to additional challenges for municipalities including: the increase in the workload of social workers and difficulties in accommodating victims in crisis centres. For these reasons, domestic violence had become an even more hidden crime and there was no doubt that official statistics did not reflect its actual extent.[11]

10. While noting the institutional reform for the protection of children's rights, SOO indicated that cooperation and coordination between different institutions in solving complex issues related to the protection of children's rights was a still relevant issue.[12]

11. Although accommodating persons with disabilities in institutions violated their rights enshrined under the CRPD, the process of deinstitutionalisation was slow. Elderly and/or disabled persons living in municipalities were not visited preventively and there was no uniform information on their needs for social services. In 2019, the SOO had found that less than half of the court decisions in which persons were declared legally incapable, were reviewed within the time limit provided for by law.[13]

12. During visits carried out in 2019 and 2021 to the Foreigners Registration Centre, SOO had found inter alia: insufficient cleanliness, that the vulnerability of asylum seekers and their special needs were not fully identified; and that insufficient attention was paid to the protection of children's rights. It also identified problems related to the lack of interpreters, shortcomings in communication and provision of legal and psychological assistance.[14]

III. Information provided by other stakeholders

A. Scope of international obligations[15] and cooperation with international human rights mechanisms and bodies[16]

13. The Office of the Equal Opportunities Ombudsperson (OEOO) noted that Lithuania had not yet ratified the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence

against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention). Consequently, national legislation did not adequately recognise gender-based violence against women, or adequately address the prohibition of stalking, specialised support for victims of sexual violence, and ensure effective preventive mechanisms.[17] JS1 stated that the lack of ratification by Parliament of the Istanbul Convention was largely due to the continued disagreement over the concept of "gender" as a social construct defined in the Convention.[18] JS1 recommended that Lithuania ratify the Istanbul Convention and harmonise legislation on combating gender-based violence (GBV) accordingly.[19]

14. The International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) noted that since 2018, Lithuania had consistently voted against an annual United Nations General Assembly resolution that welcomed the adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and stated that it should urgently sign and ratify the treaty and encourage other states to adhere to it.[20]

B. National human rights framework[21]

15. JS1 indicated that the accreditation of the Seimas Ombudsmen's Office as national human rights institution with an "A" status was a landmark event in the history of the country.[22]

16. OEOO noted it had been appointed additional functions including, prevention of discrimination and awareness-raising in 2016, investigation of complaints on the ground of citizenship in 2017, and monitoring the implementation of CRPD in 2019. However, no additional funding had been attributed for implementation of these functions.[23] OEOO recommended that Lithuania ensure sufficient funding to the OEOO to carry out all the functions regulated by law.[24] The Office of the Ombudsperson for Children's Rights (VTAKI) recommended ensuring adequate support for the Office of the Ombudsperson for Children's Rights.[25]

C. Implementation of international human rights obligations, taking into account applicable international humanitarian law

1. Cross-cutting issues

Equality and non-discrimination[26]

17. OEOO stated that the Law on Equal Treatment prohibited different forms of discrimination on 14 grounds. However, it lacked a clear prohibition of harassment, and intersectional discrimination, and precision in setting out the duty to ensure reasonable accommodation for persons with disabilities in employment and education in line with CRPD.[27]

18. OEOO indicated that the Action Plan on the Promotion of Non-discrimination was the country's key public policy document. However, it lacked financing, clear strategic goals, and effective measures.[28]

19. CoE-ECRI stated that in spite of some useful steps taken by the authorities, the various measures did not yet constitute a comprehensive strategic approach to effectively tackle the problem of racist and homo-/transphobic hate speech.[29] JS1 stated that according to a qualitative study on communities affected by hate crimes, Roma people were the most vulnerable group. The Roma people regularly experienced insults in public spaces, often manifested in hate speech or attempts at physical violence.[30]

20. OEOO welcomed the amendments to the Criminal Code prohibiting hate speech, inter alia, on the grounds of age and disability but noted that gender identity, skin colour and ethnic origin had not been included as protected grounds and recommended that Lithuania amend the Criminal Code to include those groups.[31]

21. EU-FRA indicated that besides gaps in legislation lack of guidance for criminal justice personnel made it difficult to address hate crimes effectively and noted a study indicating

that, without guidance on pre-trial investigations of such crimes, the court practice was complicated.[32] JS1 stated that a large part of hate crimes did not reach official statistics due to the lack of training and negative attitudes among public officials. The victims of hate crimes, including national minorities, often decided not to report such incidents.[33]

