

Mapping child protection systems in the EU (27)

Lithuania

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1. Legislative and regulatory framework and policies

1.1. Overview of normative and regulatory framework

Please provide an overview of the normative legal and regulatory framework of the national and sub-national child protection system. Include information on the scope of the child protection system, the specific needs it addresses, the human and financial resources allocated, and any relevant cultural, social, and historical factors. Please indicate the current priority areas in child protection.

The protection of a child and the supervision of their protection in Lithuania is ensured by the Law and the State and by municipal institutions and civil society organisations working in the field of child protection. Since Lithuania regained its independence in 1990, the State's focus concerning child protection has been on the welfare state model, where child protection forms a part of general social and welfare policies.¹ In the first decade of independence, legal and conceptual fundamentals of the child protection system were laid down; the democratic reform involved restructuring institutions, passing new laws and adopting policies.² 1994, a legal and institutional framework for protecting child rights was established.³ In 1995, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UN CRC) was ratified, and in 1996, the Law on the Fundamentals of Protection of the Rights of the Child was adopted.⁴

State policy is formed by **Parliament** (*Seimas*) while the **Government** implements the policy. Each ministry is responsible for the administration of the assigned area.⁵ The **Ministry of Social Security and Labour** (*LR Socialinės apsaugos ir darbo ministerija*) is responsible for the formation, development and coordination of implementing child rights protection policy. The **State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service** under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour (*Valstybės vaiko teisių apsaugos ir įvaikinimo tarnyba prie Socialinės apsaugos ir darbo ministerijos*) is the central institution for implementation of the child rights protection policy in all local municipalities of Lithuania.⁶ Other ministries such as the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport, the Ministry of Interior, municipalities, the

¹ Dromantienė, L., Šalaševičiūtė, R. (2006), 'Vaiko teisių apsauga Lietuvoje: socialinių darbuotojų vaidmuo', *Socialinis darbas* Vol. 5 No. 1, p. 82.

² Dromantienė, L., Šalaševičiūtė, R. (2006), 'Vaiko teisių apsauga Lietuvoje: socialinių darbuotojų vaidmuo', *Socialinis darbas* Vol. 5 No. 1, p. 82.

³ Dromantienė, L., Šalaševičiūtė, R. (2006), 'Vaiko teisių apsauga Lietuvoje: socialinių darbuotojų vaidmuo', *Socialinis darbas* Vol. 5 No. 1, p. 82.

⁴ Lithuania, Seimas (1996). Law on Fundamentals of Protection of the Rights of the Child (*Lietuvos Respublikos Vaiko teisių apsaugos pagrindų įstatymas*), No. I-1234, 14 March 1996, last amendment No. XIV-1512, 10 November 2022.

⁵ Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania, adopted by citizens of the Republic of Lithuania in the referendum of 25 October 1992, available in English at: <https://e-seimas.lrs.lt/portal/legalAct/lt/TAD/TAIS.21892>, Articles 67, 94 and 98.

⁶ Lithuania, Seimas (1996). Law on Fundamentals of Protection of the Rights of the Child (*Lietuvos Respublikos Vaiko teisių apsaugos pagrindų įstatymas*), No. I-1234, 14 March 1996, last amendment No. XIV-1512, 10 November 2022. Articles 48-50.

Prosecutor General’s Office, Police and non-governmental (civil society) organisations are also involved in child protection. Since 2000, the Ombudsperson for Child’s Rights has supervised and controlled the observance of child rights and examines complaints about child rights violations.⁷

The child protection system in Lithuania includes:

- 1) The system of social services for the family and child in need of help
- 2) Child rights protection mechanisms (implemented and coordinated by the State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service and local municipalities)
- 3) Child guardianship (curatorship)⁸ and adoption system (coordinated and implemented by the State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service, Social Services Supervision Department under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour, local municipalities, incl. Foster Care Centres)
- 4) Financial support for families with children (various child benefits)
- 5) Other child protection measures implemented in health, education, and justice areas

The State budget does not provide funds directly for the protection of children. Funds for the protection of children are included in the general budget allocated to the five ministries that are the managers of these funds.⁹ Each Ministry distributes the received funds, including the funds intended for the protection of children, under the programs implemented by the respective ministry and the annual activity plans of its own and the subordinate institutions. The State budget provides direct funds just for the Office of the Ombudsperson for Child’s Rights and municipalities for the performance of individual functions related to child protection.

1.2. Legal provisions in constitutional, civil, criminal, and administrative law related to children in need of protection

Question	YES	NO	Comments
1.2.1. Does the constitution contain any provisions on children’s rights and child protection?	x		<p>In the Constitution¹⁰, some of the rights of a child are ensured by provisions applicable to both adults and children. They are:</p> <p>Article 18 “Human rights and freedoms shall be innate.”</p> <p>Article 21(1) “The person of the human being shall be inviolable.”</p> <p>Article 21 (2) “The dignity of the human being shall be protected by law.”</p>

⁷ Lithuania, Office of the Ombudsperson for Child’s Rights (2023), [About the Office of the Ombudsperson for Child’s rights.](#)

⁸ Lithuania, Seimas (2000), Civil Code of the Republic of Lithuania, No. VIII-1864, 18 July 2000, available in English at <https://e-seimas.lrs.lt/portal/legalAct/lt/TAD/TAIS.404614?jfwid=-d2lkb6wu8> , Article 3.251.

⁹ Lithuania, Seimas (2022) Law on approval of financial indicators of the state budget and municipal budgets of 2023 ([2023 metų valstybės biudžeto ir savivaldybių biudžetų finansinių rodiklių patvirtinimo įstatymas](#)), No XIV-1556, 22 November 2022.

¹⁰ Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania, adopted by citizens of the Republic of Lithuania in the referendum of 25 October 1992, available in English at: <https://e-seimas.lrs.lt/portal/legalAct/lt/TAD/TAIS.21892>.

		<p>Article 29 (1) "All persons shall be equal before the law, the court, and other State institutions and officials."</p> <p>Article 30 (1) "The person whose constitutional rights or freedoms are violated shall have the right to apply to court."</p> <p>Article 31 (2) "A person shall be presumed innocent until proven guilty according to the procedure established by law and declared guilty by an effective court judgment."</p> <p>Article 31 (3) "A person charged with the commission of a crime shall have the right to a public and fair hearing of his case by an independent and impartial court."</p> <p>Article 31 (4) "It shall be prohibited to compel one to give evidence against himself/herself, his family members or close relatives."</p> <p>Article 31 (5) "Punishment may be imposed or applied only on the grounds established by law."</p> <p>Article 31 (6) "No one may be punished for the same crime a second time."</p> <p>Article 31 (7) "A person suspected of the commission of a crime and the accused shall be guaranteed, from the moment of their detention or first interrogation, the right to defence as well as the right to an advocate."</p> <p>Article 53 (1) "The State shall take care of people's health and shall guarantee medical aid and services for a person in the event of sickness."</p> <p>The Constitution also contains provisions that exclusively focus on ensuring the rights of the child. They are:</p> <p>Article 38 (2) of the Constitution provides that "Family, motherhood, fatherhood and childhood shall be under the protection and care of the State."</p> <p>Article 38 (6) "The right and duty of parents is to bring up their children to be honest people and faithful citizens and to support them until they come of age."</p> <p>Article 38 (7) "The duty of children is to respect their parents, to take care of them in their old age, and to preserve their heritage."</p> <p>Art. 39 (1) "The State shall take care of families that raise and bring up children at home and shall render them support according to the procedure established by law."</p> <p>Art. 39 (2) "The law shall provide to working mothers a paid leave before and after childbirth as well as favourable working conditions and other concessions."</p> <p>Art. 39 (3) "Underage children shall be protected by law."</p>
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		<p>Article 41 (1) "Education shall be compulsory for persons under the age of 16."</p> <p>Article 41 (2) "Education at State and municipal schools of general education, vocational schools and schools of further education shall be free of charge."</p> <p>Article 26 (5) "Parents and guardians shall, without restrictions, take care of the religious and moral education of their children."</p>
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<p>1.2.2. Is there a single legal instrument devoted to child protection and child rights, e.g. a Children’s Act?</p>	<p>x</p>	<p>Law on the Fundamentals of Protection of the Rights of the Child, No. I-1234¹¹</p> <p>It regulates the implementation and protection of a child's rights and freedoms, as well as the responsibilities and opportunities of parents and other legal representatives of a child to take care of the child properly and to ensure the child's best interests.</p> <p>The law establishes the foundations for the organisation of state and municipality assistance to the child and the family or other legal representatives of the child; defines mechanisms for ensuring and protecting children's rights; establishes the system of institutions responsible for the protection of children’s rights, sets the legal basis for their activities; enumerates general provisions on responsibility for violations of children's rights.</p> <p>One of the major changes in the Law took place in 2018. The reform of the child protection system was implemented. The child rights protection system was centralised, and new procedures in case of possible violations of child rights were established.</p>
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1.2.3. Please provide an inventory of key child protection related legislation, including hyperlinks, date of adoption and the areas covered. Please include civil, criminal, and administrative legislation covering different areas of child protection (please add rows, as needed).

Legislation	Date passed	Child protection areas covered
<p>Civil Code, No. VIII-1864¹² (3rd Book “Family Law”)</p>	<p>18 July 2000</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Code specifies the applicable law for the ascertainment of the origin of a child (legitimation); adoption conditions and procedures; protective measures concerning minors, establishment of guardianship (curatorship) for the child; maintenance

¹¹ Lithuania, Seimas (1996). Law on Fundamentals of Protection of the Rights of the Child (*Lietuvos Respublikos Vaiko teisių apsaugos pagrindų įstatymas*), No. I-1234, 14 March 1996, last amendment No. XIV-1512, 10 November 2022. Articles 48-50.

¹² Lithuania, Seimas (2000), Civil code (*Lietuvos Respublikos Civilinis kodeksas*), No. VIII-1864, 18 July 2000, last amendment No. XIV-1435, 29 September 2022.

