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Ombudsperson  
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Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

**Additional information on the implementation of the  
Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of  
Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in Lithuania**

## **Introduction**

Additional information on the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in Lithuania covers the period from 1 July 2018 to 7 November 2023.

The information was prepared by the Office of the Equal Opportunities Ombudsperson (OEEO), an independent state institution monitoring the implementation of the Law on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men<sup>1</sup> and the Law on Equal Treatment<sup>2</sup>.

Under aforementioned legislation, direct and indirect discrimination is prohibited in the fields of employment and occupation, education, provision of goods and services, membership in organisations (associations), social security and all actions by state and municipal public authorities. OEEO also investigates cases of harassment and sexual harassment in employment, education, occupation and in access to goods and services. Additionally, OEEO conducts preventive and educational activities, promotes equal opportunities, and runs awareness campaigns.

The inputs provided in this document are based on the expertise of the Office's experts, as well as taking into account Concluding Observations on the Sixth periodic report of Lithuania of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW/C/LTU/CO/6).

Additional information is provided regarding the articles of CEDAW and its General Recommendations.

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<sup>1</sup> Law on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men of the Republic of Lithuania (liet. Lietuvos Respublikos moterų ir vyrų lygių galimybių įstatymas), No. VIII-947, 1 December 1998, <https://www.e-tar.lt/portal/lt/legalAct/TAR.746227138BCB/FLcEVzJmSQ>

<sup>2</sup> Law on Equal Treatment of the Republic of Lithuania (liet. Lietuvos Respublikos lygių galimybių įstatymas), No. IX-1826, 18 November 2003, <https://e-seimas.lrs.lt/portal/legalAct/lt/TAD/TAIS.222522/ZomTdZpPUx>

### **Temporary Special Measures and Gender Balance in Decision-Making**

Article 10(6) of the Law on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men in Lithuania specifies that certain temporary measures outlined in laws, aimed at accelerating factual gender equality, are not considered a violation of equal rights. These measures must be repealed once equality of rights and opportunities is achieved. According to current law, special measures for de facto gender equality in a specific area must be established by legislation passed by the Parliament.

The Constitutional Court of Lithuania more than once ruled that human rights can be restricted by law under certain conditions, including necessity in a democratic society to protect legitimate aim, proportionality etc. Special interim measures to achieve equality can be seen as a temporary restriction on rights, such measures may be applied in areas where research shows gender inequality. OEEO recommends that the Ministry of Social Security and Labour coordinate special measures and that each ministry regularly assess gender equality in their areas, proposing necessary draft laws.

### **Gender Mainstreaming at the National and Municipal Levels**

The 2020 Law on Strategic Management introduced principles of gender equality in strategic planning, marking a significant step towards integrating gender considerations into public governance. Despite these positive developments, gender mainstreaming remains inadequately implemented at both national and municipal levels. OEEO recommends improving public sector representatives' understanding of gender mainstreaming and enhancing political will to fully integrate gender equality principles into decision-making processes. Specifically, public sector representatives must be trained to translate gender mainstreaming into legal acts and policies effectively. Political commitment from both national and local authorities is vital to ensure gender equality is prioritized across all governance sectors.

### **Lack of Data Collection and Analysis on Gender**

The Ministry of Social Security and Labour, in collaboration with the State Data Agency, has made efforts to enhance the collection of gender equality data, including intersectional statistics. However, progress remains slow. Furthermore, data collection is largely driven by European survey requirements rather than national needs. For instance, the national official data portal lacks data on lesbian, bisexual, transgender women (or men), as well as on migrant women (or men) and women with disabilities. Even when gender-disaggregated data is available, such as within the Migration Department, it is often shared in non-segregated formats. This hinders the effective use of gender and equality data for informed decision-making and policy formulation, as well as the proper implementation of gender mainstreaming approaches.

Current data collection on violence against women primarily focuses on cases involving citizens, with no data being collected or analyzed on trends involving foreign nationals as survivors or perpetrators. The absence of such data obstructs the development of targeted policies and support measures, particularly as the foreign population in Lithuania continues to grow.

To address these issues, it is recommended that a dedicated gender and equality focal point be appointed in every ministry and municipality. Public sector employees should undergo consistent, ongoing training on gender equality and mainstreaming. A national strategy for gender and equality data collection should be developed, ensuring that intersectional data is collected and analyzed to inform decision-making. It is also critical to collect anonymized data on cases of violence against women involving foreign nationals, enabling a better understanding of the scope of the problem and facilitating targeted interventions.