22. JS1 recommended that Lithuania: adopt measures to eliminate hate crimes towards national minorities, including by organising state funded awareness campaigns, initiating educational programmes, and ensuring adequate funding, and national legislation and practice to guarantee the proper handling of hate crimes.[34]

23. JS1 indicated that protection of LGBTI individuals, despite several positive developments, remained highly compromised.[35] The Government had no comprehensive strategy on eliminating discrimination on the groundd of sexual orientation and gender identity.[36] Transgender individuals remained at significant disadvantage due to the lack of inclusion of gender identity and/or gender expression among the protected grounds in the current legislation.[37]

24. OEOO stated that legislation did not provide for legal recognition of same-sex relationships. The 2017 or 2021 draft laws on registered partnerships for both different-sex and same-sex couples had not been adopted.[38] JS1 noted that the Civil Code regulated the relations in property of a man and a woman who, after registering their partnership, had been cohabiting for at least a year with the aim of creating a family relatiouship, and that Lithuania reserved partnership specifically to opposite-sex couples.[39] OEOO recommended that Lithuania: ensure legal protection of family life of same-sex couples; and adopt a Law on Recognition of Gender Identity.[40]

Human rights and counter-terrorism[41]

25. REDRESS stated that since the previous reviews no tangible progress had been made in investigating allegations of torture or other ill-treatment of detainees within the framework of the rendition and secret detention programmes in counter-terrorism operations.[42]

26. REDRESS recommended that Lithuania: ensure that the pending investigation was undertaken within reasonable time, and in compliance with international human rights standards; and take concrete steps to establish the truth, pursing all relevant lines of inquiry to enable the identification and accountability of the persons responsible for crimes that may have occurred in connection with and within secret detention centres established in Lithuania.[43]

2. Civil and political rights

Right to life, liberty and security of person[44]

27. CoE-CPT in 2018, regretted to note that several of its previous recommendations had not been implemented, in particular, concerning the situation in certain prisons, as well as certain matters relating to legislation, such as the legal norm of living space per prisoner, and regarding life-sentenced prisoners and inmates' contact with the outside world.[45] CoE-CPT remained deeply troubled by the omnipresence of drugs in prisons, and by the serious risk of prisoners becoming drug dependent and contracting HIV and hepatitis C while in prison by sharing injecting equipment.[46]

Administration of justice, including impunity, and the rule of law[47]

28. JS1 indicated that in the period 2016-2020, criminal offences committed by minors had been decreasing. Analysis of court judgements demonstrated that certain specific aspects of juvenile justice were not duly taken into account, and punishments were imposed without adequate consideration of the family background of the minor.[48]

29. VTAKI stated that despite positive changes, assistance for children in conflict with the law who had behavioural problems, remained a major challenge.[49] One of the biggest challenges was the provision of assistance to children in children's socialization centres, to which children from the age of 14, and in exceptional cases even younger, could be referred under the provisions of Criminal Code or the Law on Minimum and Medium Child Care.[50]

VTAKI recommended that Lithuania address the issue of access to services and assistance for children in child socialization centres, ensuring conditions that are safe, change-oriented, and necessary for development, and the respect for and proper implementation of children's rights.[51] JS1 recommended that Lithuania adopt a renewed national juvenile justice programme and increase the financing and effectiveness of resocialisation centres.[52]

Fundamental freedoms and the right to participate in public and political life[53]

30. Lietuvos bibliotekininkų draugija highlighted the role of public libraries in Lithuania in ensuring the right to access to information as well as education, in particular for vulnerable groups during the COVID-19 pandemic.[54]

31. OSCE-ODIHR noted that the law granted the Ministry of Justice broad powers to refuse registration or to deregister a party, and recommended that any restrictions on fundamental rights and freedoms, including freedoms of expression and association, or on candidacy rights should be based on objective and reasonable criteria, be proportionate and necessary in a democratic society and serve a legitimate aim.[55]

32. OSCE-ODIHR also indicated that, to safeguard the integrity of the electronic vote count, the law could be amended to prescribe means for a recount that was independent of the vote counting software; and that, to ensure effective legal redress, judicial review of the validity of election results should be guaranteed by law.[56]

Prohibition of all forms of slavery[57]

