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Consideration of reports of States parties

Replies of Lithuania to the list of issues in relation to its combined fifth and sixth periodic reports* **

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* The present document is being issued without formal editing.

** The annexes to the present document may be accessed from the web page of the Committee.



Part one

Reply to paragraph 2 (a) of the list of issues in relation to the combined fifth and sixth periodic reports of Lithuania (CRC/C/LTU/Q/5-6)

1. Action Plan for Child Welfare 2019–2021, Action Plan for Child Welfare 2022–2026 were approved. At the end of the period covered by the current plan, it is evaluated which measures are planned to be continued, which are not, and which new measures would be important to include. The available statistical data, current events and their trends, civil society information about the challenges faced by children, etc. are evaluated. E.g., in the new plan implementation of the MDFT program was included, as well as measure to support NGO projects aimed at providing services to children and families going through divorce, etc.

2. Lithuania does not have a national strategy for children's rights, but in addition to the Child Welfare Action Plan, other strategic documents have been adopted (see Annex 8, part 16(c)).

Reply to paragraph 2 (b) of the list of issues

CRPO finances

<i>Year</i>	<i>Funds, EUR</i>	<i>% of the funds dedicated for salaries</i>
2019	511 000	85
2020	570 000	85
2021	628 000	85
2022	664 000	83
2023	753 000	78

3. Since January 1st 2009, 23 positions have been approved at the CRPO, but only 16 have been filled (including the position of child rights protection ombudsperson).

Reply to paragraph 2 (c) of the list of issues

4. CP Service has all the necessary powers for the effective protection of children's rights at all levels. In LFPRC it is clearly established that CP Service performs the functions of the national state institution for the protection of children's rights, the functions of the central institution for the organization of international child rights protection and adoption in the LR; defends and ensures the rights of the child and represents the rights and legitimate interests of the child in municipal territories 24/7. Legal acts provide for the powers of child rights protection specialists necessary for them to examine specific possible violations of children's rights, including obtaining the necessary data and information from different sources. 751 positions are approved at CP Service.

5. In 2018 8,139,000 Eur have been allocated to CP Service. From 2018 July 1 (after completing the child rights protection reform that led to the centralization of the system) until 2018 December 31 6 million 912 thousand Eur were additionally allocated for CP Service activities. Child rights protection reform project was allocated with 11 million 648 thousand Eur in 2018.

6. CP Service funds in:

- 2019 – EUR 14,058,000 and EUR 294,000 for publicity and training;
- 2020 – EUR 15,482,000 and EUR 399,000 for publicity and training;
- 2021 – EUR 15,682,000 and EUR 569,000 for publicity and training;
- 2022 – EUR 18,447,000 and EUR 575,000 for publicity and training;

- 2023 – EUR 20,753,000 and EUR 638,000 for publicity and training.

7. In 2019, additional funds were approved for mobile teams under CP Service (these teams provide assistance to families and children in crisis when child protection need is identified): 694 thousand Eur, 2020 – 1.3 million EUR, 2021 – 1.4 million EUR, 2022 – 1.4 million Eur.

8. Continuous strengthening of the competences of child rights protection specialists is carried out through various activities. A model for improving the professional competences of these specialists is being prepared.

Reply to paragraph 2 (d) of the list of issues

9. Managers of state budget allocations (separate ministries) implement budget programs through progress measures programmes and continuous measures programmes. Progress measures related to children and their families are developed considering data related to challenges experienced by children and families, lack of services and support they face, the most vulnerable groups of children, etc. When preparing the content of the progress measures, an analysis of different alternatives is carried out to assess which activities will have the greatest positive impact on children. When planning financing for continuous measures, statistical data, assessment of the situation of children in the country, etc. are used. Specific tools for assessing how much funding is allocated specifically to children in all areas, distinguishing vulnerable groups of children, are not currently in place.

Reply to paragraph 2 (e) of the list of issues

10. SPIS is designed to collect data exclusively in the social field, including the protection of children's rights, so it is not possible to collect data from other areas, as it does not fall within the scope of SPIS content and data collection purposes. Other areas have their own data collection systems that collect data related to children in a specific area, such as ŠVIS, NEMIS, etc.

11. In 2023 significant changes were made to the GRL resolution that approves the list of indicators of statistical information about children. The resolution obliges various state institutions to collect more detailed data about children than has been done so far in the fields of demography, living conditions of households with children, health, education, labour market, social protection, crime, administrative offenses and civil cases, and migration. The list of institutions that collect relevant data and are able to provide them was updated too. According to changes data must be segregated by children's age groups, gender, place of residence, disability. However, it is challenging to collect data according to ethnic origin, since in Lithuania nationality is not a mandatory aspect to be indicated in the birth record. This creates a situation where the collected data are not sufficiently reliable when evaluating them in the general context of the data. In addition, nationality is a sensitive indicator, and considering the size of Lithuania, it would not even be possible to detail the data according to all nationalities due to confidentiality requirements (data cannot be published or made publicly available in such a way that the identity of individual data subjects can be directly or indirectly determined).

Reply to paragraph 2 (f) of the list of issues

12. LFPRC contains a requirement that persons found guilty of crimes related to all types of sexual violence against a child or other person, other intentional serious or very serious crimes or for similar acts provided for in the criminal laws of other countries, regardless of whether the criminal record has disappeared or been cancelled, cannot work, provide services or engage in voluntary activities in the institutions providing child rights protection, social, educational and sports, healthcare services for children; also, to do that in other institutions, companies and organizations if the work or voluntary activities are directly and regularly related to the upbringing, education, care of children or ensuring their safety. All institutions, organizations and companies (including businesses) have the duty to check the background

of all persons accepted to work, provide services or carry out voluntary activities in this aspect.

13. The Labour Code establishes clear conditions regarding child labour and ensures the protection of children against labour exploitation.

14. The CAO establishes the possibility of imposing administrative penalties in cases where an illegal interference with the child's use of his/her rights and freedoms or other acts that violate the child's rights are identified, or when it is determined that managers, educators or other persons equal to them of the education, upbringing, health care and other institutions, organizations and companies under whose supervision is a child, caused physical or mental injury of a child or other violation of a child's rights.

Reply to paragraph 2 (g) of the list of issues

15. In Lithuania, the necessary conditions have been created for civil society to act independently. MSSL is responsible for NGO policy; the legal prerequisites for NGO activity are established in the DNGO. In 2020 a legal basis has been created for the NGO Fund, which is intended to strengthen the institutional capacity of NGOs. NGO Fund's Board was established too, which decides on the strategic directions of NGO funding, funds, analyzes the situation of the NGO sector, etc.

16. There is too an NGO Council that performs monitoring, analyses, consultations in the field of NGO activities. Representatives of NGO participate in the Interinstitutional Child Welfare Council under GRL.

