



Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

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under article 35 of the Convention

Replies of Lithuania to the list of issues in relation to its combined second and third 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.



Abbreviations

ALMP	Active Labour Market Policy
CSS	Catalogue of Social Services
CC	Civil Code of the Republic of Lithuania
Convention	The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
DAD	Department for the Affairs of the Disabled under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour
DCWS	Disability and Capacity for Work Service under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour
EOO	Equal Opportunities Ombudsman of the Republic of Lithuania
EU	European Union
LDF	The Lithuanian Disability Forum
LEO	Law on Equal Opportunities of the Republic of Lithuania
LFPRPD	Law on the Fundamentals of Protection of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities of the Republic of Lithuania
LSID	Law on the Social Integration of the Disabled of the Republic of Lithuania
LSS	Law on Social Services of the Republic of Lithuania
MoC	Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Lithuania
MoE	Ministry of Environment of the Republic of Lithuania
MoESS	Ministry of Education, Science and Sport of the Republic of Lithuania
MoH	Ministry of Health of the Republic of Lithuania
MoJ	Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Lithuania
MoSSL	Ministry of Social Security and Labour of the Republic of Lithuania
MoTC	Ministry of Transport and Communications of the Republic of Lithuania
NGO	non-governmental organizations
PHCI	Personal Health Care Institution(s)
PWD/PWDs	Person(s) with disabilities
SDA	State Data Agency
SRC	Social rehabilitation services for people with disabilities in the community
SSC	Social Services Catalogue
UD	universal design principles

Replies to the list of issues (CRPD/C/LTU/Q/2-3)

A. Purpose and general obligations (arts. 1–4)

Reply to paragraph 1 (a)

1. In 2022, Lithuania passed the Law on the Fundamentals of Protection of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities of the Republic of Lithuania¹ (LFPRPD), with the aim of restructuring the social inclusion system for persons with disabilities (PWDs) and regulating their rights. The LFPRPD has abolished discriminatory terms and improved the evaluation model for disabilities. The focus is now on environmental barriers and participation, not just medical criteria. The LFPRPD has established coordination of assistance and optimization of institutions in the disability sector, along with ensuring accessibility to information (Annex 1).

Reply to paragraph 1 (b)

2. The existing evaluation of disabilities is primarily based on medical criteria and does not reflect the varying nature of disabilities and (or) necessary hours of assistance. The LFPRPD aims to assess disabilities based on an individual's abilities. The new model will reduce the influence of medical criteria on disability assessment from 90% to 40%. The assessment process will involve coordinating assistance by creating a plan for necessary support and services, with monitoring mechanisms in place for implementation. All laws related to disability assessment, services, and regulations will be approved in collaboration with non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

Reply to paragraph 1 (c)

3. According to the LFPRPD and the Law on the Social Integration of Disabled Persons of the Republic of Lithuania (LSID), the definitions of disability and a PWD in Lithuania are uniformly understood, and PWDs have equal access to the same rights and benefits throughout the country.

Reply to paragraph 1 (d)

4. Legislative changes have been made to promote universal design for products, services, equipment, and the environment. The Environmental Development Program is being implemented (Annex 2).

5. In 2018, training on universal design principles (UD) was provided for representatives of municipalities and NGOs, and a publication called “Environment and Buildings for Everyone” was released. The Department for the Affairs of the Disabled (DAD) prepared recommendations for the application of UD. In 2021, the DAD approved a checklist for evaluating the accessibility of buildings, which was used by 1528 state and municipal institutions. A public campaign called “No Difference” was launched to raise awareness about UD.

6. A formal online system www.stasis.lt was developed for evaluating and monitoring the accessibility of buildings. Training was held on the use of easily understandable language and creating illustrations for easy-to-understand text. Lectures were given to the public on accessibility of information and physical environments, and video clips were broadcast.

Reply to paragraph 2

7. From 2016 to 2023, the DAD financed projects that supported associations for PWDs with a focus on advocacy, defending the rights of PWDs, providing legal advice, representing them in government institutions and working groups, and offering educational and methodological support to the association's members. Approximately 26 organizations are funded each year.

¹ Enters into force on 1 January 2024 (Article 3(3) of the Law entered into force on 5 January 2023).

8. The Ministry of Social Security and Labour of Lithuania has organized competitions to enhance the institutional capacities of disability-related NGOs, with projects worth 198,000 euros for “Viltis,” 156,000 euros for “Pagava,” and 133,000 euros for “Lietaus vaikai.”

Reply to paragraph 3

9. NGOs implement measures and projects to protect the rights and interests of PWDs, using funds from state and municipal budgets, as well as from the European Union (EU) and other sources, according to LFPRPD.

10. The Council², consisting of 45 percent members from disability associations, operates at the national level and conducts quarterly open meetings to discuss pertinent issues and proposals related to disability laws and social projects. The Lithuanian Disability Forum (LDF) represents the disability sector in the National NGO Council. According to LFPRPD, municipalities must³ establish councils for the welfare of PWDs and approve their regulations and funding.

B. Specific rights (arts. 5–30)

Reply to paragraph 4 (a)

11. In 2022, Lithuania amended its Law on Equal Opportunities (LEO) to strengthen the protection of the rights of PWDs and other persons. Employers are required to take measures to facilitate employment, career and competence development for PWDs. Employers must also consider individual needs and provide part-time work opportunities when employing a PWD.

12. The legal regulations regarding harassment, sexual harassment, and discrimination have also been revised. Employers are obliged to take measures to prevent discrimination against employees due to parental leave and childcare leave as well as leave for caring for sick family members.

13. State and local institutions and organizations have a duty to ensure equal opportunities without regard to characteristics such as gender, race, nationality, citizenship, language, social status, religion, beliefs, age, sexual orientation, disability, ethnic affiliation, and others, when providing administrative and (or) public services.

14. The Parliament has approved a law that sets accessibility requirements for goods and services. It applies to manufacturers, importers, distributors, and service providers. The law transfers the EU Accessibility Directive⁴, which promotes equal opportunities for PWDs by improving access to products and services, into Lithuanian law, effective from mid-2025.

15. The MoSSL carries out activities to develop competencies, implement educational activities, and strengthen the legal system’s fight against discrimination. These actions are part of various plans, including promoting non-discrimination from 2021 to 2023, equal opportunities for men and women from 2023 to 2025, and preventing and assisting victims of violence in 2022–2023.

Reply to paragraph 4 (b)

16. Discrimination is prohibited in various fields, such as state and municipal institutions, education, science and study, employment, consumer protection, and organizations. Anyone can file a complaint to the Equal Opportunities Ombudsman of the Republic of Lithuania (EOO) regarding discrimination. The burden of proof is on the alleged offender when investigating cases of discrimination. In 2022, the EOO participated in four legal cases

² From 2024, the Council for the Welfare of Persons with Disabilities.

³ It was not mandatory earlier.

⁴ Directive (EU) 2019/882 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 April 2019 on the accessibility requirements for products and services.

related to possible discrimination against PWDs. Seeking assistance from the EOO does not restrict the opportunity to defend one's rights in court.

17. PWDs are seeking more active advocacy and consultation for their rights. In 2022, there were 48 complaints of possible discrimination based on disability, and PWDs made 361 requests regarding the implementation or violation of their rights. The EOO considers circumstances that constitute multiple or intersecting discrimination.