33. CoE-GRETA stated that Lithuania continued to be primarily a country of origin of trafficked persons, but was also increasingly a country of destination. The number of identified victims of trafficking for forced criminality had been on the rise since 2013, as had trafficking for the purpose of labour exploitation, which accounted for the increase in the number of male victims. There had been an increase in the number of migrant workers and asylum seekers in Lithuania, which created risks of trafficking, reflected in the increased number of identified foreign victims.[58]

34. JS3 stated that Lithuanian citizens were trafficked for sexual exploitation, forced labour and services, crime, pornography and marriages of convenience. New forms of trafficking in human beings were constantly emerging, such as the exploitation of minors for illegal fighting and the exploitation of women for surrogacy.[59]

35. CoE-GRETA urged Lithuania to: strengthen efforts to prevent trafficking for the purpose of labour exploitation, in particular by, further sensitising the general public and relevant officials; increase the human resources and strengthen the mandate of labour inspectors to detect possible victims of trafficking;[60] and take additional steps to improve the assistance for victims of trafficking, and in particular by guaranteeing the availability of appropriate and safe accommodation and assistance for all victims of trafficking, including men.[61] JS1 recommended that Lithuania provide comprehensive and up–to–date evidence–based research regarding labour exploitation and trafficking for forced labour in Lithuania.[62]

36. JS3 stated that the occurrence of trafficking among those entering the country from third countries was difficult to estimate but it was clear that victims of prostitution tended to be the most vulnerable members of society.[63] JS3 noted that it had been pointed out that the current legal framework, which imposed administrative liability for prostitution through fines, limited the possibilities for these women and girls to leave prostitution.[64]

37. JS3 recommended that Lithuania: develop national strategies against demand for prostitution services;[65] and develop exit programmes, including social, psychological, and legal counselling, to help victims to find an alternative way of living outside the prostitution.[66]

Right to privacy and family life

38. JS2 stated that the necessary security precautions to protect the personal data of hundreds of thousands of persons related to ByLock, a messaging application, which was stored in servers located in Lithuania, had not been taken by the authorities and that such information had been used illegally by the courts of a third country.[67]

3. Economic, social and cultural rights

Right to work and to just and favourable conditions of work[68]

39. CoE-ECSR noted the lack of sufficient measurable progress in respect of the obligation to promote the right to equal pay.[69] JS1 stated that one of the key reasons for the gender pay gap was the gender care gap. Data demonstrated that women undertook the great majority of care and other domestic responsibilities. However, the government did not invest in systemic measures to change gender stereotypes and prejudices about social gender roles.[70]

40. OEOO indicated that decomposition of the gender pay gap revealed that Lithuania had the biggest unexplained gender pay gap among EU countries, meaning that the most important factors driving the gap could not be explained by objective factors such as education, occupation, or job experience.[71] OEOO recommended that Lithuania increase pay equity by adopting higher pay transparency standards, such as those foreseen in the Proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council.[72]

Right to an adequate standard of living[73]

41. OEOO noted that reports indicated that income inequality persisted in Lithuania. Relative poverty remained high and was distributed unevenly across the population with the elderly, especially women, and persons with disabilities being particularly affected.[74] The COVID-19 crisis could further reinforce social vulnerabilities as indicated by unemployment rates of the older population and persons with disabilities.[75]

42. OEOO recommended that Lithuania: expand the reach and benefit levels of social programmes targeted to older persons and persons with disabilities; include older persons and persons with disabilities in economic recovery initiatives, removing age caps in job rehabilitation programmes, as well as other income-generating activities.[76]

43. JS1 stated that lack of sufficient attention to ensure the right to housing was visible during the disassembling of the Roma settlement in Kirtimai in the Vilnius municipality, finalised in 2020. JS1 indicated that some families were not able to access sufficient social services, labour market and health services.[77]

44. CoE-ECRI stated that the extremely difficult housing situation in the Kirtimai settlement should to be addressed by: providing social housing to Kirtimai residents, or subsidising rental costs for residents who find alternative accommodation in the housing market.[78]

45 CoE-ECSR noted that the law did not provide for the prohibition of evictions in wintertime.[79]

Right to health[80]

46. JS1 indicated that despite a national plan, data demonstrated that Lithuania remained among the leaders in world suicide rates, especially among young people. NGOs pointed to the lack of access to quality psychological service, especially in the regions. [81] JS1 recommended that Lithuania increase the funding and capacities of the national system for the protection of children's rights and suicide prevention.[82]