		<p>of obligations (alimony relationships) within the family.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regulates active civil capacity of minors over fourteen and under eighteen years of age, and minor emancipation. • Establishes the age of consent to marriage and regulates family relationships. • Regulates duties of spouses with respect to their children, the status and rights of children in the proceedings of divorce, annulment of marriage and separation. • Regulates mutual rights and duties of children and parents; the establishment of the origin of the child from the mother and the father; parental rights and duties in respect to their children; children's rights and duties; personal parental rights and duties. • Regulates parental disputes over children; limitation of parental authority; parental rights and duties regarding children's property administration; family maintenance obligations; rights and duties of other members of the family; registration of birth; registration of acknowledgement and determination of paternity; inheritance rights.
Civil Procedure Code, No. IX-743 ¹³	28 February 2002	<p>The Code governs the order of hearing civil and family cases in which the protection of a child's rights must be ensured. Such cases are divorce; annulment, and separation; establishment of paternity (maternity); contesting paternity (maternity); restriction of parental authority; abolition of the limitation of parental authority; separation of the child from the parents (father or mother); abolition of the separation of the child from the parents (father or mother); cases concerning the declaration of a minor to be of full active capacity (emancipated); cases concerning adoption; cases concerning guardianship (curatorship) as well as labour disputes. The Code defines the procedural rights of the child and foresees measures for the protection of child rights in such cases.</p> <p>The Code foresees that full capacitation to defend one's rights in court have natural persons from 18 years of age, children, who have concluded marriage in accordance with laws, also minors declared fully capable (emancipated) (Article 38 (1)). Persons from</p>

¹³ Lithuania, Seimas (2002), Civil procedure code of the Republic of Lithuania (*Lietuvos Respublikos Civilinio proceso kodeksas*), No. IX-743, 28 February 2002, last amendment No. XIV-1748, 22 December 2022.

14 to 18 years of age are represented in courts by their parents, adoptive parents, and curators (Article 38 (2)). Persons from 14 years of age have the right to independently appeal to a court regarding the defence of their rights or interests protected by laws if a dispute arises out of or in connection with relationships where they have the full civil capacity (Article 38 (3)). Rights and interests protected by laws of persons under 14 years of age are defended in a court by their representatives in accordance with the law – respectively by their parents, adoptive parents, and guardians. (Article 38 (4))

To ensure the protection of child’s rights the following instruments are applied in the civil procedure, which is elaborated in the Code:

- The hearings of matters are public in all courts. However, the court may pass a motivated ruling to hear a case on camera: to protect the private or family life of a person. (Articles 9 (1), 502 (1))
- In court, hearing cases on camera, substantive provisions of a court judgement are announced publicly except for cases on adoption and cases concerning guardianship (curatorship) (Article 9 (3))
- In cases, where underaged persons from 14 to 18 years of age are represented in court by their parents, adoptive parents, and curators the court involves the child to participate in hearings together with the representatives. (Article 38 (3))
- When deciding any question related to a child, a child who can formulate his own views must be questioned directly and if that is impossible, through a representative. (Article 380 (1))
- In passing a judgment, the child’s opinion must be considered if that does not conflict with the best interests of the child her/himself. (Article 380 (1)).
- Disputes concerning an adoption (Article 484), guardianship (curatorship) (Article 502 (3)) the contesting of paternity (maternity) (Article 398) must be heard with the necessary attendance of the representative of the State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service.
- An examination of child witnesses must be performed according to the special rules foreseen in the Article 194 of the Code.

- At the discretion of the court, any party to the proceeding may be removed from the courtroom by a court ruling for the period while child’s opinion is being heard. (Articles 485(5), 503 (3)).
- In all court disputes the court must undertake measures to protect the rights and interests of a child (Articles 376 (2), 384 (3), 491 (2))
- Arrest as court’s penalty cannot be ordered for children as well as for persons who are raising a child under the age of 12 (Article 108 (1)).
- The court, until a judgment is passed, taking into consideration the best interests of the child, may employ the temporary protection measures referred to in Article 3.65 of the Civil Code (Articles 384 (5), 404 (3)) and provisional safeguards referred to in Article 145 of the Code (prohibition for the defendant to remove the child from the place of permanent residence without permission of the court (Article 145(8)).

Article 385 (1). In passing a judgment to dissolve a marriage or annulling a marriage, the court must decide the question of any demands made concerning maintenance and establishment of the place of residence of any children, participation in raising them and determining the procedure for the communication of minor children with the parent who lives separately.

Article 392 (1). After establishing paternity, the court shall also decide the question concerning a demand for an order for the maintenance/subsistence for a child.

Article 407. Establishment of guardianship (curatorship): When passing a judgment to limit parental rights, the court by the same judgment shall establish the permanent guardianship (curatorship) of the child and his place of residence.

Article 485. Consent of the adoptee: 1. An adoptee, who has attained the age of 10, must be heard concerning his/her adoption in the hearing. 3. An expert psychologist may be called to establish whether the child can express his/her opinion and to explain the opinion expressed by the child.

Article 503. Opinion of the child: 1. A child, who can express his/her opinion and formulate his/her views, must be heard in the hearing concerning the

establishment of the permanent guardianship (curatorship) and/or the appointment of a guardian or a curator. An expert psychologist may be called to establish whether the child can express his/her opinion and to explain the opinion expressed by the child. 5. The court must explain to the child the consequences of establishing guardianship (curatorship) and appointing a guardian or a curator. In passing a judgment, the court must take into consideration the child's opinion if this does not conflict with the best interests of the child her/himself.

The Code also provides rules for protecting the interests of the child during the execution of the court decision.

At the request of the debtor or his family members, the court may determine that the last dwelling owned by the debtor, where he/she lives, is not subject to recovery. The court can determine this, considering the children's financial situation, interests, and the necessity for living in this housing. (Article 663 (4)).

The recovery cannot be directed to all necessary items for children. The list of these assets and supplies is set out in the Instructions for the Implementation of Decisions. (Article 668 (1))

Debts cannot be recovered from maternity, paternity, and childcare benefits (Article 739 (3)); and child allowances (Article 739 (4)).

A person who is obliged to pay child support must notify the bailiff about a change of work or place of residence, as well as additional earnings, within 3 working days from the day of the change (Article 742 (1)). If the debtor fails to do so, the court may fine the debtor up to 300 euros at the request of the bailiff or debt collector (Article 742 (2)). If the person does not have funds and does not receive income from which the bailiff can carry out debt collection, the bailiff has the right to forcefully sell the debtor's property and collect the debt from that income. (Article 742 (4)).

When a child is evicted without providing another living space, the bailiff must notify the State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service in writing about the time and place of the eviction no later than 30 days before the date of the eviction (Article 769 (3)).

The Code also sets the procedure for the transfer of children specified in the court decision. During the transfer of the child, the protection of the child's rights is ensured. (Article 764)

Criminal Code, No. VIII-1968 ¹⁴	26 September 2000	<p>The Criminal Code is a uniform criminal law having the purpose of defending human and citizen's rights and freedoms, as public and the state's interests against criminal acts by criminal law means. This Code:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Defines which acts are crimes and misdemeanours and prohibit them; 2. Establishes penalties, penal and reformative sanctions for the acts provided for by this Code and compulsory medical treatment; 3. Establishes grounds for and conditions of criminal liability and the grounds for and conditions for releasing persons who have committed criminal acts from criminal liability or a penalty. <p>A crime is a dangerous act (act or omission) forbidden under the Code and punishable with a custodial sentence (Article 11 (1)). A misdemeanour is a dangerous act (act or omission) forbidden under the Code and punishable by a non-custodial sentence, except for arrest. (Article 12).</p> <p>According to the Article 13 (2) of the Code a person who, before the time of the commission of a crime or misdemeanour, had attained the age of 14 shall be held liable for murder (Article 129), serious impairment to health (Article 135), rape (Article 149), sexual harassment (Article 150), theft (Article 178), robbery (Article 180), extortion of property (Article 181), destruction of or damage to property (paragraph 2 of Article 187), seizure of a firearm, ammunition, explosives or explosive materials (Article 254), theft, racketeering or other illicit seizure of narcotic or psychotropic substances (Article 263), damage to vehicles or roads and facilities thereof (Article 280).</p> <p>According to Article 13 (1), for other crimes and misdemeanours, liability is placed on a person who has attained the age of 16 years.</p> <p>The Code defines the specifics of the criminal liability of minors (Articles 80 – 94).</p> <p>A minor who has committed a misdemeanour or a crime and has been released from criminal responsibility or a penalty, also a minor in respect of whom the execution of the sentence has been</p>
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¹⁴ Lithuania, Seimas (2000), Criminal code (*Lietuvos Respublikos Baudžiamasis kodeksas*), No. VIII-1968, 26 September 2000, last amendment No. XIV-1749, 22 December 2022.

	<p>suspended or who has been conditionally released from correctional institutions may be subject to the reformatory sanctions (Article 82 (1)).</p> <p>A minor may be subject solely to the following penalties (Article 90):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Community service (no more than 240 hours); 2. A fine (5 - 50 MGL¹⁵, only to those who are employed or have property); 3. Restriction of liberty; 4. Arrest (5 – 45 days); 5. Fixed-term custodial sentence (may not exceed 10 years, the minimum penalty is equal to one-half of the minimum penalty provided for by the sanction of an article of the Code according to which the minor is prosecuted). <p>According to Article 54 (2) of the Code when imposing a penalty, a court shall take into consideration aggravating circumstances. The following shall be considered as aggravating circumstances: the act has been committed against a young child (Article 60 (1)(5)); the act has been committed against a minor taking advantage of his dependency or through abuse of trust, authority or influence (Article 60 (1)(6)); the act has been committed to express hatred towards a group of persons or a person on grounds of age, sex, sexual orientation, disability, race, nationality, language, descent, social status, religion, convictions or views (Article 60 (1)(12));</p> <p>The Code identifies a group of criminal acts that are considered crimes against children. Such crimes are the murder of a child, child’s health impairment, child rape, child sexual assault, child sexual abuse, child sexual molestation, unlawful separation of a child, abduction of a child or exchange of infants, purchase or sale of a child, desertion of a child, involvement of a child in a criminal act, involvement of a child in the use of medicines or other intoxicating substances, involvement of a child in the abuse of alcohol, exploitation of a child for pornography, possession of child pornography, abuse of the rights or duties of parents, of a guardian or custodian or another lawful representative of a child and evasion of a child's support.</p>
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¹⁵ MGL – The amount of the minimum standard of living approved by the Government.

