



**Convention on the Elimination
of All Forms of Discrimination
against Women**

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**Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination
against Women
Seventy-fourth session**

Summary record of the 1735th meeting

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Thursday, 31 October 2019, at 3 p.m.

Chair: Ms. Gbedemah

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The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.

Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 18 of the Convention *(continued)*

Sixth periodic report of Lithuania (continued) (CEDAW/C/LTU/6;
CEDAW/C/LTU/Q/6 and CEDAW/C/LTU/Q/6/Add.1)

1. *At the invitation of the Chair, the delegation of Lithuania took places at the Committee table.*

Articles 7 to 9 (continued)

2. **Ms. Mineikaitė** (Lithuania) said that a number of initiatives had been taken under the National Programme on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men 2015–2021 in order to enhance women’s participation in decision-making. Those initiatives included conferences, such as one organized by the Ministry of Social Security and Labour on women’s leadership in, inter alia, business, politics and sport, an event encouraging women and girls to pursue careers in technology and a project to help women entrepreneurs. Currently, 62 per cent of judges, 50 per cent of prosecutors, 38 per cent of lawyers, 86 per cent of notaries and 55 per cent of bailiffs were women.

3. **Mr. Krivas** (Lithuania) said that, in January 2019, women had accounted for 11.5 per cent of persons serving in the armed forces, including 12.1 per cent of professional and 3.4 per cent of conscripted personnel. Women comprised 9.62 per cent of personnel in the army, 5.3 per cent in the navy and 7.7 per cent in the air force. They worked mainly in medical, logistical and other support services. In addition, women made up 3.5 per cent of peacekeeping personnel.

4. **Ms. Liutikaitė** (Lithuania) said that Lithuania had assigned 69 women experts to the European Union institutions and 45 per cent of those working in the European Union missions were women. Fourteen women experts had been seconded to the European Union missions, and 17 to the European External Action Service.

5. **Ms. Mickutė** (Lithuania) said that Lithuanian women could transfer their nationality to their non-national husbands, subject to their husbands living in Lithuania for at least seven years and passing a language test. Stateless women were entitled to the same services as undocumented migrants and asylum seekers, including legal aid and medical assistance.

6. **Mr. Milevičius** (Lithuania) said that funding for non-governmental organizations had increased. It had actually more than doubled since 2016 for organizations helping trafficking victims, and now totalled €165,000. Organizations supporting domestic violence victims would receive €1.5 million in 2019, which was twice as much as in 2018. The 2019–2022 project to combat domestic violence had a total budget of €460,000.

7. **Mr. Safarov** said that he would like to know how many women occupied senior positions in sports federations and in municipal bodies.

8. **Mr. Bingelis** (Lithuania) said that the delegation would endeavour to provide information on the number of women in high-ranking positions in sports federations within 48 hours after the constructive dialogue.

9. **Ms. Čmilytė-Nielsen** (Lithuania) said that 8 per cent of mayors were women.

Articles 10 to 14

10. **Mr. Bergby** said that, although Lithuania had ratified the International Labour Organization (ILO) Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100), it appeared that the gender pay gap was rising and existed across almost all industries, with a wider gap in the private sector, particularly in areas such as financial and insurance services. Gender segregation in the labour market – one cause of the gap – had stood at 28 per cent in 2017, which was above the European Union average. He wondered whether, in a further effort to reduce, or even close the gap, the Government would conduct a comprehensive study to determine its extent and identify and address its root causes. He would also like to know whether the new Labour Code, which now required employers to implement equal

opportunity plans, provided for a mechanism, using indicators and targets, to monitor the results of those plans; how the Government would further address vertical and horizontal segregation in the labour market; and what measures it had taken to encourage more women into the financial and information and communications technology sectors, since women were currently mainly employed in lower paid jobs. What steps would the Government take, in cooperation with trade unions and employer associations, to close the gap?

11. He asked whether women could currently choose to work up to the age of 65 – the pension age for men – or even 70 if, as a result of career breaks to care for their families, they were not entitled to their full pension before that age. In that connection, did the Government implement any policies aiming to reintegrate women into the labour market?

