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Lithuania

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I. Process of drafting the report

1. The report of the Republic of Lithuania has been prepared in accordance with the Guidelines of the UN HRC. It was drafted by a commission formed by the Minister of Justice, consisting of representatives of the ministries. The draft was approved at the Government meeting.
2. Drafting was closely related to coordination of the implementation of the second cycle recommendations. The Government instructed the ministries to implement the recommendations within their competence. The Ministry of Justice, which coordinates the process, held coordination meetings of the state institutions with the NGOs on progress in implementing the recommendations. Meetings with institutions (ombudspersons), acting as human rights institutions, and the Human Rights Committee of the Seimas (Parliament) representatives. In addition, the Ministry of Justice itself held and encouraged other ministries to hold thematic meetings with the NGOs on progress in implementing the recommendations.
3. The commission-prepared draft was made available to NGOs, whose opinion was later considered in the report. E.g., NGOs have expressed concerns about the availability of services and the adaptation of infrastructure for persons with disabilities and the effectiveness of measures to reduce poverty. The draft report was also submitted to the ombudspersons', and their comments were received. In addition, the draft was made publicly available on the website of the Ministry of Justice for public feedback during the official coordination of the draft with other authorities.

II. Implementation of the recommendations received during the second cycle

A. Implemented institutional changes

4. In 2017, the Seimas Ombudsperson's Office was accredited internationally as the NHRI under the Paris Principles at A level. Amendments to the Law on the Seimas Ombudspersons, required for the consolidation of this status at the national level, came into effect in 2018. The law provides that promoting respect for human rights and freedoms by carrying out the functions of the NHRI is one of the goals of the activities of the Seimas Ombudspersons. The state and municipal institutions shall cooperate with the Seimas Ombudsperson's Office in providing it information on the situation regarding human rights in the country, in initiating and conducting research on fundamental problems concerning human rights (100.24-30).

B. Regulatory changes and policy instruments implemented

5. The 2021-2024 Government Programme provides for the instruments to guarantee political, economic, social, civil and cultural rights, following the principle that no one should be forgotten and no one should be excluded.
6. The 2021-2030 Lithuanian National Progress Plan sets quantifiable, measurable targets both in social policy and human rights. According to the Plan, all the implemented targets must align with equal opportunities and gender equality principles. The Plan for the Implementation of the Government Programme also provides the specific, measurable indicators of social policy and human rights (100.39).
7. On 16 July 2019, a separate component of the crime of torture was added to the Criminal Code (100.95-96).

Protection of the rights of the child

8. In 2015, Lithuania signed the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on a Communications Procedure. The Minister of Social Security and Labour

instructed a special working group to prepare a draft on the ratification of the Protocol by 1 October 2021 and to submit it to the Government **(100.9, 100.10)**.

9. In 2017, Seimas amended the Law on Fundamentals of Protection of the Rights of the Child, establishing a prohibition of all forms of violence against the child, including physical punishment, and the parents, other legal representatives of the child and the state must ensure the protection of the child. The Ministry of Social Security and Labour is developing various instruments to raise public awareness and intolerance of violence against children. In 2020, a publicity campaign to promote positive parenting was carried out. E.g., a leaflet for parents, custodians, and children during the campaign has been prepared. It provides clear information on the rights of the child, including the right to be protected against any form of violence, including physical punishment. The publication reminds of that the upbringing of children must be based on non-violent methods. The problem was publicised in the electronic diaries 'Tamo' and 'Mano dienynas'. Educational information on violence against children, the forms of violence, how to identify violence, where to apply for help has been substantially updated in the 'Prevention of Violence against Children' section of the ministry's website, and new information has been prepared. The information is intended for children and adults (parents, custodians (guardians), other legal representatives of the child, teachers). It is provided in an attractive format, the provisions of the legal acts are explained in a simple way, comprehensible to the general public. Activities of NGOs, which are oriented at organising positive parenting training, consultations for parents, custodians, adoptive parents on parenting issues, family preparation courses, other activities are funded **(100.114, 100.115, 100.116, 100.117, 100.118, 100.120)**.

10. Protection of children's rights is one of the main priorities of Lithuania's candidacy for the UN HRC for 2022–2024.

11. In order to create a permanent system for the protection of the rights of the child, which would provide uniform practices applied in the state in safeguarding and protecting the rights and legitimate interests of the child, and which would ensure a timely response to violations of those rights, and prompt decision making, the centralised management and coordination of the child rights protection system has been developed. As of 1 July 2018, the state-level function of protection of the rights of the child has been transferred from the municipalities to the State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service. The Service has become the central institution for implementing a policy for protecting the rights of the child. It has been mandated to ensure the coordination of actions related to the rights of the child in all sectors at national, municipal and local levels. The divisions of this Service operate in the regions, and the service provision function has been left with the municipalities. The amended provisions of the Law on Fundamentals of Protection of the Rights of the Child of 2018-2019, obliged to report a possible violation of the rights of the child. The action to be taken by the authorities upon receipt of such a report. Child neglect has also been recognised as a form of violence. A clear procedure for responding to possible violations, particularly to violence against children, (particularly rapid response to such cases) and case management, which aims at providing more effective and comprehensive assistance to families at risk, has been established. Mobile teams of professionals, which provide intensive assistance to families in crisis, have been set up. The removal of a child from his/her family is a measure of last resort, which is applied subject to judicial authorisation. **(100.40)**.

12. In 2020, Seimas has adopted the Law Amending the Law on Education (entry into force on 1 September 2024). This amendment removes the legal possibilities to discriminate against individuals based on their special educational needs, namely not to admit such individuals to general-purpose schools but to direct them to special schools **(100.61)**.

Youth issues

13. Young people in Lithuania are involved in decision-making at the national (activities of the Youth Council); at regional (activities of Municipal Youth Councils); and at European levels (Structured Dialogue activities). The Youth Council is an advisory institution to the Department of Youth Affairs under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour, which operates on a societal basis. The Municipal Youth Council is a collegial institution established on a public basis, operating under the auspices of the Municipal Council and having the status of a permanent or temporary commission. The National Working Groups

on Structured Dialogue operate by helping to implement and develop the process of discussions on various topics between youth, policymakers and organisations that work on youth issues. This process aims to ensure that the views of young people are considered in shaping the EU's youth policy (100.43).

14. Open youth spaces and centres provide for conditions to get consultations with highly qualified mental health professionals. The services are available to all young people. The 2020-2024 Suicide Prevention Action Plan, approved by the Minister of Health, provided for 40 psychologists who consult in open youth centres and/or spaces. Consultancy may be provided depending on the need (individually or in groups); the duration is usually 1–2 hours.