18. According to the Lithuanian Constitution, it is mandatory to establish legal regulations that allow persons who have been harmed by illegal actions in all cases to demand fair compensation and receive that compensation. The LEO has determined that persons who have experienced discrimination have the right to demand compensation for both material and non-material damages.

19. The Civil Code of the Republic of Lithuania (CC) establishes the duty to fully compensate for the damage inflicted upon a person and property, and in cases established by law – also to compensate for non-pecuniary damage.⁵ Under Paragraph 1 of Article 6.251 of the CC, the damages incurred must be compensated in full, except in cases when limited liability is established by means of laws or contracts. The Supreme Court of Lithuania consistently recognizes the principle of full compensation.⁶

Reply to paragraph 5 (a)

20. Lithuania's National Progress Plan for 2021–2030 establishes the horizontal principle of equal opportunities for all, which ensures that a person's rights are not restricted. When developing programs and implementing plans, it is important to consider the needs of all groups, including PWDs, women and men, different age groups, and national minorities. Measures and indicators should be put in place to ensure equal opportunities for all.

Reply to paragraph 5 (b)

21. Lithuania has been making efforts to integrate gender equality into disability-related laws and policies to ensure equal access to education, healthcare, employment, etc. for women and girls with disabilities. Public awareness is being raised through education programs, information campaigns, and social media initiatives to address the challenges and rights of women and girls with disabilities (see paragraphs 4 (a), 5 (a) and 5 (c)).

Reply to paragraph 5 (c)

22. In 2018, the Lithuanian Association of People with Disabilities conducted an analysis of the situation of women with disabilities, and the recommendations were given to responsible institutions. In 2019, a focus group of women with disabilities identified obstacles to participation in public life and how to overcome them. In 2020, a radio program called “Impossible is Possible” was broadcast.

23. Since 2021, funding has been provided for projects supporting associations for PWDs, with a priority on preventing violence against PWDs. 16 applicants were funded in 2021, 12 and 11 in 2022 and 2023 respectively. In 2021, 1,695 beneficiaries were served, including 480 PWDs, while in 2022, 742 beneficiaries were served, including 338 PWDs.

Reply to paragraph 6

24. In 2023, the Social Services Catalogue (SSC) was supplemented with a new service – social care for families. It aims to assist families raising children with disabilities or developmental disorders. Individual caregivers are also available to provide additional support at home.

25. In 2020, the child day social care service was established to provide it for children in children's day-care centres, including those with disabilities. The number of child day centres

⁵ Paragraph 1 of Article 6.245 and Paragraph 2 of Article 2.263 of the Civil Code.

⁶ On October 26, 2015, the Supreme Court of Lithuania issued a decision in case No. 3K-7-328-248/2015.

and their funding from the state budget increases annually (Annex 3). In 2021, 303 children with disabilities received accredited child day social care, and in 2022, the number increased to 496.

26. In 2021, an accompaniment service for young people as a distinct social care service was added to the SSC. The aim is to help children without parental care, at social risk, living in families at social risk, and persons who have reached adulthood and have been provided with social care in a social care institution or who have lived in families at social risk, including children with disabilities.

27. Lithuania is developing family-based care system for children in need, including those with disabilities. Currently, there are 55 functioning families.

28. In 2018, the MoSSL approved the Description of the Care Centre's Activities and the Procedure for the Organization and Quality Control of Care Performed by the Child's on-call Guardian. The care centres provide help to children in finding guardians or adoptive parents, as well as professional support, psychological counselling, and temporary respite services. There are 66 centres with over 400 employees across Lithuania.

29. Comprehensive assistance is provided to children and adults with disabilities, as well as elderly individuals, through daily social care and home care services. The range of integral aid services is expanding to be provided by state and municipal institutions, where pre-school education programs are implemented for children with disabilities up to 7 years of age. Additionally, psychological assistance is offered to integral aid recipients, caregivers, and employees providing integral aid.

Reply to paragraph 7 (a)

30. In 2016, 5 public education and awareness campaigns were implemented regarding the social integration process of PWDs. In 2017, there were 17 campaigns, and in 2018, there were 13. These campaigns included educational activities, conferences, seminars, and training related to the defence of the rights of PWDs. Activities were also held to support the work of disability associations (Appendix 4).

Reply to paragraph 7 (b)

31. From 2017 to 2022, efforts were made to educate the public in order to reduce false beliefs (Appendix No. 5) In 2023, broadcasting of created products continued on television channels and social media, along with promoting employment in the open labour market.

Reply to paragraph 7 (c)

32. The Ministry of Education, Science, and Sports (MoESS) has developed an action plan for 2021–2024 for the inclusion of children with special needs in educational institutions. The number of students with disabilities in general education schools is increasing, and the number of such students leaving these schools is decreasing (Annex No 6).

Reply to paragraph 8 (a)

33. The Government has approved a 10-year program from 2021 to 2030 called “Development Program for Environments Suitable for People with Disabilities” to improve accessibility in physical, information, and product/service environments. The program consists of three measures.⁷ Each measure has monitoring indicators set by the MoSSL.

34. The LDF has released a digital accessibility guide called “The Internet for All: A Guide to Making Digital Information Accessible” to educate the public about disabilities and accessibility. Additionally, the DAD has launched a training program called “How to prepare information accessible to everyone?” to teach public sector employees about the benefits and

⁷ 1) Measure No. 09-005-02-06-01 “Ensure accessibility of physical infrastructure for the disabled”; 2) Measure No. 09-005-02-06-04 “Ensure adaptation of information infrastructure and information to the needs of the disabled”; 3) Measure No. 09-005-02-06-07 “Encourage adaptation of services and goods to the needs of the disabled”.

necessity of information accessibility for all society members. The implementation of UD is being used to increase accessibility (see paragraph 1 (d)).

Reply to paragraph 8 (b)

35. Changes to legal regulations have been made to increase the accessibility of buildings (Annex 7). The Ministry of Environment of the Republic of Lithuania (MoE) has prepared a methodology for assessing building accessibility for PWDs.

36. The housing adaptation procedure provides that for all PWDs according to their individual needs should be ensured independence in the housing and in the living environment (see paragraphs 17 (a) and 1 (d)).

37. In 2020, a memorandum was signed by the MoESS, the MoSSL, and the LDF committing to adapt at least one general education school and one healthcare institution for PWDs in each municipality annually. From 2014 to 2020, 124 schools, 41 preschools, and 46 vocational training institutions were renovated. The total cost was 138.3 million euros.⁸

38. Regional development plans for 2022–2030 have been approved.⁹ The plans include creating and adapting school spaces for students with various needs, purchasing transportation for students with disabilities, and updating schools to implement the “Millennium Schools” advancement program, all in line with the principle of inclusive education.

39. The Ministry of Health (MoH) approved the “Assessment Procedure for Health Care Institutions Favourable to Limited Mobility Persons” to ensure that healthcare services are accessible to all patients. The MoH also implemented initiatives to improve infrastructure for PWDs and education projects (Annex No. 8).

Reply to paragraph 8 (c)

40. The transport sector adaptation plan for people with individual needs of the Ministry of Transport and Communications (MoTC) foresees changes in public transport stations, public transport stops, public transport vehicles, and post offices. These changes will also be implemented at airports and ferry terminals.