12. He wondered whether the Government could make a proportion of parental leave non-transferable from men to women, in order to encourage more fathers to fully participate in bringing up their children.

13. He would also like to know how domestic workers were protected by employment law and whether the State party would ratify the ILO Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189).

14. Lastly, in the light of a 2019 survey indicating that a number of women with disabilities had faced discrimination in employment, he wanted to know how the Government would improve its understanding of the barriers to employment encountered by women with disabilities.

15. **Ms. Chalal** said that despite improvements to health care in Lithuania, life expectancy was progressing relatively slowly, the suicide rate was double that of other Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries and girls aged 15 to 19 were more malnourished than women over 30. In addition, young people's limited access to contraception and comprehensive sex education reportedly correlated with their high rate of unplanned pregnancies, abortions and sexually transmitted diseases. She wondered whether the Government would decriminalize abortion and make it legal, for example in cases of incest, serious deformation of the fetus or where the woman's life or health was endangered. Had any women been imprisoned for having or trying to have abortions?

16. While the Government reimbursed some types of contraception, she wondered whether, for vulnerable women, such as Roma, rural and low-income women, it could provide free access to all types. What was the contraceptive prevalence rate? She wondered how, in rural areas, the Government would improve access to sexual and reproductive health services and what progress it had made on the bill on procreation. She would also like to know what legislative or administrative measures the Government would take to guarantee undocumented migrant women access to health care throughout pregnancy, labour and birth, either free of charge or at a reduced cost, given the existence, currently, of a number of legal, political and financial obstacles to such access.

17. Would the Government prohibit all forced medical treatment, including sterilization and abortion, performed on women with mental disabilities without their consent and remove the possibility for third parties, such as doctors, to allow such treatment?

18. Lastly, she wondered whether the Government would introduce and implement a ban on marriage before the age of 18, in view of an amendment to the Civil Code making it legal to marry at 16 or even earlier in cases of pregnancy.

19. **Ms. Baliukevičienė** (Lithuania) said that the gender pay gap had stood at 13 per cent in 2018, representing a 1.2 per cent decrease, for all age groups, compared with 2017. Over those same two years, there had been a 10 per cent increase in the average gross monthly earnings, and 10.7 per cent and 9.6 per cent increases in public and private sector remuneration, respectively. In that connection, it was worth remembering that more women worked in the public than in the private sector. The new Labour Code only permitted employers to pay the minimum wage for unqualified work and, from 2020, that wage would increase to €607 from the current €555. The number of workers earning the

minimum wage had dropped from 20 per cent in 2017 to 12 per cent in 2019 and, of those workers, approximately 56 per cent were women and 44 per cent were men.

20. Since 2017, the number of workers covered by collective agreements, which increasingly included provisions on pay, had doubled. The Government had also committed to spend €140 million to increase public sector salaries. It also planned to give fathers two months of non-transferable parental leave. Women's participation in the labour market stood at 71.6 per cent, compared with 73.3 per cent for men. With respect to women with disabilities, persons who felt that their rights had been violated could complain to a labour dispute committee.

21. **Mr. Gudžiūnas** (Lithuania) said that the State Labour Inspectorate carried out workplace inspections to ensure that all employers fulfilled their obligations with respect to equal opportunities. The number of inspections had decreased from 69 in 2017 to 16 in 2018, although the Government aimed to conduct 139 such inspections in 2019. So far, the Inspectorate had only found one violation relating to the adoption and publishing of measures on equal rights and opportunities. The Inspectorate also offered advice on employment legislation to both employers and employees.

22. **Ms. Dulkinaitė** (Lithuania) said that the Office of the Equal Opportunities Ombudsperson had taken steps to raise awareness of workplace equal opportunity plans, which were mandatory under the Labour Code, and had dispensed training to public institutions and private companies on how to implement them. A searchable database containing information on the equality situation in those institutions and companies had recently been created and could be used to identify areas where there was room for improvement and best practices.