		<p>However, it should be noted that other crimes and misdemeanours defined in the Code are punishable as well if they are committed against a child. A criminal is punished for these criminal acts considering the crime against the child as aggravating circumstance, leading to more severe punishment.</p>
<p>Criminal Procedure Code, No. IX-785¹⁶</p>	<p>14 March 2002</p>	<p>Based on Article 1 of the Code, the purpose of the criminal process is to investigate crimes quickly and thoroughly and to apply the law properly to fairly punish the person who committed the crime and ensure that the innocent is not convicted.</p> <p>The Code of Criminal Procedure establishes the rules of criminal proceedings to be followed by the pre-trial investigation officer, the prosecutor, and the court.</p> <p>To ensure the protection of child rights the following instruments are applied in the criminal procedure, which is elaborated in the Code:</p> <p>The court is allowed to hear cases <i>on camera</i> regarding criminal acts in which minors are accused or recognized as victims (Article 9 (3))</p> <p>A defence attorney must participate in cases where the suspect, accused, or convicted is a minor (Article (Article 51 (1) (1)). This right is guaranteed to them immediately from the moment of detention or the first questioning (Article 10 (1)). The pre-trial investigation officer, the prosecutor, and the court are not obliged to consider the minor's refusal to have a defence attorney (Article 52 (2)).</p> <p>A minor suspect or accused, among other rights, also has the right to be accompanied by a legal representative during court hearings and other procedural stages, as well as the right to privacy (Articles 21 (4), 22(3)).</p> <p>As a preventive measure for a minor, handing over to his or her parents, guardians or other natural or legal persons who take care of children may be used (Article 120 (2)). The conditions for the care of the minor are set for the person who supervises the minor, as well as sanctions for failure to fulfil these duties. (Article 138).</p> <p>The maximum possible terms of detention for minors are shorter than for adults. (Article 127).</p> <p>If the detainee has children under the age of 18 who are left without the necessary supervision, the prosecutor or the court must hand them over to</p>

¹⁶ Lithuania, Seimas (2002), Criminal procedure code (*Lietuvos Respublikos Baudžiamojo proceso kodeksas*), No. IX-785, 14 March 2002, last amendment No. XIV-1750, 22 December 2022.

	<p>family members, close relatives, other persons, or institutions for guardianship (curatorship). (Article 129 (1)).</p> <p>If the criminal act has signs of domestic violence, a pre-trial investigation is started, regardless of whether there is a complaint from the victim or a statement from his/her legal representative. (Article 167 (3)).</p> <p>A priority is given to pre-trial investigation in cases where the suspects or victims are children. (Article 176 (2)).</p> <p>It is prohibited to publish pre-trial investigation data on minor suspects and victims (Article 177 (1)). Participants in the process are prohibited from making copies of pre-trial investigation materials containing data on minor suspects and victims. (Article 181 (6) (1)).</p> <p>To reduce the traumatic effect, a special procedure for interviewing minor witnesses and victims has been established. (Article 186)</p> <p>No later than during the first interview of the victim, an assessment of the victim's special protection needs is carried out. This is considered when organising criminal proceedings and deciding whether the measures provided for in the Code must be applied to the victim (Article 186¹ (1)).</p> <p>A psychologist assists while questioning a minor suspect, if necessary. The representative of the State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service monitors, whether the rights of a minor suspect are not violated during the questioning (Articles 188 (5), 272 (4), 280, 283).</p> <p>An audio and video recording of the interview may take place. If an arrested or detained minor is questioned, an audio and video recording is always done. (Article 188 (5)).</p> <p>The State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service carries out an individual assessment of a minor suspect. The results of the assessment are considered when selecting pre-trial and other procedural measures of coercion, making decisions on termination of the pre-trial investigation or transfer of the case to the court, organising procedures, and making decisions on the imposition of punishment, punitive or educational measures. (Article 189¹).</p> <p>After the case is handed over to the court, at the request of the judge, the judge of the pre-trial investigation interviews the minor witness or the minor victim, if they will not be summoned to the trial, but it is necessary to interview them additionally (Article 239)</p>
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		<p>Minor victims and minor witnesses may be asked questions at the court hearing only through the chairperson of the court hearing, and if necessary, through a representative (Article 275 (5)).</p> <p>If a convicted person has children under the age of 18 who are left without the necessary supervision, the court must hand them over to family members, close relatives, other persons or Institutions of guardianship (curatorship) and inform about that the convict (Article 343).</p>
Code of Administrative Offences, No. XII-1869 ¹⁷	25 June 2015	<p>Article 42 of the Code specifies the aim of the administrative penalties to children. It aims to: 1) ensure that the administrative punishment corresponds to the age and social maturity of the persons who committed the offense; 2) help the minor to change his/her lifestyle and behaviour. For that purpose, administrative penalties and measures of administrative impact are applied to educate the person and eliminate the causes of illegal behaviour; 3) keep a child from committing new administrative offenses or criminal acts.</p> <p>The Code:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Defines which wrongful acts are considered administrative offences; – Determines administrative fines and administrative measures for administrative offences; – Determines the grounds and conditions of administrative responsibility; – Establishes the procedure for examining administrative offences. <p>Article 5 of the Code specifies that an administrative offence is a dangerous act (action or omission) prohibited by this Code, committed by a perpetrator for which an administrative penalty is provided in the Code. A person is punished for violation of the law by administrative procedure if this violation does not entail criminal liability.</p> <p>Administrative responsibility arises for a person who has reached the age of 16 before committing an administrative offence. (Article 6)</p> <p>An administrative penalty is a measure of state sanction, imposed on a person who has committed</p>

¹⁷ Lithuania, Seimas (2015), Law on the procedure for approval, entry into force and implementation of the Code of Administrative Offences of the Republic of Lithuania. Code of Administrative Offences of the Republic of Lithuania (*Lietuvos Respublikos administracinių nusižengimų kodekso patvirtinimo, įsigaliojimo ir įgyvendinimo tvarkos įstatymas. Lietuvos Respublikos administracinių nusižengimų kodeksas*), No.XII - 1869, 25 June 2015, last amendment No. XIV – 1773, 23 December 2022.

an administrative offence in accordance with the procedure established by the Code. (Article 22 (1)) According to Article 34 (1) of the Code when imposing an administrative penalty, a decision-making authority shall take into consideration aggravating circumstances. The aggravating circumstances are: if the adult offender involved a child in an administrative offence (Article 36 (1)(5)); an administrative offence was committed against a child (Article 36 (1)(6)); an administrative offence committed by expressing hatred towards a person (persons) or discriminating against a person (persons) on the basis of gender, race, nationality, language, origin, social status, faith, beliefs, views or other grounds. (Article 36 (1)(7)).

An administrative penalty may be imposed no later than within 2 years from the date of the commission of the administrative offence, and in the case of a continuous administrative offence, within 2 years from the date when an offence was solved. (Article 39).

The specific features of the administrative responsibility of minors are determined in Chapter VII of the Code.

The Code identifies a group of administrative offences that are considered offences against children. Such offences are violation of child's rights (Article 72), failure to use parental authority or using it contrary to child's interests (Article 73), failure to fulfil the duties of a child's guardian (caregiver) or performance contrary to child's interests (Article 74), providing false information, obstructing the establishment of custody (care) of a child and failure to report information (Article 75), purchase or other transfer of alcoholic beverages to persons under the age of 20 (Article 76), purchase or other transfer of tobacco products or related products to minors (Article 77), sale, purchase or other transfer of energy drinks to persons under 18 years of age (Article 78), violation of the requirements for marking and/or disseminating public information that has a negative impact on the development of minors (Article 79), failure to comply with the instructions of the Communications Regulatory Authority of the Republic of Lithuania to remove visual information of bullying in cyberspace and/or to remove public information prohibited by the Law on the Protection of Minors from the Negative Effects of Public Information of the Republic of Lithuania or the instructions of the Authority to remove access to this information (Article 79¹), Obstructing the child's learning (Article 80), violation of the procedure for

using safety belts, seats adapted to the height and weight of children of the appropriate group and motorcycle helmets (Article 432).

The Code foresees procedural safeguards for the protection of children which are elaborated in the Code:

The court or the institution (official) dealing with cases of administrative offences out of court may decide to examine the case *on camera* to protect the private life of individuals, as well as in cases where offenders or victims are minors (Article 570 (2)). The institution examining the case may also determine that the case material or part of it is not public (Article 570 (5)).

Every person facing administrative responsibility, as well as the victim, has the right to be heard orally or in writing, directly or through a representative following the procedure established by the Code. (Article 571).

If a minor faces administrative responsibility or a person is a victim, their interests can be represented by their legal representatives (parents, guardians, carers) (Article 584). An authorised representative can be a lawyer, a lawyer's assistant on behalf of a lawyer, as well as a person with a university degree in law or an equivalent education if he/she represents his/her children (adopted children), brothers, sisters, and grandchildren (Article 585 (1)).

If a minor, with his/her consent, is present in the premises of the relevant institution to complete an administrative offence protocol, the officer investigating the administrative offence must immediately notify his/her parents or guardians (carers) about the fact (Article 596 (1)).

If a minor, having received a summons to appear before an officer investigating an administrative offence or a court, does not appear without a justifiable reason, he/she may be brought to these institutions only accompanied by parents or guardians (caregivers) (Article 596 (3)).

