**26-10-2022**

**Information provided by the Republic of Lithuania to the Questionnaire by the Chair-Rapporteur of the Working Group on the issue of discrimination against women and girls on women’s and girls’ human security in the context of poverty and inequality**

1. Income and living conditions of the population of Lithuania (2022 edition): <https://osp.stat.gov.lt/lietuvos-gyventoju-pajamos-ir-gyvenimo-salygos-2022/izanga>

*Please find attached Annex 1*.

1. There are no statistics on girls' poverty risk level, as child poverty is not broken down by gender. Inequality indicators are also not broken down by gender.

General indicators of inequality are the Gini: [https://osp.stat.gov.lt/en/statistiniu-rodikliu-analize?hash=4ea781a3-fed7-4bf1-a992-%20f38e538d2104 - /](https://osp.stat.gov.lt/en/statistiniu-rodikliu-analize?hash=4ea781a3-fed7-4bf1-a992-%20f38e538d2104#/) and S80/S20: <https://osp.stat.gov.lt/en/statistiniu-rodikliu-analize?hash=57729ac9-1cfa-443b-a71f-c93ec04963c7>

1. N/A.
2. Reducing poverty remains an important challenge in Lithuania. Relative poverty remains high in international comparison and is distributed unevenly across population groups with the elderly women, women and girls with disabilities, lone mothers, the low-educated and the unemployed being particularly affected. In particular, the threats or risks are related with accessing health care, housing, healthy food, experiencing social exclusion and economic ‘unfreedom’. Unemployed women experience more difficulties in the Lithuanian labour market - they find employment more slowly and more often start working under fixed-term employment contracts. Data from the Employment Service show that, on average, every seventh woman and every tenth man temporarily returns to the labour market after a period of unemployment.
3. The legal framework includes a number of legal acts related to social insurance and pension system, social integration of the disabled, equal opportunities, social assistance, etc. For instance, In the Law on Cash Social Assistance for Poor Residents Cash, social assistance comprises both social benefit and compensation for the cost of heating, drinking water and hot water. Those on low income are entitled to social benefit that guarantees minimum funds for satisfying the basic needs (food and clothing) and compensation for the cost of heating, hot water and drinking water intended to cover in part the cost of maintaining a household. Those on low income may receive social benefit if there are objective reasons why they cannot earn enough to keep themselves and they have exhausted all other possibilities of earning income. Their income and assets are assessed when deciding on their entitlement for support.

Lithuania is implementing various measures to reduce poverty and social exclusion in the country. The Ministry of Social Security and Labour has initiated measures that will have an impact on poverty reduction including faster increase of pensions, single person's allowance, increase of minimum monthly salary, growing social benefits, development of social services. In order to reduce poverty and income inequality, while ensuring sufficient incentives to work, it is planned to carry out a study of the existing minimum income system, the purpose of which is a comprehensive assessment the minimum income system in Lithuania, to identify directions for its improvement in order to reduce poverty and ensure more efficient use of funds. Based on the results and recommendations of the conducted study, in 2023 it is planned to prepare amendments to legal acts focused on reducing poverty and income inequality.

In 2021, a long-term Income Inequality Reduction Development Program was approved. It foresees 14 areas of measures that will be implemented by the Ministry of Social Security and Labour together with the Ministry of Finance. In 2021, a decision has also been made to significantly increase the tax-free amount of personal income and change its calculation methodology. This change increased the net incomes of lower-wage workers while reducing incomes gaps between the highest and lowest paid workers.

1. Pensioners, single seniors or single mothers, and mothers of large families are most at risk.
2. There are no such laws. The Law on Equal Treatment of the Republic of Lithuania establishes prohibition of direct and indirect discrimination on the basis of gender, race, nationality, citizenship, language, origins, social status, belief, convictions or views, age, sexual orientation, disability, ethnic origin and religion. Educational establishments, other education providers, as well as research and education establishments must ensure equal conditions for persons when admitting to educational establishments, other education providers, as well as research and education establishments, teaching and educating according to programmes of formal and non-formal education implemented therein. The Law on Education of the Republic of Lithuania also establishes the principle of equal opportunities – the education system is socially fair, it ensures the implementation of person’s rights, it guarantees the access to education for any person.
3. During the Covid-19 pandemic, the situation of single mothers was more complicated because they had to take even more days off, take care of children, and their income was decreasing. Women have tended to be overrepresented in the frontline of the pandemic and also in the services sector. Lower-income and lower-skilled women tend to encounter themselves in a vicious cycle of systematic poverty. Older women and single women also face greater prospects of poverty.

