



**International Convention on
the Elimination of All Forms
of Racial Discrimination**

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Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination

**Combined eleventh to thirteenth periodic reports
submitted by Lithuania under article 9 of the
Convention, due in 2023***

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* The present document is being issued without formal editing.



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Abbreviations

OSCE	Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe
EUAA	European Union Agency for Asylum
ECHR	European Court of Human Rights
OEOO	Office of the Equal Opportunities Ombudsperson
LRCS	Lithuanian Red Cross Society
GRL	Government of the Republic of Lithuania
MoSSL	Ministry of Social Security and Labour
SOO	Seimas Ombudsmen's Office
THIF	Territorial Health Insurance Fund
NHIF	National Health Insurance Fund
MI	Ministry of Interior
SBGS	State Border Guard Service under the MI
DNM	Department of National Minorities under the Government of the Republic of Lithuania
OIJE	Office of the Inspector of Journalist Ethics
CC	Criminal Code of the Republic of Lithuania
Committee	UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination
Convention	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination
NGO	non-governmental organisation
CHI	Compulsory Health Insurance

I. Introduction

1. The Government of the Republic of Lithuania hereby submits the combined eleventh, twelfth and thirteenth periodic report under Article 9 of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (hereinafter referred to as the Convention). The report provides an overview of the progress made by the Republic of Lithuania as regards the implementation of the provisions of the Convention, following the ninth and tenth periodic report of the Republic of Lithuania.

2. The report has been drawn up in accordance with the guidelines and general recommendations regarding the preparation of the reports, approved by the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (hereinafter referred to as the Committee). During the preparation of the report, due regard has been paid to the Committee's concluding observations on Lithuania's ninth and tenth periodic report, approved by the Committee at its 98th session in April–May of 2019 (CERD/C/LTU/CO/9-10). During the preparation of the report, due regard has also been paid to Lithuania's report on the implementation of the recommendations provided in paragraph 34 of the concluding observations. The Committee's Note Verbale (CERD/104th session/FU/MK/ks) asking for additional information was examined and due regard has been paid to additional questions.

II. Information on the Implementation of Recommendations of the Committee

3. The report refers to information in relation to Committee's recommendations provided in the Committee's concluding observations on Lithuania's ninth and tenth periodic report (CERD/C/LTU/CO/9-10). When responding to recommendations provided in paragraphs 12, 20 and 22 of the Committee's concluding observations, due regard was taken of the Committee's Note Verbale (CERD/104th session/FU/MK/ks) requesting additional information on the implementation of the recommendations.

The Committee recommends that the State party collect statistics on the social and economic situation of persons belonging to different ethnic and national minorities, disaggregated by sex, age and other relevant indicators, in order to acquire the necessary empirical data to design policies and measures aiming at enhancing the equal enjoyment of rights under the Convention.

4. The Department of National Minorities under the Government of the Republic of Lithuania will consider the possibility of conducting a study on the socioeconomic situation of national minorities in 2024–2025.

5. The Foreigners Integration Group of the Ministry of Social Security and Labour of the Republic of Lithuania does not currently collect statistical data on the social and economic situation of persons belonging to different ethnic and national minorities, but is very interested in providing and receiving this data.

6. The Employment Service under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour of the Republic of Lithuania is responsible for the implementation of the measures provided for in the Action Plan of 2022–2023 for the Integration of Roma into Lithuanian Society aimed at promoting the employment of Roma people. According to the plan, the registration of persons belonging to this national minority group at the Employment Service and the services provided to them as well as the employment support measures applied are currently being monitored.

7. Annex 6 provides information on the employed population by country of birth and Annex 7 indicates the education level of the most numerous nationalities. Other available information on national minorities is presented in Annexes 1–5.

The Committee recommends that the State party allocate sufficient funding:
(a) To the Seimas Ombudsmen's Office so that it can effectively and independently fulfil its mandate, including in the new areas of competences defined in the amended Law on the Seimas Ombudsmen, in full compliance with the Paris principles;

8. In view of the fact that EUR 75 000 were allocated to the Seimas Ombudsmen's Office (hereinafter referred to as the SOO) in the 2018 budget for the establishment of 2 new positions, the funds were also transferred to 2019–2020. However, according to the institution's own assessment, a sufficient level of funding has not yet been reached. When planning the allocations for 2022 and 2023, the SOO submitted to the Ministry of Finance a request for the funds needed for the performance of the functions of the National Human Rights Institution, however, the funding was not allocated.

9. In 2022, the Government agreed to the recommendations presented to Lithuania during the third cycle of the Universal Periodic Review conducted by the United Nations Human Rights Council to allocate sufficient funding to the SOO, so that it could effectively and independently implement its powers, including in new areas of competence, in particular – in carrying out the functions of the National Human Rights Institution in line with the Paris Principles.

(b) To the Office of the Equal Opportunities Ombudsperson so that it can take up its preventive and education competences.

10. In 2017, the mandate of the Office of the Equal Opportunities Ombudsperson (hereinafter referred to as OEEO) was supplemented with the implementation of preventive and educational activities and the promotion of equal opportunities. For the first time the budget of 2023 includes funding for the implementation of preventive and educational activities amounting to EUR 64 000.

11. In order to implement the aforementioned activities, the OEEO consistently worked to attract international project financing. It should be noted that until targeted funding from the national budget allocations was allocated for the prevention of discrimination, educational activities and promotion of equal opportunities, the Office did not have the ability to carry out targeted activities laid out in the Law on Equal Treatment, which are not subject to calls for tenders for project funding.

The Committee recommends that the State party amend the Law on Equal Treatment and the Criminal Code to introduce colour and descent as prohibited grounds of discrimination, in order to bring them in line with article 1(1) of the Convention.

12. After the inter-institutional discussions between the Ministry of Social Security and Labour of the Republic of Lithuania and the OEEO, we note that the concept of origin in the Law on Equal Treatment of the Republic of Lithuania corresponds to the concept of descent. Protection against discrimination on the ground of skin colour is currently applied on the basis of race as ground of discrimination stipulated in the Law on Equal Treatment, however, there are plans to supplement the Law on Equal Treatment with skin colour as ground of discrimination in the future.

13. The Law No XIV-1065 of 28 April 2022 on the Amendments of Articles 60, 129, 135, 138, 169, 170, 170-1 and 170-2 of the Criminal Code of the Republic of Lithuania supplemented the elements of criminal acts established in Lithuanian criminal law, which criminalise incitement to hatred and discrimination, with the new elements of composition, i.e. "ethnic origin" and "skin colour", ensuring full compatibility of the Criminal Code of the Republic of Lithuania (hereinafter referred to as the CC) and the provisions of Article 1(1) of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination.

The Committee notes the information provided by the State Party on research carried out on vulnerable communities. However, the Committee regrets the lack of information on the intensification of public campaigns as recommended in paragraph 12 of the Concluding Observations. The Committee also regrets the lack of information on measures taken to promote the training of journalists on how to avoid the use of hate speech and stereotypes towards communities. The Committee considers the State party's response to this recommendation unsatisfactory and requests that it provide, in its next periodic report, information on steps taken to effectively implement the recommendation.

14. Due to the available resources, both human and financial, in the opinion of the Office of the Inspector of Journalist Ethics (hereinafter referred to as OIJE), the OIJE had limited opportunities to implement the recommendation to organise special training aimed at

educating media representatives, encouraging them to avoid using hate speech, as well as stereotypes towards vulnerable groups of people. However, the Inspector of Journalist Ethics carries out an educational function within his competence, by starting research on his own initiative and making decisions in cases where media representatives improperly implement the freedom of expression and spread hate speech directed against vulnerable groups of individuals, each time explaining in detail and drawing the attention of media representatives to such inappropriate implementation of freedom of expression and warning the producers (distributors) of public information about the identified violations in accordance with the procedure established by the Law on Provision of Information to the Public of the Republic of Lithuania. In addition, the Inspector of Journalist Ethics provides consultations and recommendations, both in writing and orally, as well as on the social network Facebook account managed by the OIJE, on how to identify, assess and avoid the spread of hate speech in texts under preparation, comments or other types of posts. Education on the harm caused by hate speech, as well as on how to recognise and where to turn to if one is confronted with or affected by hate speech, is a constant focus on the OIJE's Facebook and LinkedIn social network accounts. Also in 2021, a representative of the OIJE participated in trainings organised by the DNM together with partners (non-governmental organisations), aimed at educating national minorities on the topics of hate speech and hate crimes. Although the target audience of the organised trainings was members of national minority communities, representatives of the media were invited to participate in them and the representatives of the regional media were the most active in joining the trainings.

15. By Order No IV-162 of 24 February 2020 of the Minister of the Interior of the Republic of Lithuania, a working group to promote an effective response to hate crimes and hate speech in Lithuania has been established. Representatives of the MI, Prosecutor General's Office, Police Department, DNM, OIJE, OEOO, MoSSL and 9 non-governmental organisations working in the field of human rights protection, as well as representatives of the Lithuanian Jewish (Litvaks) community and the public enterprise Roma Community Centre participate in the working group. The main functions of the working group are to consider the issues of increasing the effectiveness of the fight against hate crimes and hate speech and to prepare relevant proposals. The working group has already prepared its first report on the situation of hate crimes and hate speech in Lithuania in 2020-2021.

16. On 30 September 2022, the updated general curricula of primary, basic and secondary education were approved by Order of the Minister of Education, Science and Sport of the Republic of Lithuania. More attention is paid to the national and religious diversity of Lithuania in the history curriculum. Emphasis is placed on the history of the Litvaks: "Spread of Litvak culture in the world in the 19th century – the beginning of the 20th century. Achievements of the most famous Litvaks (Nobel Prize laureates, inventors, etc.)." Along with all other national minorities, the Roma are also singled out (this emphasis was not present in the previous curriculum): "Roma in Lithuania: the history of the community." The curriculum also includes the Roma genocide. "The Holocaust in Nazi-occupied Europe and Lithuania; extermination of the Roma and other ethnic, religious or social groups". The curriculum introduces new significant themes linking the past with the present: "Heritage and memory. Memory of the 20th century and its heritage in present-day Lithuania." The difficult heritage of two totalitarian regimes in Lithuania: "Places of Nazi and Soviet mass killings in Lithuania: Paneriai, Kaunas forts, Macikai labour camp, Tuskulėnai Manor or other places of remembrance in the immediate vicinity." Updated general curricula are published at <https://www.e-tar.lt/portal/lt/legalAct/06c1f24040b711edbc04912defe897d1>.

17. The DNM pays a lot of attention to the examination of the topic of Roma genocide by encouraging discussions on human rights and Roma genocide, publishing informative and methodological publications, organising trainings for the education system employees, Lithuanian Roma youth and human rights activists, contributing to the initiatives of international and non-governmental organisations, financing and participating in the commemoration events of the Roma Genocide Remembrance Day (2 August) and International Roma Day (8 April). The Department closely cooperates with the Roma Community Centre on the issue of the situation, history and traditions of the Roma.