41. The MoTC project “Customization of Railway Services according to the Principles of Universal Design” aims to improve railway services for passengers with disabilities by making adjustments to train equipment, implementing assistance services, and installing accessible infrastructure such as ramps and informative systems at stations.

Reply to paragraph 8 (d)

42. In 2020, the National Audit Office conducted a state audit on social integration for PWDs. The audit assessed the provision of independent living services, labour market entry conditions, and access to transport and information (Annex No. 9). However, the appropriate allocation and use of funds for accessibility barriers were not evaluated.

43. Training on the application of UD for PWDs is organized for the public environment, building planning, and design specialists. The DAD employs accessibility experts who provide ongoing consultations on the legal regulation of environmental accessibility, and adaptation of the environment for persons in wheelchairs and persons with visual disabilities.

Reply to paragraph 8 (e)

44. Starting in 2021, the Information Society Development Committee is conducting an annual survey on accessibility compliance of state and municipal institutions’ websites and mobile applications, requiring them to address accessibility deficiencies within a specified

⁸ Renovated 1) 124 schools, 52.3 million euro allocated for this purpose; 2) 41 preschool educational institutions for 21.4 million euro; 3) 46 vocational training institutions for 64.6 million euro.

⁹ In accordance with the guidelines of Regional Progress Measure No. 12-003-03-01-23 (RE) “Increasing accessibility to education for children experiencing disadvantage”.

time limit, and examining complaints and administrative proceedings. The decisions are binding on individuals and bodies.

Reply to paragraph 8 (f)

45. Training on environmental accessibility was organized from 2016 to 2021. Around 60 architects, civil engineers and municipal professionals have attended it each year (see paragraph 8 (d)).

Reply to paragraph 9 (a)

46. The Law on the Legal Status of Aliens of the Republic of Lithuania stipulates that asylum seekers if classified as vulnerable persons, have the right to benefit from reception conditions appropriate to their special needs. PWDs are provided with accommodation and individual support corresponding to their special needs in the Foreigners Registration Centre and/or the Refugee Reception Centre of the State Border Guard Service under the Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Lithuania.

Reply to paragraph 9 (b)

47. In 2022, the Fire Protection and Rescue Department approved a new version of the Methodological Guidelines for the Preparation of Emergency Management Plans. In the event of a disaster, PWDs should be warned and informed in ways accessible to them, evacuated, including temporary accommodation in collective protection structures, and the mobilisation of material resources needed to meet the needs of PWDs should be envisaged. In 2023, a new Law on Crisis Management and Civil Protection of the Republic of Lithuania entered into force, which stipulates that the crisis management and civil protection system must fully meet the protection needs of PWDs.

Reply to paragraph 9 (c)

48. Organisations representing PWDs are involved in drafting legislation and its implementation. In cooperation with the Lithuanian Disability Organizations Forum, training on “The Needs of Persons with Disabilities in Emergencies” was organized at the Fire Fighters Training School. It is projected the establishment of a permanent pre-registration of assistance for PWDs on the LT72 platform.¹⁰

49. A survey of PWDs was conducted in 2022. Based on the results, the Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Lithuania prepared a report on the practical implementation of the protection and security of PWDs in dangerous situations, and the DAD prepared an analysis of the legal framework for emergencies.

Reply to paragraph 9 (d)

50. COVID-19 vaccination for those who had difficulties in accessing primary health care facilities was provided in their living environment. During the pandemic, vital services for PWDs were provided at a frequency that met their needs in ways and forms they could understand. The MoH translated all press conferences on coronavirus prevention into sign language. The social services were provided in accordance with the decisions of the MSSL and in compliance with the requirements set out for the prevention and control of COVID-19 in social service institutions.

Reply to paragraph 10 (a)

51. The Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Lithuania (MoJ) has organised a public consultation on the most effective measures to abolish the principle of total incapacity and on the changes needed in the legal framework in this area. The results of the synthesis and the assessment of the data collected will lead to the drafting of amendments to the CC and other relevant legislation with a view to abolishing the institute of total incapacity.

¹⁰ <https://lt72.lt/?lang=en>.

Reply to paragraph 10 (b)

52. In 2019, a decision support service was launched in 6 regions of the country, benefiting 510 people and restoring legal capacity to 2 beneficiaries. The service is planned to be rolled out in all municipalities in the country from 2024. The vision is to move towards a more judicial model of decision support, helping the person to represent him/herself in institutions where there is a risk of impairment of legal capacity.

Reply to paragraph 10 (c)

53. Courts must review incapacitated persons' status. In addition, the CC provides for the establishment of a Commission for the Review of the Status of Incapacitated Persons. The Commission shall, on its own initiative, review the incapacitated person's condition if, within one year from the date of entry into force of the court's decision to declare the person incapacitated in a particular field or to uphold the revised decision, or within one year from the date of the Commission's decision not to apply to the court, the persons referred to in Article 2.10(4) of the CC or the person declared incapacitated in a particular field fail to apply for the reversal of the decision of the court declaring the person to be incapacitated in that particular field.

Reply to paragraph 10 (d)

54. In 2020, training on "Assessing the Need for Decision Support and Community Resources for Empowering Persons to Make their own Decisions" was organized. The Centre for Professional Competence Development for Social Service Workers was launched in 2022¹¹ offering a wide range of online training courses for personal care workers and personal assistants on different issues related to disability.

Reply to paragraph 11 (a)

55. In 2023, the Judicial Council approved a training programme for judges on "Communication with persons with disabilities". In 2022, the training course "Peculiarities of Communication with Persons with Disabilities" was held for advocates.

Reply to paragraph 11 (b)

56. Amendments to the Civil Procedure Code and the Law on Administrative Proceedings were adopted in 2022 to encourage court participants to use electronic means of communication throughout the proceedings. This is particularly relevant for PWDs. The MoJ has produced an electronic publication on victims' rights which is adapted for PWDs. A protocol on the explanation of the rights of the victim has been adopted by order of the Prosecutor General, which provides a detailed disclosure of the content of the victim's rights, and pre-trial investigation subjects are obliged not only to hand it out but also to take active steps to ensure that the victim, taking into account his/her vulnerability, age or other circumstances, is aware of the ways in which he/she can exercise them.

Reply to paragraph 11 (c)

57. LFPRPD asserts that PWDs have the right to freedom of expression, including the ability to access information through their preferred communication method, Lithuanian sign language, and state and municipal institutions encourage this.

58. Article 5 of the Civil Code guarantees the right of every interested person to have recourse to the courts in accordance with the law. Pursuant to Article 38 of the CC, the legal representatives of natural persons whose civil capacity is limited in certain areas are their guardians. If these persons are parties to the proceedings or third parties, they must be notified of the proceedings and be invited to participate in them. The rights and interests of natural persons declared incapacitated in a particular field shall be protected in court by their legal representatives, i.e., guardians. Article 11 of the CC provides that persons who do not speak the official language shall be guaranteed the right to have access to the services of an

¹¹ <https://pktc.lt/>.

interpreter (including in sign language). There were 103 sign language interpreters in 2016–2019, 109 in 2020–2021 and 115 in 2022.