47. JS1 stated that there was a low availability of contraceptives and that there were no reimbursement mechanisms available. Awareness of modern methods of contraception was very limited and the Ministry of Health did not envisage any measures to improve awareness and accessibility, especially for vulnerable groups such as the Roma and women with disabilities, and young people.[83] JS1 recommended that Lithuania improve the information and access to contraceptives to all women, including women with disabilities, Roma and youth.[84]

48. The European Centre for Law and Justice raised concerns about abortion.[85]

Right to education[86]

49. OEOO stated that although it was estimated that children belonging to national minorities had sufficient access to education in minority languages, there was a significant

lack of textbooks in minority languages as well as, in most schools, insufficient qualified instructors. The most serious issue was the differences in academic performance between students who were taught in minority languages and those whose language of instruction was Lithuanian.[87] OEOO recommended that Lithuania pay sufficient attention and take systemic measures to strengthen the quality of education in minority languages.[88]

50. VTAKI stated that during the quarantine, the government had lacked flexibility in addressing the right of children to education. Municipalities and schools had searched for solutions themselves that could best serve the children's interest to in-person learning.[89]

4. Rights of specific persons or groups

Women[90]

51. JS1 stated that Lithuania had not made progress in the field of gender equality, and that women in Lithuania were underrepresented in the economic decision-making bodies. Lithuania had not undertaken measures, including special measures such as gender quotas, to improve women's representation in decision-making.[91]

52. JS3 indicated that a decrease in the number of reports of domestic violence in Lithuania had been observed since 2017, but that it was unlikely to be related to a real decrease in the level of domestic violence and reflect the real situation. It was possible that certain processes in Lithuanian society and politics were influencing people to refrain from calling the police in cases of domestic violence, and the problem risked becoming invisible again.[92] JS1 stated that the coordinated inter-institutional cooperation on a local level to better protect survivors of domestic violence was not effective.[93]

53. JS3 indicated that the amendments of February 2017 to the Law on the Protection of the Rights of the Child, establishing that information about children living in a violent environment must be forwarded to child protection specialists, who may, in turn, after an assessment of the risk to the child's health, take the child away from the family had probably resulted in adults suffering from a partner's violence, hiding the violence and refraining from calling the police.[94]

54. EU-FRA stated that evidence suggested that the lockdowns during the COVID-19 pandemic had led to an increase in calls to domestic partner violence support services and helplines some Member States of the European Union including Lithuania. Nonetheless, state authorities did not impose protective measures against further violence significantly more often during this time period.[95]

55. JS3 stated that Lithuania should provide support to victims of GBV unconditionally and in a way that respects victims of violence;[96] and that all interventions in the field of domestic and non-domestic violence and the actions of the institutions implementing the Law on Protection against Domestic Violence in Lithuania should be planned with a human rights-based approach.[97]

56. JS3 indicated that psychological violence and/or harassment was not identified as actual violence, although it was a widespread problem in Lithuania.[98] JS1 noted that in 2019, amendments to the Criminal Code aiming to criminalise stalking were registered by the Parliament and proceeded to parliamentary committees for discussions, but these amendments had not yet been adopted.[99]

57. JS1 noted that Lithuania had not yet adopted legal amendments to the Criminal Code to prosecute rape and sexual abuse as a type of intimate partner violence.[100] JS3 indicated that there was no system in place to address sexual violence, only a mechanism for child victims of sexual violence. The support mechanism for victims of domestic violence did not cover sexual abuse in the home, as such acts were not criminalised.[101]

58. JS1 recommended that Lithuania adopt the legal provisions to ensure the safety of female survivors of intimate partner stalking and prosecution for marital rape.[102] JS3 recommended- establishing a specialised support mechanism for victims of sexual violence.[103]

Children[104]

59. VTAKI stated that, in the period under review, the system of child's rights protection had been reformed and centralized, the processes of taking children from the family and organizing care had changed significantly, and preparation for the ratification of the OP-CRC-IC had begun.[105]

60. VTAKI indicated that in 2017, the Seimas established by law the prohibition of all forms of violence against children including corporal punishment, psychological and sexual violence, and neglect, and established mechanisms for responding to such violence.[106] However, the prohibition of violence against children was not unequivocally accepted in society, especially by parents.[107] Insufficient dissemination of information on the provisions of the legislation on the protection of children's rights, of the principles of the reformed system of child's rights protection institutions, and the new forms and objectives of family and child support, sometimes created inconsistencies between help centres specialists who provided assistance to women and mothers who were victims of violence and specialists who provided assistance to children.[108]