18. It is important to note that in 2020-2021, two state institutions acting as ombudsperson, i.e. OIJE and OEOO, jointly implemented the project "#NOPLACE4HATE:

Improving Institutional Response to Hate Speech in Lithuania” partly funded by the European Union. The main objectives of this project were to create clear guidelines on how law enforcement authorities should investigate complaints about hate speech, to increase the capacity of responsible state institutions in the field of hate speech prevention, to improve the provision of assistance and access to services for persons affected by hate speech, and to increase public awareness in recognising and responding to hate speech. In addition, the project pays special attention not only to officers who investigate and deal with cases of hate speech and hate crimes, but also to the general public. During the implementation of the project, more than 20 publications were prepared and made publicly available in the national media, aimed at drawing attention to the hatred spread towards vulnerable groups of persons, which they constantly encounter while living in Lithuania. A large-scale social advertising campaign aimed at raising the general public’s awareness and tolerance towards vulnerable groups of persons was also carried out: seven series of various posters calling for respect for people of other nationality, skin colour or religion were created and displayed on billboards in different cities. In addition to the above-mentioned activities, specially created and adapted audiovisual messages (3 messages for radio, 1 video clip for television) were broadcasted on both television and radio with the aim of explaining how to recognise the elements of hate speech in expression, raising public awareness, as well as urging members of the general public not to tolerate hate speech spread towards vulnerable groups and to report it to the competent authorities.

19. In order to combat hate speech, from July to August 2022, the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Lithuania conducted a call for projects of non-governmental organisations for the implementation of public legal education activities in 2022, the purpose of which was to select and finance projects aimed at strengthening public respect for human rights and the principles of equal treatment and the rule of law, by solving the problems related to the spread, promotion or justification of hate speech against a person or group of persons on the basis of nationality or sexual orientation. The amount of state budget funds allocated to the call for projects is EUR 70 000, which was shared by the first-ranked organisations – the public enterprise Human Rights Monitoring Institute and the non-governmental organisation Lithuanian Human Rights Centre. It is planned that project activities will include the organisation of public awareness campaigns; organisation of youth education activities; organisation of lecture series for the general public and discussions on the topic of hate speech by inviting representatives of vulnerable minority groups experiencing hate speech attacks and representatives of the general public; increase of the visibility and accessibility of the daugiaumeiles.lt platform.

Recalling its general recommendation No. 35 (2013) on combating racist hate speech, the Committee recommends that the State party: (a) Take measures to encourage and facilitate the reporting of hate speech and hate crimes, including by raising public awareness about access to legal aid and available legal remedies and ensuring that the perpetrators are adequately prosecuted and punished;

20. In 2020, the Lithuanian Human Rights Centre created an alternative platform for reporting hate crimes “Report hate crimes (manoteises.lt)”, where persons who have suffered from or witnessed a hate crime or incitement to hatred may easily report it to an NGO or the police and get the necessary help. In 2021, 181 reports were received, of which 99 cases were referred to the police.

21. In 2021, as part of the project “#NOPLACE4HATE: Improving Institutional Response to Hate Speech in Lithuania” implemented by the OEEO and the OIJE, a website on hate speech and hate crimes “Nepyk, a?” (Please, don’t be angry) (<https://nepyka.lt/en/>) for both professionals, victims and members of society who wish to help has been created. The website provides victims with information on how to report hate speech and hate crimes, information about the help they can get and their rights in criminal proceedings.

22. Internet users are encouraged to report illegal content found on the Internet to the Communications Regulatory Authority via the Internet hotline “Clean Internet” (<https://www.svarusinternetas.lt/>). In 2021, 40 reports related to hate speech were submitted: 17 were forwarded to the OIJE for further investigation and possible removal of information; 23 – to Internet service providers of other countries, website owners, managers of social networks, with the aim of removing information.

23. The Prosecutor General's Office informs the public about the pre-trial investigations initiated and ongoing concerning hate crimes and hate speech, as well as the results of criminal proceedings of this category. In order to help ensure the publicity, transparency and openness of the activities of the Prosecutor's Office to the public, promote public trust in the Prosecutor's Office, contribute to the prevention of crime, the protection of the public interest, create favourable conditions for public information producers to receive objective information about the activities of the Prosecutor's Office in a timely manner, Order No I-158 of 10 May 2018 of the Prosecutor General of the Republic of Lithuania approved the Description of the procedure for providing information to public information producers. According to this Description, public information producers are provided with information about pre-trial investigations that have been initiated, are being conducted or have been transferred to the court, as well as relevant court decisions. The website of the Prosecutor's Office also publishes information about relevant cases of hate speech and hate crimes.

24. The Prosecutor General's Office organises meetings with prosecutors specialising in the investigation of hate crimes and hate speech, with the aim of discussing the problems that arise when investigating this category of criminal acts and finding solutions thereof, as well as meetings with the representatives of non-governmental organisations, with the aim of promoting closer cooperation, strengthening the effectiveness of fight against hate crimes and hate speech, and reducing latency.

25. In 2020, a practical guide "Cooperation with Communities Vulnerable to Hate Crimes" (<https://vrm.lrv.lt/uploads/vrm/documents/files/Practical%20Guide%20ENG.pdf>) for law enforcement officers was prepared, which contains information that helps better identify hate crimes and describes the historical context, demographics and cultural characteristics of the most vulnerable communities, including the Jewish, Roma and Muslim communities, as well as the nature of vulnerability. Recommendations on how to establish and maintain contacts with the communities are also provided.

26. Police community officers are obliged to regularly organise meetings with the communities (or their representatives) of minorities and/or those who may experience social exclusion (on the grounds of disability, nationality, sexual orientation, religion, etc.) in the supervised territory. The purpose of the meetings is to share various kinds of preventive information, consult, and maintain contact. 385 of such meetings were organised in 2020, and 591 in 2021.

27. In 2020, round table discussions were held in five major cities of the country, where local police officers and prosecutors discussed with the representatives of vulnerable communities (including Jewish and Roma communities) and NGOs the needs and expectations of vulnerable communities and victims of hate crimes in regards to the work of law enforcement officers, problems and opportunities for cooperation (41 police officers, 14 prosecutors and 60 representatives of vulnerable communities and NGOs participated in the discussions).

28. In 2021, the DNM organised 6 trainings "More Love. Actions of Communities in Cases of Hate Speech: How to Recognise and Report" for representatives of national communities, journalists and employees of educational institutions, the purpose of which was to help national communities in Lithuania to recognise hate speech and report it properly. 105 participants from all over Lithuania took part in the trainings.

(b) Strengthen the capacity of law enforcement officers, prosecutors and judges to investigate and prosecute cases of hate crimes and hate speech and to collect disaggregated data on these crimes, including by expanding the number of training provided and the number of persons trained;

29. In 2018–2020, the MI together with the Prosecutor General's Office and the OIJE implemented the project "Strengthening the Response to Hate Crime and Hate Speech in Lithuania", funded under the European Union's Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme (2014–2020) (<https://vrm.lrv.lt/en/news/the-final-conference-of-the-hate-crime-prevention-project-was-held>). The project activities included analysis of cases of application of criminal liability for hate crimes and hate speech and preparation of relevant recommendations, training for police officers, prosecutors and judges, identification of needs of vulnerable communities, promotion of reporting of hate crimes, strengthening of relations between law

enforcement officers and vulnerable communities. During the implementation of this project, 17 joint trainings for police officers, prosecutors and judges (lasting 2 days) on the topics “Impact of Hate Crimes and Hate Speech. Peculiarities of Communication with Victims” and “Recognition of Hate Crimes and Hate Speech and Application of Criminal Liability” were organised in five major cities of the country in 2019–2020 (132 police officers, 109 prosecutors and 76 judges participated in these trainings).

30. In 2020, after the European Court of Human Rights (hereinafter referred to as the ECHR) delivered its judgement in the case of *Beizaras and Levickas v. Lithuania*, in which it identified violations related to the inappropriate investigation of hate speech, the Prosecutor General’s Office of the Republic of Lithuania organised a discussion on this case, in which 189 prosecutors participated. As part of the implementation of this judgement of the ECHR, the investigation of the incident examined by the ECHR in this case was renewed. This pre-trial investigation resulted in 10 pre-trial investigations, of which 5 were completed after the case was referred to the court by indictment, 4 were terminated on bail, 1 is still ongoing. All the cases referred to the court by indictment resulted in convictions, persons were found guilty in accordance with Article 170(2) of the CC. This leads to the conclusion that the judgement of the ECHR had a significant impact on the formation of a new case law (including that of pre-trial investigation), which ensures the protection of individuals from hate crimes and hate speech.

31. On 30 March 2020, the Prosecutor General’s Office prepared the Methodological Recommendations on the Specifics of the Conduct, Organisation and Management of the Pre-trial Investigation into Hate Crimes and Hate Speech, aimed at ensuring better identification of hate crimes and hate speech and more effective and high-quality investigation thereof. These recommendations will be developed with the assistance of an expert from the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights.

32. Prosecutors participate in trainings on hate speech and hate crimes organised by other Lithuanian institutions, EJTN, CEPOL. In 2018, 25 police officers were trained under the qualification improvement programme “Actions of Officers in Cases of Hate Crimes”. Trainings under the qualification improvement programme “Actions of Officers in Cases of Hate Crimes and Preventive Activities in Preventing Hate Crimes” approved in 2019 were attended by 99 police officers in 2020, 173 – in 2021, and 89 – in 2022. Since 2020, the topics “Concept, Signs, Forms, Legal Regulation of Hate Crimes” and “Differences between Hate Crimes and Other Criminal Acts” have been integrated into the police officer’s modular vocational training curriculum, which is used by all police cadets at the Lithuanian Police School during their studies.

33. In 2021, 43 police officers participated in the training “Institutional Response to Hate Speech and Hate Crimes” organised by the OEOO in cooperation with the OIJE. An educational video clip “How to recognise hate-motivated acts?” for law enforcement officers was created on the initiative of the above-mentioned institutions.

34. In 2022, 140 police officers participated in the training “Strengthening of Intercultural Competences in the Fight Against Hate Crimes”, which was organised by the Human Rights Monitoring Institute with the help of Lithuanian and international experts and representatives of communities vulnerable to hate crimes. The training focused on the Muslim community, migrants from Middle Eastern countries, their customs and traditions, and the police response to hate crimes against Roma and Jewish communities as well as migrants from African countries.

(c) Collect statistics on investigated cases of hate crimes and incitement to hatred emanating from politicians and from the media, including on the Internet;

35. In 2021, three posts of the Virtual Patrol Unit for persons responsible for preventive activities in the online space were established in the Lithuanian Police. One of the main functions of these officers is to identify illegal or harmful content on the Internet and refer it to the appropriate units for investigation. In 2021, upon verification of the circumstances of possible violations identified by the Virtual Patrol Unit or reported by residents to the Virtual Patrol Unit, 9 pre-trial investigations concerning the incitement to hatred were initiated.

36. See also paragraph 22.

(d) Enhance the data collection system in order to allow the collection of data disaggregated by prohibited grounds in cases of discrimination, hate speech and hate crimes.

37. In order to better identify and register hate crimes and hate speech, new functionalities were created in the Integrated Criminal Procedure System in 2021 (to be introduced in January 2022), such as the requirement to indicate whether a crime is a hate crime when registering a criminal act as well as indicators that help officers better identify hate crimes or hate speech.

38. Statistical data on registered criminal acts related to discrimination, hate speech and hate crimes, disaggregated by motive, are presented in Annex 8 to the report.

Noting that the State party is in the process of amending its legislation related to the compensation of victims of violent crimes to bring it in line with European Union requirements, the Committee recommends that the State party include compensation to victims of discrimination and incitement to hatred falling under articles 169, 170 and 171 of the Criminal Code in the draft Law on the Compensation for Victims of Violent Crimes.

39. The victims of violent crimes have the right to receive compensation for damages caused by violent crimes from the special Fund for Crime Victims in accordance with the procedure established by the Law on Compensation for Damage Caused by Violent Crimes of the Republic of Lithuania. The list of violent crimes for which damages are compensated is approved by Order of the Minister of Justice of the Republic of Lithuania and published in the public Register of Legal Acts. It should be noted that the above-mentioned Law currently in force establishes the concept of a violent crime linked to the consequences of a violent crime, such as loss of life, injury to health or violations of freedom of sexual self-determination. The Law does not contain provisions concerning compensation for criminal acts specified in Articles 169, 170, 171 of the CC.