### **Gender Stereotypes, Occupational Segregation, and Unpaid Domestic Work**

Gender stereotypes continue to shape social and professional roles in Lithuania, contributing to occupational segregation. Women are overrepresented in caregiving and service roles, while men dominate higher-paying fields like construction, IT, and engineering<sup>3</sup>. This segregation reinforces gender inequalities, as male-dominated sectors are typically more lucrative and socially valued, perpetuating the gender pay gap and placing a disproportionate burden of unpaid domestic labor on women. In 2023, OEEO in partnership with the media analysis company Mediaskopas, conducted a [content analysis](#) of Lithuanian media to examine the portrayal of professions and roles by gender. The findings revealed a stark division between "male" and "female" professions, reinforcing stereotypes and perpetuating inequality. The OEEO has worked to address gender stereotypes in education, partnering with the Ministry of Education to organize training for textbook authors and career consultants in 2019, 2022, and 2023. These sessions aimed to eliminate gender biases in educational materials. In 2020, OEEO experts also held training on Human Rights Education for those involved in developing competency descriptions and education programs to promote non-discrimination and integrate human rights into curricula.

OEEO emphasizes that a consistent and strategic approach is essential to comprehensively combat gender stereotypes. The following recommendations are proposed for the Ministry of Education, Science, and Sport of the Republic of Lithuania:

- Integrate gender equality principles into preschool, primary and general education curricula, ensuring these topics are included in teacher training and professional

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<sup>3</sup> Gyventojų užimtumas ir nedarbas. Užimti gyventojai pagal profesijų grupes ir lytį. Oficialiosios statistikos portalas: <https://osp.stat.gov.lt/gyventoju-uzimtumo-tyrimo-duomenys>

development programs.

- Systematically enhance the skills of education professionals in gender equality, with a particular focus on their ability to identify and challenge existing gender stereotypes during consultations and training.
- Monitor curricula, textbooks, and other teaching materials to ensure they align with gender equality principles. Provide ongoing training for textbook authors and educational material developers on incorporating these principles.
- Develop a long-term strategy to address gender stereotypes, engaging the public sector, non-governmental organizations, and the education community.

### **Gender Pay Gap and Unpaid Care Work**

Although Lithuania has claimed progress in addressing the gender pay gap, recent data demonstrates significant ongoing challenges. Despite some improvements, women continue to earn substantially less than men across most sectors. The Committee's concerns regarding this issue were raised in previous concluding observations, yet the actions taken remain insufficient. According to 2022 Sodra data<sup>4</sup>, in 2022, the gender pay gap increased to 13.6%, with the highest disparity (16.4%) in the 30–39 age group, largely due to caregiving responsibilities. Women are more likely to reduce working hours or take career breaks for childcare, impacting their earnings. The gap narrows later in life, but women's average pension is 19% lower than men's. Unpaid care work remains disproportionately shouldered by women, with 65% of women and only 29% of men doing daily household chores<sup>5</sup>. While flexible working arrangements have grown post-COVID-19, societal stigma still affects women's career advancement. Mothers, in particular, face career penalties when working flexibly due to assumptions that they prioritize domestic duties over their professional responsibilities.<sup>6</sup> While the introduction of a four-day workweek for parents with children under the age of three in 2023 was a positive step, the policy applies only to public sector employees, leaving private sector employees without similar guarantees.

The implementation of the [EU Work-Life Balance Directive](#)<sup>7</sup> introduced two non-transferable months of childcare leave specifically for fathers. However, 2023 statistics reveal significant gender imbalances. 90% of women took childcare leave. In 2023, only 1,340 men utilized two non-transferable months, out of a total 20,633

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<sup>4</sup> SODRA, 2023 <https://www.sodra.lt/lt/naujienos/moteru-ir-vyru-darbo-pajamu-atotrukis-per-metus-padidejo?lang=lt>

<sup>5</sup> European Gender Equality Index 2023, European Institute of Gender Equality (EIGE): <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-equality-index/2023/domain/time/LT>

<sup>6</sup> Heejung Chung, *The Flexibility Paradox: Why Flexible Working Leads to (Self-)Exploitation*, Bristol University Press. 2022. ISBN: 978-1447354789

<sup>7</sup> Directive (EU) 2019/1158 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 June 2019 on work-life balance for parents and carers and repealing Council Directive 2010/18/EU. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A32019L1158>

births that year<sup>8</sup>. While this marks progress in legislation, it reflects that only a small proportion of fathers are taking advantage of the opportunity.