61. VTAKI recommended that Lithuania: implement measures to change public, attitudes especially the child's close circle and disseminate information about the various forms of violence and their consequences for the child; ensure consistent, continuous, and coordinated prevention of violence against children at various levels including state, municipal and institutional; and develop a network of services that meet the individual needs of children who have experienced violence and their families.[109]

62. SOS Children's Villages Association in Lithuania (SOS-CV-Lithuania) noted the Government's efforts towards strengthening child rights protection measures, in particular in the area of protection of children without parental care.[110] However, despite the fact that the de-institutionalisation process had been ongoing for some 6 years, the prevalence of placements into small group homes instead of further strengthening and developing family-based care alternatives was a concern.[111] SOS-CV-Lithuania highlighted the difficulties in finding long-term family-based care solutions for children who were older, or had disabilities and/or special needs.[112] VTAKI indicated that due to insufficient development of community services and a range of social services, problems related to coordination and cooperation, and quality, efficiency remained a relevant issue.[113]

63. VTAKI indicated that Lithuania used solely institutional care for unaccompanied migrant minors and had not developed a network of guardians who could accept these children. The problem of the abscondment of unaccompanied minors from the care institutions required more attention from the authorities.[114] Alternative measures to detention were not sufficiently developed.[115] VTAKI recommended that Lithuania ensure that the rights and best interests of every child were carefully and individually assessed in migration procedures, regardless of their status.[116]

64. CoE-GRETA urged Lithuania to strengthen efforts to prevent trafficking in children, in particular by preventing unaccompanied foreign children from going missing from State care and Lithuanian children from absconding from institutions.[117]

65. SOS-CV-Lithuania recommended that Lithuania: intensify efforts to finalise childcare reform, particularly de-institutionalization in line with the United Nations General Assembly Resolution A/RES/74/133 by considering children's placement in residential care as a final option; and invest resources in building a highly trained workforce that can be supported to deliver new models of family-based care.[118] VTAKI recommended striving for greater involvement of municipalities in the development of the service network, ensuring the availability of services needed by children and families closest to their place of residence.[119]

Persons with disabilities[120]

66. VTAKI stated that Lithuania was taking legal, organizational, and other measures to ensure the rights of children with disabilities, but there were still a number of barriers to achieving the proper implementation of their rights.[121] Due to the insufficient availability and quality of early rehabilitation, the need for services for children with developmental disorders was not objectively assessed, and services were not provided to everyone in a timely and

high-quality manner.[122] VTAKI recommended developing the system of education and social services for children with disabilities, to remove physical, financial, social, and other obstacles hindering the inclusion of children with special educational needs in the education system.[123]

67. OEOO stated that only persons under 21 years who had special educational needs and who were trained under the pre-school, pre-primary, primary, basic, vocational education curricula were eligible for complex educational assistance, social support and healthcare services.[124] In the context of COVID-19, persons with disabilities and their families/caregivers had limited access to public and private services, which deepened socio-economic inequality.[125]

68. JS1 stated that statistics suggested that persons with disabilities were more likely to be at risk of poverty and that, among EU countries, Lithuania had one of the largest differences between people with and without disabilities participating in the labour market.[126] JS1 indicated that accessibility conditions differed widely depending on the sector of public services.[127] Additionally deinstitutionalisation had been very slow[128] and human rights monitoring and attention to psychiatric hospitals and social care homes could be limited, especially during the period of lockdown.[129]

69. JS1 recommended that Lithuania: tackle poverty and fight against discrimination of persons with disabilities; promote the provision of reasonable accommodation and employment in the open labour market; and abolish forced hospitalisation and treatment without the consent of persons with intellectual and/or psychosocial disabilities.[130] OEOO recommended abolishing discrimination on the ground of age and other grounds in access to all levels of education for persons with disabilities.[131]

Minorities[132]

70. JS1 indicated that Lithuania had no Law of National Minorities, as the previous Law of National Minorities had ceased to exist in 2010. Lithuania had ratified the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, thereby expressing consent to the rights listed in the document. Unfortunately, some provisions had not yet been transposed into national law.[133] CoE-CM recommended that Lithuania adopt, in close consultation with minority representatives, a comprehensive legal framework protecting the rights of persons belonging to national minorities.[134]

71. JS1 indicated that the overwhelming majority of the Lithuanian Roma lived below the risk-of-poverty line and the majority lived in households experiencing severe material deprivation. Acquiring primary and secondary education remained a challenge for most Roma pupils.[135] JS1 recommended that Lithuania adequately address the interconnections of housing, education and employment in Roma integration strategies.[136]