40. Additionally, we would like to inform that on 30 June 2018, Article 12 of the Law on State-Guaranteed Legal Aid of the Republic of Lithuania was amended, which enshrines the right to receive free secondary state-guaranteed legal aid for victims when a criminal act was committed with the aim of expressing hatred towards the victim on the grounds of age, sex, sexual orientation, disability, race, nationality, language, ethnic origin, social status, belief, convictions or views.

41. In order to eliminate the gaps in the implementation of the Council Framework Decision 2008/913/JHA of 28 November 2008 on combating certain forms and expressions of racism and xenophobia by means of criminal law identified in the official notification of the European Commission, amendments were made on 28 April 2022 to Article 60(1)(12) (desire to express hatred as aggravating circumstance), Article 129(2)(13) (murder committed in order to express hatred), Article 135(2)(13) (severe health impairment caused in order to express hatred), Article 138(2)(13) (non-severe health impairment caused in order to express hatred), Article 169 (discrimination on grounds of nationality, race, sex, descent, religion or belonging to other groups), Article 170 (incitement against any national, racial, ethnic, religious or other group of persons), Article 1701 (creation and activities of the groups and organisations aiming at discriminating a group of persons or inciting against it), of the CC to include skin colour and ethnic origin among other protected characteristics.

Recalling its general recommendation No. 27 (2000) on discrimination against Roma, the Committee recommends that the State party intensify its efforts towards the integration of Roma into society, within the framework of the Action Plan for the Integration of Roma into Lithuanian Society for 2015-2020. In particular, the Committee recommends that the State party guarantee that sufficient funding and human resources is allocated to the strategy and ensure a higher participation of the Roma community in its implementation, in particular Roma women. Moreover, the Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) Actively combat discrimination against Roma in all spheres, in particular employment and housing, and ensure that those victims of discrimination have access to adequate remedies. With a view to combating prejudices and stereotypes towards

Roma people, the Committee recommends that the State party provide training to law enforcement and judicial officers and to journalists on Roma issues. The Committee also recommends that the State party undertake awareness-raising campaigns to promote Roma culture and combat stereotypes and prejudices against Roma people.

42. The Law on Equal Treatment of the Republic of Lithuania establishes the prohibition of discrimination and specifies the following possible grounds for discrimination: sex, race, nationality, citizenship, language, origin, social status, belief, convictions or views, age, sexual orientation, disability, ethnicity, religion. In order to develop respect for people, to ensure the implementation of the provisions of legal acts establishing the principle of non-discrimination and equal opportunities, to increase the public's legal awareness and understanding, to inform the public about measures taken to promote equal treatment and non-discrimination, to strengthen inter-institutional cooperation in the field of promoting equal treatment and non-discrimination, Action Plans for the Promotion of Non-Discrimination are currently being implemented. During the period 2018–2022 covered by periodic reports, the following two Action Plans for the Promotion of Non-Discrimination were (are being) implemented: 2017–2020 Action Plan and 2021–2023 Action Plan. The implementation of the Action Plan includes trainings and educational events on issues of integration into society and ensuring equal treatment, as well as other activities.

43. During the implementation of the measure intended to “Organise training for youth and persons working with youth on non-discrimination promotion and building respect for people, without infringing the right of parents to raise children according to their beliefs”, trainings “Building of Anti-Discrimination, Tolerance and Respect for Others” were carried out, persons working with youth, schoolchildren, employees of educational institutions gained new knowledge, checked the current situation in their living environment, mastered non-discriminatory and respectful communication methods, improved their ability to abandon prejudices, learned to choose appropriate communication phrases, recognise the causes of bullying and combat the consequences thereof in their living, learning or working environment.

44. While implementing the measure intended to “Organise training and educational events for employers and their representatives on issues of equal opportunities and promotion of non-discrimination in the labour market”, the Employment Service organised in 2018–2020 trainings and educational events for employers on issues of equal opportunities and promotion of non-discrimination in the labour market, including trainings on Roma culture and customs, which were attended by 406 employers. In addition, counselling services were provided to 740 Roma in order to increase their motivation for employment or education, advise them on changing jobs, help them choose a profession or plan a career, taking into account personal characteristics and the needs of the labour market. 745 Roma used information services aimed at helping Roma find a job or acquire qualifications or competences in demand on the labour market, 264 Roma participated in active labour market measures intended to promote the employment of Roma.

45. The Ministry of Social Security and Labour is responsible for coordinating the implementation of the Action Plan and its implementation measures. Other ministries, the DNM, Agency of Youth Affairs and other institutions and bodies participate in the implementation of the Action Plan as well.

46. The DNM regularly conducts studies on the socio-economic situation of the Roma minority, which analyse the education of Roma, integration into the labour market, subjective health assessment and housing conditions. The most recent studies carried out are “Situation of the Roma People in 2020”, which assessed the results of the integration of Roma into Lithuanian society in 2015–2020 and the 2022 analysis “Social Demographic Portrait of Lithuanian Roma: What Does the 2021 Population Census Reveal?”.

47. In addition, as already mentioned in response to previous recommendations, the DNM annually supports traditional Roma events that present Roma history, language and introduce the public to the specific culture of the Roma community. Every year, the Romani Language Festival is organised, books are published, and exhibitions are organised. Special attention is paid to the commemoration of the Roma genocide. In 2019, the Seimas of the Republic of

Lithuania officially included the Roma Genocide Remembrance Day on 2 August in the list of commemorative days.

48. In order to honour the victims of the Roma genocide, the musical play “Samudaripen. A Girl from a Wagon” was created. The play was shown in 2018-2020 in various Lithuanian cities. In 2022, an art installation “I am Karolis, Samudaripen” intended to commemorate the Roma Genocide Remembrance Day was presented at the MO Museum.

49. In order to spread information about the Roma genocide, the DNM has published books for various target groups: the book “I am Karolis” is intended for 5-8th grade children to acquaint them with the Roma genocide; the methodological tool “Right to Remember” (prepared by the Council of Europe) is intended for youth and youth workers; the book “Forgotten Genocide: Lithuanian Roma during the Nazi Occupation” is intended for the general public.

50. Exhibitions presenting Roma culture and traditions attract great interest. In 2019, the exhibition “Sweet Sweat of the Future” was held at the National Gallery of Art. The exhibition covered Lithuanian art of the last 40 years, starting from the late 1970s – early 1980s and ending just before the big changes. Among the works of more than 70 artists, Andrew Miksys’ photographs depicting Roma life were presented. In 2022, the same artist presented an exhibition BAXT about Roma at the MO Museum. The exhibition provided an opportunity to take a new look at the Roma situation in Lithuania through the prism of visual art, to critically review the prejudices related to this community and to delve into different points of view and life experiences.

51. In 2019, the social campaign „Lygink rūbus, ne žmones” was launched. It is a social campaign that aims to draw the attention of the public and employers to persons experiencing social exclusion in the labour market and to show that professional competences and skills are more important than personal background when it comes to hiring people. The Roma were one of the target groups of the social campaign. The online daily www.15min.lt published articles about working Roma and the difficulties they face in order to integrate into the labour market.

52. Among other things, in the period 2017–2022, amendments to the Law on Equal Treatment of the Republic of Lithuania were made to extend protection against harassment and sexual harassment, establish protection against discrimination on the ground of family, as well as provide protection to persons who have reported, filed a complaint or who are involved in a case concerning discrimination.

53. Statistical information: in 2021, 381 unemployed Roma were registered with the Employment Service (of which 186 were female), 169 were employed (of which 88 were female), 9 participated in active labour market policy measures (7 – subsidised employment, 2 – vocational training).

54. In January–October 2022, 539 unemployed Roma (of which 273 were female) were registered with the Employment Service, 114 were employed (of which 59 were female), 10 participated in active labour market policy measures (7 – subsidised employment, 3 – vocational training). On 1 December 2022, 315 unemployed Roma were registered with the Employment Service (of which 187 were female).

55. Pursuant to Article 11(3) of the Law on Employment of the Republic of Lithuania, employment support measures shall be implemented in accordance with the principles of equal opportunities for women and men and non-discrimination.

(b) Pursue its efforts to promote the enrolment of Roma children in pre-school education and support Roma children and youth’s completion of compulsory education and their access to tertiary education, including with language and social skills support. It also recommends that the State party provide young Roma boys and girls with vocational training opportunities adapted to the needs of the employment market. In addition, the Committee recommends that the State party conduct awareness raising campaigns about the importance of education targeted to Roma children and young people and their family.

56. In Lithuania the guarantee of equal opportunities in the education system is ensured by law – Article 5(1) of the Law on Education stipulates that one of the principles is the principle of equal opportunities. It establishes that the education system is socially fair, ensures the implementation of person's rights, guarantees access to education for every person, the attainment of a general education level and a primary qualification, and creates conditions to improve the acquired qualification or gain a new qualification. In each case, individual decisions are made at school level in order to ensure quality education for vulnerable groups of pupils.

57. In each municipality, general education institutions apply individual measures to improve the social and educational situation of Roma pupils in order to better respond to their needs. Municipalities of general education institutions cooperate with the non-governmental organisations in order to strengthen educational work with pre-school pupils, for example, Food Bank; participate in the activities of Open Youth Centres, where joint projects with non-governmental organisations are carried out, cooperate with Kėdainiai District Children and Youth Health Club "Sveiki", Kėdainiai Branch of the Lithuanian Riflemen's Union, Lithuanian Red Cross Society, etc., where various activities, trainings, sports events are organised with the participation of children of various nationalities, including Roma.

58. Educational work focusing on Roma families with children of pre-school age has been intensified. Targeted meetings with families raising pre-school age children have been organised in schools, possibilities to accompany children to educational institutions are discussed, transportation of children (e.g. by school buses) to and from educational institutions has been organised to the extent possible.

59. Vilnius City Municipality guarantees transportation to the educational institution for pupils experiencing social risk. Families are informed and acquainted with favourable conditions for comprehensive personality development such as: safe environment, creative, responsible teachers, educational support specialists, nutrition, development of abilities (musical, sporting, artistic, etc.). One of the educational measures that has proved effective in pre-school education institutions is encouraging the use of the right to pre-school and pre-primary institutional education through individual interviews with Roma families with pre-school children. In meetings with parents, the representatives of the school tried to justify that children at the age up to 6 years are the most receptive, during this period the basic social skills of the personality are being formed, therefore it is very important to pay special attention to children when developing their physical, emotional, other needs, and to shape the skills of appropriate behaviour. Other educational work includes intensified dissemination of information (in a form of leaflets) about pre-school education institutions closest to the place of residence, visits of social workers and case managers of the Social Support Centre to Roma families and case management meetings.

60. Roma families are encouraged to exercise their right to pre-school and pre-primary institutional education. Educational institutions establish relations with the leaders of the Roma community and maintain constant contact with them. The use of the right to pre-school and pre-primary education is focused on during case management meetings and is promoted by organising visits of social workers and specialists from educational institutions. Pre-school and pre-primary education institution staff communicate individually with families raising young children, presenting examples of Roma children being educated in the institution and their individual progress as well as successfully reached school maturity. Ukmergė District Municipality can be cited as an example. According to the representatives of the Ukmergė District Municipality, parents of Roma nationality are interested in their children attending pre-school education institutions or being educated according to pre-primary education curricula. Their attendance rates are good. Almost all Roma families need help in registering their children in the Electronic Kindergartens Admission System. They are assisted by the chief specialist of the Education, Culture and Sport Department of the Ukmergė District Municipality, social workers of the municipality, or mediators of the DNM project "Local Roma Platforms - the Path towards Cooperation with Municipalities". In individual cases, managers of educational institutions, social pedagogues, and social workers of wards communicate with Roma families and make recommendations to admit children of pre-school age to pre-school or pre-primary education groups. In other cases, in order to ensure children's regular participation in classes, in some municipalities link between Roma

children's attendance, their unjustified absence from educational institutions and social benefits paid to parents is established.