If a minor under administrative responsibility is detained, then his/her parents or guardians (caregivers) must be immediately notified of his detention (Article 597 (8)). The Code clearly defines circumstances when administrative detention can be

		<p>applied (Article 597 (1)).</p> <p>The protocol of an administrative offence, which states that a minor has committed an administrative offence, is delivered, or sent (ensuring the protection of personal data) to the person held administratively responsible and to the victim. If the person being held administratively responsible or the victim is a minor, the legal representative of the minor is notified about the administrative offence protocol. (Article 608 (4)).</p> <p>The state pays the costs of minors' participation in programmes for the prevention of alcoholism and drug addiction, programmes for early intervention, health care, resocialisation, improving communication with children, changing violent behaviours, and other programmes (courses). (Article 691(3))</p>
<p>Law on State-guaranteed Legal Aid, No VIII - 1591¹⁸</p>	<p>20 March 2000</p>	<p>The Law establishes the provision of State-guaranteed legal aid to natural persons to enable them to adequately assert their violated or disputed rights and the interests protected under the law (Article 1)</p> <p>According to Article 2(11), State-guaranteed legal aid consists of Primary legal aid, Secondary legal aid, and out-of-court mediation.</p> <p>Article 2 (6) provides the meaning of Primary legal aid and Article 2 (1) the meaning of Secondary legal aid. Primary legal aid means the provision of legal information, legal advice, and drafting of the documents to be submitted to state and municipal institutions. Secondary legal aid means drafting of documents, defence, and representation in civil, administrative, and criminal court proceedings, including the process of execution, and representation in the event of preliminary extrajudicial consideration of a dispute. It also covers litigation costs.</p> <p>Article 11 (1) explains that all people lawfully residing in the Republic of Lithuania are eligible for Primary legal aid regardless of property and income they have.</p> <p>Article 12 provides a list of people who are eligible for Secondary legal aid regardless of property and</p>

¹⁸ Lithuania, Seimas (2000), Law on State-guaranteed Legal Aid (*Lietuvos Respublikos Valstybės garantuojamos teisinės pagalbos įstatymas*), No.VIII - 1591, 28 March 2000, last amendment No. XIV – 1217, 28 June 2022.

		<p>income they have. The list includes the following persons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Detained, suspected, accused, and sentenced children in criminal proceedings (Article 12 (1)(1)).- Victims of terrorism, human trafficking, domestic violence criminal acts, criminal acts against the freedom and integrity of a person's sexual self-determination, criminal acts committed by an organised group or criminal association, as well as when the criminal act was committed to express hatred towards the victim due to age, gender, sexual orientation, disability, race, nationality, language, origin, social status, creed, beliefs or opinions (Article 12 (1)(2));- Parents or other legal representatives of children when an issue of their eviction is addressed.- Children, when in cases established by law personally apply to the court regarding the defence of their rights or statutory interests, except those who have entered marriage in accordance with law or those whom the court has recognised as capable (emancipated). (Article 12 (1)(11)).- Children who are victims of offence against their health, freedom, sexual self-determination and integrity, or they were kidnapped, exchanged, bought, sold, abandoned, involved in crimes, drug use, drinking, pornography, involved in prostitution, were used for prostitution, biomedical tests were performed on them, or their parents or other legal representatives abuse the rights or do not fulfil their duties, or in other criminal proceedings when a motivated decision of pre-trial investigation officer or prosecutor or motivated court ruling recognises that participation of authorised representative is obligatory. (Article 12 (1)(12));- Persons in proceedings relating to the return of wrongfully removed or retained child in accordance with the Hague Convention of 25 October 1980 on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction (Article 12 (1)(15)).
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Code on Execution of Sentences, No. IX-994 ¹⁹	27 June 2002	<p>A new version of the Code entered into force on 01/01/2023.</p> <p>The Code establishes the procedure, conditions, and principles for the execution of punishments (Article 1 (1)).</p> <p>Articles 1 – 5 explain general rules applicable to arrested persons. Articles 6 – 8 provide rules applicable to the collection of fines. Articles 14 – 18 define rules applicable to people sentenced to community service. Articles 19 – 22 provide the rules for the enforcement of the restriction of freedom, during which an electronic monitoring device continuously monitors a person. Articles 23 – 29 specify the procedure for the execution of arrest. Articles 30 – 81 define the rules applicable to the execution of a prison sentence. Articles 82 – 87 define the rules of parole. Articles 93 – 96 indicate how the execution of the sentence is completed.</p>
Labour Code, No. XII-2603 ²⁰	14 September 2016	<p>The Code regulates individual employment relationships that arise upon the conclusion of an employment contract. Article 21 (2) of the Code establishes that an employee can be a person who has reached the age of 16, except for exceptions established by law.</p> <p>Additional guarantees are established in the Labour Code for the protection of the rights of children: Requirements for maximum working time, work order and work schedule for underage workers are established (Articles 114 (1) (3); 118 (5); 158 (1)); Children employees are granted longer annual leave than other employees (Article 126 (3)); The employment contract has to be terminated without notice when one of the parents of an employee under the age of 16, or other child's legal representative, or a doctor supervising child's health, or during the school year, the school where the child is studying, demands the termination of employment contract (Article 60 (1) (3)).</p>

¹⁹ Lithuania, Seimas (2002), Code on execution of sentences (*Lietuvos Respublikos Bausmių vykdymo kodeksas*), No. IX-994, 27 June 2002, last amendment No. XIV-1771, 23 December 2022.

²⁰ Lithuania, Seimas (2016), Law on approval, entry into force and implementation of the Labour Code of the Republic of Lithuania. Labour Code (*Lietuvos Respublikos darbo kodekso patvirtinimo, įsigaliojimo ir įgyvendinimo įstatymas*), No. IX-994, 14 September 2016, last amendment No. XIV-1690, 12 December 2022.

<p>Law on Fundamentals of Protection of the Rights of the Child, No. I-1234²¹</p>	<p>14 March 1996</p>	<p>The Law regulates the implementation and protection of the child's rights and freedoms, the obligation of parents and other representatives of the child to take care of the child and to ensure the child's interests. Support measures are also provided for them.</p> <p>The Law defines mechanisms for ensuring and protecting children's rights, specifies the institutions of the child rights protection system, and sets the legal bases of their activities. It also establishes general provisions on liability for violations of children's rights.</p> <p>The Law implements the provisions of the Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), its optional protocols and the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of the Child.</p>
<p>Law on Social Families (Foster Care-Based Households), No. XI-681²²</p>	<p>11 February 2010</p>	<p>The purpose of this Law is to regulate the formation of Social Family (foster care-based household), establish its' rights, duties and responsibilities, social family management, funds, and property, as well as social family reorganisation, reorganisation and liquidation.</p> <p>Social family is one of the forms of alternative care for children left without parental care. It is a non-profit public legal entity with limited civil liability that takes permanent care and/or takes temporary care or looks after children placed in temporary accommodation in a safe environment – of 4 or more children in a family-based environment. The total number of one's own children fostered children and children in temporary accommodation in the foster care-based household cannot be more than 8, except in cases where it is the need to place together siblings to avoid their separation, or fewer children if some of the fostered or placed in temporary accommodation children have disabilities.</p>

²¹ Lithuania, Seimas (1996). Law on Fundamentals of Protection of the Rights of the Child (*Lietuvos Respublikos Vaiko teisių apsaugos pagrindų įstatymas*), No. I-1234, 14 March 1996, last amendment No. XIV-1512, 10 November 2022.

²² Lithuania, Seimas (2010). Law on Social Families (Foster Care-Based Households) (*Lietuvos Respublikos šeimynų įstatymas*), No. XI-681, 11 February 2010, last amendment No. XIV-1511, 10 November 2022.

The Law on Social Services, No. X-493 ²³	19 January 2006	This law defines the concept of social services, their goals, and types, regulates the management, allocation and provision of social services, licensing and financing of social care institutions (incl. children foster care institutions like community-based children care homes, payment for social services, examination of disputes related to social services, the concept of work of social services, its areas and principles of implementation, and levels of social work.
The Law on Minimum and Medium Child Supervision, No. X-1238 ²⁴	28 June 2007	<p>The purpose of this Law is to create a system of minimum and medium child supervision measures that meet the rights and legitimate interests of a child and the needs of public safety and are intended for the socialisation, education and provision of education and other assistance for a child with behavioural problems, which would help the child to overcome the disruptive behaviour and to develop a meaningful concept of individual and social life.</p> <p>This Law establishes the principles of minimum and medium supervision of a child, measures of minimum and medium supervision of a child, and the grounds and procedure for the appointment, extension, change, and cancellation of these measures. It also foresees the most important provisions of the implementation of a medium supervision measure – placement of the child in a special educational institution (children's socialisation centre).</p>
Law on Child Benefits, No. I-621 ²⁵	3 November 1994	The Law establishes one-time and periodic benefits that ensure financial support for families raising children, incl. adopted children and children in guardianship (curatorship), benefits' amounts, categories of persons entitled to receive benefits, the conditions and procedure for awarding and paying these benefits.

²³ Lithuania, Seimas (2006), Law on Social Services (*Lietuvos Respublikos socialinių paslaugų įstatymas*), No. X-493, last amendment No. XIV-952, 17 March 2022.

²⁴ Lithuania, Seimas (2007), Law on Minimum and Medium Child Supervision (*Lietuvos Respublikos vaiko minimalios ir vidutinės priežiūros įstatymas*), No. X-1238, last amendment No. XIV-486, 30 June 2021.

²⁵ Lithuania, Seimas (1994), Law on Child Benefits (*Lietuvos Respublikos išmokų vaikams įstatymas*), No. I-621, last amendment No. XIV-947, 17 March 2022.

Law on Child Maintenance Payments, No. X-987 ²⁶	19 December 2006	The Law establishes the implementation of the state's obligation to guarantee child support in the amount determined by this law, when the conditions set forth in this law are met (e.g., when child's mother or father are not paying child support) and establishes the basics of the administration of benefits paid by the state for child support.
Law on Social Support for Pupils, No. X-686 ²⁷	13 June 2006	The purpose of this Law is to determine the types, amounts, conditions, procedure, and financing of social support for pupils. This Law applies to pupils who study in general education schools, vocational training institutions, pre-school education schools or at another education provider (except those studying with a freelance teacher) according to general education programs registered in the Register of Studies, Curriculum and Qualifications, or preschool education program.
Law on Social integration of the disabled, No. I-2044 ²⁸	28 November 1991	Among other things, the Law provides for the equal rights and opportunities of the disabled in society, establishes the principles of social integration of the disabled, defines the social integration system, its assumptions and conditions, and the institutions implementing the social integration of the disabled.
Law on Education, No I-1489 ²⁹	25 June, 1991	The Law establishes the goals of education, the principles of the educational system, the foundations of the structure of the educational system, educational activities and educational relationships as well as obligations of the State in the area of education.
Law on Protection of Minors against the Detrimental Effect of Public Information, No. IX-1067 ³⁰	10 September, 2002	The Law establishes the criteria of public information which may have a detrimental effect on minors, the rights, duties, and liability for disseminating such information for journalists and any disseminator of

²⁶ Lithuania, Seimas (2006), Law on Child Maintenance Payments (*Lietuvos Respublikos vaikų išlaikymo išmokų įstatymas*), No. X-987, last amendment No. XIV-1147, 21 June 2022.