15. Since 2014 Lithuania implements The Youth Guarantee Initiative. Projects that focus on activating, motivating, and enhancing the social competencies of young people with a view of their (re)integration into the labour market and/or the education system are being implemented. E.g., the Employment Service under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour is implementing the Project 'Increasing the social competencies of young people', which is intended for unemployed, out-of-school and out-of-training young people aged 16–29, who are registered with the Employment Service. The Project also includes the provision of consultancy by psychologists.

16. Department of Youth Affairs under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour implements the Project 'Judam', which aims at the most vulnerable young people aged 15–29 (persons with addictions, having problems with law, for young people living in a care home or have moved out from it, etc.). The Project aims to reduce the number of unemployed, out-of-school and out-of-training young people aged 16–29 through intervening and promoting activities considering the needs and capabilities of the young person. E.g., a young person may receive the services of a specialist: psychologist, social worker, lawyer, Lithuanian or English language teacher, personal financier, career specialist, etc.

17. Unemployed persons under 29 years are among the persons who are additionally supported in the labour market. They have access to the consultancy services provided by the Employment Service (vocational consultancy, professional career planning, psychological consultancy).

18. The system of qualified psychiatric care has been available in Lithuania since 1996. Primary outpatient mental healthcare services are provided comprehensively to all residents registered with a healthcare facility - psychiatric care is provided by a team of professionals of mental health centres (psychiatrist, paediatric and adolescent psychiatrist, psychologist, social worker, and mental health nurse). Currently, about 116 mental health centres operate in 60 municipalities. Patients (or family members) can contact these centres directly without any referral from the doctor.

19. In order to improve the availability of psychological help, in 2021, the number of persons registered with the mental health centres per one psychologist will be further reduced to 10,000 (currently 17,000). Additional funds from the Compulsory Health Insurance Fund are planned to be allocated to implement this decision, *inter alia* for increasing the number of medical psychologists in mental health centres. Since 2020, the following free psychological well-being and mental health promotion services have been launched in all municipal public health offices: up to 5 individual consultations by a psychologist, which can be provided anonymously upon request; group sessions for stress management, emotion recognition and management; sessions of mutual assistance groups; psychological consultancy in groups.

20. Municipalities continue to implement the initiative for improving the health of young people 'Implementation of an Adapted and Extended Model of Provision of Youth-Friendly Healthcare Services (YFHCS)'. The goal is to network together the existing healthcare providers and to improve their cooperation in providing more effective healthcare for young people, to organise the provision of healthcare services based on the principles of 'low threshold' and case management, namely to assess the needs of the young person who has come for a consultation, to draw up a service provision plan, to mediate when the young person applies to personal healthcare or other non-health sector institutions. In the recently updated Description of the YFHCS provision model and of coordination at the national level, eight algorithms have been developed/updated (reducing adverse health effects of sexually

transmitted diseases, unplanned pregnancy and depression, assistance in case of sexual violence, reducing the number of suicides and adverse health effects of self-harm, reducing adverse health effects of the use of psychoactive substances). They describe procedures for health promotion, assessment of risk factors, prevention activities and management in the case of personal contact. The updated YFHCS provision model will be implemented in 23 municipalities. 10 of which have already participated in implementing the measure of the previous funding period.

21. The Ministry of Health administers the State Public Health Strengthening Fund (hereinafter – the Fund) (established in 2016). The money from the Fund is used for the activities to preserve and strengthen public health, including for sponsoring prevention projects, social advertising and research. In 2020, 17 NGO projects and three research projects aimed at strengthening society’s mental health (898.6 thousand euros) were financed by the Fund (100.140).

Gender equality

22. Following the election of a new Seimas and the formation of a new Government in 2020, the speaker of Seimas and the Prime Minister are women. 6 out of 14 ministers in the Cabinet of Ministers are women. In 2021, for the first time in history, women took up positions of the President of the Constitutional Court and the Prosecutor General.

23. The fourth National Programme on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men 2015–2021 is being implemented. E.g., in 2020, 58 Programme measures were implemented, among others related to the Covid-19 pandemic, e.g. psychologic, educational, legal consultations. Different measures aimed at wage gap reduction were implemented. The Law on Strategic Management of 25 June 2020 (entered into force on 1 January 2021), enshrines the principle of gender equality as a horizontal principle stipulating that, at the time of preparing and implementing the planning documents, gender mainstreaming must be considered in planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation stages. The 2021-2030 National Progress Plan enshrines the principle of equal opportunities for all, of which gender equality is also an integral part. The Law amending the Law on State Social Insurance of 23 December 2020, established that the State Social Insurance Fund Board under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour must make public information on wage averages by gender, when the employer has more than eight employees, at least three of which are women or men (100.46-49).

Health protection

24. *Protection of sexual and reproductive health (100.141)*. The WHO Regional Strategy on Sexual and Reproductive Health provides objectives and strategies for the countries to pursue. Lithuania strives to implement those objectives and strategies (e.g., safe motherhood, HIV/AIDS, tackling problems arising from sexually transmitted diseases, prevention programs for cervical and breast cancer) by regulating them in its legal acts. In this way, reproductive health services are integrated into the existing healthcare system. Persons covered by Compulsory Health Insurance, who are entitled to personal healthcare services paid from the Compulsory Health Insurance Fund budget are provided with all the services they need.

25. Availability of contraception. The Minister of Health approved the lists of reimbursable medicinal products, which provides that levonorgestrel is prescribed for young women aged 18 to 20 years, who consult a gynaecologist for contraception, and girls aged 15 to 17 years – following the procedure established by the Minister of Health.

Rights of persons with disabilities

26. The 2021-2023 Action Plan for the Social Integration of Persons with Disabilities provides for funds for the social integration of persons with disabilities. Every year, funds for the monitoring of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities are allocated for the Department for the Affairs of the Disabled under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour (hereinafter – the Department of Disabled): in 2018 – 70 thousand euros from the state budget, in 2019 – 52 thousand euros, in 2020 – 48 thousand euros, in 2021 -

48 thousand euros. The funding decreased because part of it was transferred to the Commission for the Monitoring of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities under the Office of the Equal Opportunities Ombudsperson. As of 2019, the Commission took over the function of monitoring the implementation of the Convention (**100.144**).

27. The Government has included in the Plan of Measures of the Government Programme the measures implementing the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The Ministry of Social Security and Labour is also preparing the Programme for the development of an environment that is suitable for persons with disabilities in all areas of life. Lithuania's long-term strategies (2021–2030) for adapting the environment for persons with disabilities are being formed in the Programme (**100.145**).