61. By reducing the early drop-out of Roma pupils from the education system, the general education institutions encourage active participation of pupils in school community life, inclusion of the Roma children in various non-formal activities for children, project-based and preventive activities. Discussions with parents and children on issues of sex education, opportunities provided by education in career planning, other relevant issues are initiated, and attempts to motivate them are made by giving positive examples of the lives of Roma people.

62. Pupils with learning difficulties, once the learning difficulties have been identified, are provided with individual counselling (same as for pupils of other nationalities). Pupils are motivated by organising various educational events and non-traditional lessons. Vilkaviškis District can be cited as an example. In Vilkaviškis District Municipality, the issue of early drop-out of Roma pupils from the education system is addressed during inter-institutional meetings organised by the coordinator of inter-institutional cooperation of the Vilkaviškis District Municipality, during case management meetings by providing services to families, during the meetings of the Child Welfare Commission of the Vilkaviškis District Municipality Administration by providing assistance and services to Roma pupils and families, keeping records of those who do not study and do not attend school in the NEMIS system; such issues are resolved with the involvement of the school as well as the Child Welfare Commissions.

63. Inclusion of pupils with special educational needs in general education institutions is being increased. Inclusive education aims to provide equal educational opportunities to all children, regardless of, but at the same time not ignoring, cultural, social or other differences between pupils. Employees of general education institutions working with Roma pupils have many years of cross-cultural experience necessary for inclusive education, are familiar with Roma culture, have an understanding why a child behaves in one way or another, and are able to respond adequately and provide the child with the necessary assistance. Pupils' homeroom teachers, social pedagogues, who have to visit Roma families and solve problems of pupils' education, are the best and closest collaborators with Roma families. They work individually with each child paying a lot of attention to their needs, helping them with their homework, organising help for distance teaching, and developing missing social skills. A cosy environment is created for pupils in educational institutions where they drink tea and can talk openly with their teachers. The achievements are obvious - not only in terms of reduced early drop-out rate from the education system, but also in terms of fully developing the personality of each pupil.

64. Pupils with special educational needs are assisted, when possible, by a social pedagogue, special pedagogue, speech therapist, teacher's assistant, health care specialist, librarian, they have additional Lithuanian language lessons and individual consultations.

65. Subject teachers differentiate tasks, take pupils' needs into account, monitor the pupil's personal progress and support learning motivation. Homeroom teachers and assisting specialists are in constant contact with parents (guardians) to discuss the personal progress of pupils. Roma pupils, like all other pupils, participate in events and summer camps intended for general education pupils. Funds for the above-mentioned activities are allocated as needed from the funds allocated for school appropriations in a particular municipality.

66. In the case of vocational training, persons of Roma origin are not differentiated by sex or excluded from benefits or support for vocational training. Persons of Roma origin are admitted to vocational training under the same conditions as representatives of other nations living in Lithuania. Persons studying according to formal vocational training programmes or modules thereof have the opportunity to receive a study grant, a social grant or material support in accordance with the procedure established by the Government. If necessary, vocational training institutions may provide a dormitory. Persons of Roma nationality studying in higher education institutions are not subject to special assistance on the basis of their nationality.

67. In the last decade, significant changes have been achieved in the participation of Roma pupils in the education system. The data of the study "Situation of Roma People in 2020"

(hereinafter referred to as the study of 2020) commissioned by the DNM show that, compared to 2015, more Roma children attend pre-school and pre-primary education, a more even distribution of Roma pupils across classes in general education schools as well as the increasing number of pupils over the age of 16 has been recorded. In the youngest group (aged 10–19), the share of Roma children who have not completed primary education or are still in primary school has decreased (from 36 % in 2015 to 28 % in 2020). In the youth group (aged 20–29), the number of illiterates and persons without primary education has decreased (from 11 % to 4 %) while the number of persons with basic (from 22 % to 30 %) and secondary education (from 8 % to 18 %) has increased. However, the number of Roma pupils in the last grades of basic education and gymnasium is still very low.

68. In the period 2018–2022, the number of Roma children in general education schools was estimated to be approximately 420–450. The study of 2020 shows that the number of pupils who do attend school during the period of compulsory education has decreased. In 2020, 6 % of children aged 6–15 did not attend school (in 2015, 14 % of children aged 7-16 did not attend school).

69. In order to ensure smoother integration of Roma children in educational institutions, the DNM supports non-formal education of Roma children. Every year, funding is allocated to the projects of the Roma Community Centre and the Multicultural Day Centre for Children and Youth “Padėk pritapti” (“Help to Fit in”) involving work with Roma children and the youth. Every year, 10–12 pre-school-aged Roma children are prepared for school in the Roma Community Centre where classes on social skills, Lithuanian language and other activities are organised. Classes are attended by children from 4 years old. School-age children attend various activity groups in the Roma Community Centre such as folk dances, career development, free drawing, etc.; they participate in educational trips and summer camps. The objective of the Multicultural Day Centre for Children and Youth “Padėk pritapti” is to reduce the social exclusion of Roma children and youth, promote tolerance through education, non-formal and inclusive education. Since 2019, the Centre has been operating as an Open Youth Space, where we promote eventful engagement for young people. All “Padėk pritapti” activities are focused on education, social skills training, community building, respect for every visitor, building of trust, working with families, breaking down of stereotypes, public education. The Ministry of Social Security and Labour and Vilnius City Municipality also allocate funding to these institutions.

(c) Continue its efforts to facilitate the access of Roma to adequate housing, including access to social housing and subsidies for house rental, and complete the resettlement of the Roma households living in the Kirtimai neighbourhood. It also recommends that the State party strengthen coordination mechanisms in order to ensure that no house is demolished unless alternative housing or monetary compensation has been provided to the inhabitants.

70. The Law on Support for Purchase or Rental of Housing of the Republic of Lithuania establishes the principle of equal treatment which guarantees that support for the purchase or rental of housing is provided in order to ensure equality between individuals and families. Support for the purchase or rental of housing is provided to individuals and families, after assessing their assets, income and other factors related to the social status of the individual and the family. Support for the purchase of housing is provided: 1) by providing subsidies to the recipients of housing credits partially compensated by the state for the payment of part of the housing credit partially compensated by the state; 2) by paying the compensation for the part of the leasing fee of the housing. Support for the rental of housing is provided: 1) by renting social housing; 2) by paying a compensation for a part of the housing rental fee.

71. All low-income residents of Lithuania, regardless of their nationality, sex or race, may receive housing rental support, i.e. take advantage of the compensation for a part of the housing rental fee. A person needs to apply to the municipality where he/she has rented a housing and declared his/her place of residence or where a person is registered as a person who has not declared his/her place of residence. The amount of compensation depends on the municipality where the housing is rented, the size of the rented housing and the number of family members. Following the amendment of the legislation, municipalities have been given the right to rent housing from natural persons and legal entities and to provide it to persons entered in the list of Persons and families entitled to housing rental support. Development of

the social housing fund by buying or building housing is a very expensive investment, therefore the supply of social housing is limited and the demand for social housing is high. The state continues to develop the social housing fund by building new or reconstructing and adapting existing buildings for housing purposes, by purchasing or otherwise acquiring residential houses, parts thereof, apartments, by renting housing belonging to natural persons or legal entities for a period of at least 5 years, and when the municipalities take over for the disposal of state unnecessary vacant residential premises in accordance with the procedure established by the Law on the Management, Use and Disposal of State and Municipal Property.

72. In 2020, after the families from the Vilnius Kirtimai settlement were relocated, the Vilnius City Municipality Council made a decision and approved a new Programme for Roma Integration into Society. The measure envisaged in the Programme is to “allocate funds from the budget of the Vilnius City Municipality for the compensation of the part of housing rental fee, when the housing is rented outside the city of Vilnius and rented from persons in the private sector”.

73. During the implementation of this Programme, 31 Roma families (59 persons) received compensation for part of the housing rental fee in 2020. A total of EUR 52 194.41 (state funds) was paid as compensations to the Roma in 2020. In 2021, 32 Roma families (66 persons) received compensation for part of the housing rental fee. A total of EUR 50 473.12 (state funds) was paid as compensations to the Roma in 2021. The housing was rented for 26 families (in the period 2016–2021).

74. A study on Roma housing conducted in 2020 revealed that, compared to the general indicators of the country, Roma are less often the full owners of the housing in which they reside (Roma households – 26 %, the overall indicator of the country – 85 %). About a quarter (26 %) of Roma households indicated that they live in a housing and do not pay a rental fee (housing belongs to relatives, etc.), while the overall rate for the country is 6 %. A larger share of Roma households (compared to the population of the country) rents their housing: 43 % pay for housing below the market price (reside in social housing or receive compensation for the rental fee, while the national indicator is 2 %), 3 % of Roma households rent housing at the market price (national indicator being 1 %). The share of Roma households purchased with a loan is small (2 %), while the national indicator is 6 %.

75. According to the study, housing conditions for the Roma group have improved. The share of persons residing in houses with housing problems decreased (from 72 % to 55 %); the share of persons able to heat their residential housing has increased (from 48 % to 75 %); the housing area of Roma households increased slightly. Compared to 2015, the quality of Roma housing has improved, with a decrease in the share of households without a bath or shower (from 56 % to 47 %) and without a flush toilet (from 51 % to 40 %). The average housing area of a Roma household is smaller than the average housing area of the country’s residents (49 and 69 sq. m, respectively), but meets the minimum area for one person (14 sq. m) set by the State.

76. According to the data of the general population census of 2021 85 % of Roma have amenities (toilet, bath, hot water), 93 % of Roma have central heating, almost 100 % of Roma have water supply, sewage disposal, electricity supply.

77. The financial and material data of Roma families show several positive developments. Compared to 2015, the share of Roma households that have failed to pay utility bills twice or more due to lack of money has decreased (from 58 % to 34 %), and the share of those that are able to heat their homes has increased by a fifth.

(d) Increase its efforts to ensure that Roma, particularly Roma women, have access to adequate health care, including by conducting targeted awareness-raising campaigns informing about available health services and the requirements for compulsory health insurance coverage.

78. The Lithuanian compulsory health insurance (hereinafter referred to as the CHI) system is based on the principle of universality, solidarity and justice. All residents of the country participate in the system with equal rights. All permanent residents, regardless of their nationality, sex or race, must pay the CHI contributions. Contributions for socially

vulnerable categories defined in the law are paid by the State from the State budget. Residents insured with State funds (except for working persons who must pay the CHI contributions) are specified in Article 6(4) of the Law on Health Insurance of the Republic of Lithuania: <https://ligoniukasa.lrv.lt/en/sector-activities/about-compulsory-health-insurance/chi-participants>. Roma have the same right to health care as all other residents of the Republic of Lithuania. According to the 2020 survey, 96 % of Roma have compulsory health insurance and have access to all health services. Compared to 2015, the number of Roma who have compulsory health insurance increased by 5 % (in 2015 it was 91 %).