Reply to paragraph 12 (a)

59. The Law on Mental Health Care regulates involuntary hospitalization and treatment for patients with mental and behavioural disorders. Patients can be involuntarily hospitalized for up to 3 working days if they pose a real risk of causing substantial damage. If treatment needs to be extended, the establishment must apply to the court within 48 hours. Three professionals make the decision. We stress that involuntary hospitalisation (and treatment) is a measure of last resort, not based on the fact of disability, but on the state of health and impaired behaviour, where there is a risk to the person or others. Monitoring of involuntary hospitalisation started in 2019. Involuntary hospitalisations account for only about 4 per cent of all hospitalisations and the number of cases tends to decrease (Annex 10).

Reply to paragraph 12 (b)

60. In accordance with the Law on Patients' Rights and Compensation of Damages of the Republic of Lithuania, all personal healthcare services are provided with the free and informed consent of the individual. The Government gives priority to the development of recovery-oriented services that are in line with human rights principles.

Reply to paragraph 12 (c)

61. The Action Plan for the Prevention of Involuntary Hospitalisation 2023–2024 has been approved, and a community-based reform of mental health services has been launched, with the aim of creating community-based alternatives to hospitalisation and reducing the use of coercive measures.

Reply to paragraph 13

62. The use of physical restraint measures is strictly regulated. The Mental Health Care Act provides that the freedom of movement of patients with mental and behavioural disorders may be restricted by manual physical restraint, special physical restraint, or by isolating the patient in a separate room. The number of cases of physical restraint is systematically decreasing (Annex 11). Chemical restraint is not envisaged as a legally permissible method of restraint.

63. In cooperation with the World Health Organization, Lithuania is implementing the “QualityRights” mechanism, which will help ensure the realization of the rights of patients, especially PWDs. The order¹² of the Ministers of Health and Social Security and Labour has created conditions for its implementation.

64. The MoH has approved the 2023–2024 Action Plan for the Prevention of Forced Hospitalization, which aims to prevent relapses of mental health disorders, protect human rights, and improve patient care through community-oriented measures.

65. In the units of the Lithuanian Prison Service, only in exceptional circumstances, when other measures are ineffective, special measures provided for in the Resolution of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania No 1162 of 23 November 2016 “On the Approval of the Specification of Special Measures and the Description of the Procedure for the Use of the Special Measures” may be used. Measures of physical restraint are applied only in the Psychiatric Department of the Lithuanian Prison Service in accordance with the Law on Mental Health Care, which sets out restrictions on the rights of persons with mental illness, including physical restraint.

¹² Minister of Health of the Republic of Lithuania and Minister of Social Security and Labour of the Republic of Lithuania 2023 September 15 order No V-1004/A1-607 “On the Approval of the Description of the Procedure for Assessing the Compliance with Human Rights Standards of Services Provided by Mental Health Care and Social Care Institutions, Monitoring and Methodological Assistance Provision”.

66. Social care in social care institutions is provided in accordance with the Social Care Norms Schedule. The rights of the individual must be guaranteed. All accidents related to changes in a person's state of health or infringements of his/her rights shall be recorded, the causes analysed, and decisions taken to prevent them in the future.

Reply to paragraph 14 (a)

67. The Centres for Specialized Complex Support in Lithuania offer free, confidential assistance to individuals experiencing domestic violence. 66 crisis centres provide intensive intervention to families with children at risk, pregnant or post-natal women, survivors, victims of trafficking, perpetrators, homeless individuals, and those with disabilities. Guidelines for centre organization have been approved by the Minister of Social Security and Labour.

Reply to paragraph 14 (b)

68. Case management provides the family with assistance in solving the child's and family's problems and ensuring the child's physical or mental safety and best interests. In 2022, there were 388 case managers and 934 social workers working with families in the country. Case management was applied to 10 304 families.

69. In 2022, 12 projects were funded to support the activities of associations of PWDs, whose applicants carried out activities to prevent violence against persons with disabilities and to support victims of domestic violence with disabilities. In 2023, 11 applicants were funded.

Reply to paragraph 14 (c)

70. Incidents of a negative nature that occur in a social care institution, such as accidents or violations of children's rights, etc., are recorded in the Register of Incidents of a Negative Nature and their Consequences for the Child, and the causes are analysed, and decisions are taken on how to prevent them in the future.

Reply to paragraph 15

71. In 2023, the Action Plan for the Prevention of Involuntary Hospitalisation 2023–2024 was approved by the MoH and a community-based reform of mental health services was launched, with the aim of creating an alternative to hospitalisation and reducing the use of coercive measures nationwide.

Reply to paragraphs 16 (a) and (b)

72. 1) Between 2016 and 2022, SRC projects in 60 municipalities were funded which implemented NGOs. This included day employment for PWDs, individual service for the person, assistance in restoring or strengthening work skills and assistance for family members of PWDs. 2) Between 2016 and 2020, the state and municipal budgets funded projects for the social integration of PWDs through physical culture and sport in 60 municipalities. The state is ensuring permanent rather than project-based funding.

73. From 1 July 2021, personal assistance at the national level is introduced for all PWDs with an identified need, irrespective of age, severity or nature of the disability. 1,650 PWDs received personal assistance in 2022.

74. The list of technical aids has been expanded and the procedure for allocating and acquiring them has been simplified (see 17(d)). Vehicle driving courses are financed for PWDs. Comprehensive social rehabilitation services for blind people are provided. Housing adaptations are organised.

Reply to paragraph 16 (c)

75. In 2011, 6061 PWDs were living in residential care institutions. In 2023, around 5500 people are living there. Most of the reduction in institutional care has taken place through the establishment of Group Living Homes (GLHs) in communities. At the end of 2022, there were 49 GLHs in the country with 426 adults with disabilities and older people living in

them. There were also 8 community-based children's homes with 47 children with disabilities.

76. The deinstitutionalisation process is well-funded, with 76 million euro of EU Structural Funds allocated for the transition from institutional to family and community care. 38 million euro has been earmarked for the development, testing and implementation of new social services, with the remainder used for infrastructure development.

Reply to paragraph 16 (d)

77. In 2016–2020, the DAD implemented the project “Creating the Conditions for a Sustainable Transition from Institutional Care to Family and Community-based Services in Lithuania”. Sheltered housing service provided to 22 PWDs; personal assistant service – to 85; temporary respite service – to 233; case management for children with disabilities diagnosed within 12 months – to 25.

78. Between 2020 and 2023, the DAD, together with 41 social partners, including 26 NGOs, is implementing in six regions of Lithuania a project co-financed by the EU Structural Funds and the state budget of the Republic of Lithuania, “From Care to Opportunities: the Development of Community-Based Services”, which is piloting 4 alternative and preventive services to institutional care, related to the development and maintenance of the independence of persons with psychosocial and/or intellectual disabilities: social workshops, assisted employment, support for decision-making and sheltered housing. A total of 1772 PWDs received services.

Reply to paragraph 16 (e)

79. The MoSSL has approved two progress measures: “Establishing a Sustainable Non-residential Long-Term Care System” and “Developing a Comprehensive System of Social Integration of Persons with Disabilities.” The first measure outlines the implementation indicators, funding sources, and authorities involved. The second measure aims to change the legal framework to provide temporary respite for persons with severe disabilities.