28. The Law on Construction provides that the building architecture must meet the requirements for universal design, set out in the normative construction technical documents, in the normative building safety and purpose documents. If construction in buildings and civil engineering works is conducted according to the following projects: construction, reconstruction, building renewal, major repairs, simplified construction or reconstruction, a major project description, a simple repair or a simple repairs description in buildings from the list approved by the Government or by an institution authorised by it, or when the building's purpose is being changed to the specified in this list, special requirements are set. These buildings and civil engineering works must be adapted to the special needs of persons with disabilities following the requirements of normative construction technical documents.

29. Project solutions' compliance with the requirements is verified by an NGO selected by the Department of Disabled through a tender procedure. The selected NGO participates in the work of the commission for the completion of the important buildings' construction for persons with disabilities. On average, 2,240 building projects important for persons with disabilities are verified per year. The NGO participated in 668 construction completion commissions, provided on average 563 consultations regarding construction projects preparation. Draft amendments of the Law on Construction from 2021 provide for compulsory design expertise of mandatory structures, which must be adapted to the needs of persons with disabilities. Such projects will be verified and approved by experts. The said amendments introduce provisions enshrining that environmental accessibility also constitutes public interest, including environmental accessibility for persons with disabilities (**100.146, 147**).

30. Pursuant to the Law on Social Integration of the Disabled, vocational rehabilitation services are provided to persons with disabilities to develop or restore their employability and increase employment opportunities. The Law on Employment provides that persons with disabilities are additionally supported in the labour market. To ensure employment opportunities for persons with disabilities, they are subject to active labour market policy measures, such as subsidised employment, support for job creation (adaptation), promotion of self-employment, vocational training and other active labour market policy measures that aim at as quickly as possible integration into the labour market (**100.148**).

31. Persons recognised as disabled according to the procedure established by legal acts are insured at the expense of the state (Law on Health Insurance). Thus, they are guaranteed access to affordable and quality personal healthcare services. Additional personal healthcare services provided for persons with disabilities at the expense of the state are: prosthetic dentistry services, provision of certain services of family medicine and nursing at home, repeated or supportive medical rehabilitation services, reimbursement of medicines (**100.148**).

32. Criminal Code provides for greater legal protection for persons with disabilities by imposing a stricter criminal liability in cases where any offence is committed with the intent to express hatred against a group of persons or a person belonging to it because of disability. Under the Criminal Code, such cases are considered aggravating circumstances (**100.150**).

Integration of national minorities

33. The Department of National Minorities under the Government (hereinafter – the Department of National Minorities) participated in implementing the 2017–2020 Action Plan for the Promotion of Non-discrimination. The plan provided two measures targeted explicitly

at national minorities. Measure 1.4 included: research of areas with the highest population of national minorities, preparing information and training on national minorities, strengthening intercultural dialogue and tolerance, dissemination of information on labour market opportunities. Measure 1.5 focused on the activities that promote intercultural cognition of the cultural heritage of national minorities and immigrants. The Department of National Minorities implemented the Project ‘Inclusion of Representatives of National Minorities in the Labour Market’. It aimed at reducing and preventing discrimination on the grounds provided for in the Law on Equal Opportunities. The 2021-2023 Action Plan for the Promotion of Non-discrimination provides for a measure intended to raise the awareness of national minorities in recognising the language of hatred **(100.152)**.

34. The 2015-2020 Action Plan for Roma Integration into the Lithuanian Society promoted the employment of Roma people. Under the said Plan project ‘Let's work together with the Roma: new job opportunities and challenges’ was implemented. **(100.162)**.

35. The Council of National Communities of new composition, consisting of the candidates elected for the years 2020–2024 at the meetings of national minority NGOs, started its work in 2020. This Council is a public advisory body representing national minorities in matters related to coordination of Lithuanian national minority policy. It unites representatives of 28 nationalities. The Council participated in preparing the concept of representation of the history of national minorities in Lithuania, the Draft Law on National Minorities. Representatives of national minorities are invited to working groups dealing with the issues relevant to national minorities. The Prime Minister has a special advisor for the questions of national minorities. In December 2020, the Minister of Education, Science and Sports formed the Commission on National Minorities. This Commission provides opinion and conclusions for the Minister of Education, Science and Sports or the other institutions in matters of education of national minorities **(100.160, 161)**.

36. The councils of national minorities serve as public advisory bodies in several municipalities, e.g. Klaipeda City Municipality and Visaginas Municipality. These councils assist the municipalities in formulating policy of the national minorities, represent their interests, consult and provide expertise in addressing strategic and other issues of ethnic communities, seek to promote the integration and the development of cultures of national minorities, to ensure the preservation of national identity and the equal life of national minorities. The Public Institution House of National Communities, Public Institution Kaunas Cultural Centre of Various Nations, Public Institution Centre of the Roma Society, Public Institution Folklore and Ethnography Centre of Ethnic Minorities in Lithuania help to preserve the cultural identity of Lithuanian national minorities and fully integrate into the social life of the country. The representatives of national minorities actively participate in political life (e.g., hold positions of ministers, advisers to ministers, are the members of Seimas and the local self-government councils) and in the activities of traditional political parties **(100.59, 100.152, 100.162, 100.163)**.

37. To make the information regarding the legal framework of national minority rights more accessible, the Department of National Minorities has published a two-part law compendium ‘Legal Regulation of National Minorities’, which includes the Lithuanian and international legal acts and recommendations **(100.51)**.

38. The Department of National Minorities is implementing the 2018-2021 Programme ‘Integration of national minorities into the society while preserving their identity’, coordinates and implements measures for the integration of Roma into Lithuanian society. It has formed the priorities of the Programme activities considering the directions and works of the Government Programme implementation. The Programme aims to create a harmonious civil society by integrating the heritage of national communities and developing cultural diversity; strengthening civically responsible and non-discriminatory public information on national minorities; to strengthen the involvement of the Lithuanian Polish community in the formation of positive cooperation with Poland. The Department of National Minorities supported projects of national minority NGOs; promoted cooperation between the municipalities and national minority NGOs in preserving and representing the culture and history of national minorities; organised seminars for Sunday school teachers of national minorities and competence development seminars for the representatives of national minority NGOs; supported the initiatives of the cultural and integration centres of national minorities

promoting the knowledge of the history and traditions of national minorities in Lithuania; the intercultural cooperation initiatives of the children and youth of the ethnic communities of South-Eastern Lithuania and other regions of the country; academic research on the history of national minorities in Lithuania; dissemination of the culture of national minorities in the media by giving priority to projects representing the history of national minorities in Lithuania; carried out measures intended for learning the state language to enable persons belonging to national minorities to enter the labour market as quickly as possible and to ensure social and economic well-being; organised a public information campaign ‘Names. Places. Dates’ on the social network about the contribution of the representatives of national minorities to the development of Lithuanian statehood **(100.52, 55)**.