79. The comparison of data related to Roma in surveys conducted in 2015 and 2020 indicates that the overall health condition of children under 15 years of age and adults of working age (16–44 years) has slightly improved – there was an increase in those who answered that their health was good or very good, and a decrease in those who assessed their health condition as average. However, among the oldest age group (45 years and older) there was an increase in those who assess their health status as bad and very bad (from 52 % to 59 %). Subjective health assessment data show that there is a considerable gap between the population of Lithuania and the Roma group – there are more people in the Roma group who rate their health poorly, especially in the working age and older age groups. There is a positive change in that the overall health assessment has improved in the Roma group over the past five years, but the differences from the entire population of Lithuania remain clear. There are no statistically significant differences in health assessment by sex.

80. Information about health care services available to all residents of Lithuania can be found by persons of Roma nationality on the website of the health insurance fund www.ligoniukasa.lrv.lt. The website operates on the portal “My Government”, which was created on the basis of the websites of the National Health Insurance Fund under the Ministry of Health (NHIF) and five, i.e. Vilnius, Kaunas, Klaipėda, Šiauliai and Panevėžys, Territorial Health Insurance Funds (THIF). The website provides information about mandatory health insurance, activities of health insurance funds throughout Lithuania, health care services provided by medical institutions, their rates, and waiting times for visits. The interactive list of [personal health institutions in Lithuania](#) presents information by the type of service provided, working hours, and location. On the webpage, residents may also check whether they are covered by compulsory health insurance, order a European Health Insurance Card or an electronic certificate that replaces it.

While welcoming the information that national minorities are consulted in the course of the drafting process of a Draft Law on National Minorities through the establishment of a working group, the Committee requests the State party to provide information on concrete steps taken to accelerate the drafting and adoption of the law on national minorities.

The Committee considers the response to this recommendation partially satisfactory and requests the State party to provide, in its next periodic report, information on steps taken to fully implement the recommendation, including details on the composition of the working group of minority representatives.

81. A separate Law on National Minorities has not yet been adopted, but Lithuania seeks to implement the provisions of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities by introducing into the laws regulating various fields of law the provisions ensuring the rights and freedoms of national minorities. For example, the Law on Education of the Republic of Lithuania enshrines the right to learn (teach) the language of a national minority and the conditions for fostering national, ethnic and linguistic identity, learning the mother tongue, history and culture in general education and non-formal education schools; the Law on Public Administration of the Republic of Lithuania enshrines the right of a person to address the subjects of public administration in a language he/she understands; the Law on Courts of the Republic of Lithuania enshrines the right for persons who do not speak the state language to participate in court proceedings assisted by an interpreter; the Law on Equal Treatment of the Republic of Lithuania establishes obligations related to ensuring equal treatment in various areas of public life (legislation, education, labour relations, protection of consumer rights, etc.) and prohibition of direct and indirect discrimination on grounds of sex, race, nationality, citizenship, language, origin, social status, belief, convictions or views,

age, sexual orientation, disability, ethnicity, religion; the draft of the Constitutional Law on the State Language of the Republic of Lithuania is being considered in the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania, which contains provisions on the publication of public information in other languages, i.e. not only Lithuanian, according to needs and possibilities; also this draft law does not limit the right of persons to foster their mother tongue, which is not the state language.

82. It should be noted that the draft Law on National Minorities of the Republic of Lithuania was prepared by the working group established by Order No IV-47 of 3 December 2019 of the Director of the Department of National Minorities under the Government of the Republic of Lithuania on the approval of the composition of the working group for drafting the draft Law on National Minorities, which consists of the representatives delegated by the Office of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania, seven ministries, other state institutions, representatives of the Lithuanian Polish Lawyers' Union, the Kaunas German Society, the Lithuanian Russian Community, the Lithuanian Armenian Union, the Vilnius County Tatar Community, and the Lithuanian Jewish (Litvaks) Community, the Lithuanian Russian Community active in the fields of protection of national minorities and human rights.

The Committee welcomes the information provided by the State party on measures taken to expand the capacity of reception centres and the development of community-based accommodation for asylum seekers. While noting the information provided on the rights and procedures related to asylum seekers, the Committee requests the State party to provide, in its next periodic report, information on concrete measures taken to ensure that these rights and procedures are respected in practice, as well as on investigations conducted into alleged cases of denials of entry into the territory and denial of access to asylum procedures at the hands of border guards, with respect to persons seeking international protection in 2016, 2017 and 2018. The Committee considers the State party's response to this recommendation partially satisfactory.

83. In order to implement the objectives set by the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund during the programming of the 2014–2020 national programme in the field of asylum, in 2017–2021 projects were implemented to improve reception conditions by expanding and improving the infrastructure – the existing premises were repaired, a 15-bed dormitory for vulnerable asylum seekers was built. As the flow of asylum seekers grew, on 8 March 2017, Resolution No 171 of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania approving the Procedure for accommodation of asylum seekers was adopted, which regulates the compilation of a list of accommodation facilities, temporary housing and places for temporary housing of asylum seekers, requirements for places of accommodation, accommodation conditions and procedure for asylum seekers, ensuring reception conditions and amounts of funds allocated to ensure material reception conditions. In implementing the provisions of this Resolution, on 2 June 2017, the Ministry of the Interior and the Refugee Reception Centre (a budgetary institution subordinate to the Ministry of Social Security and Labour) signed an agreement on the use of budget funds to ensure the conditions of reception of asylum seekers accommodated in the Refugee Reception Centre in 2017. Until then, the Refugee Reception Centre accommodated foreigners who had already received asylum in Lithuania. This agreement was extended until 20 November 2020, when the Law on the Legal Status of Foreigners established that the Refugee Reception Centre will be allowed to provide services not only to foreigners who have received asylum, but also to asylum seekers. In 2019, in accordance with this Resolution, contracts were signed with non-governmental organisations that rented housing in municipalities to asylum seekers.

84. In order to create more effective reception conditions for asylum seekers in Lithuania, from 1 January 2020, the Migration Department under the Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Lithuania has been appointed as the authority responsible for accommodating, in accordance with the procedure established by the Government, the asylum seekers in housings or temporary places for accommodation, which has taken over this function from the Ministry of the Interior. On this basis, during the implementation of the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund project in 2021–2022, accommodation services were purchased from the Jieznas Family Support Centre, where 40 asylum seekers could live at the same time.

85. In 2021, when Lithuania received an unusually large influx of migrants who crossed the border illegally, the Lithuanian reception system was overloaded, the efficiency of reception conditions fell sharply, therefore, in the second half of 2021, additional temporary accommodation centres were established in a short period of time, the infrastructure in already existing centres was expanded by building modular houses. Asylum seekers are assigned to the places of accommodation taking into account their vulnerability on a case-by-case basis.

86. At the end of 2021, the MI and the MoSSL assessed the costs incurred during the crisis and the alternatives for creating reception conditions.

87. On 25 May 2022, during the meeting of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania, a protocol decision, which approved the concept of restructuring the Migrant Reception and Accommodation System, was adopted. Within its scope, some functions of the State Border Guard Service under the Ministry of Interior (hereinafter referred to as the SBGS), including accommodation, are transferred to the Refugee Reception Centre. The planned result is an efficient and flexible reception system able to adapt to changing flows, and clear and non-duplicated functions of the institutions. A working group to implement this concept was set up, the final results of which are expected to be received by the end of 2023.

88. In turn, the SBGS, in order to more effectively ensure the rights of asylum seekers and suitable reception conditions, signed a cooperation agreement with the Lithuanian Red Cross Society (hereinafter referred to as the LRCS) on 10 June 2020, according to which the LRCS provides legal services to asylum seekers. According to this agreement, the SBGS also informs the representatives of the LRCS about cases when the foreigners do not request asylum; such foreigners are allowed to meet with the representatives of the LRCS, who assess the humanitarian needs of the foreigners and ensure they will be provided with the service of restoring family ties.

89. In order to provide as much detailed information as possible about the procedures and deadlines for examining an application for asylum, leaflets prepared in foreigners' most commonly used languages are distributed to them. This information is also available on the LRCS website at <https://www.redcross.lt/kaip-padedame/pagalba-pabegeliams-ir-migrantams/informacija-migrantams>.

90. Also, taking into account the violations found in the judgement of the European Court of Human Rights of 11 December 2018 in the case of M.A. and others v. Lithuania (petition No 59793/17), the SBGS took steps to ensure the continuous improvement of the qualifications of the SBGS officers in the field of the protection of the rights of asylum seekers, by organising various events and trainings (detailed information about the trainings organised for the SBGS officers in 2019–2022 is provided in Annex 9 to the report). In addition, since 1 July 2019, Migration Departments have started operating in three SBGS frontier districts, one of the functions of which is to receive, in accordance with the procedure established by the law, applications for asylum in the Republic of Lithuania of foreigners, to carry out the initial steps of the asylum procedure, and to coordinate and control the performance of these steps.

91. The amendment of the Description of the procedure for granting and withdrawing asylum in the Republic of Lithuania approved by Order of the Minister of the Interior in 2022 establishes that if a foreigner applies for asylum to a state institution or authority other than the SBGS or the Migration Department, such institution or authority must explain to the foreigner orally in a language that he/she can reasonably be expected to understand the procedure for submitting an application for asylum and inform the Migration Department about the foreigner's intention to submit such an application no later than within 2 business days.

92. In January 2023, a draft amendment to the Law on the Legal Status of Foreigners of the Republic of Lithuania was submitted to the Seimas, which proposes to ensure the possibility for foreigners to submit applications for asylum, regardless of whether they entered the Republic of Lithuania legally or illegally. Applications for asylum may be submitted at border checkpoints or transit zones to the SBGS; when the foreigner is in the territory of the Republic of Lithuania – to the Migration Department or the SBGS; when the

foreigner is in a foreign country – through the diplomatic missions or consular offices of the Republic of Lithuania specified by the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

The Committee recommends that the State party: (a) Guarantee that each refugee and beneficiary of subsidiary protection benefit from adequate integration measures, including in the field of education, training and employment.

93. On 21 December 2018, Order of the Minister of Social Security and Labour approved the Action Plan for the Integration of Foreigners into Society of 2018–2020, which was extended for another year at the beginning of 2021. Its purpose is to improve the implementation of integration of foreigners and ensure their successful integration into society. The Action Plan for the Integration of Foreigners provides for 39 measures, which were used to improve legislation and processes related to the integration of foreigners and persons granted asylum, improve inter-institutional cooperation in the field of integration of foreigners and persons granted asylum, improve the integration of foreigners and persons granted asylum into the labour market system and improve the results of their integration into the labour market, improve the integration of persons granted asylum and foreigners into the education system, improve the conditions for foreigners to receive social and healthcare services, promote cooperation between foreigners and local communities, reduce discrimination against foreigners, improve the integration of female foreigners by ensuring their rights, monitor and analyse the implementation of foreigner integration processes and policies.

94. As part of the implementation of this plan, the municipalities of Jonava and Akmenė districts and the city of Šiauliai were selected in 2019 to carry out an analysis of the needs and opportunities of foreigners living there. In 2020, the EU Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund project “Increasing the Competences of Municipalities in the Provision of Services to Third-Country Nationals” was launched and recommendations were formulated for the development and provision of integration services in each municipality. Project participants are consulted during the implementation of recommendations and the strategic integration planning process. Also, 12 municipalities started implementing projects to promote community initiatives in 2021.