²⁷ Lithuania, Seimas (2006), Law on Social Support for Pupils (*Lietuvos Respublikos socialinės paramos mokiniams įstatymas*), No. X-686, last amendment No. XIV-130, 23 December 2020.

²⁸ Lithuania, Seimas (1991), Law on Social Integration of the disabled (*Lietuvos Respublikos neįgaliųjų socialinės integracijos įstatymas*), No. I-2044, last amendment No. XIV-1722, 20 December 2022.

²⁹ Lithuania, Seimas (1991), Law on education (*Lietuvos Respublikos švietimo įstatymas*), No. I-1489, 25 June 1991, last amendment No. XIV-1263, 30 June 2022.

³⁰ Lithuania, Seimas (2002), Law on the Protection of Minors against the Detrimental Effect of Public information (*Nepilnamečių apsaugos nuo neigiamo viešosios informacijos poveikio įstatymas*), No. IX-1067, 10 September 2002, last amendment No XIV-181, 14 January 2021.

		public information, enumerates institutions carrying out the supervision of their activities
Law on the Ombudsperson for Child's Rights, No VIII-1708 ³¹	25 May 2000	<p>The Law establishes the legal basis and powers of the Ombudsperson for Children as well as the status and organisational structure of the Office of the Ombudsperson for Children (Article 1).</p> <p>According to Article 11, the Ombudsman for Children:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) controls and supervises how the provisions of the Constitution, international treaties, legal acts of the EU, laws and other legal acts of the Republic of Lithuania regulate the protection of the rights and legitimate interests of children are implemented; 2) investigates the complaints; 3) refers the material to a pre-trial investigation institution or the prosecutor if features of a criminal act have been established; 4) submits proposals concerning the measures that could improve the protection of the rights and legitimate interests of children, the amendments to legal acts and the adoption of new legal acts as well as formulation and implementation of the policy related to the protection of the rights and legitimate interests of children; 5) inform the society about its' activities and the situation related to the protection of the rights and legitimate interests of children.
Law on Protection against Domestic Violence, No XI-1425 ³²	26 May 2011	<p>The amendments of the Law which came into force on 1 July 2023 substantially change the currently existing legal regulation. As a result, the focus is on legal regulation, which will be after the amendments to the law come into force.</p> <p>The purpose of the Law is to ensure the protection of every person, including children, from domestic violence, to create legal prerequisites for immediate response to the threat arising from domestic violence, to apply domestic violence prevention and protection measures, to provide specialized complex assistance to individuals, who are in a dangerous environment or have experienced domestic violence, to determine the functions of institutions in the prevention of domestic violence, protection from domestic violence and providing specialized complex assistance to persons in a dangerous environment and persons who have experienced domestic violence. (Article 1)</p> <p>According to the Article 2 (4) a child who has</p>

³¹ Lithuania, Seimas (2000), Law on the Ombudsperson for Child Rights (*Lietuvos Respublikos vaiko teisių apsaugos kontrolieriaus įstatymas*), No. VIII-1708, 25 May 2000, last amendment No. XIV-423, 17 June 2021.

³² Lithuania, Seimas (2011), Law on protection against domestic violence (*Lietuvos Respublikos apsaugos nuo smurto artimoje aplinkoje įstatymas*), No. XI-1425, 26 May 2011, last amendment No. XIV-934, 15 March 2022.

		<p>witnessed domestic violence and/or a child living in an environment where domestic violence has occurred is considered a victim of domestic violence. Article 2 provides definitions of what is considered the Order on Protection against Domestic Violence, a domestic environment, an assistance to a person at risk of domestic violence or a person who has experienced domestic violence, a victim of domestic violence, a domestic violence, domestic abuser, a person at risk of domestic violence, a specialized complex assistance, and a centre for specialized complex assistance.</p> <p>Article 3 presents the principles of domestic violence prevention, protection against domestic violence and helping persons at risk of domestic violence or to persons who have experienced domestic violence.</p> <p>Articles 4 – 7 determine the functions of institutions in the prevention of domestic violence, protection from domestic violence and providing specialised complex assistance to persons in a dangerous environment and persons who have experienced domestic violence; provide the legal basis for cooperation between institutions, financing, and management of specialised complex assistance.</p> <p>Articles 8 – 9 of the Law explain how the Order on Protection against Domestic Violence must be applied in practice.</p> <p>Article 10 defines the rights of victims of domestic violence and persons at risk of domestic violence and Article 11 defines the rights of abusers.</p> <p>Articles 12 – 16 present the features of the organisation of protection against domestic violence and specialised complex assistance for victims of domestic violence and persons at risk of domestic violence.</p> <p>Articles 17 – 18 indicate the basis of liability for domestic violence, consequences for false reports of domestic violence and violations of this Law.</p>
<p>Law on the Assistance of Victims of Crime, XIV-169³³</p>	<p>14 January 2021</p>	<p>The purpose of the Law is to ensure that natural persons who have suffered from a crime receive assistance before the criminal proceedings, during the proceedings, and if necessary, also after the proceedings, and in cases where the criminal proceedings are not initiated (Article 1 (1)).</p> <p>The Law specifies that the provision of assistance to a child victim of a crime, the relations related to the child's rights, freedoms, and children protection</p>

³³ Lithuania, Seimas (2021), Law on the assistance of victims of crime (*Lietuvos Respublikos pagalbos nuosiskalstamos veikos nukentėjusiems asmenims įstatymas*), No. XIV-169, 14 January 2021.

		while assistance is provided, are regulated in the Law on Fundamentals of Protection of the Rights of the Child, and the related acts aimed at implementation of this Law (Article 1 (2)).
Law on Probation, XI-1860 ³⁴	22 December 2011	<p>A new version of the Law entered into force on 01/01/2023.</p> <p>This Law determines the purpose and principles of probation, the procedure, and conditions for the execution of probation, the legal status of persons to whom probation has been assigned, and supervision of the legality of the execution of probation (Article 1 (1)).</p> <p>Article 2 of the Law explains the main terms used in this Law. Based on Article 2 (5) Probation is a period of intensive supervision of the sentenced person taking place instead of the execution of an arrest or imprisonment sentence or part of it or imposed upon conditional release from places of imprisonment, during which supervision of the probationer is carried out. According to Article 4 (1), the purpose of probation is to ensure the effective resocialisation of probationers and reduce their desire to re-offend.</p> <p>Articles 6 and 7 provide requirements for cooperation among the Probation Service and other related stakeholders.</p> <p>Articles 8 – 10 explain the requirements for personal risk assessment of a convicted person.</p> <p>Articles 11 – 17 define the basis of the execution of probation, the legal status of probationers, rights, and duties of probation officers.</p> <p>Articles 18 – 24 present the features of probation planning and implementation.</p> <p>Articles 25 – 28 detail the specifics of applying intensive care to probationers.</p> <p>Articles 29 – 31 define the procedure for changing the conditions of probation, the consequences of serving and avoiding serving probation, as well as the grounds for terminating probation.</p> <p>Articles 32 and 33 The articles explain who and how supervises the legality of probation.</p>

³⁴ Lithuania, Seimas (2011), Law on Probation (*Lietuvos Respublikos probacijos įstatymas*), No. XI-1860, 22 December 2011, last amendment No. XIV-1204, 28 June 2022.

Law on Enforcement of Arrest, I-1175 ³⁵	18 January 1996	A new version of the Law on Enforcement of Arrest, I-1175³⁶ entered into force on 01/01/2023. According to Article 1 (1), the Law determines the procedure and conditions for the execution of pretrial measures, that is: arrests, as well as the status of detainees held in prisons. Articles 2 – 4 explain general rules applicable to arrested persons. Articles 5 and 6 explain the procedure for arresting persons and their transportation to prison. Articles 7 – 20 define the rights, duties, and prohibitions applied to the arrested persons. Articles 21 – 23 present means for occupying detainees and meeting their social needs. Articles 24 and 25 provide means for ensuring the health care of detainees and meeting their personal needs. Articles 26 – 27 define measures applicable in prisons for ensuring safety and security. Articles 28 – 33 provide rules applicable for encouraging and disciplining detainees. Articles 34 – 35 explain the procedure for the release of arrested persons from prison.
Law on Youth Policy of the Republic of Lithuania, IX-1871 ³⁷	4 December, 2002	The Law determines the peculiarities of the formation of youth policy, and its implementation, specifies particularities of work with youth, indicates the advisory authorities, and defines the competence of youth organisations and defines the competence of organisations working with youth. According to the Law, a young person is a person between the ages of 14 and 29 (Article 2 (6)).

1.3. Policy Framework

Question	YES	NO	Comments
1.3.1. Is there a specific national or sub-national policy framework and/or a national or sub-	X		In 2003, the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania, considering that there are no common provisions in the field of child welfare that could lead to consistent

³⁵ Lithuania, Seimas (1996), Law on Enforcement of Arrest (*Lietuvos Respublikos suėmimo vykdymo įstatymas*), No. I-1175, 18 January 1996, last amendment No. XIV-1772, 23 December 2022.

³⁶ Lithuania, Seimas (1996), Law on Enforcement of Arrest (*Lietuvos Respublikos suėmimo vykdymo įstatymas*), No. I-1175, 18 January 1996, last amendment No. XIV-1772, 23 December 2022.