39. In 2019, a working group for preparing a draft Law on National minorities was formed. The draft law was presented and discussed in social dialogue with representatives of the Council of National Communities, communities of national minorities, the academic community, representatives of institutions and organisations in various Lithuanian cities - in Vilnius, Klaipėda, and Visaginas. The discussions included the following issues: necessity of adopting the law on national minorities, teaching the state language, cooperation with state and municipal institutions, the concept and definition of ‘national minority’. In 2021, the Ministry of Justice took over drafting the Law on National Minorities **(100.153-158)**.

40. The Government formed in 2020 in its programme, and the plan for its implementation paid due attention to the issues of national minorities. The programme envisages actualising the importance of the cultural, tangible and intangible cultural heritage of the national minorities living in Lithuania; to develop intercultural dialogue, to involve ethnic communities and young people in cultural processes at national, regional and municipal levels; to ensure by legal means the freedoms of the identity, equal conditions for cultural dissemination, self-expression and self-realisation rights of the national minorities living in Lithuania. The 2021-2030 Culture and Creativity Development Programme is a strategic document currently pending approval by the Government. This Development Programme aims to implement the National Progress Plan objective - to promote the full integration of national minorities.

41. In 2019, the Minister of Culture approved the Concept of Representation of the History of National Minorities in Lithuania. In 2020, the 2020-2022 Action Plan for the Representation of the History of National Minorities in Lithuania was approved. The state, municipal institutions and NGOs of national minorities participate in the implementation of this Action Plan. The Concept and its Action Plan aim to substantiate the necessity of representing the history of national minorities in Lithuania, to present to the public the history of Lithuanian national minorities as a culturally, confessionally and linguistically important and relevant part of an integral and dynamic identity of Lithuania, and to create conditions for its effective presentation to the public.

42. The Department of National Minorities informs the public about national minorities by promoting the integration of national minorities, by ensuring the possibility for the representatives of the national minorities and their NGOs to carry out activities for the preservation of national identity, language, culture, cultural heritage and history, to participate actively in social, political and cultural life. The cultural centres of national minorities operating in Lithuania allow achieving this objective **(100.57)**.

43. The Department of National Minorities implemented the project ‘Inclusion of Representatives of National Minorities in the Labour Market’. The National Institute for Social Integration, the partner of the said project, carried out day-to-day media monitoring, analysed the daily information, how individual media portray various national minorities **(100.59, 60)**.

44. The project for the integration of the Roma into the labour market ‘Let's work together with the Roma: new job opportunities and challenges’ has been implemented. During the successful implementation of this project, socially vulnerable Roma people participated in social integration activities and seminars on gender equality (45 persons participated, 14 women joined various empowerment activities), in sports activities, attended music lessons. Some of the participants acquired profession, returned to the education system, sought education in general education institutions, entered into employment contracts, acquired

individual activity certificates or registered with the Employment Service. The Roma people attended Lithuanian, English, driving (B and C-CE categories) and computer literacy courses, a positive parenting camp, and youth talent development training. They participated in a mentoring program, employment-promoting sessions of vocational training, and the development of practical work skills in the workplace. Every year, more than 300 Roma people take part in social integration activities (100.162).

45. The 2015-2020 Action Plan for Roma Integration into the Lithuanian Society has been implemented. The Department of National Minorities has prepared, constantly updates and administers the website www.romuplatforma.lt. It has implemented measures to promote Roma education, empowerment of women and non-discrimination. The Department of National Minorities supported the dissemination of Roma culture and traditions, coordinated and implemented 15 measures of the Action Plan, and monitored it. In cooperation with the Public Institution Centre of the Roma Society, non-formal education of Roma children and children's summer camp has been organised, the computer class activities for children and adults, the state language courses have been ensured, the commemoration of the Holocaust and the provision of intercultural mediation services have been organised. Seimas has included the Roma Genocide Remembrance Day (2 August) in the list of Remembrance Days (100.163).

46. In order to reduce social exclusion, measures to integrate the groups vulnerable to social exclusion into the Lithuanian education system and society are being taken. Roma children could be an example of such successful integration. Educational work with Roma families with children of pre-school age is being strengthened. Meetings with families having pre-school children are organised in schools, the possibilities of accompanying children to educational institutions daily are discussed, transportation of children to educational institutions and homes where possible is organised (e.g., by school buses). Families are familiarised with the conditions favourable for the full development of the personality: a safe environment, creative, responsible teachers, educational support professionals, catering, capacity building (musical, sports, artistic, etc.). Promotion of the use of the right to pre-school and early childhood institutional education (one-on-one dialogues with Roma families with children of pre-school age) is one of the proven educational measures in pre-school educational institutions. E.g., in Ukmerge district municipality, school attendance by Roma children is good. To reduce early school leaving amongst the Roma students, the schools encourage the active participation of the students in the life of the school community, involving the Roma children in various non-formal education activities. Dialogues with parents and children on the issues of sex education, educational opportunities in career planning, other relevant issues are organised. Attempts are made to motivate by giving positive examples of the lives of Roma people (100.163).

Integration of migrants

47. 2017-2020 Action Plan for the Promotion of Non-discrimination provides for the information campaigns on initiatives for the integration of foreigners, the understanding of diversity and the promotion of intercultural dialogue. The 2018-2020 Action Plan on the Integration of Foreigners into Society provides for 39 measures for improving: the legislation and processes for the integration of foreigners and asylum seekers, inter-institutional cooperation in the field of integration of foreigners and asylum seekers, their integration into the labour market system, and the results of their integration into the labour market, the integration of asylum seekers and foreigners into the education system, conditions for foreigners to receive social and healthcare services. Those measures also seek to encourage cooperation between foreigners and local communities, reduce discrimination against foreigners, improve the integration of foreign women by improving their rights, monitor and research foreigners' integration processes and policy implementation. Under this Plan, in early 2021, two contracts were signed for the projects to implement campaigns to promote tolerance. During the implementation of Measure 9.1 'to promote community initiatives of Lithuanian residents and foreigners in Lithuanian municipalities in order to help foreigners integrate into the community' of the Action Plan, in 2021, 3 contracts for the implementation of projects to promote community initiatives by paying particular attention to the inclusion of migrant youth and women in local communities were signed (100.59-60, 164-165).

48. In 2020, the Government approved amendments to the Description of the Procedure of Provision of State Support for the Integration of Persons who Have Been Granted Asylum. The amendments aim to create a more flexible system for providing state support for integration, motivating integration. Support for integration started to be linked to the individual needs and opportunities of asylum seekers, which further are considered in drawing up an individual integration plan for each asylum seeker (**100.166**).