17. All draft legal acts must be consulted on with interested institutions and the civil society – all drafts are published publicly in the TAIS system. Conditions have been created for civil society to participate in public consultations organized by ministries. The portal www.epilietis.lrv.lt publishes the topic, time and place of a specific public consultation, and after the consultation, the results of the consultation are shared.

18. From 2025 1.2% of the income tax can be allocated only to NGO and/or artists who can receive support. Other activities aimed at strengthening civil society are also planned through the strategic documents.

Reply to paragraph 3 (a) of the list of issues

19. The principle of non-discrimination is enshrined in LFPRC, as well as in all other legal acts related to children's rights. By-laws and the procedures described in them are also based on the principle that all children have equal rights to receive services, assistance, or in other ways ensuring the realization of their rights. The child rights protection system applies equally to all children in the territory of the LR, regardless of their status.

20. Practical measures promote the proper implementation of this principle. E.g., the Constitutional Court in its 2019 decision determined that one of the forms of discrimination prohibited by the Constitution of the LR is the restriction of human rights because one's gender identity and/or sexual orientation, which can also be considered as a humiliation of human dignity. In 2021 The Kaunas district court made a decision regarding the right of a minor applicant to change the gender record to the opposite gender in the civil status documents, accordingly, changing the person's first and last name. After this decision, the courts received more requests to change the gender records in civil status documents for minors.

21. Amendments to the Law on Vocational Education have been made, establishing certain rights for students with SEN due to intellectual disability to receive scholarships, support, education with the same right as everyone else. Drafts of updated descriptions of the provision of educational assistance at school are being prepared, providing better conditions for children to receive such assistance. It is planned to implement a measure that will ensure better access to pre-school (including compulsory) and pre-primary education for children experiencing social exclusion, poverty or social risks that can lead to social exclusion.

22. In 2018 the concepts “social risk family”, “social risk child” and “social risk person” were removed from legal acts as discriminatory and inconsistent with the principles of human rights. The list of risk families and risk children that was compiled before is gone too. This ensures that families and children are not discriminated against because of their social status, do not experience social exclusion, stigmatization. Social services focus now on all children and their families, not only those who experience social risks.

23. Various awareness-raising activities aimed at reducing negative attitudes towards children left without parental care have been implemented. In 2023 National Action Plan for the Implementation of the Child Guarantee System in 2023–2030 was approved – it includes 38 measures aimed at combating child poverty and social exclusion, paying special attention to the most vulnerable groups of children.

Reply to paragraph 3 (b) of the list of issues

24. All legal acts of the LR, which regulate the protection of children’s rights, clearly state that when making any decision that has a direct or indirect impact on children, it is necessary to rely on the best interests of the child.

25. This principle is equally interpreted and applied in court proceedings when making decisions – e.g., this is reflected in the consistently formed practice of the Supreme Court of Lithuania, which developed the concept of the best interests of the child. According to it, child’s representatives, other persons, legal entities must follow the principle of priority of the child’s best interests. This principle is applied on the basis of the specific situation of an individual child, assessing and determining what is best for the child now and in the future, taking into account the child’s opinion, his/her identity, the preservation of the family environment and family ties and the maintenance of relationships, the development of the child’s needs in accordance with his/her age, abilities and maturity and ensuring the child’s proper development, physical and mental safety, ensuring the child’s right to health and education and other special needs of the child. The child must be provided with such protection as is necessary for his/her well-being, using all possible complex measures.

26. From 2023 August 1 professional psychologists have started work in four territorial units of CP Service, who listen to children in particularly complex, conflictual divorce situations, together with a lawyer prepare a conclusion for the court, offering the solutions that meet the best interests of the child. The principle of the best interests of the child must be applied in all other processes as well, e.g., related to case management, foster care and adoption, etc.

27. The best interests of the child are also considered when determining the legal status of children under the LLSF and making other decisions. The appointment of the UFM representative, the rights granted to UFM, and the accommodation procedure are clearly defined in the LLSF. Amendments to the LLSF have been made, which allow for a faster and simplified procedure to appoint a representative of the LLSF in cases where a state of war, a state of emergency, or an emergency due to a massive influx of foreigners has been declared. It is clearly established that vulnerable persons and families with minors may be detained only in exceptional cases, considering the best interests of the child and vulnerable persons.

28. Information about children’s participation in decision-making is provided under question 23.

Reply to paragraph 3 (c) of the list of issues

29. Children are members of the Interinstitutional Child Welfare Council under GRL.

30. The necessity of hearing the child’s opinion on any issues related to him/her is enshrined not only in LFPRC, but also in other legal acts regulating the protection of children’s rights. E.g., CP Service is obliged by law to listen to the child’s opinion and take it into account when assessing the child’s situation, choosing a place of temporary accommodation or temporary care, a foster family, and a place of care. The child’s opinion

is also heard and noted during case management meetings, child welfare committees' meetings, court proceedings in cases involving disputes over children, etc.

31. In 2023 CP Service prepared and published "Methodological guide for listening to the child's opinion", intended for CP Service specialists. However, because the need to listen to the child's opinion constantly arises for other specialists too, this guide was also presented to other organizations, institutions and agencies working with children, and shared publicly too.

32. For additional information, see question 23.

Reply to paragraph 4 (a) of the list of issues

33. Measures to help families expecting a child and in the first years of a child's life are developed. E.g., there is a measure implemented in health field: "Development of home visitation early intervention model". The goal is to strengthen parenting skills, to provide the support needed during pregnancy, after birth and in the first year of a child's life. 13 pilot projects under this measure are being implemented, 325 families are visited.

34. MH created a working group to prepare a description of the procedure for the provision and finance of early intervention (ambulatory) services for families during pregnancy and before the child turns 2 years old. It is hoped that such services could be provided as routine, thus ensuring help and prevention for Lithuanian children in the prenatal, postnatal period and until the child turns two years old.

35. In the social field, from 2022 individual care workers started to work with families experiencing social risk with children under 24 months of age, and with families with children with developmental disorders and/or disabilities up to 36 months of age.

36. Currently, MSSL together with MH are discussing other measures to strengthen quality support for families expecting or having a baby. E.g., it is planned to include in the training program for 2024 (intended for social workers, individual care workers, and personal assistants) of the Centre for the Improvement of Professional Competences the parts on the signs and recognition of postpartum depression.

Reply to paragraph 4 (b) of the list of issues

37. In 2021 amendments to the Law on Citizenship entered into force, establishing better conditions for children:

(a) Children born to stateless persons living in Lithuania, whether permanently or temporarily, regardless of their place of birth, acquire LR citizenship at birth;

(b) A child whose one of the parents is stateless and living in LR, regardless of whether permanently or temporarily, and the other parent is unknown, acquires LR citizenship at birth, regardless of child's place of birth;

(c) In cases where a person under the age of 18 applies for the granting of LR citizenship through the naturalization procedure, he/she is not subject to the requirements to take the state language exam, the basic exam of the LR Constitution and to have a legal source of livelihood. A stateless person under the age of 18, born in the territory of the LR, may be granted citizenship of the LR if he/she has legally resided in the LR for the past 5 years, has not acquired the citizenship of another country, has the right to reside at the time of submitting the application for the granting of citizenship of the LR and making a decision on the granting of citizenship of LR.