95. In order to further improve the implementation of the integration of foreigners and to ensure their successful integration into society, in 2020, amendments to Resolution No 998 of 5 October 2016 of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania approving the Procedure for the provision of State support for the integration of persons granted asylum were approved, which encouraged foreigners who were granted asylum in Lithuania to seek greater integration. Key changes are as follows:

- Taking into account the fact that the integration of persons granted asylum is a two-way, complex and multi-layered process, which requires both the readiness of persons granted asylum to integrate in the host country and its society, and the readiness of the society and its local communities to accept newcomers, and the desired result of which is the full involvement of the persons granted asylum in the social, economic, cultural and political life of the State, including their equal participation in education, health care, social security and labour systems (with equal rights and duties), the concepts of “integration of persons granted asylum” and “State support for the integration of persons granted asylum” have been clarified;
- Individual integration plans for a person (or family) are drawn up while the person is still in the Refugee Reception Centre and updated after the person (or family) settles in the municipality; the plan is updated in cooperation with the municipal institution responsible for integration. Based on the individual integration plan, services are provided to persons granted asylum according to their specific needs;
- Social support reflecting the progress of integration, which may remain unchanged or decrease if the person (or family) demonstrates an obvious (un)willingness to integrate, is provided. As before, from the first to the seventh month, the persons granted asylum would receive social support at a basic rate depending on the number of family members. Support may be differentiated after this period. The amount of the paid monthly allowance depends on the level of vulnerability assessed and on the progress

of the implementation of the individual integration plan, i.e. on the efforts to integrate into society (e.g. how motivated a person is to learn the Lithuanian language, etc.).

96. In 2018–2022, three integration centres operated in Vilnius, Kaunas and Klaipėda, where comprehensive services to citizens of third countries are provided. In these centres, direct information and consultations of foreigners covers various areas of social life: education, employment, health care system, search for housing, labour market, etc. (social consultations, individual legal consultations, professional guidance, psychological consultations, informational events). The centres organise trainings that meet the specific needs of third country nationals and make it easier for foreigners to find work, pass the examination on the fundamentals of the Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania and prevent violations of the rights of foreigners (Lithuanian language courses, civic orientation training).

97. In 2019, a network of schools prepared to integrate foreigners arriving to and Lithuanian pupils returning to the country was developed: it included 22 schools in 10 Lithuanian municipalities. Seminars “How to Ensure the Overall Integration of Pupils Who Have Arrived or Returned From Other Countries at School?” were held for municipal pre-school, pre-primary, primary, basic and secondary education school teams. In 2020, 3 learning models were created and supplemented with methodological tools intended for pedagogues engaged in multilingual education of foreigners who have arrived in classrooms, taking into account the individual learning needs of pupils and ensuring equal opportunities for them in the educational process; in 2021, these learning models were launched. Also, in 2020, foreigners who have passed the state Lithuanian language examination were provided with the possibility to apply for additional hours of higher level Lithuanian language courses. In 2018–2022, an analysis was carried out on learning the Lithuanian language at the workplace and on the possibility to reconcile the Lithuanian language learning and vocational training. With financing from Switzerland, a vocational training pilot project is planned for 2024 onwards, together with the teaching of the Lithuanian language for foreigners. On 1 October 2020, the Ministry of Social Security and Labour signed a cooperation agreement with the Mykolas Romeris University, on the basis of which this university will provide the possibility to study for free to some of the persons granted asylum in Lithuania, and will take into account the research needs of the Ministry of Social Security and Labour when compiling lists of research topics.

98. It is very important to note that every person granted asylum and beneficiary of subsidiary protection has the right to use the same services of the Employment Service as Lithuanian citizens (e.g. counselling, active labour market policy measures, etc.). On 5 December 2019, the amendment to the Law on the Recognition of Regulated Professional Qualifications of the Republic of Lithuania was adopted, which established provisions on the recognition of professional qualifications acquired by third country nationals in third countries. In 2021–2022, the Refugee Reception Centre implemented the project “Promotion of Entrepreneurship and Involvement in the Labour Market of Foreigners” financed by the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund, which planned to strengthen the integration of persons granted asylum into the labour market by providing mentoring services and Lithuanian language teaching at the workplace.

99. In 2019–2021, webinars were organised for employers on the specifics of hiring foreigners and on the principles of equal opportunities and non-discrimination in the labour market. In 2022, the Employment Service started financing Lithuanian language courses for third country nationals who have a residence permit in Lithuania for at least one year. According to the Refugee Reception Centre data for the first half of 2022, almost 45 % of persons granted asylum out of all persons granted asylum of working age were employed.

(b) Further combat xenophobia and anti-migrant sentiments in the area of housing and ensure that cases of discrimination against these groups are adequately reported and addressed.

100. The Law on Equal Treatment of the Republic of Lithuania established that the service provider may not discriminate on grounds of sex, race, nationality, citizenship, language, origin, social status, belief, convictions or views, age, sexual orientation, disability, ethnicity, religion and must provide equal conditions for access to the same services, including the provision of housing, to all users. A person who believes that his/her equal opportunities have

been violated shall have the right to submit a complaint to the Equal Opportunities Ombudsperson concerning the violation of equal opportunities. Appealing to the Equal Opportunities Ombudsperson shall not limit the possibility to defend own rights in court. This provision of the Law concerning discrimination in the field of housing covers business-related relations.

101. In 2019, during the implementation of the project financed by the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund, 10 videos presenting to the public the history, culture of the third country nationals and their countries as well as their connections with Lithuania were created. Steps were taken to ensure that social media will be used in order to achieve the greatest possible visibility of the project's activities and awareness of the public, especially younger people, of the situation of other nationalities in Lithuania. Public discussions with the public and third country nationals were organised which were attended by more than 2 000 Lithuanian residents; over 300 foreigners from 38 different countries visited school, adult and senior citizens' communities. In 2021, two contracts for projects financed from the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund, aimed at promoting tolerance, were signed. Funded by Switzerland, a comprehensive communication campaign for the general public is planned from 2024 onwards, which is intended to present a more positive and evidence-based narrative about migration processes and migrants as well as asylum seekers/persons granted asylum.

(c) Consider increasing the duration and amount of financial support for the integration of beneficiaries of international protection in order to facilitate their access to adequate housing.

102. The MoSSL continues its efforts to ensure that beneficiaries of international protection have access to adequate housing, including social housing and rental support. Beneficiaries of international protection, under the same conditions as Lithuanian citizens, have the right to social housing in Lithuania and are not discriminated on grounds of race, ethnicity, nationality, citizenship, language or origin. Amendments to the Procedure for the provision of State support for the integration of persons granted asylum adopted in 2020 increased the one-time settlement allowance for beneficiaries of international protection living alone and with small families, making it easier for them to find housing by paying a deposit.

103. In 2018–2022, housing rental fee compensation was regularly reviewed and increased taking into account the increase in the amount of the basic social benefit due to the influence of inflation. As a result of cooperation with the Jonava District Municipality, the Refugee Reception Centre had the opportunity to provide foreigners with housing purchased under the financing agreement of 25 May 2017 with the Council of Europe Development Bank.

The Committee recommends that the State party take concrete measures, including legislative measures, to reduce and prevent statelessness and to facilitate the naturalisation procedure for stateless persons, particularly for persons born in Lithuania. The Committee also recommends that the State party improve its identification mechanism and data collection on stateless persons in order to include those who do not have a residency permit in the official statistics on statelessness.

104. The amendments of the Law on Citizenship of the Republic of Lithuania adopted in 2020 establish that children of stateless persons legally residing in the Republic of Lithuania and children whose one parent is a stateless person and resides legally in Lithuania, while the other parent is unknown, shall acquire the citizenship of the Republic of Lithuania at birth, unless they have acquired the citizenship of another country by birth, i.e. the requirement that the parents of such children, i.e. stateless persons, must be legally residing permanently in the Republic of Lithuania was waived. The citizenship of the Republic of Lithuania of these children shall be recorded in the document certifying the fact of the child's birth when registering the child's birth.

105. A stateless person born on the territory of the Republic of Lithuania may be granted the citizenship of the Republic of Lithuania, if he/she has been legally residing in the Republic of Lithuania for the last 5 years, has not acquired the citizenship of another state and meets the following requirements: he/she has passed the state language examination, passed the examination on the fundamentals of the Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania,

has a legitimate basis of livelihood. It should be noted that under this procedure, the citizenship of the Republic of Lithuania may also be granted to a child under the age of 18 who is a stateless person born on the territory of the Republic of Lithuania; such a person is not subject to the requirements concerning the state language examination, the examination on the Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania and the possession of a legitimate basis of livelihood.

106. In regards to the recommendation to improve the mechanism for identifying stateless persons and the collection of data, it should be noted that efforts are made to collect the most detailed statistics possible, however, it is difficult because it is practically impossible to include in the statistics stateless persons who do not apply to the Migration Department regarding their legal status.

Bearing in mind the indivisibility of all human rights, the Committee encourages the State party to consider ratifying those international human rights treaties that it has not yet ratified, in particular treaties with provisions that have direct relevance to communities that may be subjected to racial discrimination, including the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families and the Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189), of the International Labour Organization.

107. Lithuania is a party to almost all the core human rights treaties and their optional protocols of the United Nations. Therefore, the focus is currently more on the proper implementation of assumed international obligations than on accession to new ones.

108. Lithuania does not yet plan to start the ratification procedures for the International Labour Organisation's Domestic Workers Convention (No 189) and the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, as it considers that the rights of domestic workers and migrant workers as well as their family members in Lithuania are sufficiently guaranteed in accordance with national and EU legislation and assumed international obligations, which are legally binding.

The Committee encourages the State party to make the optional declaration provided for in article 14 of the Convention recognizing the competence of the Committee to receive and consider individual complaints.

109. The answer has been given in response to the previous *Recommendation* in paragraphs 107 and 108.

In light of its general recommendation No. 33 (2009) on the follow-up to the Durban Review Conference, the Committee recommends that, when implementing the Convention in its domestic legal order, the State party give effect to the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action, adopted in September 2001 by the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, taking into account the outcome document of the Durban Review Conference, held in Geneva in April 2009. The Committee requests that the State party include in its next periodic report specific information on action plans and other measures taken to implement the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action at the national level.

110. The MoSSL coordinates the Action Plan for the Promotion of Non-Discrimination of 2021–2023. The Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania and the Law on Equal Treatment largely comply with the provisions on non-discrimination of the European Union legislation and international treaties of the Republic of Lithuania, but since non-discrimination is a horizontal priority that should be implemented in all areas, i.e. education, transport, culture, labour, integration of the disabled and other areas, in which it is necessary to ensure equal treatment for participation for all, it is necessary to make additional efforts and strive to ensure that there are no discriminatory provisions against any group of people in legislation.

111. The Action Plan is implemented from the general appropriations approved in the State budget of the Republic of Lithuania for the relevant institutions and authorities responsible for the implementation of the measures of the Action Plan and from the European Union's structural funds.

112. State and municipal institutions and authorities implementing the measures of the Action Plan shall, at the end of each quarter, by the 15th day of the first month of the following quarter, and at the end of the year – by the end of 31 January, provide the Ministry of Social Security and Labour with written information on the progress and results of the implementation of the Action Plan in relation to the approved tasks, measures of the Action Plan and the allocations provided for the implementation of those tasks and measures in Chapter IV of the Action Plan as well as the assessment criteria and values thereof provided for in Chapter V of the Action Plan.

In light of General Assembly resolution 68/237, in which the Assembly proclaimed 2015–2024 the International Decade for People of African Descent, and Assembly resolution 69/16 on the programme of activities for the implementation of the Decade, the Committee recommends that the State party pursue its efforts to implement a suitable programme of measures and policies. The Committee requests that the State party include in its next report precise information on the concrete measures adopted in that framework, taking into account its general recommendation No. 34 (2011) on racial discrimination against people of African descent.