49. The projects implemented within the National Programme for the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund for 2014-2020 sought to improve the reception and living conditions of asylum seekers, with a special focus on vulnerable persons, to increase the knowledge of asylum seekers about their rights and obligations. During the Programme various services were provided to asylum seekers (social, legal, psychological, translation services, support for clothing, food, hygiene products). In order to expand and improve the infrastructure and the reception conditions, the project of alternative accommodation for asylum seekers has been launched, a dormitory for vulnerable asylum seekers has been built at the Aliens Registration Centre (**100.168**).

50. Until 2019, methodological instructions regarding the compliance of stateless persons living in the serviced territory with the provisions of the Law on Citizenship and regarding the procedure for informing such persons about the methods of acquiring the Lithuanian citizenship were regularly provided to the migration units of the county police headquarters. After the migration management system reform in 2019, no migration units were left in the police system. The Migration Department under the Ministry of the Interior became the main institution providing migration services in Lithuania. The Migration Department organised training for its employees on citizenship issues and stateless persons. The training aimed to ensure the uniform application of the Law on Citizenship and advising clients of the Migration Department on the acquisition of citizenship. In 2020, the Migration Department drew up a list of stateless persons and invited them for consultations regarding possibility of acquiring Lithuanian citizenship (in 2020, 2,158 information messages were sent to stateless persons). As many as 139 persons took advantage of the consultation service of the Migration Department, 57 of them submitted applications for citizenship, and 15 have become Lithuanian citizens. One of the reasons the stateless persons did not apply for citizenship was the lack of finances. In order to help those persons, they were provided with information regarding acquiring support from the NGOs. Twenty stateless persons applied to the Lithuanian Red Cross Society and took advantage of its financial assistance to arrange documents. In 2020, as many as 221 stateless persons became Lithuanian citizens, and the number of such persons in Lithuania decreased to 2,683 (**100.167, 100.168, 100.169, 100.170**).

Protecting LGBT+ community from discrimination

51. The 2017-2020 Action Plan for the Promotion of Non-discrimination envisaged measures concerning the LGBT + community. Equal opportunities measures will continue to be implemented through the development programs and the 2021-2023 Action Plan for the Promotion of Non-Discrimination. A new version of the Law on Equal Opportunities, considering extending legal protection against discrimination, has been prepared and is currently being considered in Seimas (**100.50, 75, 76, 81, 94**).

52. In 2016, The Minister of Education, Science and Sport approved the General Health, Sex Education and Family Preparation Programme (the General Programme). During its implementation, trainings were organised (about 800 teachers attended seminars for sexuality education alone), methodological guidelines were developed, and interested parties were consulted. The plan of implementation measures for this Programme includes models, a memorandum, and an infographic for the programme implementation in the schools. All information about this programme (<https://duomenys.ugdome.lt/?/mm/slrus>) is available on the 'Ugdymo sodas' website at <https://sodas.ugdome.lt/viesieji-puslapiai/3054>. After public consultation, the General Programme has been renamed – the Life Skills General Programme. This Programme is available online at <https://www.mokykla2030.lt/>. The Action Plan for the Promotion of Non-Discrimination for 2021–2023 provides for a measure 'Provide training for young people and those working with young people on sexuality education'.

53. The Guidelines for Updating General Programmes approved by the Minister of Education, Science and Sport in 2019 indicate social, emotional and healthy lifestyle competence as one of the competencies to be developed. They specifically provide for combating homophobia and discrimination. The competency component provides that during the programme implementation, students should: recognise other people's feelings; respect different opinions, recognise the similarities and differences of people; successfully communicate and cooperate; constructively resolve interpersonal conflicts; resist negative influences; seek help, if necessary, and help should be appropriately provided; act responsibly in making decisions and be able to anticipate their consequences; participate in the creation of community, public welfare (100.76, 82).

Combating hate crime, various forms of discrimination and manifestations of extremism

54. In 2018-2020, the Ministry of the Interior, together with the General Prosecutor's Office and the Office of the Inspector of Journalist Ethics, has been implementing the project 'Strengthening the Response to Hate Crimes and Hate Speech in Lithuania' funded under the Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme of the European Union (2014-2020). (<https://vrm.lrv.lt/en/news/the-final-conference-of-the-hate-crime-prevention-project-was-held>).

55. In 2020, the Minister of Interior formed a working group to promote an effective response to hate crimes and hate speech in Lithuania. Representatives of the Ministry of the Interior, of the Prosecutor General's Office, of the Police Department, of the Department of National Minorities, of the Office of the Inspector of Journalist Ethics, of the Office of the Equal Opportunities Ombudsperson, of the Ministry of Social Security and Labour and 11 NGOs participate in the work of the working group. Its main functions are: to consider possibilities and make proposals for increasing the effectiveness of the fight against hate crime and hate speech. In order to identify threats of hate and discriminatory crimes, their causes and conditions, and to respond in a timely and proper manner within the competence of the police, monitoring of information disseminated to the public on the Internet is carried out. The Police Department is also implementing a 'Virtual Patrol' experiment. Three police officers were selected to perform the functions of a virtual patrol. Their daily activities include the following functions: social network monitoring, evaluation of the information received and collection of additional information, consultancy and informing. The Lithuanian Police Commissioner-General approved in the 2021 calendar of general prevention activities that police officers must implement. The calendar provides a measure 'Meetings with minority communities and/or communities that may experience social exclusion (persons with disabilities, national minorities, sexual minorities, religious minorities, etc.)'. Under this measure, within their supervision area, community officers must hold at least one meeting every six months with each minority community and/or community that may experience social exclusion. In the first half of 2021, 250 meetings were held. During the meetings, the officers are in touch with the communities, and community officers share relevant preventive information, advise communities on issues of concern to them (100.50, 100.54, 100.56, 100.61, 100.62, 100.63, 100.64, 100.66, 100.67, 100.69, 100.65, 100.68, 100.70, 100.72, 100.73, 100.74, 100.78, 100.79, 100.83, 100.81, 100.82, 100.84, 100.85).

56. When manifestations of hatred on a national basis occur, the Department of National Minorities expresses its position by condemning any form of attempt to incite national hatred in Lithuania.

57. The Guidelines for Updating General Programmes of 2019 allowed to update general programmes. The draft history programme pays more attention to Lithuania's national and religious diversity, emphasising the Litvaks and Roma people's history (culture, achievements, Holocaust). The program introduces significant new subjects that link the past to the present: 'Heritage and memory. The 20th-century memory and its heritage in present-day Lithuania. Difficult heritage of two totalitarian regimes in Lithuania: 'Places of Nazi and Soviet massacres in Lithuania: Paneriai, Kaunas Forts, Macikai Camp, Tuskulenai Manor or other places of remembrance in the immediate environment'. Drafts for the general programmes to be updated have been prepared (publicly available at <https://www.mokykla2030.lt/bp-projektai/>) (100.71).

