**Responses by The Ministry of Social Security and Labour of the Republic of Lithuania to the questionnaire for the report of the Special Rapporteur on the right to adequate housing to the 78th session of the UN General Assembly “A place to live in dignity for all: Making housing affordable”**

Name of submitting entity, organization or individual: *The Ministry of Social Security and Labour* *of the Republic of Lithuania*

**National law, policies and jurisprudence relating to affordable housing**

1. Does your country’s national law, including constitutional, housing or social protection law, refer to affordability of housing or provide any other guarantees to ensure a minimum standard of living? Or in its absence, are there national policies that refer to affordable housing or minimum standard of living? Please provide references and links to the respective key laws or constitutional provisions as well as policies.

*In Lithuania, housing support is provided to individuals and families by:*

*-providing subsidies to the recipients of state partially compensated housing loans for the payment of the state partially compensated housing loan portion;*

*-by paying compensation for the part of the rental fee.*

*In Lithuania, support for the rental of housing is provided in accordance with the Law of the Republic of Lithuania on Support for the Acquisition or Rental of Housing (hereinafter referred to as “the Law”). The Law establishes the following forms of support for the rental of housing:*

*• rental of municipal social housing;*

*• partial reimbursement for a housing rent fee.*

*Minimum Income Schemes constitute the Law on Financial Social Assistance to Low-income Families of the Republic of Lithuania and Single Persons and the Law on Social Assistance to Pupils of the Republic of Lithuania.* *Persons or families are eligible to social assistance benefits if they receive low income, has not enough assets, are employed and registered as unemployed or are economically inactive because of retirement, poor health, studying, care of child or adult family member. More information on Support to low-income families and single persons is available on:* [*https://socmin.lrv.lt/en/activities/family-and-children/social-assistance-to-families-and-children/support-to-low-income-families-and-single-persons*](https://socmin.lrv.lt/en/activities/family-and-children/social-assistance-to-families-and-children/support-to-low-income-families-and-single-persons)

1. Please explain if there is any official definition or criteria to assess whether a household faces housing costs above the level of affordability in your country.

*There are requirements by the Law on Support for Buying or Renting Housing for acquiring the right to a housing credit (subsidy) that is partially compensated by the state and to the compensation of the part of the rental fee of the rented housing.*

*In Lithuania, a target model of social housing is applied – social housing is given to persons and families whose declared property value and income do not exceed the amounts established by the Law and if persons and families do not own housing in the territory of the Republic of Lithuania, or the owned housing, according to the data of the Real Property Cadastre, is physically depreciated by more than 60 percent, or the useful area of the owned housing per person or family member is less than 10 square meters or less than 14 square meters if the family has a disabled person or a person with a severe chronic illness. Persons and families entitled to rent social housing in accordance with the requirements established by the Law, having submitted an application to the municipal administration for the support to rent housing, shall be entered in the list of persons and families entitled to rent social housing according to the date and time of registration of their application in the municipal administration, i.e. social housing shall be rented following the order. Persons and families entitled to rent social housing are divided into groups (young families; families with three or more children; persons left without parental care and their families; disabled, people with chronic diseases and families with such people; tenants of social housing entitled to the improvement of social housing conditions; general group), however, belonging to one of the groups shall not give priority to rent social housing. The supply of social housing is limited, whereas the demand for social housing is rather high.*

**Data and trends on housing affordability**

1. Is housing affordability regularly measured in your country, region or city, by the national statistical office or other entities? Please explain how housing affordability is measured and tracked. Where is the data published?

*The Official Statistics Portal provide the data on dwelling:* [Housing - Oficialiosios statistikos portalas](https://osp.stat.gov.lt/2021-gyventoju-ir-bustu-surasymo-rezultatai/bustai) *. It includes the data on: area of dwellings at the end of the year; number of dwellings at the end of the year; stock of dwellings at the end of the year; useful floor area per capita; average size of a dwelling.*

1. Has housing affordability increased or decreased in your country over the past 10 years? In which regions or cities has housing affordability changed and for whom?