Reply to paragraph 4 (c) of the list of issues

38. Various educational events and other activities are constantly implemented. E.g., from 2021 community officers of the Lithuanian police implement the measure "Internet culture. Prevention of cyberbullying". In 2020 they participated in events organized by general

education schools, published relevant information in various sources. CP Service started public discussions on the topic of social networks in 2023.

39. Child Rights Line was launched in November 2022 – children and adults can consult on all questions related to children’s rights. Questions can also be asked by e-mail. Line can also be used to report about PVCRC (children can do it too). To create the smoothest possible process of submitting complaints, the rules for examining requests and complaints from individuals have been approved by the CP Service.

40. In 2016 amendments to the EL were made, thanks to which many positive changes were made in regard to violence (incl. bullying) prevention and intervention. In 2017 Recommendations for the implementation of violence prevention in schools have been approved by the MESS. During 2019–2023 various measures in the field of bullying prevention (methodical materials, recommendations, etc.) were developed. The implementation of the “Bullying box” measure in Lithuanian schools continues (502 schools apply it). MESS publicly publishes a list of preventive and social-emotional skills development programs recommended for implementation in schools (schools can choose which program to implement).

41. The Safer Internet project is being implemented. During the implementation of the program in all EU countries, national safer internet centres were created, which currently operate in 30 countries and are united by the INSAFE and INHOPE networks. The project aims to make the Internet a reliable environment, to involve children and young people in the creation of a safer Internet space.

42. NEA trained 120 specialists in the fields of human trafficking and bullying and violence prevention in all municipalities of Lithuania. Specialists conducted classes in schools, advised pupils, parents and teachers, school child welfare committees. Various methodological materials have been prepared.

Reply to paragraph 4 (d) of the list of issues

43. The Lithuanian police cooperates with the US National Centre for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC). In 2022 about 4,900 reports were received from NCMEC on the discovery of sexual content (including pornographic and sexual abuse materials) on the Internet, and in first 3 months of 2023 – 2200 reports¹¹⁹.

44. CRA supervises how persons providing services for access to public computer networks (Internet) (hereinafter referred to as service providers) ensure the installation and operation of filtering tools approved by CRA for harmful Internet content that has a negative impact on minors. From 2019 annual surveys of service providers (children education institutions and public libraries) are conducted regarding the use of filtering tools at access points of public computer networks (Internet) where minors can visit and surf the Internet. Since the first CRA survey conducted in 2019, the number of service providers who provided information increased 2.6 times (in 2019 – 179, in 2023 – 818), as well as the share of service providers using mandatory filtering measures increased by 50 percentage points (in 2019 – 43 (25%), in 2023 – 606 (75%). Starting in 2023, CRA experts go to institutions and not only check whether service providers filter Internet content with CRA-approved filtering tools, but also advise on the use, installation and other issues of these tools. Also, CRA has approved 10 filtering devices tools and regularly retests these tools.

45. CRA also administers the website www.esaugumas.lt, which provides Internet users with information on various Internet security issues.

Reply to paragraph 5 (a) of the list of issues

46. There are many different measures available to help parents raise their children in non-violent ways. E.g., free consultation line “Parent’s Line” is financed; positive parenting training is provided in complex services for family projects; two “One Stop Centres” pilot projects are financed (during which, among other things, new methodologies are tested, designed to help parents in non-violent ways to solve challenges that arise, for example,

during the child's adolescence years). Evidence-based services and programmes are implemented too – Family Conference, “Incredible Years” positive parenting program, MDFT program (intended for children with complex behavioral problems and their family members). Some public health offices also organize positive parenting skills groups for parents and foster parents of children of various age groups. Since 2017, when corporal punishment in family settings was banned, various informational and educational activities have been carried out. There are also efforts to ensure the availability of information in various languages. E.g., in 2020 an information leaflet was prepared for parents, and other caretakers of children and children, about the rights of the child, the child's right to be protected from any form of violence, including corporal punishment, reminding that the upbringing of children must be based on non-violent methods. Leaflets are prepared in Lithuanian, Polish, Russian, English, and Arabic languages. If necessary, all these measures can be presented in more detail.

Reply to paragraph 5 (b) of the list of issues

47. From 2020 community officers of the Lithuanian police must implement the measure “Meetings in communities on the promotion of intolerance of domestic violence”. In 2023 July 1 changes to the LPADV entered into force – an urgent protection order against violence was introduced into the legal system. The register of incidents recorded by the police has been improved, and a new domestic violence system has been implemented to assess the risk of domestic violence.

48. To create a safer environment for children, in 2021 amendments to the CC and CPC entered into force, related to an additional measure of criminal impact – the obligation to notify about the change of place of residence for persons who have committed criminal acts related to sexual violence against children, child trafficking.

49. From 2022 Child Rights Line is active. Additionally, Children Helpline has been financed for many years – if during the call, it becomes clear that the child needs urgent help or that the situation is related to PVCR – there is an opportunity to connect the child or adult who called with child rights protection specialists so that the child receives the necessary help as soon as possible. To facilitate children's communication, children can contact the Children Helpline not only by phone, but also by chat or e-mail.

50. CP Service responds to reports about PVRC 24/7, every day of the week (including holidays, weekends, and all other days). CP Service is obliged by law to respond to reports of possible violence against children very quickly.

51. In 2023 the five-party agreement between MSSL, CP Service, CRPO, the General Prosecutor's Office and the Police Department was significantly updated. The updates have clarified the terms and actions regarding the exchange of information and inter-institutional action in cases where possible sexual violence against children is encountered. It should be noted too that there is a requirement in the law for every person and every institution, organization or agency to report about PVCR, especially when it comes to violence against children.

Reply to paragraph 5 (c) of the list of issues

52. Help Centre, operating since 2016 June 3 is the only specialized centre in Lithuania, where all services necessary for investigating cases of sexual violence against children are gathered under one roof. The Help Centre provides free short-term complex assistance to children who have suffered from sexual violence and their family members. Considering the fact that such a centre is the only one in Lithuania, the Help Centre also provides a free accommodation service in cases where children come from other municipalities. To strengthen the quality of the Help Centre's activities, it is planned to move this centre under CP Service.