58. The Department of National Minorities pays a lot of attention to the Roma Holocaust. It encourages discussions on human rights and the Roma Holocaust, publishes information and methodological materials, organises training for the education staff, Lithuanian Roma youth and human rights activists, contributes to the initiatives of international organisations and NGOs, funds and participates in the events for the commemoration of the Roma Genocide Day and the International Roma Day (8 April) (100.56).

59. The Law on Assistance to Victims of Criminal Offenses of 2021 establishes a system of assistance to victims of crime. Regardless of whether the victim has filed an official complaint as to the crime, he (his family members), depending on his (their) needs, will have free and confidential access to assistance provided by the help centre and by assistance providing entities before, during and after criminal proceedings (100.97, 100.98, 100.99, 100.100, 100.101, 100.102, 100.104, 100.105, 100.106, 100.107, 100.110).

Prevention of domestic violence

60. In 2017, the Ministry of the Interior initiated an applied research ‘Cooperation between the Police and other interested institutions in recognising the manifestations of domestic violence and ensuring an effective response and application of preventive measures (methods)’. The Ministry of the Interior website www.bukstipri.lt is dedicated to publishing relevant information, statistics for victims of domestic violence, and regularly publishing information on ways to get help. On 25 November 2019, the Ministry of the Interior held a meeting on the possibilities of applying for the protection against violence order in Lithuania. During the said meeting, an agreement on protection against violence order was reached. The research recommendations and the discussion results lead to the inclusion of the provisions on improving inter-institutional cooperation and better protection for victims in the draft recast of the Law on Protection against Domestic Violence. E.g., an institute for protection against violence is established; reports to the specialised integrated assistance centre are transmitted regardless of whether a pre-trial investigation is initiated, or there is a lack of data to initiate it; provisions on general and specialised training and refresher courses for those working in the field of prevention, protection and assistance in the field of domestic violence have also been set out. NGOs and other social partners are regularly consulted during the drafting of the law.

61. In implementing the Law on Protection against Domestic Violence, specialised, complex, coordinated and quality assistance is provided to victims of domestic violence throughout Lithuania. Funding for specialised help centres is increased every year: in 2017, 740 thousand euros have been allocated from the State budget, in 2018 – 750 thousand euros, in 2019 – 1,500 thousand euros, in 2020 – 1,504 thousand euros, in 2021 – 1,530 thousand euros.

Prevention of trafficking in human beings

62. The assistance to victims of trafficking is provided through NGOs. The provision of equal social assistance to victims of trafficking in human beings has been ensured and is being organised, encouraging them to return to society and the labour market. Availability, quality, and coordination of assistance throughout Lithuania, and the prevention of trafficking in human beings are guaranteed. Funding for NGOs is increased every year: in 2017, 80 thousand euros were allocated from the state budget, in 2018 m. – 165 thousand euros, in 2019 - 190 thousand euros, in 2020 – 245 thousand euros, in 2021 – 300 thousand euros (100.123, 127). An amended Law on State-Guaranteed Legal Aid provides for more favourable conditions for state-guaranteed legal aid to victims of trafficking in human beings. The State Guaranteed Legal Aid Service cooperates with NGOs. NGOs mediate in helping to select lawyers to represent the interests of victims of these crimes (100.126).

63. The 2017-2019 Action Plan for combating trafficking in human beings, approved by the Minister of the Interior in 2016, has been implemented. A new Action Plan for 2020–2022 for combating trafficking in human beings provides for four tasks (strengthening coordination and improving combating trafficking in human beings at state and municipal level, improving pre-trial investigations, strengthening victim assistance, refresher training for professionals), 65 new and ongoing measures and tasks to combat trafficking in human beings. Between 2020 and 2022, the measures and tasks of the said Plan will be implemented

by 16 ministries, organisations, institutions and some municipalities (100.112, 100.121, 100.122, 100.124, 100.125, 100.127).

Implementation of strategic objectives and poverty reduction

64. The 2021-2030 National Progress Plan sets out quantifiable, measurable objectives both in the field of social policy and human rights (100.139).

65. In Lithuania, the following basic amounts determine the guaranteed income: the state pension base, state social insurance basic pension, basic salary of the state politicians, judges, state officials, civil servants, employees of the state and municipal budget institutions, basic social benefit, etc. All amounts are set considering the possibilities of the state budget and assumptions at the macro-level. Some of them are set in participation of social partners (e.g., the basic amount used to calculate the salaries of the state politicians, judges, state officials and civil servants). Basic amounts of social benefits and cash social assistance for deprived people, also social assistance pensions paid to people with disabilities, orphans or seniors who have not completed the minimum social insurance seniority period, targeted compensation for people with disabilities, who have special needs, increased as of the beginning of 2021 (100.137).

66. The laws and social policy are constantly reviewed, evaluated and implemented to prevent poverty and social exclusion. In recent years, more attention has been paid to reducing in-work poverty and the development of social services (the minimum monthly wage, the tax-exempt amount of income for lowest income earners, for persons with disabilities and those raising children is increased). Actions currently planned: to personalise services by involving communities and NGOs as much as possible, to combine social support with inclusion in the labour market to improve the situation of vulnerable people, to review and, subject to financial availability, increase certain amounts of social assistance (100.138).

Improving prison conditions (100.129-131)

67. Application of alternatives to imprisonment is being expanded. In 2019, Seimas has adopted amendments to the Criminal Code, the Code of Execution of Punishment, and the Law on Probation. They provide for more frequent use of alternatives to imprisonment (suspension of penalty execution, fine, restriction of freedom, contribution to the victims' fund); the possibilities of application of the conditional release institute have been expanded; measures for more effective resocialisation of convicts in correctional institutions have been provided for (involvement of NGOs, use of electronic monitoring tools, targeted planning of the processes of resocialisation of the convict). Compared to 2018, the number of prisoners in places of detention has decreased by 23.6% (the number of prisoners on 1 January 2018 – 6,815, on 1 June 2021 – 5,207).

68. Detention conditions for convicts and detainees are being improved. Reconstruction work is being carried out in places of detention, and work related to the construction of a new prison in Siauliai is continued. In mid-2021, places of detention are not overcrowded (29% vacancy).