80. The amended Law on Social Services of the Republic of Lithuania (LSS) aims to enhance family services, including preventive services, develop comprehensive services, and improve staff competencies. It also aims to strengthen the system of social services and assistance from 2023–2024, enhancing service standards, staff qualifications, and social innovation development.

81. The LSS has been updated with new principles to ensure people receive social services in their homes and families for as long as possible, coordinated with education, training, employment, personal health care, and special assistance measures. This includes respecting the right of each person/family to free choice regarding social services, working with the person/family and their environment, and promoting their initiative in decision-making.

82. The CSS offers a wide range of both residential and non-residential social services based on the individual interests and needs of the person/family. In 2019, the CSS introduced a new social care service – sheltered housing. Integrated family support and preventive services are provided in municipalities (see paragraphs 7 and 23).

83. The State Data Agency (SDA) reported a significant increase in the number of people with disabilities and the elderly receiving social services at home, day centres, independent living homes, group living homes, and care institutions. The number of people receiving social services at home increased from 18,600 in 2016 to 21,200 in 2022, while the number of people receiving services at day centres increased from 34,700 to 45,300.

84. An amendment to the LSS was adopted in 2020, introducing accreditation for social care. It provides that the recipient of social care can choose the provider of the service, the social care provider, and therefore the institution can be financed directly.

85. In 2022, the Description of the Procedure for Determining and Assigning a Person's (Family's) Needs for Social Services was amended stipulating that a person (family) may be identified as having a need for more than one type of social service, in order to ensure that a person's individual needs are being met.

86. The municipality is responsible for providing social services to its inhabitants, with funding increasing from 22.9 million euro in 2016 to 84.8 million euro in 2022. This funding covers long-term/short-term care in social care institutions, group homes, day care in day centres, and personal homes for persons with severe disabilities.

87. During the 2014–2020 EU investment period, 71 group homes were planned to be set up in 6 regions of Lithuania, but due to price increases and other reasons, it is projected that around 50 group homes will be set up by the end of 2023. The majority of the beneficiaries of group home services are expected to be PWDs living in institutions, with a smaller proportion of those living in the community. Preliminary estimates suggest that the new group homes will accommodate around 400 people from residential care and 100 from the community.

88. The EU investment period 2021–2027 focuses on the prevention of institutional care, prioritizing those living in the community and in need of accommodation services. In 2022, the MoSSL, together with municipalities, has developed regional Transition Maps from institutional care to family and community-based services, where municipalities will identify the needs of PWDs and their relatives.

89. Since 2019, the DAD has implemented the “From Care to Opportunities: Developing Community-based Services” project, providing piloted services such as sheltered accommodation, social and work skills training, decision-making support, and supported employment to 1773 PWDs in six regions.

Reply to paragraph 17 (a)

90. Between 2017 and 2021, the DAD funded the development and restoration of mobility and independent living skills for people with mobility problems. In total, 76 persons completed training to drive a Category B motor vehicle and prepared for the driving test. From 2022, driving training and preparation for the driving license test is organized through public procurement.

91. People with mobility, intellectual or mental disabilities and, from 2024, visual disabilities, can apply for adaptations to suit their individual needs, which are organized by the municipality of residence. The number of adaptations is increasing every year (444 adaptations in 2016, 598 in 2022).

92. From 2021, personal assistance is available to help with mobility issues. Persons are provided with mobility equipment appropriate to their needs (see paragraph 17 (b)).

Reply to paragraph 17 (b)

93. The Ministry of Social Security and Labour’s Centre for Technical Assistance for Disabled Persons has introduced a new mobility equipment regime, expanding the list of equipment, allowing independent acquisition and compensation, increasing compensation amounts, and simplifying awarding criteria. This includes individuals with long-term or irreversible mobility impairments eligible for compensation for light vehicle purchases or adaptations.

94. As of 2022, new hearing and vision aids have been added to the list and the process for prescribing them has been simplified. Additionally, a new group of approximately 40 communication and sensory aids has been included.

Reply to paragraph 18 (a) and (b)

95. According to LFPRPD, PWDs have the right to freedom of expression, including the right to express their opinions, seek, receive, and disseminate information and ideas through their chosen methods of communication, including Lithuanian sign language. State and municipal institutions ensure the rights of PWDs by providing them with free access to public information through their chosen methods of communication.

96. In 2022, a workshop was held to illustrate the drafting text in easy-to-understand language. The first Lithuanian database of illustrations for easy-to-understand language texts was created. The public lecture “Accessibility opens up opportunities” presented physical

and information accessibility through UD design principles to over 600 participants and produced a report on easy-to-understand language. A “Guide to Accessible Information. How to present information in a way that everyone can understand” was prepared. In 2023, the DAD set up a consultation centre on accessibility and adaptation of information for people with intellectual disability, visual and hearing impairment.

97. The Lithuanian Sign Language Interpreting Service is available to all persons who need it. In 2023, the DAD contracted information accessibility experts for providing advice on accessibility and adaptation of information for persons with intellectual, visual and hearing disabilities.

98. The DAD has been funding projects to publish and distribute periodicals for PWDs in visual, Braille, audio format, in an easily understandable language. From 2022, applicants who choose to carry out periodical activities must produce at least 40 % of the information in the periodical in an easily understandable language.

99. Sign language training programmes have been developed under the DAD measure “Selection of Methodological Centres for Sign Language Interpreters and Development of Training, Qualification Development and Methodological Materials for the Teaching and Training of Sign Language Interpreters for Various Adult User Groups”. In 2021, the Lithuanian Sign Language Translation Centre set up a methodological unit responsible for the development of methodological material and training for sign language interpreters.

Reply to paragraph 18 (c)

100. In 2022, the DAD produced an electronic publication entitled “Guide to Accessible Information. How to Present Information in a Way that Everyone can Understand”. For information on sanctions see paragraph 8(e).

Reply to paragraph 19 (a)

101. In 2021, the regulation of temporary respite was amended to make it a separate social service in the CSS. In 2022, this service was provided to 780 people. In 2022, the provisions of the LSS entered into force, regulating preventive social services, which are also available to families with children with disabilities. Each municipality must ensure that at least one community family home is available in its territory and that comprehensive family services are accessible to all those who need them, including families with children with disabilities. The measure “Supporting NGO Projects to Develop Parenting Skills and Counselling for Parents to make Parenting Skills Training Accessible to all Parents” supports NGO projects to provide telephone counselling on positive parenting issues.

Reply to paragraph 19 (b)

102. All families are entitled to basic services, consisting of a set of 14 essential services, as well as social preventive assistance. Individualised support for families in difficulty is strengthened through case management, family support from social workers, case managers, personal care workers and other professionals.

103. Adoptive parents can be adults of both sexes of working age who are fit to adopt. A person who has been declared incapacitated or has limited legal capacity and who suffers from diseases, cannot be an adopter. A programme has been developed for training and counselling of foster carers, duty carers, adoptive parents, and staff of community-based children’s homes, approved by the Order of the Director of the State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour.

Reply to paragraph 19 (c)

104. Since 2016, Lithuania implemented the Framework Programme for Health and Sexuality Education and Family Preparation, approved by the Ministry of Education, Science of and Sport of the Republic of Lithuania (MoES). The Life Skills Framework Programme, which also includes sexuality education, is implemented from 1 September 2023.