53. Also, child-friendly interrogation rooms are available in 40 courts and 65 police stations throughout Lithuania.

Reply to paragraph 5 (d) of the list of issues

54. In 2021 an Educational Centre has been established in the Help Centre, which carries out preventive activities for children and educational activities for children's relatives, specialists working with children and families. In the Educational Centre, interactive games are used for children's education, aim of which is to develop children's safe behaviour skills, the recognition of dangers hidden in social situations, to deepen children's knowledge about the body, to expand children's awareness of the possibilities of help in the event of a risky situation or in the face of inappropriate behaviour. Help Centre organizes trainings for specialists of various institutions every year. Methodological material has been prepared as well.

55. In 2022 38 municipalities have municipal youth affairs coordinators who, as a separate activity, work with young people on the topic of domestic violence prevention. In 2022 YAA organized activities related to sexual violence prevention.

Reply to paragraph 5 (e) of the list of issues

56. Legislation clearly regulates the procedures for the provision of information that is prohibited or has a negative impact on minors to the CRA and the powers of the CRA to act. CRA has the right to issue mandatory instructions ("Notice and Take Down") to service providers of Lithuanian electronic information hosting or public communication networks regarding the removal of prohibited information from their service stations or the cancellation of access to it, and the service providers are obliged to comply with these instructions.

57. CRA since 2007 has established and administers an internet hotline (since 2019 called – "Clean Internet"). Through this line, all Internet users can report information found on the Internet that is prohibited for distribution or has a negative impact on minors (e.g., public bullying in cyberspace; information with pornographic content (including child sexual exploitation); information related to discrimination, etc.). Once these reports are investigated and violations are identified, they are forwarded to the appropriate entity for further investigation, depending on the type of violation identified. CRA Internet Hotline is a member of an international association of Internet hotlines INHOPE (since 2008).

58. In 2022 September CRA has signed a cooperation agreement with the Canadian NGO "Canadian Center for Child Protection" and became part of the "Arachnid" project, which aims to combat child sexual exploitation material. Thus, the opportunities to detect and remove child sexual exploitation material as soon as possible increased in Lithuania. In addition, CRA from 2022 uses an innovative solution – an automatic search tool based on artificial intelligence, which searches for prohibited Internet content (pornography and child sexual exploitation material) in the Lithuanian IP address space and, upon detection, reports it to the CRA Internet hotline "Clean Internet".

Reply to paragraph 6 (a) of the list of issues

59. LFPRC clearly establishes that the separation of a child from the family is possible only as a last resort and only after all possible assistance measures to the family were applied. LFPRC also establishes that poverty for objective reasons cannot be considered as a child neglect.

60. In order to protect children from being separated from their parents, a number of different measures have been implemented in the last few years, such as: measures to help parents raise children in non-violent ways (see 5(a)); evidence-based services (e.g., Family Conference, MDFT Program, Incredible Years Program); other new services (e.g., services of individual care workers, pilots of mechanisms of strengthening social integration for children/youth from disadvantaged backgrounds, "One Stop" Centres, etc.). After the reform of the child rights protection system, new mechanisms were created to help families in which PVCR were identified (e.g., case management, mobile teams). Efforts to strengthen preventive work with families were made too, e.g., preventive services were established in SSL. From 2020 families can apply for case management even in cases where no PVCR were

identified in the family, but there is a need for complex assistance. Complex services are available to all families in all municipalities. In 2020 a new mechanism was created – a child’s temporary supervision – which additionally protects the child from being separated from the family even in cases of PVCR. The number of children taken from their families is decreasing.

61. In 2023 national action plan for the implementation of the Child Guarantee in 2023–2030 in Lithuania was approved, with 38 measures aimed at combating child poverty and social exclusion, paying special attention to the most vulnerable groups of children. A whole range of measures aimed at strengthening families, including families in crisis situations, is provided for in the Family Policy Strengthening Development Program.

Reply to paragraph 6 (b) of the list of issues

62. The institutional care of children under 3 years old is banned by the law, except in certain extreme cases, but only with the approval of CP Service. The large old institutions are being restructured – the last of them can continue their activities only until December 31, 2023. Already in 2020 it was prohibited to establish care for new children in these institutions (except for short-term social care up to 3 months). New forms of family- and community-based care were created, such as professional foster families, CBCCH.

63. Financial and non-financial support and assistance measures are combined in promoting family-based childcare. In 2022 childcare benefits were significantly increased. The childcare benefit also is now linked to the age of the child (higher allowance is also paid if the child has a disability). Foster Care Centres were established in all municipalities of Lithuania – these are service institutions that provide services to all types of foster settings and children placed there. Adoptive parents can also apply for services. Various awareness-raising campaigns have been carried out consistently for several years, aimed at encouraging people to foster or adopt children, to change negative attitudes towards children left without parental care. In 2021 the Adoption and Foster Care Line has been launched. Investments are made in the competences of specialists working with fostered children and their families (various trainings, other activities are organized).

64. To further promote family-based care, professional foster care model is in further development, also, significant updates are being made to the GIMK program (according to which foster parents, professional foster parents, members of foster care-based households, adoptive parents are trained).

65. An important part of the deinstitutionalization of the childcare system is the development and strengthening of the quality of support and services for families raising children (see question 6(a)). More information can be provided during the session on Lithuania’s CRC report.

Reply to paragraph 6 (c) of the list of issues

66. Monitoring of care settings is ensured through continuous procedures, covering all children placements. CP Service supervises all cases of temporary and permanent care of the child in the foster families. CP Service visits the fostered child, and writes a visitation report after the conduction of the care review. When visiting the child, the CP Service assesses how the foster parent takes care of the child’s physical and mental safety, health and education, what style of upbringing of the child is applied, how the foster parent cooperates with the Foster Care Centre, how funds allocated to support the child are used, how the child’s property is administered, if a foster parent does not prevent the child from communication with the parents (if such communication is allowed), maintains relations with them, takes care of the child’s free time, prepares the child for an independent life, etc.

67. CP Service, together with SSSD, supervises the quality of activities of Foster Care Centres, thus ensuring the high-quality performance of these centres.

68. Accordingly, the quality of childcare in the institution (both old-type child care institutions and CBCCH) is supervised by SSSD. SSSD provides methodological assistance

regarding the application of social care norms, supervises and evaluates the quality of social care, issues licenses to provide social care, suspends and cancels their validity, and supervises and controls compliance with the conditions of licensed activity, accounts licensed social service institutions providing social care. In cases where the PVCR of specific children are determined, the information is transferred to CP Service. Therefore, continuous and consistent monitoring of all childcare settings is ensured in Lithuania.

Reply to paragraph 7 (a) of the list of issues

69. In 2022 guidelines for the development of inclusion in education were prepared. A description of the progress measure “Implementing Inclusive Education” was prepared. Various guidelines, memos, recommendations for schools, Pedagogical Psychological Services, etc. were developed, including regarding work during lockdown due to the COVID-19. Various trainings for teachers and educational support specialists were organized.