C. Remaining challenges in implementing the recommendations

Protection of family life, law on partnership

69. In 2011, the Constitutional Court held that families other than those based on marriage are also protected and defended under the Constitution. In its ruling of 2019, the Court emphasised that the constitutional concept of the family is gender-neutral and that all families that comply with the constitutional concept of family are protected. This concept is based on the permanent or long-term relationship between family members, mutual responsibility, understanding, emotional attachment, assistance between family members and a voluntary determination to assume certain rights and obligations. The legal doctrine formed by the Constitutional Court presupposes that property and non-property legal relations of persons living together must be legally regulated and protected, without prejudice to the principles of equality and non-discrimination.

70. The governing majority formed after 2020 has included changing the laws and legitimising a gender-neutral partnership in the coalition agreement. Seimas continues to discuss the concept of such a partnership; several drafts of the law have been prepared. In 2021, Seimas returned the package of the draft laws submitted by the group of Seimas members to the drafters for improvement. These drafts propose to regulate both property and personal non-property relations between unmarried but cohabiting persons and property relations of partners with third parties. Some opposition members proposed to consolidate cohabitation agreements, which could be entered into not only by couples but also, e.g., by relatives who live together (100.80, 86, 92).

Recognition of the legal status of transgender persons

71. In 2017, the Ministry of Justice had drafted Law on Recognition of Gender Identity. It has not yet been adopted. By its ruling of 2019, the Constitutional Court confirmed that restriction of personal rights on the grounds of gender identity is one of the forms of prohibited discrimination under Article 29 of the Constitution. There is a debate as to whether it is necessary to enshrine this ground of discrimination in law in order to guarantee the rights of transgender people adequately or whether the constitutional jurisprudence is sufficient for ensuring effective protection against discrimination on the grounds of gender identity (100.93-94).

Protection of women against violence: ratification of the Istanbul Convention

72. In 2013, Lithuania signed the Istanbul Convention. By signing it, Lithuania has issued a declaration that the Convention will be applied considering the provisions and principles of the Constitution. The draft Law on Ratification of the Convention submitted by the President was registered in Seimas in 2018 (100.15-20, 97).

73. The process of improving the national legislation needed to implement the Convention continues. In addition, the Minister of Social Security and Labour approved the Action Plan for 2021 for Prevention of domestic violence and provision of assistance to victims (100.98-106).

Involuntary hospitalisation and treatment (100.149)

74. Article 14 of the Law on the Rights of Patients and Compensation for the Damage to Their Health and Articles 2.25–2.26 of the Civil Code prohibit involuntary medical treatment (except for the provision of emergency medical care services when the patient is unable to express his will on his own).

75. Pursuant to Article 2.26 of the Civil Code and the Law on Mental Health Care (new versions, entered into force on 1 May 2019), a patient with mental and behavioural disorders, who refuses to be hospitalised, might be involuntarily hospitalised for a period not exceeding three working days, only if it can be reasonably inferred from the behaviour of the patient and/or other objective data that there is a real risk that the patient could cause, by his actions or omissions, significant damage to the health, life and/or property of his own or of those around him. After the involuntary hospitalisation, the psychiatrist must immediately seek the patient's written consent to treat him. If the patient is unable to assess his interests reasonably and, as a result, the consent to treatment cannot be obtained, the patient can be involuntarily treated for a period not exceeding three working days. In the attempt to improve legal regulation, the challenge arises as to how to reconcile the application of the provisions of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the provisions of the Council of Europe Conventions. Public authorities, health professionals and representatives of the civil society are being consulted on this issue.

76. Article 9 of the Law on the Prevention and Control of Communicable Diseases in Humans establishes conditions and procedures of necessary hospitalisation and/or necessary isolation of patients diagnosed with a communicable disease, of persons who are suspected of having a communicable disease after they have been in contact with a person suffering from a communicable disease, and of carriers of infectious agents. A decision on the necessary hospitalisation and/or of necessary isolation and its duration is made by a commission consisting of at least three doctors, and a municipal doctor approves it. The

patient or his representative is informed about the decision. He is also familiarised with his rights and their limitations. Persons are subject to necessary hospitalisation and/or isolation until the patient becomes harmless to other persons, but without a court decision for a maximum of 7 calendar days. Where the necessary hospitalisation and/or necessary isolation of persons is applied for a particularly serious communicable disease, due to which quarantine has been imposed in the entire territory of the state, the decision on the necessary hospitalisation and/or necessary isolation and its duration is made by the attending physician. In this case, the necessary hospitalisation and/or necessary isolation of persons is applied until one of these dates, whichever is earlier: until the person becomes no longer dangerous to other persons, but without a court decision for a maximum of one month, or until the person or his legal representative gives consents to hospitalisation and/or isolation. If the patient remains dangerous to other persons, the terms of necessary hospitalisation and/or necessary isolation may be extended only by a court for a maximum of 6 months and repeatedly - for up to 6 months, but the total period may not exceed 24 months. The public and professionals pay less attention to this aspect of legal regulation, and no active discussion on the need to improve legal acts in this area occurs.

Assistance to female patients who have experienced sexual violence

77. In 2021 the Minister of Health approved the Description of the provision of personal healthcare services to female persons who may have experienced sexual violence (hereinafter – the Description). The Description sets requirements for personal healthcare institutions (hereinafter – PHCI), for personal health professionals, who provide personal healthcare services to female patients, who may have experienced sexual violence, for the premises and medical devices of PHCIs that provide these services, and the procedure for the organisation and provision of these services.

78. To ensure quality personal healthcare services to female patients, who have experienced sexual violence, the PHCI, which provides services to female patients having experienced sexual violence (hereinafter - the PHCI that provides services), will provide comprehensive help continuously (24/7). Five PHCIs will provide such services.

79. The Description establishes that when a medical professional, who provides services in the PHCI, suspects or diagnoses sexual violence, the female patient is transported to the nearest PHCI that provides services. When transporting female patients, it will be possible to approach the specialised help centre for help. Once the necessary services have been provided, the medical professional will have to indicate information about the specialised help centres and their contact details.

80. The annexes to the Description contain the requirements for the search for the sperm for sampling, for conducting toxicological analyses after sexual violence, for preparing the female patient for examination and investigation, for the diagnosis and prevention of sexually transmitted infections after sexual violence, for filling in documents, also the description of mechanical injuries, and recommendations for emergency contraception, tetanus prevention. They also specify the form of informed patient's consent, the form of a protocol for investigating a victim of sexual violence, etc.

81. The Description also lays down that from 1 May 2022, professionals who provide services to female patients having experienced sexual violence will be required to complete a special training course of providing such assistance (100.141).

Funding of human rights institutions

82. It is sought to ensure that human rights institutions receive adequate funding and are able to carry out their functions. E.g., in 2018, 75 thousand euros were allocated to the Seimas Ombudsperson's Office to create two new posts; the funds were also carried over to 2019-2020. However, according to the institutions themselves, a sufficient level of funding has not yet been reached (100.31-36, 132).