72. OEOO stated that the five-year Action plan for integration of Roma into Lithuanian society 2015–2020 integration strategy had ended in 2020. Although overall the strategy could be evaluated positively, the social and economic indicators of Roma persons' well-being, in particular employment rates, housing conditions and their education level, remained below the country's average.[137] EU-FRA noted that there had been challenges in providing funding for efforts to promote Roma inclusion in education, noting lack of funding for a number of measures set out in the Action plan into Lithuanian society 2015–2020.[138]

73. OEOO recommended that Lithuania: adopt the National Action Plan of Roma Integration covering measures in employment, education and housing and allocate sufficient funding for their implementation; and continue working to strengthen intercultural dialogue, raising public awareness on the issues Roma people face and changing negative public attitudes.[139] CoE-CM recommended that Lithuania take resolute awareness raising measures to address negative stereotypes against Roma in the population at large and implement specific training involving teachers, police officers and employees of local public administrations.[140]

74. JS1 stated that Holocaust distortion in the media and social networking platforms was an emerging issue, reaching even the institutional and political levels; and was closely related to the lack of education.[141] Anti-Semitism was widely evidenced on social media platforms

and through vandalism/ hooliganism on buildings/ memorial cites/monuments, largely in cities. Yet, there was a lack of official data about concrete anti-Semitic incidents towards members of the Lithuanian Jewry and a lack of effective sanctions and procedures.[142] JS1 recommended that Lithuania strengthen formal and informal Holocaust education.[143]

Migrants, refugees and asylum seekers[144]

75. JS1 indicated that quotas for non-EU migrant workers were introduced in 2021 to regulate labour migration.[145] While attitudes towards Muslims and refugees had somewhat improved since the refugee crisis of 2015-2016, social distance regarding these groups remained significant.[146]

76. JS1 recommended that Lithuania: ensure the continuity of implementation and monitoring of the Action Plan 2018–2020; take steps to eliminate prejudice towards migrants and beneficiaries of international protection: including by organising state-funded awareness campaigns and educational programmes.[147]

77. EU-FR noted reports of violations of the principle of non-refoulement in the EU including in Lithuania noting cases concerning individuals who had tried unsuccessfully to seek international protection at land border crossing points.[148]

Notes

[1] The stakeholders listed below have contributed information for this summary; the full texts of all original submissions are available at: www.ohchr.org. (One asterisk denotes a national human rights institution with “A” status).

Civil society

Individual submissions:

ECLJ	European Centre for Law and Justice, Strasbourg (France);
ICAN	International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons, Geneva (Switzerland);
LBD	Lietuvos bibliotekininkų draugija, Vilnius (Lithuania);
OEOO	Office of the Equal Opportunities Ombudsperson, Vilnius (Lithuania);
REDRESS	REDRESS, London (United Kingdom);
SOS-CV-Lithuania	SOS Children's Villages Association in Lithuania, Vilnius (Lithuania);
VTAKI	Office of the Ombudsperson for Children's Rights, Vilnius (Lithuania).

Joint submissions:

JS1	**Joint submission 1 submitted by**: Coalition of Human Rights Organizations Lithuania (HROC)**,** Vilnius (Lithuania) including the following members of HROC and its partner organisations: The Center for Equality Advancement (CEA); Lithuanian disability forum (LNF); Mental Health Perspectives; National LGBT Rights organization LGL; Diversity Development Group (DDG); Lithuanian Jewish (Litvak) Community; Lithuanian Centre for Human Rights (LCHR); Tolerant Youth Association (TJA or TYA); Ante Litteram (AL);
JS2	**Joint submission 2 submitted by**: Human Rights Defenders (HRD), Cologne (Germany), Victim Laborers Platform;
JS3	**Joint submission 3 submitted by**: CAP International Paris (France), Klaipeda Social and Psychological Support Centre (KSPSC), Missing People Family Support Centre (MPFSC), Women's Information Centre (WIC), and Association of Specialised Emergency Services (ASES).

National human rights institution:

SOO	Seimo kontrolierių įstaiga, *Vilnius (Lithuania).

