**RESPONSES BY THE REPUBLIC OF LITHUANIA TO THE QUESTIONNAIRE ON THE CULTURAL DIMENSION OF THE RIGHT TOEDUCATION**

**1. Please provide information on how, in your country, the issue of respect for cultural**

**diversity and the cultural rights of each person is reflected in school curricula (legislative,**

**institutional and policy framework, and implementation)**

The Law of Education is the principal document governing the objectives, the key principles of education in the Republic of Lithuania, and the methods of their implementation. The Law enshrines equal opportunities for all students learning under core curricula of the national level to develop their cultural identity, to get to know other cultures and to respect cultural diversity.

The cultural dimension has been included in the core curricula of the national language, national minority and foreign languages, ethics and religion, history, basics of citizenship, arts (theatre, arts), *from primary to the final secondary education grade (grades 1 to 12)*. The development of multiculturalism encompasses all aspects of **cultural competence** in the curricula of these subjects, namely, the ***1) values, 2) knowledge and 3) skills.***

The following are several examples of how the development of multiculturalism has been enshrined in the curriculum content: for example, the provision “To value heritage of other nations, religions and countries and to contribute to its preservation” has been formulated in the core History curriculum for grades 9-10; “To value reading as a way of getting to know own self, others, the nation and the world” is a part of the core curriculum of the Lithuanian Language and Literature for 11-12 graders, “To value language and literature as a part of a nation’s culture that transmits experiences, values and traditions of past generations, which help people to develop national and civic self-awareness, and to become a full-fledged culture participant” has been a part of the core curriculum of National Minority Mother Tongues for grades 11-12, “To show interest in other countries, to develop respect for the diversity of the nature and culture of those countries” is a part of the core curriculum of Geography for 5-6 graders, “To show tolerance for different appearances, behaviours and religions; to respect people of other nations” is a part of the core curriculum of Ethics for grades 3-4, and the like. Each provision in the core curricula contains examples of the definition of specific skills, as well the demonstration of specific knowledge and understanding.

The aspect of multiculturalism has been included in the **integrated cultural awareness programme,** which is an integral part of the content of all subjects. Cultural awareness competence is defined as a personal competence, which manifests itself in the ability to recognize, respect, protect cultural diversity and participate in socially valuable activities of cultural expression. The integrated cultural awareness programme aims to help students to acquire cultural awareness, skills, attitudes needed to understand, accept, respect and participate in communicating cultural values of different individuals, groups, nations and races, and to develop their abilities of cultural expression.

The development of multiculturalism has been implemented in curricula at all levels: *competence development, scope of curricula content and the evaluation of educational achievements*.

**2. Please provide information on how, in your country, the issue of respect for cultural**

**diversity and the cultural rights of each person is taken into account in the organization of the school system and schools (legislative, institutional and policy framework, and implementation)**

The Law on Education of Lithuania enshrines equal opportunities for all learners to receive education based on their capabilities and needs.

In Lithuania, students learning under core curricula in grades 1-12 have the opportunity to learn their mother tongue and culture, and to receive instruction in their mother tongue (enshrined in Article 30 of the Law on Education). Therefore, in addition to schools where Lithuanian is the language of instruction, there also are schools where instruction is given in minority languages in Lithuania (e.g. Polish, Russian, Belarussian, German), teaching subjects in the mother tongue.

In Lithuania, pupils can also study in international (for example, international baccalaureate) schools where instruction is given in a foreign language.

**3. Please clarify to what extent the measures described above relate not only to the issue of**

**languages in education (in this regard, please briefly explain the context and provide details on the State language policy), but also to the arts, heritage, science, history, values and religions, or world views and ways of life, in all their diversity.**

Learning the Lithuanian language is compulsory in all Lithuanian schools. Lithuanian language learning achievements are evaluated when completing the basic and secondary education programmes. The evaluation of achievements in minority languages is compulsory when completing the basic education programme and, at the decision of the school where a minority language is the language of instruction, it is compulsory at the end of the secondary education programme.

The Lithuanian Language and Literature (Cultural) education aims to convey to learners signs that are important to the national and civic community, images, ideas, values, “common places” and ideals, thus ensuring continuity of tradition, strengthening personal identity and bringing together students of various origins into the Lithuanian society of solidarity. This subject covers texts written not only in Lithuanian but also in other languages in Lithuania, revealing their relations, demonstrating the diversity of the Lithuanian cultural tradition and multilingualism, and opening up the European cultural tradition.

Schools where Lithuanian is the instruction language aim to introduce to learners the multilingual Lithuanian culture and classics of the neighbouring nations in greater detail, thus developing their broader cultural understanding, attention and respect for Lithuanian national minority cultures, opening up Lithuanian culture to them as a dialogical and polylogical one.

The aim is to open up the multilingual Lithuanian culture to learners of schools teaching in minority languages, which could become their own, through texts in their mother tongue. Learners of both Lithuanian and national minority schools are assisted in finding a common Lithuanian cultural space uniting them, which would strengthen the self-respect, self-esteem and contemporary identity of all, and would help to form a solid European community in Lithuania.

In Lithuania, pupils can learn their religion through the core curricula of six religions: Catholic, Orthodox, Evangelical Lutheran, Evangelical Reformed, Karaite, and Jewish. Teaching other traditional Lithuanian religions, including the Old Believers, Sunni Muslims and Catholics of Greek Rite, has been arranged by management of local religious communities and associations.

By learning foreign languages, pupils have the opportunity to get to know other cultures and develop their general skills of language culture and communication. By understanding cultural values of different nations, students develop tolerance for cultural diversity and confidence in their national culture.

Art education aims to raise cultural awareness of learners. Artistic creation provides students with many opportunities to get to know their native culture and cultures of other nations and social groups, to take care of their heritage and their creative integration into the modern culture and economy.

**4. Please specify the specific and particular difficulties encountered in ensuring an inclusive**

**and quality education that allows cultural diversity and the cultural rights of each person to flourish at the same time;**

The issue of the linguistic and cultural integration of children of Lithuanian citizens who have returned to their homeland from abroad and of immigrant children into the Lithuanian education system is highly relevant at this time. Legislation relating to financing education of such learners and ensuring effective learning support has been supplemented to address this issue. The plan is to develop state language curricula by language proficiency levels (A1-B1) for primary education (grades 1-4) and basic education (grades 5-8) programmes.

**5. Have specific mechanisms been established to consult and ensure the participation of**

**stakeholders, in particular the populations concerned and parents, for a better understanding and effectiveness of the right to education, including its cultural dimension? What place is given in this context to the voice of children?**

The General Education Council, which includes representatives from national minority schools, parents’ organizations, researchers and practicing teachers, has been formed in Lithuania to address current issues in education.

The Student Union has been consulted on issues that are relevant to learners, such as reducing the workload, inclusion of relevant topics in the curriculum, evaluating students achievements, and the like.