105. Recommendations on the adaptation of the updated general curricula for pupils with special educational needs have been developed for 2023. If a pupil is identified as having

special educational needs, the curricula are adapted according to the recommendations of educational psychologists. The Social Skills Programme for pupils with special educational needs is implemented.

Reply to paragraph 20 (a)

106. The majority of pupils with special educational needs (SEN) (89.3% in 2021) are already in mainstream classes. From 1 September 2024, the education of pupils with SEN will be provided by all schools providing compulsory and general education, other education providers and more than one teacher.

107. In 2022, there were 47 special schools in the country. Around one-third of school-age children with disabilities were enrolled there: 8 772 pupils in mainstream schools and 3 416 in special schools. According to data from the Education Management Information System, the enrolment of children with disabilities in mainstream schools is on an upward trend (Annex 12).

108. The State increases funding for educational aid every year (Annex 13). Schools can use these funds to retain educational support specialists as needed: psychologists, speech and language therapists, special educators, teaching assistants, sign language interpreters, and tifto-/surd pedagogues.

Reply to paragraph 20 (b)

109. A national skills development programme on inclusion is launched. Between 2022 and 2023, 5 000 teachers were trained on how to implement updated general education curricula in mainstream schools, including for pupils with severe and very severe special educational needs.

110. Pupils' educational aids are calculated according to their level of special educational needs (SEN) (Annex 14). Between 2023 and 2029, an investment of 150.875 million EUR is planned to strengthen schools in the field of inclusive education.

Reply to paragraph 20 (c)

111. Students with SEN receive a range of services, including targeted support, individual timetables, and some Higher Education Institutions have a disability coordinator. Social grants are available to students, with 2,200 students receiving them in 2022. The State Fund for Studies is implementing the EU Structural Funds-funded project "Increasing Accessibility of Studies", which provides targeted benefits and improves accessibility conditions for students with disabilities.

Reply to paragraph 20 (d)

112. In 2022, 99 consultants were trained in 42 municipalities on how to adapt the updated curricula for pupils with SEN. Prepared methodological publications for children with autism spectrum disorder and the development of their social competencies. Developed guidelines "Towards inclusion, what schools need to know", and 13 digital publications for parents of children with multiple developmental disabilities, school communities and educators.

Reply to paragraph 20 (e)

113. Between 2022 and 2023, 1,579 special educational and technical aids were purchased and distributed to 285 mainstream schools with pupils with severe and very severe SEN in mainstream classes. Guidelines for working with such children are based on the type of disability.

Reply to paragraph 21

114. All persons insured with Compulsory Health Insurance, entitled to personal health care services, without distinction based on the criterion of disability, paid for by the budget of the Compulsory Health Insurance Fund, if these services meet the requirements for the provision of services, approved by the Minister of Health, and if a personal health care institution (hereafter – PHCI) has entered into a contract with the territorial patients' fund for

the provision of these services, shall be provided with the full range of the services they require.

115. According to the Law on Patients' Rights and Compensation for Damage to Health of the Republic of Lithuania, all personal healthcare services are provided only after the patient has been informed and has signed an informed consent for the provision of healthcare services. Information must be provided to the patient in a way that is appropriate to the patient's age and state of health and in a form that is understandable.

116. Reproductive health services are integrated into the health care system and are provided without distinction between women and girls with or without disabilities. The Law on Assisted Reproduction establishes the conditions, methods, and procedures for the provision of assisted reproduction and fertility preservation services as well as the rights of persons who are provided with these services. There is a possibility of using a donor's gametes for assisted reproduction, as well as conducting genetic tests to assess the risk of transmitting a highly disabling disease with the gametes of one of the partners.¹³

117. Both surgical and medical termination of pregnancy is possible.¹⁴ The drug Levonorgestrel can be prescribed as a contraceptive 1) for girls aged 15 to 17 in accordance with the procedure established by the Minister of Health;¹⁵ 2) for girls between the ages of 18 and 20 who consult a gynaecologist for contraception. Age, health, social, psychological, legal, etc. are taken into account when prescribing a contraceptive.

118. The requirements for PHCIs, including personal health care specialists, premises and medical equipment are set in providing services to women who may have experienced sexual violence, as well as the procedure for organizing and providing these services.¹⁶

119. Since 2022, institutions providing services to pregnant women, woman who has given birth and new-borns¹⁷ have an obligation to inform the patient being discharged from the hospital about the symptoms of postpartum depression and the PHCIs, which provide services to patients experiencing symptoms of postpartum depression.

120. The description of the procedure for the organization of the caesarean operation service for pregnant women on her request was approved,¹⁸ which sets the requirements for the PHCIs and health care specialists providing this service.

121. Entrance to all types of emergency departments, waiting rooms, patient examination, patient hygiene rooms, intensive care rooms, and procedure rooms must be adapted to the needs of PWDs.¹⁹

Reply to paragraph 22

122. In 2022, 37 specialists working in the fields of human rights and mental health participated in the training of WHO lecturers "Strategies for ending the use of isolation and

¹³ Minister of Health of the Republic of Lithuania 2016 December 20 order No. V-1452 "On the Approval of the Description of the Procedure for the Provision of Assisted Reproduction Services and their Funding from the Budget of the Compulsory Health Insurance Fund". TAR, 2016-29271.

¹⁴ Minister of Health of the Republic of Lithuania 1994 January 3 order No 50 "On the Approval of the Description of the Procedure for the Organization and Provision of Abortion Services".

¹⁵ Minister of Health of the Republic of Lithuania 2000 January 28 order No 49 "On the Approval of the Lists of Compensatory Drugs".

¹⁶ Minister of Health of the Republic of Lithuania 2021 July 30 order No V-1765 "On the Approval of the Description of the Procedure for the Provision of Personal Health Care Services to Women who may have Experienced Sexual Violence".

¹⁷ These services are provided according to the Minister of Health of the Republic of Lithuania 2013 September 23 order No V-900 "On the Approval of the Description of the Health Care Procedure for Pregnant Women, Women who have given Birth and New-borns".

¹⁸ Minister of Health of the Republic of Lithuania 2022 October 27 order No V-1607 „On the Approval of the Description of the Procedure for the Organization of the Caesarean Operation Service for Pregnant Women on her Request".

¹⁹ Minister of Health of the Republic of Lithuania 2010 December 16 d. order No V-1073 „On the Approval of the Description of Special Requirements for the Emergency Department and Emergency Room of a Personal Health Care Institution".

restraints, focusing on de-escalation". 53 employees of institutions providing personal mental health care services, which were assessed based on the WHO QualityRights methodology, participated in training events on the topic of recovery. Consultations are provided on issues of ensuring human rights and the implementation of the QualityRights initiative, and a plan of measures for the implementation of Human Rights has been prepared.

123. In 2023, the public education campaign "Look Deeper" is being implemented in Lithuania, which aims to increase public knowledge and change attitudes related to mental health. An initiative of mental health ambassadors is being implemented, which aims to reduce the stigma of mental health in society.

Reply to paragraph 23

124. Supportive medical rehabilitation services for PWDs are provided in accordance with the description of the procedure for prescribing and providing medical rehabilitation and anti-recidivism sanatorium treatment services. A person who has a referral to receive supportive rehabilitation services can apply to all personal healthcare institutions that have signed contracts with territorial health insurance funds for the provision of these services. Institutions providing supportive rehabilitation services must ensure the services of an assistant if necessary.