Regional intergovernmental organization(s):

CoE	The Council of Europe, Strasbourg (France);

Attachments:

(CoE-CPT) European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, Report to the Lithuanian Government on the visit to Lithuania carried out by the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CPT) from 20 to 27 April 2018, Strasbourg, 2019, CPT/Inf (2019) 18;
(CoE-ECRI) European Commission against Racism and Intolerance report, Conclusions on the implementation of the recommendations in respect of Lithuania subject to interim Follow-up, adopted on 3 April 2019, Strasbourg, 2019, CRI(2019)25;
(CoE-GRETA) - Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings, Report concerning the implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings by Lithuania, Second Evaluation Round, adopted on 22 March 2019, Strasbourg, 2019, GRETA(2019)08;
(CoE-ECSR) European Committee of Social Rights, Lithuania and the European Social Charter, Factsheet, Department of the European Social Charter Directorate General Human Rights and Rule of Law, Strasbourg, 2021;
(CoE-CM) Committee of Ministers, Resolution CM/ResCMN (2019)4 on the implementation of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities by Lithuania (Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 27 March 2019 at the 1342nd meeting of the Ministers' Deputies);

EU-FRA European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, Vienna (Austria);

OSCE-ODIHR Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights of the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe, Warsaw, Poland. Attachments:

[2] SOO, p. 6.
[3] SOO, p. 4.
[4] SOO, p. 5.
[5] SOO, p. 5.
[6] SOO, p. 5.
[7] SOO, p. 6.
[8] SOO, p. 1.
[9] SOO, p. 1.
[10] SOO, p. 2.
[11] SOO, p. 2.
[12] SOO, p. 1.
[13] SOO, p. 2.
[14] SOO, p. 4.
[15] The following abbreviations are used in UPR documents:

ICERD International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination;
ICESCR International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights;
OP-ICESCR Optional Protocol to ICESCR;
ICCPR International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights;
ICCPR-OP 1 Optional Protocol to ICCPR;
ICCPR-OP 2 Second Optional Protocol to ICCPR, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty;
CEDAW Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women;
OP-CEDAW Optional Protocol to CEDAW;
CAT Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment;
OP-CAT Optional Protocol to CAT;
CRC Convention on the Rights of the Child;
OP-CRC-AC Optional Protocol to CRC on the involvement of children in armed conflict;

OP-CRC-SC	Optional Protocol to CRC on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography;
OP-CRC-IC	Optional Protocol to CRC on a communications procedure;
ICRMW	International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families;
CRPD	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities;
OP-CRPD	Optional Protocol to CRPD;
ICPPED	International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance.

[16] For the relevant recommendations, see A/HRC/34/9, paras. 100.1-100.19, 100.21-100.23.
[17] OEOO, para. 9. See also EU-FRA, p. 6 and SOO, p.1.
[18] JS1, para. 7.
[19] JS1, p.4. See also OEOO, para. 9.
[20] ICAN, pp. 1-2.
[21] For the relevant recommendations, see A/HRC/34/9, paras. 100.24-100.38, 100.132, 100.44.
[22] JS1, p.2.
[23] OEOO, para. 23.
[24] OEOO, p.9.
[25] VTAKI, p. 3.
[26] For the relevant recommendations, see A/HRC/34/9, paras. 100.47, 100.50, 100.53-100.57, 100.59-100.70, 100.73-100.82, 100.84, 100.86-100.94.
[27] OEOO, para. 1.
[28] OEOO, para. 4.
[29] CoE-ECRI, p.6.
[30] JS1, para. 60.
[31] OEOO, para. 11.
[32] EU-FRA, p.8.
[33] JS1, para. 58.
[34] JS1, p. 11.
[35] JS1, para. 31.
[36] JS1, para. 34.
[37] JS1, para. 37.
[38] OEOO, para. 12.
[39] JS1, paras. 39-40.
[40] OEOO, p.6. See also JS1, para. 8.
[41] For relevant recommendations see A/HRC/34/9, para. 100.171.
[42] REDRESS, paras. 3-4.
[43] REDRESS, p .9.
[44] For relevant recommendations see A/HRC/34/9, paras.100.95, 100.96, 100.129-100.132, 100.171.
[45] Council of Europe contribution for the 40th UPR session (Oct-Nov 2021) regarding Lithuania, p. 2. See also CoE-CPT, p. 3.
[46] CoE-CPT, p. 4.
[47] For relevant recommendations see A/HRC/34/9, paras. 100.128, 100.72, 100.83, 100.85.
[48] JS1, para. 85.
[49] VTAKI, para. 25.
[50] VTAKI, para. 26.
[51] VTAKI, p. 9.
[52] JS1, p. 14.
[53] For relevant recommendations see A/HRC/34/9, paras. 100.43, 100.51, 100.52, 100.133-100.136.
[54] LBD, pp. 1-4.
[55] OSCE-ODIHR, paras. 14-15.
[56] OSCE-ODIHR, para. 15.
[57] For relevant recommendations see A/HRC/34/9, paras. 100.112, 100.121-100.127.
[58] CoE-GRETA, paras. 13-14.
[59] JS3, para. 8.
[60] CoE-GRETA, p. 39.
[61] CoE-GRETA, p. 39.
[62] JS1, p. 9.
[63] JS3, para. 8.
[64] JS3, para. 13.
[65] JS3, para. 33.1.
[66] JS3, para. 33.3.