*Demand was rising strongly. During 2021, there were 39,849 residential property transactions in Lithuania, up 21% from a year earlier and by 11% from two years ago, according to figures from the State Enterprise Centre of Registers. Almost all major cities saw double-digit increases in home sales in 2021.*

*According to the analysis of the Bank of Lithuania, the affordability index, which had been improving for many years, started to deteriorate during the pandemic [for the first time since the financial crisis 15 years ago]. Now we see that the time it takes to save to buy a home has increased and is further prolonged by rising inflation, when people have to not just save money, but also spend more on current consumption.*

*More information is available at:* [*https://www.ober-haus.lt/en/rinkos\_apzvalgos/annual-reports/*](https://www.ober-haus.lt/en/rinkos_apzvalgos/annual-reports/)

[*https://osp.stat.gov.lt/en/lietuvos-statistikos-metrastis/lsm-2019/gyventojai-ir-socialine-statistika/bustas*](https://osp.stat.gov.lt/en/lietuvos-statistikos-metrastis/lsm-2019/gyventojai-ir-socialine-statistika/bustas)

[*https://osp.stat.gov.lt/gyvenamasis-fondas*](https://osp.stat.gov.lt/gyvenamasis-fondas)

1. Please describe which households, persons or groups are at particular risk of being exposed to housing affordability in your country, region or city.

*Low-income, vulnerable households, young people and young families are at particular risk of being exposed to housing affordability. In Lithuania, the housing purchase and rental market is completely different compared to some Western European countries. The general trend of housing policy is mostly about buying a household. Due to privatization in the nineties, the private housing stock dominates in Lithuania. The rental stock and the so-called public housing stock or social, municipal housing stock are a very small part compared to some other Western countries.*

(Please provide data on housing affordability disaggregated on the basis of household size, form of tenure (living in self-owned housing, rental, other), type and quality of housing (e.g. living in formal or informal housing); location (region, urban, rural), type of household (with or without children, single parent households), income, employment status, gender, disability, age, nationality, ethnicity, religious affiliation or immigration status.

*Long-term unemployment is one of key risks. Measures to help prevent homelessness:*

*During the period of the year 2014–2020, the development of social housing fund, inter alia, was carried out using EU funds. It is planned that according to the mentioned measure, the social housing fund will be supplemented with a total of 2049 housing units.*

*A total of around EUR 32 million of EU Structural Funds for the 2014-2020 period has been earmarked for the social integration of vulnerable people. Some of the projects have already been completed and others will continue to be implemented in 2023. These funds have been earmarked for the integration into the labour market and society of different groups of socially vulnerable or socially excluded people (e.g., people with disabilities, people suffering from addiction, Roma, etc.). Almost 12 700 people participated in project activities, of whom around 40 per cent found employment or returned to education. One project that could be singled out is the "Alternative Investment Detector" project, which tests innovative project ideas from both the private and the non-governmental sector to help socially disadvantaged people get a job or return to education through a range of cross-cutting measures or partnerships.*

*The Ministry of Social Security and Labour of the Republic of Lithuania (MoSSL) coordinates the implementation of the Model of Employment Promotion and Motivation for the Unemployed and Beneficiaries of Social Assistance (the Model). Currently, 45 municipalities provide services to participants in the Model. One of the main objectives of the Model is to combine the provision of employment promotion and motivation services with the provision of cash social assistance and personalised assistance through the employment of case managers. Each long-term unemployed person is treated individually and provided with services to help them prepare for the labour market. It is planned that from next year, this case management model will be applied by all Lithuanian municipalities.*

*Another risk is debts. The MoSSL is currently running a "Create for Lithuania" project to investigate the problem of debt. The overall objectives of the project are to analyse the debt problems in Lithuania, to identify the root causes and to propose ways to address them.*

*The MoSSL, together with experts from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), is carrying out the project "Establishment of a personalised service delivery system for vulnerable groups of society". The project focuses on three vulnerable groups: people with disabilities, people leaving prison and young people with fewer opportunities. This activity focuses on reducing social exclusion of the target groups by creating a mechanism for case management, access to information and accompaniment of services and assistance. It also focuses on integration into the labour market. The model, which has been developed and discussed with stakeholders (NGOs, municipalities, representatives of public authorities, etc.), is planned to be tested in three different sized municipalities in Lithuania.*

*Finally, procedures for the social integration of persons released from correctional institutions are being implemented and further improved. The aim is to further strengthen cooperation between social workers and other professionals in correctional institutions and municipalities in order to address the problems of persons released from correctional institutions and to plan for their social integration prior to their release.*

**Causes and Consequences of housing unaffordability**

1. What are main reasons why housing is unaffordable to certain persons or groups in your country? Please provide if possible as well links to (scientific) studies that have analysed such reasons.