70. In 2022 for the first time, other qualification acquisition study programs were carried out, where it was possible to acquire the qualifications of a special pedagogue, speech therapist, pedagogue of deaf or typhoid pedagogue for persons with a pedagogue qualification. Certain measures have been applied to increase the attractiveness of studies in these specialties.

71. In 2023 The Lithuanian Centre for Inclusion in Education has started its activities in Vilnius, which will act as a national expert institution. The centre will propose and test the new tools of inclusive education, innovative educational strategies, provide methodological assistance to specialists, and coordinate the improvement of their competences. Will provide short-term educational support and counseling for children with SEN and their parents, pedagogical workers, teacher assistants. In 2022 424.45 thousand Eur were invested in the adaptation of public schools for persons with disabilities.

72. The description of the creation and operation of regional special education centres (8 such centres are planned) that will provide consultations on the education of children with SEN to schools has been approved.

73. A description of the procedures and financing conditions for the creation of groups and classes open to pupils’ diversity, and the organization of education in them, has been prepared. According to them from September 1st, 2023, 100 general-purpose classes will be established, where up to 3 students with high and very high SEN will be educated, and a second teacher, a teacher’s assistant will participate in the educational process. In 2022 the theme of inclusion has been approved as one of the national priorities of qualification improvement programmes for 2023–2025.

74. The payment conditions for the educational support specialists have been improved. Although educational assistance is an independent function of municipalities, the MESS consistently supports municipalities and increases the financing of educational assistance in schools, allocates funding for the establishment of educational assistance specialist positions.

Reply to paragraph 7 (b) of the list of issues

75. New documents relevant to inclusion have been approved. E.g., the Millennium Schools Program has been approved to strengthen inclusion. The goal is to create integral, optimal and high-quality educational conditions by 2030 to reduce student achievement gaps in every Lithuanian municipality. Activities will be implemented in 270 schools. 22% of their pupils receive financial or other support (are from a group of lower social, economic, cultural status).

76. The funding guidelines of the regional measure “Increasing access to education for children experiencing exclusion” have been approved to finance the adaptation of schools according to the principles of universal design and to purchase the means of transport. 150.875 million Eur are planned for 2023–2029. Eur. Funds are planned for adapting the educational environment, acquiring and implementing evaluation and educational

methodologies, attracting specialists and improving their competences, testing new educational organization models, and expanding educational support.

Reply to paragraph 8 of the list of issues

77. Some paediatric specialties are on increase, other – on decrease (see table below). Some specializations are still very young in Lithuania (see Annex 11).

Reply to paragraph 9 (a) of the list of issues

78. In Lithuania, reproductive health services are integrated into the health care system. All persons insured by PSD, who have the right to personal health care services, can receive all necessary services covered by the funds of the PSD, if these services meet the established requirements. A referral for specialized personal health care services is issued by a family doctor. A doctor's referral is not necessary when applying for emergency services. Services for pregnant women, mothers in labour and new-borns are provided in accordance with the description of the health care procedure for pregnant women, mothers in labour and new-borns. In 2022 the institutions providing these services are obliged to inform the patient discharged from the hospital about the symptoms of postpartum depression and the personal health care institutions that provide services to patients experiencing symptoms of postpartum depression.

79. According to the order of the MH, the Levonorgestrel contraceptive is prescribed and reimbursed for girls aged 15 to 17 according to the procedure established by the MH, while for women aged 18 to 20, the contraceptive Levonorgestrel is prescribed and reimbursed 100% if they consult a gynaecologist for contraception.

80. From 2023 the updated description of the procedure for the organization and provision of abortion services entered into force. The document more clearly describes the termination of pregnancy service (counselling the patient before the termination of pregnancy, carrying out the termination of pregnancy and care after the termination of pregnancy), establishes termination of pregnancy with medicinal products.

Reply to paragraph 9 (b) of the list of issues

81. Many measures are being implemented in this area – more information can be provided during the session on Lithuania's CRC report.

82. E.g., the Early Intervention Program is being implemented for young people aged 14-21 who experiment or irregularly use alcohol and/or drugs (except tobacco). In schools, the prevention of the use of psychoactive substances is carried out in two directions – social-emotional education and the prevention of the use of psychoactive substances. 5 preventive programs from the 22 available programs recommended by the MESS are aimed at the general prevention of the use of psychoactive substances. Schools also implement two other preventive programs that supplement general education.

83. In 2021 in accordance with the European Prevention Curriculum (EUPC), the competences of specialists working in the field of prevention of the use of psychoactive substances have been improved – the innovative measure “European Prevention Curriculum” has been developed and applied. During 2021–2022 national online seminar and training activities were organized.

84. The Department of Drug, Tobacco and Alcohol Control annually prepares awareness raising campaigns aimed at children and young people on the most relevant topics of psychoactive substance use; various methodical publications are developed, training for specialists in response to current needs are organized. Website www.askritiskas.lt is available – it aims to inform young people (from the age of 14) about psychoactive substances, the effects and risks of their use.

85. The MDFT program is being implemented, which also contributes to solving the problem of the tendency to use alcohol and other psychoactive substances. In 2022 amendments to the SSL entered into force, which established preventive social services in municipalities. From 2024, more amendments to the SSL will establish psychological and social rehabilitation for children with addictions in the community. Children's day care centres, open work with youth and mobile work with youth operate as a preventive measure too.

Reply to paragraph 9 (c) of the list of issues

86. A lot of measures are implemented in this area – more information can be provided additionally.

87. Psychological well-being and mental health promotion services are provided through 49 public health offices in all municipalities, which are very popular among young people: in 2020 the number of 11–17-year-olds who received services was 1400 persons; in 2021 – 3874 in 2022 – 5513.

88. Primary mental health services provided at 116 Mental Health Centres are free and do not require a referral. Services are provided by a team of specialists, including a psychiatrist, a child and adolescent psychiatrist, a mental health nurse, a social worker and a medical psychologist. In 2022 there were 83 inpatient psychiatric beds and 9-day inpatients for children.

89. Legal regulation was improved in many areas (e.g., in relation to psychosocial rehabilitation services for children; suicide crisis etc.). A working group has been established by the MH, to improve situation related to mental health care services for children and adolescents. New measures are being tested, e.g., “Introduction of the adapted and extended model of the provision of youth-friendly healthcare services”.

90. Mental health literacy training and other training for school staff is being conducted. Activities related to the prevention of suicides, coordination of systematic assistance etc. are implemented. To reduce the stigmatization of mental health, the initiative of mental health ambassadors is implemented. Children's self-harm and suicide attempts are on decrease.

91. Mobile psychological aid crisis teams are established in Lithuania, consisting of at least 2 crisis psychologists. Assistance is provided across Lithuania in cases of severe crisis.