In 2023, 9 out of 10 fathers who used non-transferable childcare months did not work while receiving benefits, a shift from previous practices where most men worked while claiming benefits. Additionally, about 7 out of 10 fathers took paternity leave. While this shows progress, more support is needed through policy, cultural messaging, and education to normalize male participation in caregiving.

The Lithuanian government highlighted the Daugiau Balanso<sup>9</sup> project with OEEO as vital for increasing male caregiving. OEEO acknowledges its importance but notes its temporary nature and limited scope, reflecting broader challenges like stigmatized parental leave and barriers to fathers in childcare.

In 2023, Lithuania's Parliament approved a law granting adoptive mothers the same 30-day maternity leave and benefits previously only available to adoptive fathers. This change, prompted by a complaint to the OEEO, addresses a legal gap and promotes gender equality across family structures. It aligns with CEDAW's principle of equal treatment for all parents, marking significant progress in Lithuania's commitment to equality.

### **The Right to Free Choice of Profession and Employment**

Lithuania's disability policy has improved opportunities for individuals with disabilities to live in the community and join the labor market. However, limited alternatives and misconceptions about their abilities still restrict their choices. Discrimination remains prevalent, with employers often refusing to hire or failing to accommodate employees with disabilities<sup>10</sup>. Many believe women with disabilities can't live independently or make decisions for themselves<sup>11</sup>. Some individuals, particularly women with invisible disabilities, hide their condition to gain employment. Women with intellectual disabilities face limited options,

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<sup>8</sup> Calculated manually using these State Data Agency data sets: 1) Number of persons born in Lithuania [https://osp.stat.gov.lt/lt/statistiniu-rodikliu-analize?hash=99a2a2f2-b102-43b4-ab89-393de8fa3417#](https://osp.stat.gov.lt/lt/statistiniu-rodikliu-analize?hash=99a2a2f2-b102-43b4-ab89-393de8fa3417#/); 2) Average annual number of recipients of state social insurance maternity, paternity and childcare benefits: [https://osp.stat.gov.lt/lt/statistiniu-rodikliu-analize?hash=adbda9fe-ffc6-431b-a324-79dce62dfe5#](https://osp.stat.gov.lt/lt/statistiniu-rodikliu-analize?hash=adbda9fe-ffc6-431b-a324-79dce62dfe5#/);

<sup>9</sup> Daugiau balanso (More Balance) <https://daugiaubalanso.lt/>

<sup>10</sup> Analysis of the situation of women and girls with disabilities: evaluating the effectiveness of the implementation of the UN Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities in Lithuania <https://anta.lrv.lt/media/viesa/saugykla/2024/2/nF42tX6QoP4.pdf>

<sup>11</sup> Reprezentatyvi visuomenės nuomonės apklausa apie moterų su negalia vertinimą, Lygių galimybių kontrolieriaus tarnyba, 2022.

typically working in unskilled jobs chosen by social workers<sup>12</sup>. Expanding opportunities based on individual needs and interests, rather than limited options, is essential for meaningful progress in disability employment policy.

### **Gender Equality Planning in the Workplace**

Although the Labour Code includes a provision encouraging employers with more than 50 employees to publish measures for the implementation and monitoring of gender equality and equal opportunities policies, there is insufficient attention to the oversight and enforcement of these plans.

OEOO emphasizes the importance of ensuring that workplaces prioritize gender inequality issues and implement concrete measures to address them. To this end, it is crucial to establish regular audits and reporting requirements for employers to demonstrate progress on their equal opportunities plans. These reports should incorporate specific indicators, such as the gender pay gap, representation in leadership positions, and workplace satisfaction surveys disaggregated by gender.

### **Sexual Harassment Prevention at Work**

In 2022, Lithuania amended Article 30 of the Labor Code to impose stricter requirements for prohibiting violence and harassment. However, many companies still lag in implementing systematic measures to prevent sexual and gender-based harassment. Nearly [one in five](#) working women in Lithuania have experienced sexual harassment at work, highlighting the need for stronger actions. OEOO urges the implementation of the obligation to adopt policies that ensure effective prevention of violence and establish clear response mechanisms for incidents.