113. As part of the United Nations International Decade for People of African Descent in 2015–2024, various events are organised in Lithuania every year to improve intercultural dialogue, tolerance, awareness and encourage Lithuanian society to be interested in the culture and history of African countries.

114. In commemoration of the International Africa Day, the 11th festival Africa Days 2022 was held on 25–28 May 2022. Concerts inspired by African musical traditions and extremely diverse culture became the highlight of the 2022 festival. The concerts took place on 25 May in Kaunas, on 26 May in Vilnius and on 28 May in Ukmergė. All Africa Days events were free of charge. For more information visit the Facebook page “Afrikos dienos” (Africa Days) and www.afrikosdienos.lt.

The Committee recommends that the State party continue consulting and increasing its dialogue with civil society organizations working in the area of human rights protection, in particular those working to combat racial discrimination, in connection with the preparation of the next periodic report and in follow-up to the present concluding observations.

115. As already mentioned in response to the additional recommendation on paragraphs 11–12 of the Committee’s conclusions, a working group has been set up in line with the Order of the Minister of the Interior in 2020 to promote an effective response to hate crimes and hate speech in Lithuania, involving the representatives of the MI, Prosecutor General’s Office, Police Department, DNM, OIJE, OEOO, MoSSL and 9 non-governmental organisations working in the field of human rights protection, as well as representatives of the Lithuanian Jewish (Litvaks) community and the public enterprise Roma Community Centre. The main functions of the working group are: to consider issues of increasing the effectiveness of the fight against hate crimes and hate speech and prepare relevant proposals; to consider related legal acts and drafts thereof, as well as planning documents and drafts thereof; to initiate activities that would contribute to increasing the capacities to identify hate crimes and hate speech, reducing the latency of hate crimes, strengthening the relevant competences of law enforcement institutions and other state authorities and bodies, as well as civil society organisations. This group is also tasked with preparing and publishing an annual report on the situation of hate crimes and hate speech in Lithuania. Such a report, namely “Report on the Situation of Hate Crimes and Hate Speech in Lithuania 2020–2021“, was prepared and published in 2022.

116. Also, the Ministry of Justice is constantly making efforts to strengthen dialogue with non-governmental organisations. In 2022, after the successful approval of the report of the third cycle of Lithuania’s Universal Periodic Review by the United Nations Human Rights Council, the society, NGOs and independent human rights institutions were invited to submit proposals on the implementation of these recommendations. All accepted recommendations received during the Universal Periodic Review are made public on the website of the Ministry of Justice.

117. In addition, as already mentioned (in points 13–14 of the section “Concerning the conclusions of the Committee”), in 2022 a call for NGO projects for the implementation of public legal education activities in 2022 was organised; the Ministry of Justice regularly cooperates with various NGOs by jointly organising various events and conferences; organises meetings to discuss issues related to the protection of human rights and freedoms.

118. Finally, when exercising its functions as the national human rights institution, the SOO cooperates with state and municipal institutions, authorities, civil society, social partners, international organisations on issues of human rights and freedoms.

The Committee recommends that the State party’s reports be made readily available and accessible to the public at the time of their submission and that the concluding observations of the Committee with respect to those reports be similarly made available to all State bodies entrusted with the implementation of the Convention, including municipalities, and publicized on the website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the official and other commonly used languages, as appropriate.

119. All reports submitted by the Republic of Lithuania under international conventions ratified by the Republic of Lithuania are published on the website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Lithuania. Reports under the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination are also publicly and freely available on the website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Lithuania. The Committee’s concluding observations related to this report will also be published on the website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Lithuania, and will be shared with the institutions responsible for the implementation of the provisions of the Convention.

The Committee encourages the State party to update its common core document, which dates to 1 October 1998, in accordance with the harmonized guidelines on reporting under the international human rights treaties, in particular those on the common core document, as adopted at the fifth inter-committee meeting of the human rights treaty bodies held in June 2006 (HRI/GEN/2/Rev.6, chap. I). In the light of General Assembly resolution 68/268, the Committee urges the State party to observe the limit of 42,400 words for such documents.

120. The Republic of Lithuania is currently updating the common core document.

In accordance with article 9 (1) of the Convention and rule 65 of its rules of procedure, the Committee requests the State party to provide, within one year of the adoption of the present concluding observations, information on its implementation of the recommendations contained in paragraphs 12 (combatting hate speech), 20 (law on national minorities), and 22 (reception of asylum-seekers) above.

121. On 29 April 2021, the Republic of Lithuania submitted an additional report containing information on the implementation of the recommendations presented in the concluding observations of the ninth and tenth periodic reports of the Republic of Lithuania: 12 (Combating Hate Crimes), 20 (Law on National Minorities) and 22 (Reception of Asylum Seekers).

III. Information according to the Articles of the Convention

122. In the light of the above detailed responses with regard to the Committee’s recommendations (Concluding observations of the Committee CERD/C/LTU/CO/9-10), which include certain legislative provisions, policies and programmes, please find below only relevant information concerning the most important changes in the implementation of the Articles of the Convention not mentioned so far.

Article 2

123. Information has been provided in response to previous *Recommendations* in paragraphs: 12, 13, 20–38 and 42–103.

Article 3

124. As already mentioned in response to the Committee's recommendations in paragraphs 42–55, in order to foster respect for the human being, ensure the implementation of the provisions of legal acts establishing the principle of non-discrimination and equal opportunities, increase legal awareness and understanding of the public, inform the public about measures taken to promote equal opportunities and non-discrimination, strengthen inter-institutional cooperation in the field of promoting equal opportunities and non-discrimination, Action Plans for the Promotion of Non-Discrimination have been (are being) implemented: during the reference period of 2018–2022 the Action Plan for the Promotion of Non-Discrimination for 2017–2020 and the Action Plan for the Promotion of Non-Discrimination for 2021–2023 were (are) being implemented. During the implementation of the Action Plan, trainings and educational events focusing on integration into society and ensuring equal opportunities, as well as other activities are held.

125. The implementation of the measures of the Action Plan will increase respect for a person regardless of sex, race, nationality, language, origin, social status, belief, convictions or views, age, sexual orientation, disability, ethnicity, religion, increase tolerance in society, reduce discrimination against other people, improve legal acts ensuring equal opportunities to participate in public activities and measures for their effective implementation, strengthen inter-institutional cooperation in the field of promoting non-discrimination.

Article 4

126. Information has been provided in response to previous *Recommendation* in paragraphs: 20–38.

Article 5

Political and civil rights

127. After the amendments to the Law on Legislative Framework came into force on 1 April 2020, the impact assessment of the expected legal regulation, taking into account the nature and extent of the new legal regulation foreseen in the legal act, includes the assessment of the impact on the economy, competition, state finances, social environment, public administration, legal system, criminogenic situation, extent of corruption, environment, administrative burden, regional development, regulated professions, regional development and other areas.

128. Pursuant to the Law on Legislative Framework, institutions shall publish the legislative initiatives in the Information System of Legal Acts, and the Rules of Procedure of the Government stipulate that when it is necessary to find out the opinions and proposals of stakeholders on published legislative initiatives and draft legal acts or in other cases important to the institution drafting the legal act, the public shall be consulted. In 2022, the Rules of Procedure of the Government were revised to specify the provisions on consultation with the public, inviting all stakeholders who will be directly or indirectly affected or may be affected by the envisaged legal regulation to participate. It is also planned to develop and implement a system for strengthening analytical capacity to perform quality impact assessments.

129. The amendments to the Law on Legislative Framework regarding the regulation of persons impacting on the legislature (on drafters of legal acts, the public), which entered into force on 1 January 2021, approved the procedure for registering these persons in the list, specified the rights and duties of these persons, in order to ensure the publicity and transparency of the influence they exert on the legislature, and provided for the publication of these persons, their activities and data in the declarations provided to ensure transparent legislature.

130. The institute of ex post evaluation of the existing regulation (hereinafter referred to as ex post evaluation) has been applied. Amendments to the Law on Legislative Framework that

entered into force on 1 January 2021 provide for legislative peculiarities in time of mobilisation, state of emergency and martial law (providing for the publication of draft legal acts and legal acts in other public information media, when it is not possible to make them available to the public in publicly accessible information systems intended for legislation and in the Register of Legal Acts).

131. In implementing the right of the Nation to decide the most significant issues concerning the life of the State and the Nation by a referendum, which is enshrined in the Constitution, among other things, in its Article 4 and Article 9(1), the Constitutional Law on Referendum of the Republic of Lithuania that entered into force on 1 September 2022, stipulates that at least 300 thousand eligible voters holding the citizenship of the Republic of Lithuania who used the right of initiative to call for a referendum may submit the text of the proposed decision for the referendum. It should also be noted that this law stipulates that citizens shall participate in the referendum on an equal basis and that the right of citizens to participate in the referendum shall not be restricted on grounds of sex, race, nationality, language, origin, social status, disability, belief, convictions or views or other grounds of discrimination.

132. Article 35 of the Constitution provides for the right to freely form political parties, other political organisations or associations. It should be noted that in order to enable the citizens of the European Union to participate in the political life of the Republic of Lithuania, the Law on Political Parties of the Republic of Lithuania stipulates as of 1 January 2015 that not only citizens of the Republic of Lithuania aged 18 or over, but also citizens of the European Union Member States, permanently residing in the territory of the Republic of Lithuania aged 18 years and over, who are not members of other political parties or political organisations, may be members of political parties. Following the repeal of this Law, the Law on Political Organisations of the Republic of Lithuania, which entered into force in September 2022, establishes that not only citizens of the Republic of Lithuania, but also citizens of the European Union Member States residing in the Republic of Lithuania who are aged 18 and are not members of political parties or political organisations of other countries, except in the case of their membership in European political parties, may be founders and members of a political organisation.

133. Since 2014, according to the legal regulation of the Republic of Lithuania, candidates for the European Parliament and the municipal council could be nominated by political parties and public election committees. Following the repeal of the Law on Elections to the European Parliament and the Law on Elections to Municipal Councils, the Election Code of the Republic of Lithuania, approved by the constitutional law, entered into force on 1 September 2022, according to which candidates for members of the European Parliament, members of the municipal council may be nominated by a political party or a political committee by submitting a list of candidates, in which the candidates are entered according to the rankings established by that political party or political committee. A person may nominate himself or herself as a candidate for mayor, and may also be nominated by a political party or a political committee. Political committee is a public legal entity with a name established in accordance with the Law on Political Organisations, which has the right to participate only in the elections to the European Parliament or only in the elections of a particular council and/or mayor of a municipality. In order to establish a political party, it is necessary that it has at least 2 000 founders in the Republic of Lithuania. A political committee intending to participate in the elections to the European Parliament must have at least 1 000 founders in the Republic of Lithuania, and a political committee intending to participate in the elections to the council and/or post of a mayor of a municipality (hereinafter referred to as the mayor) must have at least 0.1 % of the population who have declared their place of residence in that municipality for at least half a year, which must be at least double the number of members of the council of that municipality.

134. The Election Code, which entered into force on 1 September 2022, establishes the principle of equal suffrage. Citizens of the Republic of Lithuania as well as citizens of other European Union Member States permanently residing in the Republic of Lithuania who have reached the age of 18 on the day of the elections and who do not exercise this right in the same elections in another European Union Member State have the right to elect members of the European Parliament, while the right to elect members of the municipal council and the

mayor belongs to all permanent residents of this municipality who have reached the age of 18 on the election day. In the Republic of Lithuania, a citizen of the Republic of Lithuania or a citizen of another European Union Member State permanently residing in the Republic of Lithuania who is at least 21 years old on the election day and is not a candidate for the election to the European Parliament in another European Union Member State may be elected as a member of the European Parliament. A permanent resident of this municipality who has reached the age of 18 on the election day may be elected as a member of the municipal council, and the candidate for a mayor, in addition, is required to be a citizen of the Republic of Lithuania.