[67] JS2, pp. 1-10.
[68] For relevant recommendations see A/HRC/34/9, paras. 100.49, and 100.58.
[69] CoE-ECSR, p.3.
[70] JS1, para. 8.
[71] OEOO, para. 6.
[72] OEOO, para. 6.
[73] For relevant recommendations see A/HRC/34/9, paras. 100.39, 100.138, 100.139.
[74] OEOO, para. 19.
[75] OEOO, para. 20.
[76] OEOO, p.8.
[77] JS1, para. 61.
[78] CoE-ECRI, p.5.
[79] CoE-ECSR, p 4.
[80] For relevant recommendations see A/HRC/34/9, paras. 100.140, 100.141, 100.149.
[81] JS1, para. 71.
[82] JS1, p. 13.
[83] JS1, para. 3.
[84] JS1, p. 4.
[85] ECLJ, paras. 1-30.
[86] For relevant recommendations see A/HRC/34/9, paras. 100.58, 100.71, 100.142, 100.143, 100.145, 100.147, 100.148, 100.159, 100.161, 101.1.
[87] OEOO, para. 16.
[88] OEOO, p. 7.See also JS1, p. 11.
[89] VTAKI, para. 6.
[90] For relevant recommendations see A/HRC/34/9, paras. 100.20, 100.46, 100.48, 100.97-100.111.
[91] JS1, para. 1.
[92] JS3, para. 15. See also JS1, para. 2.
[93] JS1, para. 10.
[94] JS3, para. 23.
[95] EU-FRA, p.6.
[96] JS3, para. 34.1.
[97] JS3, para. 34.3.
[98] JS3, para. 27.
[99] JS1, para. 13.
[100] JS1, para. 14.
[101] JS3, para. 31.
[102] JS1, p.4. See also JS3, para. 34.8.
[103] JS3, para. 34.6.
[104] For relevant recommendations see A/HRC/34/9, paras. 100.40-100.42, 100.113-100.120.
[105] VTAKI, p.1.
[106] VTAKI, para. 10.
[107] VTAKI, para. 12.
[108] VTAKI, para. 15.
[109] VTAKI, p. 6.
[110] SOS-CV-Lithuania, p. 2.
[111] SOS-CV-Lithuania, p. 2.
[112] SOS-CV, p. 3.
[113] VTAKI, para. 3.
[114] VTAKI, para. 30.
[115] VTAKI, para. 31.
[116] VTAKI, p. 9.
[117] CoE-GRETA, p. 39.
[118] SOS-CV-Lithuania, p. 3.
[119] VTAKI, p. 3.
[120] For relevant recommendations see A/HRC/34/9, paras. 100.144-100.150.
[121] VTAKI, para. 19. See also JS1, para. 16.
[122] VTAKI, para. 20.
[123] VTAKI, p 8.
[124] OEOO, para. 21.
[125] OEOO, para. 22.
[126] JS1, paras. 18-19.
[127] JS1, para. 21.

[128] JS1, para. 26.
[129] JS1, para. 27.
[130] JS1, p. 6.
[131] OEOO, p.8.
[132] For relevant recommendations see A/HRC/34/9, paras. 100.151-100.158, 100.160, 100.161, 100.162, 100.163.
[133] JS1, para. 63.
[134] CoE-CM, p.1 See also JS1, p. 11.
[135] JS1, paras. 61-62.
[136] JS1, p. 11.
[137] OEOO, para. 17.
[138] EU-FRA, p.8.
[139] OEOO, p.7.
[140] CoE-CM, p.1.
[141] JS1, para. 55.
[142] JS1, para. 59.
[143] JS1, p. 11.
[144] For relevant recommendations see A/HRC/34/9, paras. 100.164-100.168.
[145] JS1, para. 46.
[146] JS1, para. 50.
[147] JS1, p. 9.
[148] EU-FRA, pp. 10 and 13.