23. **Ms. Mineikaitė** (Lithuania) said that draft amendments to the Law on Employment and the Law on Social Enterprises were intended to facilitate the integration of a greater number persons with disabilities into the labour market, particularly the social enterprise sector, and would enter into force in 2020. Under the amended Law on Employment, tailored assistance services would be provided to persons with disabilities with fewer employment prospects. The services would include helping those persons to find a job, settle into the workplace, navigate employment procedures, communicate with their new employer and solve workplace problems that, if left unchecked, could result in dismissal.

24. The Law on Social Enterprises had been amended in an effort to increase the employment in social enterprises of persons who belonged to target groups, defined as persons who were not in any other employment relationship or legal equivalent and who were not self-employed. Target group members were required to register with the State employment agency and had to account for at least 50 per cent of the workforce in a social enterprise. Persons with a moderate or severe disability or less than 40 per cent working capacity had to account for at least 40 per cent of the annual average number of employees in social enterprises. Persons with a severe disability had to account for 10 per cent of the workforce in a social enterprise. The monthly working time of workers with disabilities had to be at least 50 per cent of that of workers who did not belong to a target group. Social enterprises were required to reinvest at least 75 per cent of their profits in initiatives to promote the reintegration of target group members into the labour market and to reduce their social exclusion. Persons with disabilities with a working capacity of between 45 and 55 per cent were entitled to ongoing support.

25. **Ms. Cechanovičienė** (Lithuania) said that a human papillomavirus vaccination programme for 11-year-old girls had been launched in 2016. In 2018, the participation rate in the programme had been 55 per cent. The committee responsible for reimbursing health-care costs within the Ministry of Health was considering reimbursing the cost of certain types of contraceptives for girls between 15 and 19 years of age.

26. In Lithuania, surgical termination of pregnancy was performed in accordance with Order No. 50 of the Minister of Health. All persons in possession of compulsory health insurance were entitled to receive the personal health-care services covered by the Compulsory Health Insurance Fund. Those services were provided by accredited gynaecologists and included abortion and sterilization. In order to ensure that those procedures were performed safely and lawfully, health-care institutions followed diagnostic

and treatment guidelines. The criteria governing abortion procedures would be updated in 2020.

27. Under Lithuanian public health law, each municipality was required to ensure the provision of public health services, including public health care in schools, health promotion and public health monitoring. Those responsibilities were discharged by 48 municipal public health bureaux with the support of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), communities, families and other stakeholders. Public health bureaux were mandated to, *inter alia*, promote healthy lifestyles, increase health literacy and address public health problems, such as suicide and violence. School-based programmes to help children develop life and social skills and to combat violence were also being carried out. Technical tools and training programmes had also been developed for teachers and school administrators.

28. The national curriculum included a component on identifying and preventing sexual, physical and psychological abuse and a general programme on health, sexuality and family planning. In 2018, a new post of healthy lifestyle specialist had been created to support family doctors in increasing health literacy and promoting healthy living. The Lithuanian legislation governing the rights of patients and compensation for damage to their health laid down a protocol for health-care institutions to follow in informing patients about important health-related matters.

29. **Ms. Sadauskienė** (Lithuania) said that, in 2019, a civil court had ordered the hospital where a doctor had sterilized a woman suffering from cerebral palsy without her knowledge or consent to pay her €31,000 in damages.

30. **Ms. Čmilytė-Nielsen** (Lithuania) said that, according to a recent study, there was little or no difference in pay between men and women when they first entered the workforce. The gender pay gap began to emerge later, on account of many new mothers taking advantage of the generous parental leave entitlement available to them, which could be extended up to three years and had the effect of freezing their pay. The measures taken to close the gender pay gap included the introduction of non-transferable parental leave and a legislative amendment authorizing grandparents to take parental leave in their children's place so as to give them a greater degree of flexibility.

31. **Ms. Ameline** said that, regrettably, maternity leave was often a factor driving salary inequality. She wondered whether the State party had considered calculating the overall average salary increment to which women would have been entitled during their maternity leave and increasing their salary accordingly when they returned to work, thus offsetting the impact of maternity leave on the gender pay gap.