To promote a safe and equitable work environment, OEOO recommends extending the provisions of Articles 26 and 30 to employers with 20 or more employees. This would ensure that violence prevention measures and response mechanisms are consistently applied across a wider range of workplaces, supporting employee well-being and fostering a positive work culture.

### **Gender-based Violence Prevention Programs in Schools**

[The General Life Skills Programme](#), introduced in Lithuanian schools on September 1, 2023, aims to equip students with skills for healthy relationships and social-emotional development. While it includes gender-based violence prevention topics, these are addressed only briefly.

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<sup>12</sup> Analysis of the situation of women and girls with disabilities: evaluating the effectiveness of the implementation of the UN Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities in Lithuania <https://anta.lrv.lt/media/viesa/saugykla/2024/2/nF42tX6QoP4.pdf>

OEOO is concerned that the curriculum lacks specific gender-based violence prevention recommendations, including the critical topic of consent. It recommends adding content to help students evaluate gender stereotypes, recognize violence, and understand relationship dynamics to foster safe, respectful interactions.

To ensure comprehensive gender-based violence prevention, OEOO recommends supplementing the curriculum with:

- Critical evaluation of gender stereotypes and their impact.
- Skills to distinguish healthy and harmful relationships.
- Education on consent and its importance in all relationships.
- Training in non-violent communication for respectful interactions.
- Recognition of gender-based violence forms and appropriate response strategies.

### **Gender-Based Violence**

A 2021 [survey](#) in three Lithuanian municipalities showed increased recognition of domestic violence forms, with awareness of economic, psychological, and sexual violence rising. However, victim-blaming attitudes worsened, with more people agreeing that women provoke violence or overreact when reporting it. Experts link this to debates against the Istanbul Convention and rallies promoting traditional values.

OEOO acknowledges the recent amendments to the Law on Protection against Domestic Violence, effective 1 July 2023, which aim to strengthen prevention and inter-agency coordination. However, OEOO highlights several gaps and provides the following recommendations for improvement of the law:

- Incorporate a gender perspective into the definition of domestic violence and introduce a definition of gender-based violence as:  
*“Gender-based violence: violence directed against a person because of that person's gender, gender identity, or gender expression, or that disproportionately affects persons of a particular gender.”*
- Include content on coercive control and gender-based violence in intimate environments in public campaigns.
- Integrate the topic of coercive control into preschool, primary, and general education curricula.
- Establish systems to monitor individuals completing behavior modification programs and periodically review these programs based on research and best practices.
- Extend the obligation for information-sharing to all entities involved in domestic violence prevention.
- Organize specialized training and advanced courses for law enforcement institutions and organizations responsible for officer training on

the prevention of and support for victims of domestic violence and gender-based violence within intimate environments. Include the State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service in the list of institutions obliged to organize such training on domestic violence prevention, recognition of domestic violence, and provision of assistance.

- Ensure sustainable national funding for domestic violence prevention measures and projects, especially when partially financed through international programs that require national financial contributions (co-financing).
- Establish comprehensive protection for victims of domestic violence by preventing secondary victimization during pre-trial investigations or criminal proceedings in court.
- Ensure all specialized assistance centers are accessible to persons with disabilities, with ensuring fully accessibility of information and adapting services to individual needs of survivors of violence.

Additionally, OEEO urges the Lithuanian Parliament to ratify the Istanbul Convention, demonstrating a firm commitment to CEDAW's principles.

### **Gender-Based Violence and Women with Disabilities**

A 2022 [public opinion survey](#) revealed widespread stigma against women with intellectual and psychosocial disabilities, with 40% believing they provoke partner violence and 70% deeming them irresponsible for having children. Over half of respondents supported a partner's right to control the social interactions of women with intellectual disabilities, highlighting deep-rooted discrimination and social control based on disability.

Public opinion surveys in Lithuania show unfavourable attitudes toward motherhood for women with disabilities. Many believe women with disabilities cannot independently plan families. A 2021 [study](#) found that over half of respondents (54%) supported forced sterilization or pregnancy termination in some cases of disability. A 2022 [survey](#) revealed that attitudes toward childbearing by women with disabilities were generally unsupportive, with the most negative views directed at women with psychosocial (54%) and intellectual disabilities (69%). Some even justified doctors terminating pregnancies without consent, particularly for women with intellectual (48%) and psychosocial disabilities (38%).