*Real estate in Lithuania remains overpriced. This is one of the main reasons why housing is unaffordable to certain persons or groups in Lithuania.*

[*https://housingpolicytoolkit.oecd.org/www/CountryFiches/housing-policy-Lithuania.pdf*](https://housingpolicytoolkit.oecd.org/www/CountryFiches/housing-policy-Lithuania.pdf)

1. How many households have, during the last ten years been evicted because of their non-payment of housing costs? Please provide, if possible, more information on the socio-economic profile of the concerned households.

*There are general numbers of evictions available since 2018 not specifying the ones due to non-payment of housing costs. According to the data of the Bailiffs Information System, in total, between 1 January 2018 and 31 December 2021, 711 new enforcement proceedings for the forced eviction of persons were opened by bailiffs. More than 50 per cent of the requests for the forced eviction of natural persons from dwelling were submitted to bailiffs by municipalities and municipal companies. 219 enforcement cases in this category were fully executed during the period from 2018 to 2021 (see detailed data in the table).*

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| *Data from the Bailiffs Information System* |
| *Period* | *New enforcement proceedings for forced evictions opened* | *Enforcement proceedings for enforced eviction executed (complete execution of the enforcement document)* |
| *2018* | *190* | *72* |
| *2019* | *196* | *63* |
| *2020* | *147* | *39* |
| *2021*  | *178* | *45* |
| *Total:* | ***711*** | ***219*** |

*National Courts Administration*

*Under the amendments of the Law of the Republic of Lithuania on Support for the Acquisition or Rental of Housing adopted on 21 December 2021, income and asset limits were increased (to 35 and 50 per cent instead of 25 per cent), which allow preserving the right to social housing. If the termination of a social housing rental agreement is planned, before the eviction of a person or family who does not own any other housing unit, the municipal administration shall plan and organise the provision of social services in accordance with the procedure laid down by the Law of the Republic of Lithuania on Social Services and other legal acts which regulate temporary accommodation or accommodation in hostels, i.e. it helps the person or family to find other accommodation or arranges help to rent a housing unit and obtain reimbursement of part of housing rental, if this person or family is not able to find housing for themselves.*

1. How many individuals, households or groups have, during the last ten years, been rendered homeless because of inability to afford housing? Please provide a breakdown of the socio-economic characteristics of such individuals.

*Based on the data of the 2021 Population and Housing Census, the number of homeless people totalled 1,380 (857 in 2011; 1,250 in 2001).*

*Source:* [*https://osp.stat.gov.lt/informaciniai-pranesimai?articleId=9619298*](https://osp.stat.gov.lt/informaciniai-pranesimai?articleId=9619298)

*There is no evidence that these individuals been rendered homeless because of inability to afford housing. Research conducted in Lithuania has revealed the main individual reasons for homelessness to be alcoholism, violence and conflicts in the family, unemployment, poverty, material shortages, property and financial obligations, young people leaving foster homes, and those returning from detention facilities. Other reasons include divorce, loss of housing due to debt or deception, natural disasters and fire (Ivanauskienė and Gončiarova, 2017; Kocai, 2008).*

1. Please describe how housing unaffordability impacts the capacity of individuals and families to enjoy their other human rights including rights to work, health, education, and access to personal security in all its dimensions.

*The lack of affordable housing supply decreases public safety and inter-generation connection. If a place becomes too expensive for people to live or they loose a sense of being needed in society, their future prospects may become uncertain. Housing can be a factor in deciding to emigrate or to stay in a country.*

**Laws, policies, programmes and practices aiming to ensure that housing is affordable to all without discrimination**

1. Please share an assessment of the success, limitations or potential failures of the above mentioned laws and policies in your country/region/city, including any studies or independent evaluation reports related to them. Who has benefited from them, who has not? What has worked well, what - less? What lessons can be learned? What could potentially be replicable in other countries/regions/cities?

*In 2017, the National Audit Office of Lithuania conducted a report “Is Housing Availability Ensured for Low Income Population?”.*

*The report is available in the Lithuanian language:*

[*https://www.valstybeskontrole.lt/LT/Product/23686/ar-uztikrinamas-busto-prieinamumas-mazas-pajamas-gaunantiems-gyventojams*](https://www.valstybeskontrole.lt/LT/Product/23686/ar-uztikrinamas-busto-prieinamumas-mazas-pajamas-gaunantiems-gyventojams)