Reply to paragraph 24 (a)

125. The LFPRPD establishes quotas in the public sector from 1 January 2024. The number of employees with disabilities must be at least 5 percent of the total number of employees if the number of employees in these organizations is 25 or more.

Reply to paragraph 24 (b)

126. In Lithuania, there is no such service/program/means as "work in sheltered workshops". Within the project implemented by DAD, a pilot social workshop service is provided, the purpose of which is to increase the opportunities for employment of PWDs in the open labour market. Employment for visitors to social workshops, most of whom are persons with severe psychosocial or intellectual disabilities, is organized according to individual plans, taking into account the abilities and opportunities of each person.

Reply to paragraph 24 (c)

127. In 2022–2023, a public education and awareness campaign "No Difference" was launched to reduce discrimination against PWDs in the labour market. 8 associations of PWDs organized 30 measures focusing on the participation of PWS in the open labour market, training and other events.

128. The Employment Service applies a case management approach to PWDs with medium and limited employability. Case management is becoming increasingly important in removing barriers to employment, in providing support for employment and in supporting the person after employment.

129. In 2021, the Social Services Mapping project was launched, involving over 400 NGOs and social partners offering social, legal and psychological services.

130. Labour market services and ALMP measures, such as assisted employment, subsidised employment, job adaptations or reimbursement of the costs of a job coach, promote the labour market integration of PWDs. The number of participants in the subsidised employment measure is increasing: in 2020, 1,479 PWDs participated, in 2021 – 1,741 and in 2022 – 1,839.

131. A new supported employment measure, the subsidy for the cost of a job assistant, has been introduced from 1 January 2023. The employer is provided with a subsidy for the cost of a job assistant, which is 62 percent of the minimum hourly wage for the time the employer assigns the job assistant to assist the worker with disabilities in performing the job functions.

132. Job adaptations apply to the recruitment of the unemployed or the maintenance of jobs, subsidising the adaptation of work equipment, the worker's environment, and industrial

and recreational facilities. The employer may acquire technical aids or special equipment used in the work process to adapt the workplace to the needs of PWDs.

133. Jobseekers with disabilities are offered training in marketable occupations through learning support measures. Mobility support is used when a person is offered a job in a remote workplace. PWDs can also expect support to set up a business if their business idea is linked to the objectives of digital and green transformation or will contribute to the promotion of the circular economy. From 2021, assisted employment services are available for PWDs where there is a need.

Reply to paragraph 24 (d)

134. On 1 January 2021, 71.4 thousand young people aged 16–29 were registered, representing more than 25% of the registered unemployed in the Employment Service, less than 1,000 of them with disabilities. More than half of the unemployed in this age group did not have any vocational training, so their participation in ALMP measures, and in particular vocational training, was an important contribution to their employability and sustainable employment. In 2020, 115 PWDs up to the age of 29 participated in ALMP measures, while in 2021 and 2022 this number increased to 147 and 212 respectively, and in Q1 2023, 80 young PWDs started to participate in employment measures.

Reply to paragraph 24 (e)

135. The Business Start-up Support Facility was launched in 2023 to support employed and unemployed persons registered with the Employment Service to create a job for themselves or for themselves and an unemployed person(s) in micro-enterprises contributing to the digital and green transformation objectives, to the promotion of the circular economy and/or to the mitigation of the impact of the COVID-19 disease. Applicants who are older persons (50+), young persons (up to 29 years of age), and persons with a level of incapacity for work of up to 55 % will be awarded additional evaluation points. For other measures to improve the employability of PWDs, see paragraph 24(c).

Reply to paragraph 25 (a)

136. The reform of the employment of PWDs is underway. As part of it, ALMP measures are applied, and individualized services are provided (see paragraph 24 (c)).

137. The MoSSL is taking measures to reduce poverty by increasing social benefits and facilitating access to them. Amendments to the Law on Social Insurance Pensions were adopted in 2021, which ensured a faster increase in social insurance pensions. All PWDs living alone in Lithuania can receive a single person's benefit. PWDs can receive a disability pension or a social insurance invalidity pension. Targeted compensation for the cost of care or assistance may be awarded and paid if the special needs of an adult or child are assessed. PWDs can receive support for adapting their housing, are entitled to social housing rent, and can benefit from other benefits and compensations. All municipalities in the country provide social services for PWDs who lack capacity and need help, including their families. All PWDs who have an identified need for a personal assistant, regardless of age, severity or nature of the disability, are eligible.

Reply to paragraph 25 (b)

138. The LSS stipulates that general social services and social care services are provided free of charge to those persons (families) who are in receipt of a social allowance, or who receive an income of less than twice the amount of the state-supported income.

139. In 2019, the Government²⁰ established recommendations for municipalities on how much people should pay for social services based on their income. The aim is to take better account of the needs of individuals, including PWDs, and to avoid disproportionate increases in the fees for social services.

²⁰ The Government of the Republic of Lithuania 2006 June 14 resolution No 583 “On the Description of the Procedure for Payment for Social Services”.

140. To promote employment and independent living in the community for PWDs, in 2020, the LSS was amended with a provision that, for the purposes of determining a person's payment for social services, the person's income does not include the employment-related income of PWDs, where this income does not exceed the minimum monthly wage set by the Government. Lithuania further seeks to improve the accessibility of social services, to increase the social well-being of PWDs and to reduce the financial burden on both PWDs and their families.

Reply to paragraph 26 (a), (b), (c), (d)

141. The Electoral Code, effective September 1, 2022, ensures the right of PWDs, including mental and psychosocial disabilities, and rural residents to vote in elections and referendums. It prohibits voting if declared incapacitated in areas related to voting. Voters with disabilities must vote independently, assisted by someone trusted, and maintain vote confidentiality.

142. The municipal administration must assess polling stations for disabled and elderly voters within 20 days of election announcements. They can either adapt or rent adapted stations, and the election commission must reassess stations at least 2 months before the election.

143. The Electoral Code also stipulates that the following voters may vote at home: voters with disabilities, persons caring for or assisting PWDs at home, voters who are temporarily unable to work due to illness, voters aged 70 years and over, if they are unable to come to the polling station on election day due to a medical condition. In addition, separate lists of voters voting in health care establishments (other than outpatient establishments) and social care establishments shall be established.

144. These provisions of the Electoral Code also apply to referendums under the Constitutional Law on Referendums of the Republic of Lithuania, which entered into force on 1 September 2022, and which stipulates that the right of citizens to participate in a referendum may not be restricted, *inter alia*, on the grounds of disability.

145. Data on voters and candidates with disabilities are collected by the High Electoral Commission. It also establishes special procedures for the implementation of these laws, including to ensure the participation of PWDs in political and public life.

Reply to paragraph 27 (a)

146. The Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Lithuania (MoC) is implementing an initiative called "Museums for Human Well-being" to ensure accessibility of museum services for PWDs. The "Museums for Human Well-being" study was conducted, and recommendations were made to increase museum accessibility.

147. The Lithuanian Council for Culture funds cultural and art projects for PWDs. Starting from 2023, the Lithuanian Film Centre provides additional funding for film adaptations for people with visual and hearing impairments. All Culture Pass services must be adapted for at least one of the listed disabilities – visual, hearing, mobility, or intellectual impairment.