In response to these attitudes, the Life Skills Program, which includes sexual education, is insufficiently adapted to the needs of various disability groups, limiting reproductive rights and access to healthcare. A shift in societal and educational

attitudes is needed to ensure women with disabilities can make autonomous family planning decisions.

In 2022-2023, OEEO conducted research on the accessibility of assistance and services for women with disabilities experiencing domestic violence<sup>13</sup>. The findings revealed that most temporary accommodation facilities in Lithuania are inaccessible to women with disabilities, with only 14 out of 59 facilities accommodating all disabilities. Services are more available for women with psychosocial or intellectual disabilities than for those with hearing, mobility, or visual impairments. Key issues include inadequate accessible information, insufficient integration of disability considerations in service planning, and instances of specialists undermining women's autonomy and decision-making.

OEEO also conducted a legislative analysis of international and national laws on domestic violence in 2023<sup>14</sup>. It concluded that international law does not provide comprehensive standards on how protection against domestic violence should be applied to women with disabilities. However, it establishes key principles recognizing them as a vulnerable group requiring an individualized approach. Furthermore, the Criminal Code of Lithuania inadequately addresses domestic violence by failing to explicitly recognize forms such as psychological and economic violence and does not treat violence against women with disabilities as a particularly severe crime.

OEEO urges greater public awareness and education on gender-based violence, particularly for women with disabilities, and has enhanced its specialized website, [www.visureikalas.lt](http://www.visureikalas.lt), with accessible resources in Lithuanian Sign Language and Easy-to-Read formats.

### **Combating Violence Against Migrant Women and Trafficking in Women**

Based on consultations with experts in gender-based violence, there is a pressing need to enhance support and services for victims, particularly foreign women in Lithuania. Language barriers pose a significant challenge, as many state institutions lack adequate translation services. This hinders effective communication between authorities and survivors, leading to underreporting and a lack of trust in institutions.

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<sup>13</sup> Pagalba moterims su negalia dėl smurto artimoje aplinkoje: paslaugų prieinamumas. Lygių galimybių kontrolieriaus tarnyba, 2023. <https://lygybe.lt/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/Pagalba-moterims-su-negalia-del-smurto-artimoje-aplinkoje-paslaugu-prieinamumas.pdf>

<sup>14</sup> Moterų su negalia apsauga nuo smurto artimoje aplinkoje: Lietuvos ir tarptautinės teisės analizė. Lygių galimybių kontrolieriaus tarnyba, 2023. <https://lygybe.lt/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/moteru-su-negalia-apsauga-nuo-smurto-artimoje-aplinkoje-1.pdf>

Migrant women often remain unaware of available support systems, especially in temporary accommodation centres, where cases of violence are reported, and freedom of movement may be restricted. Many migrant women also fear losing their legal status, being separated from their children or families, or facing deportation if they report violence. These concerns exacerbate their vulnerability and contribute to significant underreporting of gender-based violence.

OEOO recommends improving access to translation and interpretation services in public institutions to facilitate effective communication with survivors of gender-based violence, particularly those who speak less commonly used languages.

Migration-related bodies should actively inform foreign residents about available support services and state-provided legal aid. Regular intercultural and trauma-informed training should be provided to state representatives to enable culturally sensitive responses to gender-based violence.

### **Intersecting forms of discrimination**

The CEDAW Committee's General Recommendation No. 28 underscores that discrimination against women based on sex and gender is closely linked to other factors, including gender identity. In 2019, the OEOO published a [National Review of the Situation of Transgender People in Lithuania](#), followed by a 2024 follow-up [review](#), highlighted significant gaps in legal, healthcare, and educational frameworks that fail to address the needs of transgender individuals adequately. These gaps expose transgender individuals to systemic discrimination and violence.

To address these gaps, the OEOO calls for the adoption of a gender recognition law to allow transgender individuals to update their civil status records, ensuring their rights and autonomy. Lithuania's obligation to adopt a gender recognition law stems from the ECtHR ruling in *L. v. Lithuania*, which found that the lack of legal regulations for gender transition and document changes violates Article 8 of the ECHR. Additionally, Lithuania should update its healthcare system by adopting ICD-11 and eliminating pathologizing practices, ensuring healthcare services for transgender individuals are not contingent on a diagnosis. Comprehensive training on transgender issues should also be integrated into teacher preparation programs to foster inclusive, supportive environments in schools. These measures are essential to combat systemic discrimination and align with CEDAW's recommendations.