32. It appeared that, despite the adoption of the 2018–2021 Action Plan for the Implementation of the National Programme on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men 2015–2021, little or no progress had been made in eliminating gender stereotypes from the education system. Indeed, the persistence of such stereotypes continued to limit girls' career choices by reinforcing traditional roles and undermining their free and equal access to all professions. The State party should take consolidated measures to empower girls to make free and informed decisions about their education, career and life in general.

33. It would be useful to know whether women had been involved in the process of revising textbooks and learning materials to eliminate gender stereotypes. She would also appreciate information on the strategies in place to protect young girls from violence, including harassment and sexual exploitation, given the negative impact of those phenomena on their education and physical and psychological well-being.

34. The delegation should describe the practical measures taken to ensure the inclusion of women from minority groups, such as migrants, the Roma and children with disabilities, in Lithuanian society and to encourage more women to seek employment in the science and innovation sector in view of the growing importance of digital technology and its impact on the labour market. She also wished to know whether the 2017 reform of the higher education system had resulted in closer alignment between the education and training provided by higher education institutions and the needs of the labour market. It would also

be helpful to hear more about the outcome of the recent overhaul of the vocational training system and about the career counselling services available to female adolescents.

35. **Ms. Akizuki** said that, although the Lithuanian economy was one of the fastest growing economies in the European Union, it seemed that the gains of rapid economic growth had not been distributed equally between men and women and that there was a risk that the gender development gap could widen further. She would like to receive sex-disaggregated data on the impact of economic development on men and women in the country. While she was pleased to learn of the range of benefits available to persons raising children and/or guardians, she noted a dearth of information on the State party's pension schemes. She wished to know how many monthly contributions men and women had to make to qualify for a State pension and whether any provision was made for women who had made fewer than the requisite number of monthly contributions on account of having worked less than their male counterparts. It would also be useful to receive sex-disaggregated data on the beneficiaries of the State party's pension schemes and on the current gender pension gap. She would appreciate information on any specific pension schemes for disadvantaged women, such as Roma women, self-employed women, single mothers, women with disabilities and women living below the poverty line.

36. She noted that Lithuania had a shrinking and ageing population, which could adversely affect the availability of social protection. She asked whether the State party had devised a plan to mitigate that risk, what measures it had taken to ensure that men and women enjoyed a work-life balance, whether it intended to ratify the ILO Social Security (Minimum Standards) Convention, 1952 (No. 102) and what loans or other forms of financial credit were available to promote the economic empowerment of disadvantaged women and female entrepreneurs.

37. **Mr. Bingelis** (Lithuania) said that a number of new regulations had been introduced to tackle gender stereotypes in the education system. The Office of the Equal Opportunities Ombudsperson had assisted the Government in identifying school textbooks with discriminatory content. Those textbooks were in the process of being revised and would be reissued. All primary and secondary school curricula were being updated. A longer-term strategy would be needed to bring about change in the higher education system.

38. Between 2017 and 2018, the gender pay gap had narrowed. Both men and women were reaping the benefits of the growing economy. More and more women were retraining after university and finding employment in the information and communications technology and financial technology sectors. When reviewing the evolution of the gender pay gap in the country, it should be borne in mind that, as little as 15 years previously, Lithuanian salaries had been significantly lower. The current priority was to prevent the gender pay gap from widening as a result of the rapidly growing economy.

39. Mothers with more than five children received additional pension credits from the State. In 2018, a new universal childcare benefit had been introduced to help lift single parents out of poverty. The benefit was available to all single parents, including job-seeking single parents and young single parents in non-standard forms of employment. To date, single-parent families with three or more children had been the primary target group. The benefit had made it possible to reduce child poverty to an absolute minimum.