92. Various measures aimed at improving the working conditions of psychologists in schools have been implemented. Schools must implement at least one preventive program; schools and Pedagogical Psychological Services (or educational support services) employ psychologists who carry out educational work with pupils and teachers, provide psychological consultations, and if more serious mental health problems are noticed, refer for further help. Methodological recommendations, memos for school specialists about crises, suicides, psychological violence, bullying, prevention of the use of psychoactive substances and promotion of a healthy lifestyle are being prepared; supervisions are organized for school specialists. Measures are being implemented to ensure the quality of psychological support services in schools and Pedagogical Psychological Services. In 2018–2020 funds were additionally allocated to increase the availability of psychological help in educational institutions, through the project “Creating a Safe Environment at School II”.

93. In 2019 NEA prepared the suicide prevention program and its methodological materials. During 2020–2021 20 general education schools participated in the suicide prevention program. Methodological publications on suicide crisis recognition and help options have been prepared.

Reply to paragraph 10 of the list of issues

94. More information can be provided additionally.

95. An algorithm for municipalities on how to ensure the provision during quarantine of food rations to children receiving free meals at school was prepared; recommendations on

the organization of distance education were developed; the conditions for pupils to participate in distance education were assessed and help was provided to those who faced difficulties (e.g. conditions were created to use a school computer, tablet or mobile phone at home or to buy them additionally, while also providing an internet connection). Children's day care centres joined helping children to participate in distance education. The child rights protection system worked without major restriction in relation to the assessment of reports about PVCR. Various activities for specialists of educational institutions were organized, aimed at ensuring the quality of their work. Various financial measures have been implemented to help children and families, as well as measures to keep the maximum number of people in the labour market, to return those who lose their jobs to the labour market as soon as possible, and to ensure adequate income and support for those who have fallen out of it. NEA prepared recommendations for Pedagogical Psychological Services of municipalities for assessment activities under quarantine conditions. Pedagogical Psychological Services had to ensure that conditions for the remote education of students with SEN and for the provision of educational assistance are in place.

96. To ensure high-quality psychological and emotional support, further consultations related to parenting skills were provided. A new section "Emotional and psychological support" has been created on the MSSL website. It included information on how to help yourself and your loved ones during quarantine, where to apply for help provided by specialists and information about professional counseling (supervisions). To better respond to the emerging needs of families, it was allowed to expand the range of services financed within complex services for the family projects. In cooperation with MH, a free Emotional Support Line and an Emotional Support website have been created (www.pagalbasau.lt).

97. 49 measures have been implemented in accordance with the 2021–2022 Action Plan for Reducing the Long-term Negative Consequences of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Individual and Public Mental Health. The National Action Plan for the Implementation of the Child Guarantee System in 2023–2030 in Lithuania was approved. It envisages 38 measures aimed at combating child poverty and social exclusion, paying special attention to the most vulnerable groups of children.

Reply to paragraph 11 (a) of the list of issues

98. The EL established that quality education must be ensured for everyone, regardless of social status, nationality. To ensure equal opportunities for children who lack any resources, educational support specialists are involved to help these children. Part of the costs of the pupils related to school is covered. Children experiencing social risk are given compulsory education according to the pre-school education program, and the costs of their education, meals and transportation are covered by the state budget. Children experiencing social risks, including Roma children, are provided with educational assistance.

99. Education is adapted to pupils according to their strengths and abilities, and if necessary, individualized according to the recommendations of the Pedagogical Psychological Services. A child who faces learning difficulties is given learning support to eliminate gaps. Access to education for socially excluded families living in poverty, children who do not study in school etc. is ensured by providing them with social services and educational assistance through targeted social and educational programs. Targeted programs for the inclusion of out-of-school children in educational activities are being implemented. To ensure access to education, pupils who live in villages and towns more than 3 kilometres away from the school, must be transported to and from school.

100. For children from 0 to 18 years old (and in some cases – until 21 or 23 years old) when they have severe and very severe SEN, who are educated according to pre-school, pre-primary school, general education, primary vocational training programs, and their parents, other caregivers, coordinated educational assistance, social and health care services are ensured.

Reply to paragraph 11 (b) of the list of issues

101. The data of the study “Situation of persons of Roma nationality in 2020” shows that the situation of Roma in education is improving (see Annex 13).

102. The Department of National Minorities under the GRL, in order to ensure the integration of Roma children into general education schools, supports non-formal education of Roma children and youth empowerment projects. Every year, funding is allocated to the projects of the Roma Society Centre and the Multicultural Day Centre for Children and Youth “Paðek Pritapti” (Help to Adapt), which work with Roma children and youth. The goal is to reduce the social exclusion of Roma children and youth, promote tolerance through education, non-formal and inclusive education. From 2019 the Centre functions as an Open Youth Space, which promotes meaningful employment of Roma youth. Department since 2016 is implementing the project “Local Roma platforms – a path towards cooperation with municipalities” and through cooperation with mentioned multicultural day care centre, supports annually 4–5 projects aimed at empowering Roma youth through sports, volunteering and culture.

Reply to paragraph 12 (a) of the list of issues

103. It is established in the LLSF that vulnerable persons and families with foreign minors may be detained only in special cases, considering the best interests of the child and vulnerable persons. SBGS officials, when preparing submissions to the court regarding the detention of foreigners whose families include minor children, assess all the circumstances, and evaluate the best interests of the child and usually submit a proposal to the court to assign foreigners an alternative measure to detention. Even in cases where foreigners are detained by a court decision, minor family members are not detained, but are accommodated in the SBGS’s Aliens Registration Centre together with their parents. The centre has one dormitory for vulnerable asylum seekers and a second one for families and women in detention. Both dormitories are adapted for persons with disabilities, have all the necessary conditions for living, ensuring the privacy of the residents, and there are recreational areas nearby, also suitable for children.

104. UFM are not detained or accommodated in SBGS structural units – other provisions of the LLSF apply to them, and they are accommodated in the Refugee Reception Centre in Rukla in accordance with established procedures and by decision of the CP Service.

Reply to paragraph 12 (b) of the list of issues

105. The performance of the age determination test of foreigners is regulated by the LLSF. LLSF establishes that the age determination investigation is carried out when there are reasonable doubts about the foreigner’s stated age, and that the age determination investigation of a minor foreigner is carried out only after receiving the consent of his/her legal representative or representative. The UFM age determination test is carried out according to the “Description of the procedure for determining the age, accommodation and other procedural actions of unaccompanied minor foreigners who are not asylum seekers established in the Republic of Lithuania”, and for asylum seekers – according to the “Description of the procedure for granting and cancelling asylum in the Republic of Lithuania”. SBGS officials, before organizing an investigation to determine the age of a foreigner, provide the foreigner with information in a language he/she understands about the verification procedure and the possible consequences of the results.