³⁷ Lithuania, Seimas (2003), Law on Youth Policy of the Republic of Lithuania (*Lietuvos Respublikos jaunimo politikos pagrindų įstatymas*), No. IX-1871, 4 December 2003, last amendment No. XIII-3204, 29 July 2020.

<p>national strategy on child rights and/or child protection? If <u>yes</u>, does it require an integrated approach to child protection?</p>		<p>reforms, and realising that the concept of child welfare state policy is a comprehensive step for the protection of a child and his/her well-being, has decided to approve the Concept of the State Policy on the Child's Welfare.³⁸</p> <p>The concept provides future insights into the child's policies. It presents the main principles and values about the child's welfare policy. Based on these principles and values, the main aims of the child welfare future policy in the areas of child provision, child participation, and child protection are foreseen, and strategic guidelines for the implementation of the child welfare policy are indicated. The concept requires an integrated approach to child protection.</p> <p>However, it should be noted that there is a lack of systematic implementation of this conceptual policy document in Lithuania. There are separate strategic documents related to the implementation of different aspects of this issue. Child protection issues are not central in these documents, they are considered together with issues from other areas.</p> <p>LITHUANIAN PROGRESS STRATEGY "LITHUANIA 2030"³⁹ only shows a general approach to children. Article 5.5. states that "[s]ociety must recognize the rights of persons experiencing social exclusion, help them preserve their dignity and be full members of society, actively participate in social inclusion policies and activities, help combat stereotypes and stigmatization, preserve and strengthen the quality of life, social well-being, especially of children, and equal opportunities for all." More specifically the Strategy address just family issues. The Strategy aims to strengthen the family institute by creating a family-friendly environment (Article 5.9.2. Para 5). In particular, expanding complex services and</p>
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³⁸ Lithuania, Seimas (2003), Resolution on approval of the Concept of the State Policy on the Child's Welfare (*Dėl Vaiko gerovės valstybės politikos koncepcijos patvirtinimo*), No. IX-1569, 20 May 2003.

³⁹ Lithuania, Seimas (2012), Decision on the Approval of the State Progress Strategy 'Lithuanian Progress Strategy 'Lithuania 2030' (*Dėl Valstybės pažangos strategijos "Lietuvos pažangos strategija "Lietuva 2030" patvirtinimo*), No. XI-2015, 15 May 2012.

		<p>infrastructure for the family and creating conditions for combining family and work obligations. Also, the Strategy addresses the poverty issue. Article 5.9.2. § 6 states that the Strategy aims to reduce social exclusion by developing and implementing national poverty reduction programs.</p> <p>For the implementation of the Lithuanian progress strategy "Lithuania 2030" different development programmes were prepared. Following development programmes are related to children and their families: The Family Policy Strengthening Development Program,⁴⁰ the Program for the Development of Social Solidarity,⁴¹ the Income Inequality Reduction Development Program,⁴² the Development Programme on Ensuring a Suitable Environment for the Disabled in all areas of life,⁴³ Justice system development program,⁴⁴ Regional development program,⁴⁵ Programme on the</p>
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⁴⁰ Lithuania, Government (2021), Resolution on the Approval of the Family Policy Strengthening Development Program, governed by the Ministry of Social Security and Labour, which is the Manager of the Development Programme for 2021-2030 (*Dėl 2021–2030 metų Plėtros programos valdytojos Lietuvos Respublikos socialinės apsaugos ir darbo ministerijos Šeimos politikos stiprinimo plėtros programos patvirtinimo*), No. 930, 10 November 2021.

⁴¹ Lithuania, Government (2021), Resolution on the Approval of the Program for the Development of Social Solidarity for 2022 – 2030, governed by the Ministry of Social Security and Labour (*Dėl 2021–2030 metų Plėtros programos valdytojos Lietuvos Respublikos Socialinės apsaugos ir darbo ministerijos socialinės sutelkties plėtros programos patvirtinimo*), No. 931, 10 November 2021.

⁴² Lithuania, Government (2021), Resolution on the Approval of the Income Inequality Reduction Development Program for 2021 – 2030, governed by the Ministry of Social Security and Labour (*Dėl 2021–2030 metų plėtros programos valdytojos Lietuvos Respublikos Socialinės apsaugos ir darbo ministerijos Pajamų nelygybės mažinimo plėtros programos patvirtinimo*), No. 932, 10 November 2021.

⁴³ Lithuania, Government (2021), Resolution on the Approval of the Development programme on ensuring a suitable environment for the disabled in all areas of life for 2021 – 2030, governed by the Ministry of Social Security and Labour (*Dėl 2021–2030 metų plėtros programos valdytojos Lietuvos Respublikos Socialinės apsaugos ir darbo ministerijos Neįgaliesiems tinkamos aplinkos visose gyvenimo srityse plėtros programos patvirtinimo*), No. 933, 10 November 2021.

⁴⁴ Lithuania, Government (2021), Resolution on the Approval of the Justice System Development Program, governed by the Ministry of Justice, which is the Manager of the Development Programme for 2021-2030 (*Dėl 2021–2030 metų Plėtros programos valdytojos Lietuvos Respublikos teisingumo ministerijos Teisingumo sistemos plėtros programos patvirtinimo*), No. 861, 20 October 2021.

⁴⁵ Lithuania, Government (2022), Resolution on the Approval of the Regional development programme for 2022 - 2030 (*Dėl 2022 - 2030 metų regionų plėtros programos patvirtinimo*), No. 713, 29 June 2022.

		<p>Development of Education,⁴⁶ and Programme on the Development of Health Preservation and Strengthening⁴⁷ have been approved by the Government of Lithuania at the end of 2021 and beginning 2022. It should be mentioned that the Ministry of Interior is also currently preparing the Public Security Strengthening and Development Programme which will be approved by the Government shortly.</p> <p>These programs include, among other things, the problems related to children’s protection identified until 2021 and measures for their solution until 2030. 2021-2030 National Progress Plan⁴⁸ establishes that when implementing the Plan and preparing national development programs, it is mandatory to consider the needs of the disabled, women and men, different age groups, national minorities, and other groups that may experience discrimination, and provide measures and indicators that implement the principle of equal opportunities.</p> <p>In implementing 3rd strategic goal of the plan - to increase the inclusiveness and effectiveness of education, to meet the needs of the individual and society, it is planned to increase the availability of various levels of formal and non-formal education for persons with special educational needs, disabilities, poverty, psychological and other difficulties, in order to ensure the right of every person to participate in education and receive a quality education, the necessary assistance, an environment adapted to various educational needs.</p>
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⁴⁶ Lithuania, Government (2021), Resolution on the Approval of the Programme on the Development of Education for 2022 – 2030, governed by the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport (*Dėl 2021–2030 m. Plėtros programos valdytojos Lietuvos Respublikos Švietimo, mokslo ir sporto ministerijos Švietimo plėtros programos patvirtinimo*), No. 1016, 1 December 2021.

⁴⁷ Lithuania, Government (2022), Resolution on the Approval of the Programme on the Development of Health Preservation and Strengthening for 2022 – 2030, governed by the Ministry of Health (*Dėl 2022–2030 m. plėtros programos valdytojos Lietuvos Respublikos Sveikatos apsaugos ministerijos Sveikatos išsaugojimo ir stiprinimo plėtros programos patvirtinimo*), No. 66, 26 January 2022.

⁴⁸ Lithuania, Government (2020), Resolution on the Approval of the 2021-2030 National Progress Plan (*Nutarimas Dėl 2021–2030 metų Nacionalinio pažangos plano patvirtinimo*), No. 998, 9 September 2020, last amendment No. 797, 29 September 2021.

		<p>It also aims to eliminate discrimination, segregation, and factors that cause exclusion, create a safe environment, and reduce bullying.</p> <p>Achieving the 4th strategic goal - to strengthen national and civic identity, to increase the development of culture and the creativity of society, is planned to promote the comprehensive integration of national minorities, openness and respect for the languages of national minorities, and the uniqueness and diversity of other cultures.</p> <p>The Programme of the 18th Government of the Republic of Lithuania⁴⁹ identifies the goals that the Government of Lithuania is pursuing during its period of governance (2020-2024). The goals set in the Programme contribute to the implementation of the Lithuanian progress strategy "Lithuania 2030" and the programs specifying it.</p> <p>The Government undertakes to ensure that every child, regardless of his/her place of residence, social status, or special needs, can acquire quality education (Articles 10, 38, 39 - 42). For that purpose, it is aimed that all children have quality early education, i.e. the opportunity to attend kindergarten (Articles 43 – 44), quality school education (Articles 45 – 46) and the opportunity to participate in after-class extra-curriculum education (Article 95.3).</p> <p>In the program, the Government aims to ensure that high-quality social services that meet the child’s individual needs are available to all children who need them. It envisages expanding and strengthening alternative (non-institutional) care of children left without parental care and improving the activities of guardians on-call (Article 103.4). The Government is also committed to subsidising the purchase of childcare services for working, lower-income parents and guardians (article 103.4).</p> <p>In the Program, the Government seeks to ensure that children are safe in all life environments,</p>
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⁴⁹ Lithuania, Seimas (2020), Decision on the Programme of the 18th Government of the Republic of Lithuania (*Nutarimas dėl Aštuonioliktos Lietuvos Respublikos Vyriausybės programos*), No. XIV-72, 11 December 2020.

