**17/07/2019**

**Reply of Lithuania to the Questionnaire of OHCHR regarding the Implementation of Article 8 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities**

**1. Regarding policies relating to raising awareness about persons with disabilities**

The **Action Plan on Non-Discrimination 2017-2019** is being implemented which includes separate measures to improve the situation of disabled people in Lithuania, educate the public on non-discrimination and equal opportunities.

It should also be noted that the issue of non-discrimination of persons with disabilities also falls within the scope of more general measures aimed at reducing discrimination on all grounds provided for in the **Law on Equal Opportunities**. Measures to be implemented are the following:

1. To inform the public on equal opportunities and non-discrimination.
2. To raise public awareness of equal opportunities and non-discrimination. The funds for the implementation of the measure in 2019 are 7000 EUR. Social advertising for informing the public on equal opportunities and non-discrimination issues in 2018 was broadcasted in public transport. About 320 thousand times of advertising in the fight against stereotypes and intolerance were broadcasted. Social advertising is also planned to be broadcasted in 2019;
3. Activities to reduce discrimination on the grounds provided for in the Law on Equal Opportunities and to prevent discrimination in the labour market. The implementation of the measure is financed by the European Union Structural Funds (European Social Fund). The project “Change in business, public sector, society - new standards for reducing discrimination” is being implemented. Funded activities to reduce discrimination on the grounds provided for in the Law on Equal Opportunities of the Republic of Lithuania and to prevent discrimination in the labour market: development, maintenance and presentation of an online platform for distance learning on discrimination on the grounds set out in the Law on Equal Opportunities of the Republic of Lithuania; the preparation and dissemination of methodology and recommendations for the public sector on the availability of public information to all users (disabled, non-native speakers, migrants and others); presentation of successful cases of diversity promotion in business, presentation of foreign and Lithuanian examples in business events and forums organized in Lithuania; implementation of equality plans for the management of socially responsible companies; preparing and disseminating information about the manifestations of discrimination, its consequences and actions to employers and employees; promotion of diversity and mutual understanding of discussions in Lithuanian regions by organizing the election of local diversity ambassadors in cooperation with local media and community; capacity building of non-governmental organizations working in the field of human rights protection (training, round-table discussions, preparation and dissemination of information material). 411839 EUR of EU structural funds were allocated to implement the project. Project duration is 36 months. (2016-2020). It is planned that 1664 persons will participate in events promoting the reduction of discrimination in the labour market.

**The National Program for Social Integration of Persons with Disabilities for 2013–2019** and its measures are being implemented in Lithuania.

**The project “Establishment of Conditions for a Sustainable Transition from Institutional Care to Family and Community-based Services System in Lithuania**” is being implemented under the 2014-2020 European Union Funds Investment Action Program.

In addition, **the Action for Institutional Care Reorganization Project “To carry out education and information of the society and its individual groups on issues of transition from institutional care to community and family-based services and to publicize the project and its results”** is being implemented.

**2. Regarding policy measures to address hate crimes, hate speech and harmful practices against persons with disabilities.**

The Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Lithuania together with the Prosecutor General’s Office and the Office of the Inspector of Journalists’ Ethics in 2018-2020 are carrying out a project funded by the EU Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme 2014-2020 ‘Strengthening Response to Hate Crime and Hate Speech in Lithuania’. The project is aimed at preventing hate crime and hate speech on grounds protected by law (including the basis for disability). The project aims to create a help platform for victims of hate crime and hate speech, providing victims with legal, emotional, psychological support (services), as well as guaranteeing the protection of the victims' rights from criminal proceedings in line with the requirements of the European Union Victims' Rights Directive.

The EU’s Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) 2019 Fundamental Rights Report indicates that, upon request from the Member States, FRA, together with the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), offers technical assistance to national authorities to improve their ability to record and collect hate crime data and thus provide better support to victims, through national workshops. In 2018 one such workshop for Lithuanian and Estonian law enforcement officials took place in Vilnius, Lithuania.

**3. Regarding practices on representation and portrayal of persons with disabilities in broadcast media**

In 2017, **public information and media information about the people with disabilities and their integration, analysis and evaluation** was carried out (the analysis consisted of media monitoring, discussion of focus groups of journalists and analysis of 3357 publications in the media, assessing the role of the media in the policy of people with disabilities in various sections). In the pilot study, 6 main images of people with disabilities and contexts of depiction were highlighted. Neutral disability presentation is not included in this part of the analysis, as it is not relevant for researching the image of people with disabilities. Each section has several types of image that are assigned to it, which make it possible to understand the features of depicting people with disabilities and their context even deeper. Disability perception and portrayal as rights holders dominate, accounting for just over a third of cases (36% of publications). In the second and third places, the depiction of the disabled as in the situation of a victim or victim (33% of publications) and positive cases of depiction of people with disabilities (14% of publications) appeared. The image of the person with a disability as a financial vulnerability or poverty situation is the fourth most frequent (13 % of publications). Representing people with disabilities in the context of disaster or crime (7 % of publications).