40. **Ms. Mineikaitė** (Lithuania) said that, in 2018, the pensionable age had stood at 62 years and 8 months for women and 63 years and 10 months for men. In 2026, the pensionable age would be raised to 65 years for both men and women. At least 15 years of contributions were required to qualify for a minimum pension while 31 years of contributions were required to qualify for a full pension. In 2027, the threshold for qualifying for a full pension would be raised to 35 years. Since 2014, parents with children under 3 years of age had received from the State maternity/paternity and social insurance benefits and a set payment for each child. Pension contributions had amounted to 2 per cent of the country's average monthly gross wage in 2017. In January 2019, the State's contribution to employees' pensions had decreased from 2 per cent to 1.5 per cent. Efforts were under way to implement 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.

41. **Ms. Statauskienė** (Lithuania) said that the General Programme for Education in Health and Sexuality, and Family Education, which covered grades 1 to 12, had been adopted in 2017. Public consultations, conferences and training seminars had been organized for teachers, public health professionals and other educators responsible for implementing the programme.

42. In order to combat gender stereotypes in the education system effectively, seminars on gender roles and gender stereotypes had been organized for authors of school textbooks, those responsible for vetting their content and teachers. It was hoped that the Office of the Equal Opportunities Ombudsperson would be able to assist the education authorities in reviewing and updating learning materials and school curricula.

43. **Ms. Toé-Bouda** said that women living in rural areas faced multiple disadvantages, including a lack of public transport, a lack of access to reproductive health services, a lack of nurseries for young children, a high infant mortality rate, lower levels of education and fewer opportunities to enter the labour market or pursue higher education. In view of that situation, she asked whether the Government would consider conducting an assessment of the measures taken at the local and national level to promote gender equality in rural areas and, if so, what form such an assessment would take. What measures would be taken to promote rural women's participation in decision-making, particularly in regard to plans and strategies that affected them?

44. The Committee would be interested to hear about any steps being taken to facilitate entry into higher education for young persons living in rural areas. In view of the fact that a significant proportion of men died at a relatively young age, it would be interesting to learn what support was given to widows and other women heads of household, especially those living on low incomes. The Committee would welcome information on rural women's right to own land and property. Would the State party ensure that its next periodic report included data, disaggregated by age and gender, on the situation of persons living in rural areas?

45. The Committee would like to know whether statistics on women with disabilities in the State party would be amended to include women living with a family member with a disability, as such women were often subjected to discrimination by association. She wondered whether the Government would consider conducting targeted studies of women with disabilities and gathering disaggregated data on their situation. The Government might also consider conducting studies of attitudes towards transgender persons and enacting legislation aimed at protecting them against discrimination.

46. **Ms. Dulkinaitė** (Lithuania) said that one of the goals of the 2018–2021 Action Plan for the Implementation of the National Programme on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men 2015–2021 was to make it easier for rural women to start and develop businesses. Plans were in place to implement regional initiatives designed to enhance rural women's entrepreneurial skills and financial literacy. Under the Lithuanian Rural Development Programme for 2014–2020, funding was allocated to projects that would diversify the economy and promote small non-agricultural businesses in rural areas. The Ministry of Agriculture allocated funding to promote gender balance in decision-making processes concerning the development of local initiatives. Rural women had the opportunity to participate in decision-making processes related to investment in the local economy and the resolution of social problems. Local authorities in rural areas, together with non-governmental organizations, had prepared guidelines on the development of rural businesses.

47. **Ms. Statauskienė** (Lithuania) said that the "Quality Basket" project had been initiated in 2019 with a view to improving attainment levels in Lithuanian schools and closing gaps in attainment between girls and boys and between urban and rural schools. The project made it possible to identify which schools were performing well and which were performing badly so that best practices could be exchanged and funds could be allocated appropriately. The European Union's Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme 2014–2020 had provided for the funding and launching of a project aimed at tackling homophobia and transphobia in schools and raising awareness of bullying in the

educational sphere. The project had enabled discussions and seminars on homophobia, transphobia and bullying to take place.