Reply to paragraph 12 (c) of the list of issues

106. LFPRC and the functioning of the child rights protection system established in it are valid for all children in the territory of the LR, does not matter what their status is. In addition, when solving UFM issues, LLSF is applied too. Some changes to legal acts have been made that allow for a faster and simplified procedure to ensure the protection of UFM children,

such as changes to the LLSF, which allow for the faster appointment of a UFM representative. Various measures were implemented (some in cooperation with NGOs) aimed at helping children from Ukraine integrate into society, the education system, receive psychological help, employment, etc.

107. CP Service in all cases, when it receives a notification about a child separated from their parents, including children left without parental care, evaluates such notification as a case of a child without a representative under the law and conducts an assessment of the situation of each child. CP Service also makes decisions on placement of UFM who are not asylum seekers, initiates the search and determination of a guardian, provision of services – all these actions were carried out for all children who arrived from Ukraine too. After the establishment of care of the UFM who arrived from Ukraine, the CP Service performs supervision of these placements. CP Service also participates in UFM interviewing process. Children who have arrived from Ukraine (like all other children in migration) have the right to notify CP Service and/or other competent authorities about their violated rights. All reports about PVCR related to UFM and other children are treated with the same procedures and algorithms as all other PVCR. Information about the Child Rights Line is shared directly with Ukrainian children in Lithuania.

Reply to paragraph 13 (a) of the list of issues

108. In courts, disputes related to family relations and children's rights are examined by judges specializing in these areas. In 2023 draft laws were approved, which, among other things, aim to create conditions for the development of the specialization of judges. It is expected that from 2024 July 1 in the district courts of Lithuania (their chambers), conditions will be created for all district court judges (who wish so) to specialize.

109. In 2022 in the EU Justice Scoreboard, Lithuanian courts are singled out among countries that implement a large number of measures to ensure the administration of justice that meets the interests of the child: judges are trained to communicate with children participating in the process, children have the right to receive legal aid, and are heard in a specially adapted environment. Judges must constantly improve their professional qualifications: introductory and mandatory qualification upgrading is set for them. Every year, the MJ proposes topics for training programs for judges related to ensuring the rights of the child in the court process.

110. The courts have a team of psychologists who help to ensure the emotional safety of all children participating in the court process during interrogations. Forensic psychologists help to properly implement the procedural rights and guarantees of minors in courts, help to interrogate a minor, considering his/her social and psychological maturity.

Reply to paragraph 13 (b) of the list of issues

111. According to the CPC, the participation of a defense attorney in the case is necessary if the case involves acts in which a minor is suspected or accused. In practice, a state-guaranteed legal aid lawyer who has experience in such cases is chosen to defend a suspect or an accused minor.

112. In 2022 a feasibility study of the effectiveness and quality of the state-guaranteed legal aid system was carried out. According to its' results, targeted measures for improving the quality of lawyers' services were planned and amendments to the SGLAL were adopted in 2023 aimed at: 1) promoting the specialization of lawyers by determining the organization of special training for lawyers providing state-guaranteed legal aid in sensitive cases (e.g., related to minors). The training is planned at the beginning of 2024, and lawyers who have completed them will be paid a higher salary; 2) The Lithuanian Bar Association (an association uniting all lawyers) must prepare practical recommendations for lawyers regarding the effective provision of legal aid in specific cases; 3) improvement of service provision supervision through a) organization of surveys of service recipients about the provided services; b) approval of the rules for examining complaints regarding the quality of state-guaranteed legal aid.

113. In 2023 training related to the protection of the interests of minors in court proceedings was organized for lawyers providing state-guaranteed legal aid.

Reply to paragraph 14 (a) of the list of issues

114. The CC establishes the definition of the crime of buying or selling a child, which includes all the crimes defined in the CRC Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography. It is alleged that the person who offered to buy, otherwise acquired, sold, bought, otherwise transferred, acquired, recruited, transported or held in captivity a child knowing or intending that, without regard to the consent of the child, the child would be unlawfully adopted, used in slavery or similar to slavery conditions, prostitution, pornography, other forms of sexual exploitation, forced, fictitious marriage, forced labour or services, including begging, committing a criminal act or other exploitation purposes, shall be punished by deprivation of liberty from three to twelve years. Also, it is stipulated that the one who committed the specified act to two or more children or a minor, or endangering the life of the victim, or participating in an organized group, or knowing or seeking to have the organ, tissue or cells of the victim be taken, or being in the state an employee or a person performing public administration functions and in the exercise of authority shall be punished by deprivation of liberty from five to fifteen years. A person may be prosecuted too for preparing and attempting to commit specified criminal acts.

Reply to paragraph 14 (b) of the list of issues

115. Crimes related to the purchase or sale of a child enshrined in the CC are classified as very serious crimes, that is, they are subject to a maximum statute of limitations of 25 years, calculated from the moment of committing the criminal act.

Reply to paragraph 14 (c) of the list of issues

116. CC contains regulated provisions related to criminal liability for crimes stipulated in international treaties (universal jurisdiction). It is stated that “individuals are liable according to the CC, regardless of their nationality and place of residence, as well as the place where the crime was committed and whether the committed act is punished according to the laws of the place where the crime was committed, when they commit crimes for which liability is stipulated on the basis of international treaties: [...] 3) buying or selling a child”. Therefore, the provisions of criminal laws in Lithuania provide for universal jurisdiction for the crimes defined in the CRC Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography, and the requirement of double criminality does not apply to them.

Reply to paragraph 14 (d) of the list of issues

117. Pursuant to the resolution of the Council of Judges, which approved the 2019 training programs for judges, 2019 trainings were organized for the judges of district and district courts dealing with criminal cases on relevant topics: “Victimized minors” and “Trafficking in human beings”.

118. In the Lithuanian legal system, no sanctions, including fines, are applied to the victims of the crimes defined in the CRC Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography. CAO includes responsibility for prostitution. However, it is established that a person is not a subject to this responsibility if a person engaged in prostitution was involved in prostitution while materially, due to service or otherwise dependent, or involved in prostitution using physical or mental coercion or deception, or in any way involved in prostitution as a minor and/or suffered from human trafficking and is recognized as a victim in criminal proceedings.

Reply to paragraph 15 (a) of the list of issues

119. In 2022, a coordination working group has been established in the Operational Police to protect refugees from Ukraine from human trafficking. The action plan of this working group was approved. The Police Department and the National Association Against Human Trafficking, implementing the Plan, organized in 2022 trainings for Ukrainians employed by the Police Department and working at registration centres on how to identify cases of human trafficking. Continuous monitoring and analysis of events marked “Ukraine 2022” is carried out, periodic risk analysis is carried out, measures are implemented for the members of the Ukrainian community in Lithuania to warn of risks, threats, increase vigilance, to motivate to pay attention to self-protection, encourage reporting of violations of the law.

120. In 2023 CP Service organized a meeting with SBGS to discuss possibilities of solution of UFM issues related to ensuring the best interests of the child. A section has been created on the CP Service website with relevant information for Ukrainians in their own language. Information leaflets in Ukrainian, English and Russian languages about the child rights protection system in Lithuania have been prepared.