148. In 2020–2021, measures were implemented in all public libraries to increase accessibility for persons with autism spectrum disorder and other persons with language, communication, and behavioural disorders. A national conference called "Library for Everyone" was organized in 2021, during which the Accessibility Manifesto for Libraries was signed.

149. The Ministry of Economy and Innovation of the Republic of Lithuania is collaborating with institutions representing the rights of PWDs²¹ to improve tourism infrastructure and create a digital national tourism information system that is accessible to people with special needs. This initiative is part of the 2022–2030 Economic Transformation and Competitiveness Development Program.

²¹ Representatives of the Union of Lithuanian Persons with Disabilities participate in the Tourism Council.

Reply to paragraph 27 (b)

150. In 2022, a digital literacy and adapted information resources training program called “Experience Management Standard” was created for persons with reading disabilities. Two virtual audio book libraries (ELVIS) mobile applications were developed to facilitate the use of electronic publications adapted for people who cannot read normal printed text. 2,100 special players and necessary storage media for recording were purchased. A fully equipped transport vehicle was purchased to organize mobile training in remote regions. In 2023, mobile training for residents with reading disabilities living in remote towns and rural areas began.

151. The Lithuanian Audiosensory Library (LAB) is the biggest publisher of publications in special formats (Braille, audio, DAISY format) in the country.²² One of the most important products created by LAB is the virtual library ELVIS. It aims to create an inclusive publishing system that provides better access to cultural content for individuals who cannot read standard printed text. In 2021, the number of modernized ELVIS users increased by 58%, and the number of publications read doubled.

152. The Minister of Culture has approved a procedure for exchanging accessible copies of works for blind, visually impaired, or otherwise unable to read printed text, in line with Regulation (EU) 2017/1563 of the European Parliament and Council. This procedure is applicable to authorized entities operating in Lithuania and beneficiaries who have ratified the Marrakesh Treaty of the World Intellectual Property Organization in 2013.

Reply to paragraph 27 (c)

153. The MoC has approved a progress measure for the 2021–2030 Cultural and Creativity Development Program aimed at increasing the competitiveness and visibility of Lithuanian creators, promoting international and cross-sectoral cooperation, and reducing cultural inequality.

C. Specific obligations (arts. 31–33)

Reply to paragraph 28

154. The SDA has initiated and organized the collection of data on PWDs from various information systems and registers. The data includes information on age, type and severity of disability, place of residence, etc. The DAD information system allows for the formation and retrieval of specific information on disability diagnosis by gender, age, disability type, and term.

155. In 2023, the SDA continues its work related to the implementation of recommendations from the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. This includes comparing statistics on disability among adults in EU countries and gathering information on their health status and living conditions. Statistical information is published on the Official Statistics portal.²³

156. Since 2005, the Income and Living Conditions Survey evaluates the percentage of 16+ year olds with health-related activity limitations for at least six months, their health status, housing conditions, economic difficulties, poverty risk, and material deprivation.

157. Eurostat’s recommendations are followed by a five-year survey on the health of residents aged 15 and older, assessing health status, lifestyle, and healthcare utilization using disability-related questions from the Washington Group Short Set.

158. In 2021, a statistical study was conducted on the employment of long-term PWDs aged 15–64, whose daily activities were restricted for six months or longer due to health or functional impairments, compared to the general population of the same age group.

²² <https://www.labiblioteka.lt/en/services/62>.

²³ <https://osp.stat.gov.lt/tarptautiniams-palyginimams-apie-asmenis-su-negalia>.

159. The SDA conducts an annual statistical survey of social services for PWDs in homes, day centres, and residential care facilities. This information is used to compile statistics on the provision of social services according to gender, age groups, facility type, and municipalities as part of the Disabled Social Integration Action Plan 2021–2023.

160. The SDA, under the European system of integrated social protection statistics, provides annual statistical data on the income and expenses of social protection programs, including disability benefits, as per Regulation 2007/458. The official statistics portal²⁴ presents information on social protection expenses for disability benefits in terms of cash and in-kind support, categorized by benefit and service type.

161. Statistical information prepared on the basis of VDA statistical research and administrative sources is published on the Official Statistics Portal in thematic tables²⁵ and in the indicator database²⁶ in accordance with the Official Statistics Portal 2023 calendar.

Reply to paragraph 29

162. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Lithuania (MoFA) is actively involved in promoting and providing resolutions to international organizations on the rights of PWDs. Lithuania was elected to the UN Human Rights Council for the 2022–2024 term, prioritizing disability rights. Lithuania, along with other countries, organized events during the 50th and 53rd sessions to discuss climate change, disability rights, and accessible information.

163. The MoFA participates in organizing the National Human Rights Forum, which takes place annually since 2018 to celebrate International Human Rights Day. The forum focuses on ensuring the rights of PWDs, such as discussing the experiences of mothers with disabilities in the 2021 forum.

164. The needs of PWDs are taken into account in the provision of development cooperation and humanitarian aid. In 2023, applications are being invited for a project that aims to create and implement complex psychosocial and physical rehabilitation services that meet the needs of people affected by Russia's war against Ukraine.

165. Lithuania provides health and social assistance, as well as accommodations, for refugees with disabilities from Ukraine. Temporary protection and social support are given to those who arrive in Lithuania. The country has allocated approximately 400 million euros for the reception of Ukrainian refugees.

Reply to paragraph 30 (a)

166. The implementation of the Convention is the responsibility of various ministries and institutions in Lithuania. From 2024, the local government will take on the role of coordinating issues related to PWDs. The aim is to ensure the implementation of social integration policies and the rights of PWDs, as established in international, EU and national legal documents. This function will be funded by the local and national budgets.

167. The DAD involves disability associations and coordinates the implementation of policies and projects related to the social integration of PWDs. It also monitors the results of social integration activities and participates in preparing reports on the implementation of the Convention.

Reply to paragraph 30 (b)

168. The Commission for the Monitoring of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities at the Office of the EOO carries out the implementation of the provisions of the Convention.²⁷ In 2022, 8,785 euro was allocated for the Commission's activities, and in 2023 – 18,400 euros.

²⁴ Oficialiosios statistikos portalas.

²⁵ <https://osp.stat.gov.lt/statistika-apie-asmenis-su-negalia-rengiama-igyvendinant-nacionalinius-teises-aktus>.

²⁶ <https://osp.stat.gov.lt/statistiniu-rodikliu-analize#/>.

²⁷ <https://lygybe.lt/en/commission-for-the-monitoring-of-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities/>.

169. In 2023, the Commission presented a report on the monitoring of the provisions of the Convention to the highest-level state institutions. The Human Rights Committee of the Republic of Lithuania started parliamentary control regarding the implementation of the report's recommendations. The report was made public, translated into easy-to-understand language and into English, and submitted to the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Reply to paragraph 30 (c)

170. The DAD, involving disability-related associations organizes the implementation of the policy of social integration of the PWDs and coordinates the implementation of the measures and projects of this policy, organizes the monitoring of performance results, and participates in the preparation of monitoring reports on the implementation of the Convention. The Council for the Affairs of the Disabled, a public advisory institution, examines social integration issues for PWDs and proposes policies, drafts legal acts, and monitors the implementation of the Convention and its Optional Protocol.