		<p>undertakes to improve measures to prevent any violence against children, to implement effective mechanisms for responding to violence, which would allow timely identification of cases of violence and immediate provision of timely, individualised, and effective assistance to the child and family. It also commits to implementing advocacy and awareness-raising measures to promote zero tolerance for violence (Article 103.5).</p> <p>The Government undertakes to ensure access to treatment measures for minors with behavioural disorders or addiction to alcohol, drugs, or other substances (Article 103.4).</p> <p>To reduce the number of suicides, the Government undertakes to proactively offer the necessary services to children experiencing crises and psychosocial difficulties (Article 113.2)</p> <p>The programme emphasizes that human rights violations are not tolerated in the field of mental health care (Article 113.2).</p> <p>The government, together with experts, intends to prepare a clear vision and plan for developing the system of execution of punishments. According to the prepared documents, prisons and other related institutions will be restructured. The main goal is the resocialization of convicts and the implementation of behaviour correction programs. (Article 193).</p> <p>It undertakes to strengthen the activities of the Lithuanian Probation Service, the competencies of its personnel, and to involve non-governmental organizations, communities, psychologists, mediators, and other specialists in the resocialization process. (Article 193).</p> <p>The Government undertakes to pay special attention to the protection of the rights of victims and vulnerable persons during criminal proceedings (Article 195.3) It undertakes to take further measures to improve the quality of state-funded legal aid (Article 187.7).</p>
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		<p>The Government has approved the Implementation Plan of the 18th Programme of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania.⁵⁰</p> <p>The measures provided in the Plan are divided into priorities. Part of the measures related to the protection of the rights of child is provided with measures dedicated to both adults and children. The following priorities and projects may be attributed to the protection of child's rights:</p> <p><i>Priority I – Equal starting position for all Lithuanian people:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project - Quality Early Education available for all. • Project - A good school and modern curriculum available to everyone. <p><i>Priority IV – A long healthy life for a person who is fully capacitated:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project - Strengthening Public Health. <p><i>Priority VIII - Restored confidence in the justice system:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project - New modern facilities for the execution of punishments. • Project - Quality Legal Aid. <p><i>Priority III – Strengthening the most vulnerable groups of society:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project - Protection of the Rights of Disabled Persons and Development of Services. • Project - Adequate and sustainable social security benefits. • Project - Empowerment of social workers. Strengthening the child rights protection system. <p>Only part of the Project "Empowerment of Social Workers. Strengthening the Child Rights Protection System" is dedicated to ensuring children's rights directly. The project provides for the following measures: Improving the activities of social workers; Improvement of the social work system; Improving</p>
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⁵⁰ Lithuania, Government (2021), Resolution on the Approval of the Implementation Plan of the Programme of the 18th Government of the Republic of Lithuania (*Dél Aštuonioliktosios Lietuvos Respublikos Vyriausybės programos nuostatų įgyvendinimo plano patvirtinimo*), No. 155, 10 March 2021.

		<p>protection against domestic violence; Raising Public Awareness About Violence and Abuse; Increasing Public intolerance to violence; Increasing the availability of aid and assistance to victims of violence; Increasing the number of evidence-based programs and services for families, children, and young people.</p> <p>Based on the Lithuanian Progress Strategy “Lithuania 2030”, the Programme of the 18th Government of the Republic of Lithuania, the Implementation plan of the 18th Programme of the Government, and development programs each ministry has its own three-year strategic plans. Strategic plans include programs to achieve the goals set in the strategies.</p> <p>The Action Plan for Child Welfare 2022-2026⁵¹ approved by the Order of the Minister of Social Security and Labour No A1-52 is one of the documents that implement the 2023-2025 Strategic Plan of the Ministry of Social Security and Labour and includes continuous measures for children and families.⁵²</p> <p>Article 17 of the Plan states that the action plan aims to implement measures for the child's well-being to ensure the rights and legitimate interests of a child, with special focus on most vulnerable children, increasing the availability of services and other assistance mechanisms to children and their families, increasing public awareness and information on child's rights, developing measures, which would help to strengthen children's families, thus ensuring a safe, educational environment for a child, the capacity of the child's parents, guardians (curators to properly care for children, as well as to</p>
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⁵¹ Lithuania, Ministry of Social Security and Labour of the Republic of Lithuania (2022), Order on the Approval of the Action Plan for Child Welfare 2022-2026 (*Lietuvos Respublikos Socialinės apsaugos ir darbo ministro įsakymas 'Dėl vaiko gerovės 2022-2026 metų veiksmų plano patvirtinimo'*), No. A1-52, 24 January 2022, last amendment No A1-409, 19 June 2023.

⁵² Lithuania, Ministry of Social Security and Labour of the Republic of Lithuania (2021), Order Regarding the approval of the 2023-2025 strategic plan of the Ministry of Social Security and Labour of the Republic of Lithuania (*Dėl Lietuvos Respublikos socialinės apsaugos ir darbo ministerijos 2023–2023 metų strateginio veiklos plano patvirtinimo*), No. A1-32, 24 January 2023.

		<p>create conditions for children’s full and harmonious development.</p> <p>The Plan foresees preventive, interventive, and integration measures to achieve the aim of the Plan (Article 16).</p> <p>The preventive measures are designed to ensure the availability of the necessary services for child and family. This is designed to ensure that families can properly care for their children and meet their needs, and children, especially the most vulnerable, receive the necessary assistance and support and they could exercise all their rights equally with other children.</p> <p>The measures for intervention are designed to solve the problems that children and their families face, reduce the impact of these problems on children's lives, and prevent crises and their negative consequences.</p> <p>Integration measures are designed to promote children's well-being, reduce children's social exclusion, educate the public on the rights of the child, carry out other activities that are important for the child's well-being, and promote interinstitutional and international cooperation in these fields.</p> <p>National Action Plan for the Implementation of the Child Guarantee in Lithuania for 2023-2030⁵³</p> <p>The plan contains an analysis of the situation on Child protection in Lithuania and the action plan for improvement of the situation. In the plan, the measures are divided into the following groups: 1. Measures for children with disabilities, special needs (including needs arising from medical conditions) and/or developmental disorders; 2. Measures for children in guardianship (curatorship); 3. Measures for children with high-risk behaviours (having behavioural problems); 4. Measures for children at</p>
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⁵³ Lithuania, Minister of Social Security and Labour, Minister of Health and Minister of Education, Science and Sport, Order on the approval of the action plan for the implementation of the child guarantee system in Lithuania for the years 2023-2030 (*Įsakymas dėl vaiko garantijų sistemos įgyvendinimo 2023–2030 metais Lietuvoje veiksmų plano patvirtinimo*), No A1-388/V-678/V-821, 13 June 2023.

			social risk (from families living in disadvantaged conditions); 5. Measures for Children in migration/ children of migrant origin / ethnic minorities; 6. Other measures (covering all groups of children).
1.3.2. Are there national or sub-national plans for action or policies targeting specific groups of children or particular areas, e.g. children with disabilities, or children in care?	x		<p>2022-2023 Action plan for the prevention of domestic violence and the provision of assistance to victims⁵⁴</p> <p>The Action Plan establishes the measures for the year 2022-2023 aimed at strengthening the prevention of domestic violence and assistance to persons affected by domestic violence, determining the need for funds to implement the measures, the entities responsible for the implementation of the measures, the evaluation criteria of the Action Plan and their indicators.</p> <p>The purpose of the Action Plan is to reduce the level of domestic violence by improving prevention of domestic violence and assistance to victims of domestic violence.</p> <p>The measures provided for in the Plan for a child are implemented together with the measures intended for other family members.</p> <p>2021-2023 Action Plan for social integration of disabled persons⁵⁵</p> <p>The purpose of the Action Plan is to ensure the continuity of the implementation of measures for the social integration of the disabled, to implement new measures necessary to include the disabled people in social life, to encourage state institutions to cooperate with non-governmental organizations working in the field of social integration of the disabled people.</p> <p>Strategic Guidelines on De-Institutionalisation of Social Care Institutions for Disabled Children,</p>

⁵⁴ Lithuania, Ministry of Social Security and Labour (2022). On the approval of the 2022-2023 Action plan for the prevention of domestic violence and the provision of assistance to victims (*Dėl smurto artimoje aplinkoje prevencijos ir pagalbos teikimo nukentėjusiems asmenims 2022–2023 metų veiksmų plano patvirtinimo*), No. A1-264, 11 April 2022, last amendment No. A1-111, 2 February 2023.

⁵⁵ Lithuania, Ministry of Social Security and Labour (2022), On the approval of the 2021-2023 action plan for social integration of disabled persons (*Dėl Neįgalųjų socialinės integracijos 2021–2023 metų veiksmų plano patvirtinimo*), No. A1-817, 8 September 2020, last amendment No. A1-892, 28 December 2022.

		<p>Children Left Without Parental Care and Adult Persons with Disabilities.⁵⁶</p> <p>The Guidelines provide strategic aspects for the deinstitutionalization of care institutions (including institutions for infants) for children and youth with mental and/or mental disabilities and children left without parental care, including infants, i. e. the transition from institutional care to the provision of social services in the community, the purpose, aspirations of this change and implementation direction.</p> <p>2014-2023 Action Plan for the Transition from Institutional Care to Family and Community-based Services for Children with Disabilities and Children left without Parental Care⁵⁷</p> <p>The Action Plan stipulated the changes in the policies regarding the transition from institutional care to family and community-based services for children with disabilities and children left without parental care; it aimed to provide for coherent and coordinated actions for the period 2014-2023, to promote the development of a transition from institutional social care to community-based services for children and young people with intellectual and/or mental disabilities, children left without parental care, including infants.</p> <p>The plan indicates two main goals related to children:</p> <p>1) To provide support for biological families to ensure child’s possibility to grow up in his/her own family, and when that is not possible – to ensure that children are cared for in foster families, adoptive families, social families (foster care-based households), to ensure that these families receive proper support necessary for child’s care, education,</p>
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⁵⁶ Lithuania, Ministry of Social Security and Labour (2012), Order of the Minister of Social Security and Labour on the ‘Approval of strategic guidelines for de-institutionalisation of social care institutions for children with disabilities, children, left without parental care and adult persons with disabilities (*Lietuvos Respublikos Socialinės apsaugos ir darbo ministro įsakymas ‘Dėl neįgalių vaikų, likusių be tėvų globos vaikų, suaugusių neįgalių asmenų socialinės globos namų deinstitutionalizacijos strateginių gairių patvirtinimo’*), No. A1-517, 16 November 2012.

⁵⁷ Lithuania, Ministry of Social Security and Labour (2022), On the approval of the 2014-2023 action plan for the transition from institutional care to family and community-based services for disabled children and children left without parental care (*Dėl Perėjimo nuo institucinės globos prie šeimoje ir bendruomenėje teikiamų paslaugų neįgaliesiems ir likusiems be tėvų globos vaikams 2014–2023 metų veiksmų plano patvirtinimo*), No. A1-83, 14 February 2014, last amendment No. A1-1211, 7 December 2020.