Reply to paragraph 15 (b) of the list of issues

121. The right of asylum seekers established by the LLSF is to receive free of charge necessary medical assistance, psychological assistance and social services at the SBGS, Refugee Reception Centre or other place of accommodation, as well as other state-guaranteed (free) healthcare specified in the Law on the Health System. When a person is classified as a vulnerable person, the right to use reception conditions that meet their special needs is provided. The decision on accommodation of the asylum seeker is made by the Migration Department under the Ministry of the Interior (hereinafter – MD); asylum seekers are temporarily accommodated in a SBGS or Refugee Reception Centre. Asylum seekers can be accommodated in other places of accommodation. The asylum seeker (at his/her request) may be allowed to settle in the place of residence of his/her choice by the decision of the MD. Vulnerable persons and their family members may be accommodated in other accommodation that meets their special needs. Vulnerable persons are allowed to live with a close relative or representative who is of legal age in the territory of the LR, when possible, by the decision of the MD.

122. An initial assessment of the vulnerability of asylum seekers is already carried out during the initial interview. Vulnerability can also be determined at the later stages of processing an asylum application (vulnerability can also be determined by the SBGS, the Refugee Reception Centre or another competent organization or institution). Vulnerable persons include minors.

Part two**Reply to paragraph 16 of the list of issues**

123. See Annex 8.

Part three**Reply to paragraph 17 of the list of issues**

124. It is not possible to provide data on how much funds are specifically allocated to children in the state budget in all areas, because there are no tools in Lithuania that allow determining how much funds are allocated directly to children, and which funds are classified as expenses for children, and which are not. It is possible to provide data only on funds intended for child protection system (see question 1 (c)) and on separate measures.

Reply to paragraphs 18 (a), (b), (c), (d), (e) and (f) of the list of issues

125. See Annex 6 and Annex 9.

Reply to paragraph 19 (a) of the list of issues

126. The nature and duration of the separation of the child from the family is different in different situations (see Annex 10).

Reply to paragraph 19 (b) of the list of issues

127. There are 18 remaining old-type children's social care homes (SCH) in Lithuania, and they will complete their activities by December 31, 2023. The number of children left in them is very small – these children will either reach adulthood by the end of the institutions' activities or will be placed at CBCCH or foster families. Meanwhile, there are 219 CBCCH in Lithuania:

- 2020 – SCH: 857 children, CBCCH: 799 children;
- 2021 – SCH: 415 children, CBCCH: 975 children;
- 2022 – SCH: 511 children (the increase in the number is related to children who arrived from Ukraine's care institutions), CBCCH: 836 children.

Reply to paragraph 19 (c) of the list of issues

128. In foster families:

- 2020 – 4644 children;
- 2021 – 4417 children;
- 2022 – 4994 children.

129. In the professional foster care families:

- 2020 – 198 children;
- 2021 – 210 children;
- 2022 – 244 children;

In foster care-based households:

- 2020 – 318 children;
- 2021 – 279 children;
- 2022 – 263 children.

Reply to paragraphs 19 (d) of the list of issues

130. See Annex 12.

Reply to paragraph 20 (a) of the list of issues**The total number of children with disabilities in Lithuania**

	<i>Gender</i>		<i>Level of disability</i>			<i>Total</i>
	<i>Boys</i>	<i>Girls</i>	<i>Severe</i>	<i>Moderate</i>	<i>Mild</i>	
2020	9 534	5 725	3 033	8 156	4 070	15 259
2021	9 467	5 802	3 245	8 297	3 727	15 269
2022	10 179	5 852	3 573	8 868	3 590	16 031

Reply to paragraph 20 (b) of the list of issues

131. At the end of 2022, 136 children lived in 5 social care homes for children with disabilities (hereinafter – SCH):

- 2021 – 106 children in 5 SCH;
- 2020 – children in 4 SCH;
- 2019 – 89 children in 4 SCH.

Reply to paragraph 20 (c) of the list of issues

132. No data available.

Reply to paragraphs 20 (d), (e), (f), (g) and (h) of the list of issues

133. See Annex 2, 3, 4 and 5.

Reply to paragraph 20 (i) of the list of issues

<i>Academic year</i>	<i>Number of children (ages 6–17) out of school due to disability</i>
2020–2021	51
2021–2022	39
2022–2023	45

Reply to paragraph 20 (j) of the list of issues

134. In 2021 of all children who lost parental care, 42 children were diagnosed with a disability. At the end of 2022, 159 children placed in foster care were diagnosed with a disability (80 boys and 79 girls). 22 children had a mild disability, 104 children – moderate disability, 33 children – severe disability.

Reply to paragraphs 21 (a), (b), (c), (d) and (e) of the list of issues

135. See Annex 1.

Reply to paragraph 21 (f) of the list of issues

136. Minors sentenced to arrest, serving a prison sentence or arrested are kept separately from adults in all cases.

Reply to paragraph 22 of the list of issues

137. See question 18 (e).

Reply to paragraph 23 of the list of issues

138. When planning measures aimed at children or having an impact on their lives, the aim is to assess how the content of these measures complies with the most important principles of a child rights-based approach, that is, the aim is to assess to what extent the measures meet the best interests of the child, the principle of non-discrimination, the right of every child to life in a safe environment, the opportunity to be healthy, grow and develop. Also, how measures ensure the principles of dignity, transparency and accountability, and all rights of all children, recognizing the mutual interaction and indivisibility of rights. Also, the decisions are based on the available data about the situation of children in Lithuania, which makes it possible to ensure that the measures will meet the needs of children and the realities of their lives. In addition, it is aimed to carry out additional evaluations and analyses, when possible, which allow a better understanding of the challenges experienced by children in one or another area.

139. To involve children in the decision-making process, from 2021 July 1 until 2023 June 5 the Children's Council was active as the advisory voice of CP Service. The Children's Council consisted of 15 children from all over Lithuania (10–16 years old). During the two years of this Council, 12 meetings were held. Each meeting of the Council was linked to relevant topics (e.g., prevention of bullying, violence against children, tolerance, challenges of formal and non-formal education, differences and integration of schools of national minorities and children's rights and responsibilities). Also, children participate as permanent members in the Interinstitutional Child Welfare Council under GRL. Public consultations with children on certain issues are planned, e.g., in 2024 a public consultation on a child-friendly version of the implementation of the Child Guarantee in Lithuania is planned.

Reply to paragraph 24 of the list of issues

140. See Annex 7.

Reply to paragraph 25 of the list of issues

141. Priority areas:

- Protection of children from all forms of violence;
- Further improvement (deinstitutionalization) of the childcare system;
- Reducing child poverty and social exclusion;
- Quality help for children with complex behavioural problems;
- Measures for children and families during the first 1000 days of a child's life.