Russia’s unprovoked and unjustified war of aggression against Ukraine has a negative impact on Lithuania’s economy through declining exports, a shortage of imported raw materials, an uncertain investment climate and rising energy prices, which have negative impact on women and girls access to economic and social rights.

The climate, pollution, and biodiversity crises adversely impact women and girls by causing direct impacts on their health and well-being. It exacerbates and accentuates already existing inequalities and deepens socioeconomic imbalances. As the impacts of climate change intensify, women's greater economic disadvantage would make it more difficult for them to manage the consequences of climate change, such as heat waves.

1. N/A.
2. Recently Lithuania introduced non-transferable parental leave for women and men which could contribute to better work-life balance and preventing inequality.
3. Reforms are important to strengthen income protection by ensuring that cash benefits provide adequate and tailored support to those in need. An individual-based approach is also essential for the provision of social services to reduce deficits in important areas such as social housing and long-term care for the elderly.
4. A number of measures were introduced over the few years to strengthen working-age benefits. These include an increase in state-supported income and its indexation to the amount of minimum consumption needs from 2019, revisions in unemployment benefits that increased coverage and made payment rates more generous, and changes in the family benefits notably through the introduction of a universal-child benefit (non-means tested). The state-supported income is indexed to the amount of minimum consumption needs, thereby adjusting automatically for price level changes. Heating Compensation is an important instrument to tackle energy poverty. The government further increased in 2020 and 2021 the general part (non-earnings related) of the old-age pension by more than foreseen by the automatic pension index, subject to budget constraints. In an effort to address undersupply of social housing, since 2019, municipalities are permitted to rent housing from private or legal persons and sublet it to individuals (families) awaiting for social housing. Steps were also taken to shorten the long waiting time for social housing. A new law, in particular, set the upper limit for the waiting to five years initially and then to three years. A municipality will have to reimburse the actual rental costs in case it cannot meet its obligation by the end of this period. Promising steps were taken to help families to reconcile family and work responsibilities. The new Labour Code offers more part-time work and remote working opportunities, as well as more flexible working schedules. Recent reforms also changed leave provisions for parents. One of the main goals of the Government is to create more opportunities for women to return to the labour market. Expanding the network of early childhood education facilities and creating a family-friendly environment is essential to achieve this goal.
5. In order to reduce income inequality and poverty in Lithuania, is improving the state social insurance and monetary social support system will and is increasing the progressivity of the tax system. The employment support system will also be improved, its coverage will be expanded, the employment of vulnerable groups of persons will be increased, people's entrepreneurship will be effectively combated against illegal and undeclared work, and the quality and development of social dialogue will be promoted. This is foreseen in the Income Inequality Reduction and Labour Market Inclusion Development Programs prepared by the Ministry of Social Security and Labour, which meet the goals of the National Progress Plan for 2021-2030.
6. The Employment Service of Lithuania developed the online Social Assistance Map. It is a convenient tool for all jobseekers including women who need complex assistance in any municipality of the country (legal, social, psychological assistance or catering, accommodation, medical services). The social assistance map was created through the implementation of the case management model, which requires coordinated, integrated services for the assistance of persons with complex problems. Please visit the Map: <https://soczemelapis.uzt.lt/>
7. Participate in the activities of NGOs that initiate public management decisions related to reducing poverty and social exclusion. For instance in Lithuania the "National Network of Poverty Alleviation Organizations" unites 59 non-governmental organizations fighting poverty and social exclusion.

* *Incorporate gender mainstreaming into national development plans, poverty reduction strategies and national budgets.*
* *Strike a better work-family balance and improve work incentives.*
* *Create more and better quality jobs in the formal sector, especially for the low-skilled women.*
* *Enlarge women participation in life-long learning programmes, which could contribute to re-skilling and up-skilling towards higher incomes.*
* *Increase spending on well-designed labour market activation policies.*

1. To set out clear gender equity goals, particularly in the areas of economic equality between the sexes and equal distribution of unpaid care and household work, make clear decisions to achieve these goals, and support those decisions. Women's leadership should be promoted from childhood, by combating stereotypes, promoting girls' leadership and participation in public life and politics.
2. To further promote women’s and girls' empowerment and advocacy at the national level and to increase public awareness of legislation (national and international, for instance the ratification of Istanbul Convention) related to women’s rights.