Strategic planning

83. The possibility of drawing up a new National Human Rights Action Plan was discussed at the meeting of the competent ministries, the Seimas Ombudsperson's Office and

the Seimas Committee on Human Rights in 2017. However, in the long run, it was decided not to draw up such a plan given that many action plans are being drawn up in various thematic areas, and drawing up another plan, would not constitute significant added value. In practice, however, the challenge of identifying priority human rights issues and coordinating activities designed to ensure various aspects of human rights, which are carried out under various planning documents, remains. There are also certain challenges in assessing the achieved level of progress in protecting human rights (100.37-38).

Human rights education

84. A number of human rights education activities are carried out in Lithuania. E.g., the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, together with international partners, has organised training on information security for Lithuanian NGOs operating in the field of human rights. Together with the Seimas Committee on Human Rights, national human rights institutions, academic institutions and foreign embassies in Vilnius, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs hosted the first National Human Rights Forum, during which challenges faced by human rights defenders have been discussed. The National Human Rights Forum was continued in later years (100.133-134, 136, 142).

85. The Ministry of Justice is responsible for organising legal education, which includes human rights education. Whereas ministries coordinating specific sectors are responsible for education on narrower issues. Furthermore, the Seimas Ombudsperson's Office and other ombudsperson-type bodies play an important role. Activities of different institutions, however, are relatively poorly coordinated. To improve the coordination function of legal education, including in the field of human rights, in 2021, the Ministry of Justice decided to create an internal structural unit responsible for legal education (100.45).

III. Implementation of voluntary international commitments

86. Lithuania lodges its candidacy to the UN HRC for the period between 2022 and 2024. Lithuania's aspiration for membership in the HRC is based on the experience of democratic reforms which are based on respect for human rights, EU policy on human rights, a foreign policy based on the principles of liberty, democracy, human rights, the rule of law and multilateral decision-making, and close dialogue with civil society. The Freedom and Democracy Agenda is one of the main principles of Lithuania's foreign policy. As a full member of the UN HRC, and following the principles of universality and indivisibility of human rights, Lithuania will continue to promote the protection of fundamental human rights and freedoms.

87. Considering Lithuania's work at the international level and experience in the field of human rights, foreign policy priorities, the EU human rights policy, global trends in human rights protection, and the provisions of the Government Programme, Lithuania will pay much attention to the protection of human rights defenders, the rights of the child, the rights of persons with disabilities and human rights during armed conflicts. Lithuania will continue its activities in defending the rights of women and girls, freedom of expression, freedom of peaceful assembly and association, security of journalists, freedom of religion and belief. Lithuania will also actively respond to new threats to human rights - the impact of digitisation, data protection, artificial intelligence, climate change, emerging epidemics, migration on human rights, and will invite to work together to find solutions necessary to overcome these challenges. Lithuania also undertakes further to improve the human rights situation in the country.

IV. Latest challenges and efforts to overcome them

Pandemic

88. *Access to healthcare services.* After the Government by resolution has announced the first quarantine for COVID-19 in the territory of Lithuania on 14 March 2020, the

peculiarities of the provision of inpatient and outpatient personal healthcare services had been regulated by the said resolution and by the decision of the Minister of Health – the State Commander of National Emergency Operations of 16 March 2020 on the organisation of the work of healthcare institutions after the announcement of quarantine. During the quarantine, scheduled surgical operations and hospitalisations were postponed, and inpatient emergency services were provided. In the case of outpatient personal healthcare (OPHC) services, priority was given to the provision of services remotely (prescribing of medicines and medical aids, consultancy, issuing and extending electronic certificates of incapacity for work, consultancy between doctors, prescribing of necessary tests and examinations, etc.). Contact diagnostic services and procedures were provided only in cases where the non-provision of such services to the patient would directly impact the deterioration of the patient's health or would result in the need for necessary medical assistance. Less stringent requirements for the provision of healthcare services were being imposed in the changing epidemiological situation in the country.

89. The earlier regulations of the healthcare services during pandemic were changed in June 2020. After the Government has announced the second quarantine on 4 November 2020, the provision of scheduled outpatient and inpatient personal healthcare services has not been suspended.

90. *Vaccination against COVID-19.* The Minister of Health approved the Description of the Procedure for Organising Vaccination of the Population with Coronavirus (COVID-19) Vaccine Purchased at the Expense of the State (hereinafter - COVID-19 vaccine). The Procedure establishes conditions for storage and transportation of COVID-19 vaccines, requirements for providing information on COVID-19 vaccines, the procedure for payment for the vaccination service. Vaccination with COVID-19 vaccine is carried out in accordance with the following principles: the principle of voluntariness, of legality, of economy, rationality, responsibility, and accountability.

91. *Review of the legality of crisis management actions.* Vilnius Regional Administrative Court dismissed the action of a private healthcare institution for damages caused by quarantine restrictions (including restrictions on the movement of persons, on economic activity and organisation of work). The court found that by declaring a state of emergency and quarantine in the country in February and March 2020, the Government did not exceed its powers and that such a decision was constitutional. An appeal has been brought against this decision before the court of higher instance and is currently pending.

92. *Management of increased threat of domestic violence (100.97-101).* The Minister of the Interior approved The Plan of preventive measures for domestic violence during the quarantine period for COVID-19. It includes additional measures to help victims of domestic violence during the quarantine period and improve the response to domestic violence cases. The plan provides for the possibility of calling for help via SMS sent to emergency telephone number 112, additional measures for publicising information on how to obtain assistance. It contributes to the implementation of the Action Plan of the Police authorities in strengthening the security of the rural population. The municipalities were recommended to cooperate with specialised integrated assistance centres and, where possible, to allocate part of the isolation places provided by municipalities to victims of domestic violence.

93. On 12 January 2021, the Ministry of the Interior organised an inter-institutional meeting on domestic violence prevention, considering the quarantine's impact for COVID-19 disease. This meeting was attended by representatives of institutions and NGOs working in the field of domestic violence. Working remote meetings with the Ministry of Social Security and Labour representatives are held periodically (once every two weeks).

Emergency over migrants who cross the Belarusian border illegally

94. The flow of asylum seekers from Belarus, which has increased more than tenfold in 2021, is a recent challenge. Most of them are non-Belarusian citizens. Potentially, they are victims of trafficking in human beings to Western Europe. The Lithuanian institutions respond to the situation; they provide additional funding for the protection of the rights of asylum seekers, coordinate the actions with partners in the EU, and seek to address this issue

at the international level. Migrants are given the opportunity to return voluntarily to their country; they are also offered financial support for that. Particular attention is paid to vulnerable migrants.