Article 6

135. Information on changes in criminal law provisions has been provided in response to the Recommendations in paragraphs: 12, 13, 29–34, 39–41.

Article 7

136. Information on public education has been provided in response to the *Recommendations* in paragraphs: 14–28, 113, 114.

Annexes

Annex I

Population by nationality and mother tongue

Results of the population and housing census of 2021

	<i>Mother tongue</i>							<i>Two mother tongues</i>
	<i>Total</i>	<i>Lithuanian</i>	<i>Polish</i>	<i>Russian</i>	<i>Belarusian</i>	<i>Ukrainian</i>	<i>Other</i>	
Total	2 810 761	2 398 353	143 931	190 733	6 708	4 835	17 135	49 066
Lithuanians	2 378 118	2 346 397	2 444	7 464	56	77	3 858	17 822
Poles	183 421	15 858	134 634	19 260	218	17	1 017	12 417
Russians	141 122	9 855	275	121 324	40	31	692	8 905
Belarusians	28 183	1 467	2 681	14 052	6 293	4	467	3 219
Ukrainians	14 168	1 056	104	6 380	17	4 681	202	1 728
Other nationalities	16 036	5 285	175	4 678	5	3	4 996	894
Not specified	49 713	18 435	3 618	17 575	79	22	5 903	4 081

Annex II

Population by age groups and languages spoken (other than mother tongue)

Results of the population and housing census of 2021

	<i>Total</i>	<i>English</i>	<i>German</i>	<i>Polish</i>	<i>Lithuanian</i>	<i>French</i>	<i>Russian</i>
Total	2 810 761	873 936	224 163	221 769	295 245	52 097	1 703 426
0–14	417 071	50 983	4 876	4 170	18 981	2 324	32 960
15–29	441 931	315 195	44 951	17 078	39 828	12 286	161 814
30–44	563 123	317 604	69 689	49 041	74 839	15 785	410 842
45–59	618 702	129 851	57 415	70 074	77 909	11 813	526 304
60–74	501 027	54 096	36 648	56 435	64 027	8 145	401 489
≥75	268 907	6 207	105 82	24 971	19 662	1 743	170 017

Annex III

Population by citizenship and age groups

Results of the population and housing census of 2021

	<i>Total</i>	<i>0-19</i>	<i>20-39</i>	<i>40-59</i>	<i>≥60</i>
Total	2 810 761	546 738	694 883	799 206	769 934
Residents with one citizenship of	2 800 182	541 964	693 539	796 386	768 293
Republic of Lithuania	2 782 515	540 246	688 625	789 803	763 841
Russian Federation	7 771	601	1 312	2 584	3 274
Republic of Belarus	3 071	205	1 138	1 317	411
Ukraine	2 710	341	822	1 205	342
Republic of Latvia	306	65	134	89	18
Republic of Armenia	214	15	59	100	40
Republic of Türkiye	210	34	106	68	2
Syrian Arab Republic	207	89	83	29	6
Republic of Kazakhstan	206	29	59	73	45
United States of America	187	24	40	78	45
Republic of Poland	186	5	80	72	29
Republic of Azerbaijan	184	25	75	74	10
State of Israel	181	16	32	86	47
Federal Republic of Germany	133	33	16	45	39
Other states	2 101	236	958	763	144
Residents with more than one citizenship	8 372	4 764	1 167	1 602	839
Without citizenship	2 207	10	177	1 218	802

Annex IV

Population by sex, citizenship and place of birth

Results of the population and housing census of 2021

	<i>Total</i>	<i>Lithuania</i>	<i>Foreign states</i>
Total	2 810 761	2 655 172	155 589
Residents with one citizenship of	2 800 182	2 651 503	148 679
Republic of Lithuania	2 782 515	2 649 241	133 274
Russian Federation	7 771	1 347	6 424
Republic of Belarus	3 071	257	2 814
Ukraine	2 710	165	2 545
Other states	4 115	493	3 622
Residents with more than one citizenship	8 372	2 774	5 598
Without citizenship	2 207	895	1 312
MALE	1 304 965	1 237 942	67 023
Residents with one citizenship of	1 299 565	1 236 055	63 510
Republic of Lithuania	1 290 083	1 234 798	55 285
Russian Federation	3 823	760	3 063
Republic of Belarus	1 395	147	1 248
Ukraine	1 544	88	1 456
Other states	2 720	262	2 458
Residents with more than one citizenship	4 134	1 334	2 800
Without citizenship	1 266	553	713
FEMALE	1 505 796	1 417 230	88 566
Residents with one citizenship of	1 500 617	1 415 448	85 169
Republic of Lithuania	1 492 432	1 414 443	77 989
Russian Federation	3 948	587	3 361
Republic of Belarus	1 676	110	1 566
Ukraine	1 166	77	1 089
Other states	1 395	231	1 164
Residents with more than one citizenship	4 238	1 440	2 798
Without citizenship	941	342	599

Annex V

Population by citizenship

Results of the population and housing census of 2021

	<i>Kaunas</i>	<i>Klaipėda</i>	<i>Panevėžys</i>	<i>Šiauliai</i>	<i>Vilnius</i>
Republic of Lithuania	298 753	152 008	89 100	100 653	546 155
Residents with one citizenship of	297 903	151 086	88 940	100 355	542 016
Republic of Lithuania	296 653	149 256	88 686	99 625	534 667
Republic of Belarus	76	118	21	62	1 620
Russian Federation	493	1 119	147	356	2 704
Ukraine	207	309	29	237	980
Other states	474	284	57	75	2 045
Residents with more than one citizenship	772	747	129	264	3 383
Without citizenship	78	175	31	34	756

Annex VI

Employed population by country of birth

Employed population

(thousands)

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Total by States	1 354.8	1 374.7	1 378.4	1 358.1	1 368.6
Belarus	16.2	16.7	18.3	17.9	13.6
Lithuania	1 292.1	1 312.1	1 309.8	1 292.5	1 311.1
Russia	27.3	26.2	29.4	26.7	22.8
Ukraine	6.2	5.9	6.1	6.9	6.8
Other States	12.9	13.8	14.8	14.1	14.3

Annex VII

Education level of the most numerous nationalities*

Results of the population and housing census of 2021

<i>Nationality</i>	<i>Post-secondary and special secondary</i>				
	<i>Higher</i>	<i>Secondary</i>	<i>Basic</i>	<i>Primary</i>	
Total	270	157	318	133	105
Lithuanians	278	157	307	132	108
Armenians	352	157	333	87	60
Belarusians	197	233	371	138	54
Romani	9	25	188	230	468
Latvians	252	198	319	147	71
Poles	190	149	396	146	103
Russians	268	193	335	122	72
Tatars	256	211	350	116	58
Ukrainians	287	245	310	112	41
Germans	269	162	306	128	119
Jews	496	139	211	79	63

*per 1 thousand residents aged 10 and older of the respective nationality that received education.

Annex VIII

Data from the Official Register of Criminal Acts on registered criminal acts related to discrimination, hate speech and hate crimes

<i>Article of the Criminal Code</i>		<i>2018</i>	<i>2019</i>	<i>2020</i>	<i>2021</i>	<i>2022</i>
Article 169 “Discrimination on Grounds of Nationality, Race, Sex, Descent, Religion or Belonging to Other Groups”	Registered criminal acts,					
	of which committed on grounds of:	0	0	0	0	2
	nationality	0	0	0	0	1
	race	0	0	0	0	1
	Transferred to court	0	0	0	0	1
	Number of identified suspects	0	0	0	0	1
Article 170 “Incitement against Any National, Racial, Ethnic, Religious or Other Group of Persons”	Registered criminal acts,					
	of which committed on grounds of:	21	28	50	82	84
	nationality	5	8	13	6	15
	race	2	3	7	3	7
	origin	0	0	1	0	0
	sexual orientation	9	11	24	67	57
	belief	0	3	3	1	0
	Transferred to court	5	3	3	23	37
	Number of identified suspects	15	6	15	69	59
Article 171 “Disturbance of Religious Ceremonies or Religious Celebrations”	Registered criminal acts	1	2	1	0	0
	Transferred to court	0	1	0	1	0
	Number of identified suspects	0	5	1	1	0
Article 129(2)(13) “Murder”*	Registered criminal acts	0	0	0	0	0
Article 135(2)(13) “Severe Health Impairment”*	Registered criminal acts	0	0	0	0	0
Article 138(2)(13) “Non- Severe Health Impairment”*	Registered criminal acts,					
	of which committed on ground of:	0	0	1	0	0
	language	0	0	1	0	0
	Transferred to court	0	0	1	0	0
	Number of identified suspects	0	0	1	0	0

* Crime has been committed in order to express hatred against a group of persons or a person belonging to it on grounds of age, sex, sexual orientation, disability, race, nationality, language, origin, social status, belief, convictions or views.

Annex IX

Information on trainings organised for SBGS officers in 2019–2022

2019:

- Trainings on the actions of officers after a foreigner submits an application for asylum organised by the Migration Department;
- Qualification improvement trainings “Asylum Seekers at the Border. Standards and Practices” for officers organised at the SBGS Border Guard School;
- Trainings “Functions of the SBGS in the Field of Prevention and Control of Illegal Migration, Performance of Initial Steps of the Asylum Procedure” organised for the officers of the Migration Departments of the SBGS frontier districts;
- Trainings on ensuring reception conditions for asylum seekers and identifying victims of human trafficking organised together with the public enterprise Diversity Development Group and Vilnius Archdiocese “Caritas” (hereinafter referred to as the Caritas).

2020:

- Trainings on the topic of asylum organised by the LRCS for the officers of the Lavoriškės border checkpoint of the SBGS Vilnius frontier district, Adučiškis, Tribionys and Švenčionys border checkpoints of the SBGS Vilnius frontier district;
- Seminar “Ensuring the Rights of Asylum Seekers during the COVID-19 Pandemic” organised by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the LRCS and Caritas;
- Trainings on ensuring reception conditions for asylum seekers and identifying victims of human trafficking organised by the public enterprise Diversity Development Group and Caritas;
- Trainings on the fundamental human rights organised at the SBGS Border Guard School;
- Event “Lifelong Learning Approach in the Reception and Asylum System” organised by the public enterprise Diversity Development Group and Caritas;
- Seminar “Protection of Refugees and Victims of Human Trafficking: Synergy, Positive State Obligations and Applicable Guarantees” organised by the public enterprise Diversity Development Group and Caritas.

2021:

- Trainings “Peculiarities of Vietnamese Culture. Prevention of Illegal Migration and Human Trafficking” organised by the non-governmental organisation of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam;
- Trainings on the fundamental human rights organised at the SBGS Border Guard School;
- Trainings “Communicating with and Providing Information to Asylum Seekers” organised by the European Asylum Support Office (EASO).

2022:

- Trainings “Communication and Providing Information to Asylum Seekers” organised by the European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA, formerly EASO);
- Trainings on the fundamental human rights organised at the SBGS Border Guard School;
- Trainings “Prevention and Ensuring Control of Illegal Migration in Lithuania” organised by the SBGS;

- Trainings “Registration of Applications for International Protection” organised by the EUAA;
 - Trainings “Lifelong Learning Approach in the Reception and Asylum System” organised by the public enterprise Diversity Development Group and Caritas;
 - Trainings “Identification of Vulnerability and Provision of Initial Assistance” organised by the EUAA and SBGS.
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