Articles 15 and 16

48. **Ms. Peláez Narváez** said that, in accordance with the State party's Civil Code, citizens were required to have full legal capacity in order to be able to marry or raise children, which restricted the rights of some women with disabilities to enjoy family life. Furthermore, article 34 of the Constitution stipulated that persons deemed by the courts to lack capacity were unable to participate in elections, while article 56 stipulated that such persons were unable to stand for election to parliament. In view of the fact that some 4,500 women with disabilities did not have full legal capacity, she asked what measures would be taken to restore such capacity to all women with disabilities in order to ensure their access to justice, their right to vote and stand for election and their right to enjoy family life.

49. The State party had informed the Committee that it would not consider lowering the minimum age for marriage until the State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service had issued an opinion on the matter ([CEDAW/C/LTU/Q/6/Add.1](#), para. 54). In view of the fact that girls under the age of 18 were continuing to marry in the State party, it would be interesting to learn whether the agency in question had issued an opinion on child marriage and, if so, whether the Government would be amending its Civil Code to establish a minimum age for marriage of 18 years for boys and girls. She wondered whether the Government would consider enabling same-sex couples to enter into civil unions or marriages to ensure that they enjoyed the same rights as heterosexual married couples.

50. **Ms. Čmilytė-Nielsen** (Lithuania) said that, although public opinion was largely against the introduction of civil partnerships for same-sex couples, views on the issue were gradually changing. In 2019, 66 per cent of the public had been against such partnerships while 24 per cent had expressed support for them. Although a bill on the introduction of civil partnerships for same-sex and opposite-sex couples had been voted down by parliament in 2017, that bill was expected to be put to the vote again in the near future. No legislation on gender reassignment had been adopted but transgender persons were able to change their identity documents through the courts.

51. **Mr. Bingelis** (Lithuania) said that social insurance regulations provided that all citizens, including part-time workers, received a minimum income. Steps were being taken to improve the availability of public transport in rural areas.

52. **Ms. Milašiūtė** (Lithuania) said that the case law of the Lithuanian courts had established that cohabiting couples who jointly owned property were recognized as partners within the meaning of article 6.969 (1) of the Civil Code. Following the reform of legislation governing legal capacity, the capacity of a certain number of persons was now only partially restricted. In the case of *A.N. v. Lithuania*, in which the European Court of Human Rights had found that the restriction of the complainant's legal capacity had constituted a violation of his rights, the Committee of Ministers of the European Court of Human Rights had been satisfied that the reform of legal capacity conducted in Lithuania was sufficient to prevent similar violations in the future.

53. The issue of child marriage was a delicate one as, when a child became a parent, it was necessary to consider not only the rights of that child but also the rights of his or her child to live within a family. The law provided for certain safeguards that were intended to protect the rights of children who became parents. Decisions on whether a teenage mother or father could marry were taken by the relevant authorities on the basis of expert assessments of the individual case. Girls who were granted the right to marry acquired new rights, including the right to file for a divorce.

54. **Ms. Akizuki** said that it was still not clear whether the State party would consider ratifying the ILO Social Security (Minimum Standards) Convention, 1952 (No. 102). In view of the fact that the State party's report contained no information on women's right to participate in sports, recreational activities and cultural life, the Committee would be grateful if such information could be included in the next report.

55. **Mr. Bergby** said that he would welcome clarification of whether women could currently opt to retire at the same age as men or whether they could continue working until they were 65 years of age. It was also be interesting to learn whether the State party would consider ratifying the ILO Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189).

56. **Ms. Peláez Narváez** said that it was still not clear whether the Government would consider amending the Constitution to ensure that persons deemed to lack capacity had the right to vote and stand for election to public office. She would be grateful if the delegation could clarify whether, for instance, persons with Down syndrome or persons living with cerebral palsy would be able to hold a position as an elected official. In view of the delegation's claim that girls who married acquired new rights, she wondered what measures were taken by the State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service to protect the rights of children who had become mothers.

57. **Mr. Bingelis** (Lithuania) said that he wished to thank the Committee for the constructive, engaging dialogue, which would guide the Government in its efforts to promote and protect the rights of women and girls in Lithuania.

The meeting rose at 5.05 p.m.