**3 (b). Regarding existing measures to regulate social media in accordance with Article 8 and human rights standards on freedom of expression.**

In 2019, the Lithuanian Parliament amended the Law on the Provision of Information to include disability as a ground. The amendment prohibits publishing in the media information which instigates hatred, ridicule, humiliation, discrimination or violence towards a group of people or a person belonging thereto. The EU‘s Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) in 2019 Fundamental Rights Report indicated this amendment as an example of action taken to improve attitudes towards persons with disabilities.

**4. Regarding existence and implementation of the programmes and activities related to raising awareness to persons with disabilities and their rights, and combatting negative attitudes**

One of the objectives of **The National Program for Social Integration of Persons with Disabilities for 2013–2019** is the implementation of measures aimed at public education. In 2018, following measures were implemented:

* **Projects to publish and distribute periodicals for persons with disabilities**, providing information such as that regarding social education. Projects finance the publication of periodicals related to the social integration of people with disabilities and the provision of equal opportunities for people with disabilities in writing, Braille, audio (CD). The publication of 7 periodicals on social education and information for people with disabilities was supported. 167. 2 thousand EUR was allocated and used for these measures.
* **Projects supporting the activities of associations of persons with disabilities**, such as promoting the activities of related NGOs. 28 projects were funded with 98 publicity (educational activities) measures. 15 conferences were organized with 1388 participants, of whom 621 were people with disabilities; 28 seminars, trainings with 366 participants were organised, including 242 persons with disabilities; 62 events (meetings, round tables, informational visits in municipalities, etc.) were held involving 10215 people, including 747 persons with disabilities (out of which were 238 disabled children).
* **Public education and information on the social integration for persons with disabilities** (170.6 thousand EUR were spent). While implementing the project on Information Preparation and Dissemination on the Internet, and the development and dissemination of information to the public on the social integration and education of people with disabilities, following activities were implemented: the section entitled “I Can” was present on the news website www.lrytas.lt. 433 pieces of information have been published, including the following: 392 articles, 12 video reports, 24 interactive campaigns. Published articles were adapted for people with language and communication difficulties; the publication “Environment and Buildings for All” on universal design was prepared; various articles regarding social integration articles were published in the weekly “Lietuvos sveikata” (“On Opportunities for Creating a Comfortable Environment for Disabled Children”, “The Council was Looking for the Best Solutions for the People with Disabilities”, “Exploring the Progress of Adapting Buildings to the People with Disabilities”, “Exploring the Benefits of Social Rehabilitation Services for the People with Disabilities”, “Disabled Women Experience Double Discrimination”).
* **The following events were organised**: a seminar on Universal Design for architects and designers (47 participants); seminars devoted to discussing the accessibility of tourism services for people with disabilities, to increase the knowledge of tourism professionals, to provide services for the disabled, to share good practices and example (210 participants); cultural events for people with disabilities; International Conference of the European Disability Forum, on the implementation of the Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on the accessibility of public sector websites and mobile applications; the social project “Friendship Carries”, aimed at reducing the social exclusion of disabled people and promoting tolerance; training for municipal administrations and organizations of disabled people (242 participants) during which 2017 monitoring report of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities was presented during the training, participants were introduced to the search for new ideas for project development.
* The information system [www.pertvarka.lt](http://www.pertvarka.lt) was created for the transformation, and institutional care reform was provided for social advertising in public transport - promotional video clips on public transport screens were broadcasted for 24 months. Themes of informative video clips were as follows: Reducing discrimination and stereotypes related to mental and/or mental disability. A sociological research was carried out during the project, one of which was to analyse the attitudes of the Lithuanian population related to persons with mental disabilities living in residential institutions. 1007 respondents were interviewed during the survey. One in every two respondents thinks that whether the responsibility for care should lie with the state institutions, the family, community or NGOs depends on the severity of the disability.
* In the context of the 2018-2020 Action Plan on Social Inclusion for Persons with Hearing Disabilities, the following measures were implemented: Educational interactive publication on sign language history was published; The time of broadcasts translated into sign language has been increased on the Lithuanian national radio and television (it was translated into sign language for 400 hours of broadcasting (which is about 4.5% of all broadcast time); the time of broadcast captions on the Lithuanian National Radio and Television were 1216 hours (about 14% of broadcast).