		<p>and general well-being of a child, including a child with disabilities; to enhance services for biological families/foster families, adoptive families, social families (foster care-based households); to develop model of professional foster care, to strengthen the role of service providers (municipalities, NGOs).</p> <p>2) To promote the change related to society's values, to form positive attitude towards deinstitutionalization, and ensure visibility of its' actions. This includes actions to change attitudes towards people with disabilities (incl. children with disabilities), and towards children left without parental care.</p> <p>The 2021-2024 Action Plan for Assistance to Persons diagnosed with Multiple Developmental Disorders⁵⁸ approved by three ministers (Minister of Health, Minister of Education, Science, and Sport, and Minister of Social Security and Labour).</p> <p>The Plan envisages measures aimed at strengthening the early diagnosis of multifaceted developmental disorders, creating institutional prerequisites for inclusion, ensuring quality access to health care, social and educational services for persons with multifaceted developmental disorders, providing the necessary competencies to specialists who provide health, social or educational services to such persons, and ensuring, that parents raising a child with multifaceted developmental disorders receive necessary education and psychological support.</p> <p>Agreement on the Policy on Lithuanian Education (2021-2030)⁵⁹</p> <p>Agreement on the Policy in Education (2021-2030) (signed on 1 September 2021); Agreement is a policy document, signed by the Political parties, represented in Seimas (Parliament), and the Association of Municipalities. The Agreement enumerates 18 commitments. The 1st commitment</p>
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⁵⁸ Lithuania, Minister of Health, Minister of Education, Science, and Sport, and Minister of Social Security and Labour (2020), Order on the approval of the 2021-2024 action plan for assistance to persons diagnosed with multiple developmental disorders (*Įsakymas dėl pagalbos asmenims, kuriems diagnozuotas įvairiapusis raidos sutrikimas, 2021–2024 metų veiksmų plano patvirtinimo*), No. V-2875/V1946/A1-1254, 10 December 2020.

⁵⁹ Lithuania (2021), [Agreement of leaders of parliamentary political parties on the Policy of Lithuanian education \(2021-2030\)](#) (*Politinių partijų lyderių susitarimas dėl Lietuvos švietimo politikos (2021-2030)*), 1 September 2021.

		<p>stipulates commitment to establish facilitating and supportive educational practices free of bullying and violence; the 2nd commitment stipulates commitment to provide all children, including from national minorities qualitative education, leading to equal prospects in life and profession; the 4th commitment stipulates commitment by the end of 2023 to test the model of inclusive education in at least five municipalities. The 9th commitment stipulates plans by 2024 to enhance financial aid for non-formal education; priorities are to be given to children with individual learning needs, and children from families at risk of social marginalisation.</p> <p>State Programme for 2018-2028 on Control and Prevention of Drugs, Tabaco, and Alcohol⁶⁰</p> <p>The Programme is a strategic document that sets out the long-term aspirations, priorities, and commitment of the State to apply a health-based approach to the use of psychoactive substances and to help people protect or restore their health, well-being, and quality of life (Article 1).</p> <p>Article 7 specifies that the programme includes the following equally important and complementary areas: demand reduction, supply reduction, damage reduction, and monitoring.</p> <p>The Description of the Procedure for the Implementation of the Early Intervention Program⁶¹</p> <p>The purpose of the Description is to ensure the implementation of the Programme by integrating the activities of municipal public health offices to motivate minors to give up the use of psychoactive substances (Article 3). The programme applies to minors with risky behaviour from the age of 14 who experiment or irregularly use psychoactive</p>
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⁶⁰ Lithuania, Seimas (2018), Resolution on the approval of the State programme for 2018-2028 on control and prevention of drugs, tobacco, and alcohol (*Nutarimas Dėl Valstybinės narkotikų, tabako ir alkoholio kontrolės ir vartojimo prevencijos 2018–2028 metų programos patvirtinimo*), No. XIII-1765, 13 December 2018.

⁶¹ Lithuania, Minister of Health and Minister of Education, Science, and Sport (2018), Order On the approval of the description of the procedure for the implementation of the Early Intervention Programme (*Dėl Ankstyvosios intervencijos programos vykdymo tvarkos aprašo patvirtinimo*), No. V-60/V-39, 18 January 2018, last amendment No. A1-1211, 30 April 2018.

		<p>substances (except tobacco) but are not addicted to them (Article 5).</p> <p>Public Security Development Programme for 2015-2025⁶²</p> <p>The implementation of the Program, among other goals, aims at increasing the effectiveness of responding to reports of criminal acts and other violations of the law and creating suitable conditions for the victims to exercise their rights, reducing the extent of violence, especially in the domestic environment, reducing the risk of reoffending, reducing the possibilities of crimes in the electronic space, and expanding the effective fight against human trafficking.</p> <p>The measures provided for in the Programme are applied to the protection of the rights of children and adults.</p> <p>Inter-institutional Activity Plan for the Implementation of the Public Security Development 2015-2025 Program⁶³ is designed to implement the Public Security Development Programme for 2015-2025. The programme indicates the funding of the activities of the missing children hotline number 116000.</p> <p>To reduce the extent of violence, especially in the home environment, the programme envisages the organization of coordinated assistance to children and their parents; selection and financing projects of specialized assistance centres aimed at assisting victims of violence; organization of the provision of complex services to children who have suffered from violence or indirect violence in the domestic environment (witnesses) and their family members. To reduce the risk of recidivism, the programme foresees the implementation of social skills-improving programs in prisons, the implementation of measures for preventing repeated violence and fighting against addictions, and the organization of</p>
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⁶² Lithuania, Seimas (2015), Resolution On the approval of the public security development programme for 2015-2025 (*Nutarimas Dėl Viešojo saugumo plėtros 2015–2025 metų programos patvirtinimo*), No. XII-1682, 7 May 2015.

⁶³ Lithuania, Government (2016), Resolution on the approval of the inter-institutional activity plan for the implementation of the Public Security Development programme for 2015-2025 (*Dėl Viešojo saugumo plėtros 2015–2025 metų programos įgyvendinimo tarpinstitucinio veiklos plano patvirtinimo*), No. 370, 13 April 2016, last amendment No. A1-1136, 13 November 2019.

		<p>corrective occupation for minors under the supervision of the probation service.</p> <p>In order to develop an effective fight against human trafficking, the programme envisages the training of officials in the fight against human trafficking, the provision of assistance to persons who have suffered or may have suffered from human trafficking, the implementation of measures for the prevention of human trafficking, criminal prosecution, and the protection and support of victims of human trafficking.</p>
1.3.3. Are there national or sub-national child protection policies regarding children in the digital space and when using online media?	X	<p>The main policy document in this field: the National Cyber Security Strategy⁶⁴ concerning crimes related to the dissemination of information in the digital space speaks about the protection of children in the digital space and when using online media. Addressing the issue on sexual abuse of children on the internet the Strategy outlines that such crimes are some of the most harmful and rapidly spreading due to the rapid development of internet technology. The Strategy specifies that for the combating sexual abuse of children on the internet Lithuania implemented the European Parliament and of the Council Directive 2011/93/EU on combating sexual abuse of children, their sexual exploitation and child pornography⁶⁵ and ratified the Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse.⁶⁶ The fight against these crimes is ensured implementing general goals set out in the strategy, which does not have an exclusive focus on sexual abuse of children on the internet.</p>

⁶⁴ Lithuania, Government (2018), Resolution on the implementation of the Cyber Security Law of the Republic of Lithuania (*Dėl Lietuvos Respublikos Kibernetinio saugumo įstatymo įgyvendinimo*), No. 818, 13 August 2018, last amendment No. 1298, 18 November 2020.

⁶⁵ Directive 2011/93/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 December 2011 on combating the sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children and child pornography, and replacing Council Framework Decision 2004/68/JHA, OJ 2011 L 335, p. 1.

⁶⁶ Lithuania, Seimas (2012), Law of the Republic of Lithuania on the ratification of the Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children from Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse (*Lietuvos Respublikos įstatymas dėl Europos Tarybos konvencijos dėl vaikų apsaugos nuo seksualinio išnaudojimo ir seksualinės prievartos ratifikavimo*), No. XI-2368, 6 November 2012.

		<p>Several goals of the strategy - ensuring the prevention, suppression, and investigation of criminal acts in cyberspace and promoting cyber security culture and innovation development, concern the protection of the rights of both children and adults. Regarding children, the strategy touches on two aspects: 1) the need to prevent crimes related to the sexual exploitation of children in cyberspace; 2) the importance of introducing the basics of cyber security to children in preschool education and students in school education, as digital educational tools are increasingly used during the education process.</p> <p>To coordinate the actions of related institutions, the government approved the Inter-Institutional Action Plan for the Implementation of the National Cyber Security Strategy.⁶⁷ The plan places special emphasis on receiving and investigating reports of cyberbullying and other prohibited or restricted public information. However, even in this aspect, there is no exclusive attention for a child.</p> <p>Article 28 of the Law on Fundamentals of Protection of the Rights of the Child, No. I-1234⁶⁸ provides the foundations for the general protection of a child from the negative effects of public information. The child is protected from the negative impact of public information that may affect his/her mental or physical health, and physical, mental, spiritual, or moral development (Article 28 (1)).</p> <p>Article 28 (2) states that the child is protected from computer games that weaken a child physically and mentally and pose a threat to his health and safety. It is forbidden for a child to create, host, and distribute on computer networks (Internet) images of a sexual nature of themselves and other children,</p>
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⁶⁷ Lithuania, Government (2019), Resolution on the approval of the inter-institutional activity plan for the implementation of the National Cyber Security Strategy (*Dėl Nacionalinės kibernetinio saugumo strategijos įgyvendinimo tarpinstitucinio veiklos plano patvirtinimo*), No. 709, 3 July 2019, last amendment No. 1320, 30 December 2019.

⁶⁸ Lithuania, Seimas (1996). Law on Fundamentals of Protection of the Rights of the Child (*Lietuvos Respublikos Vaiko teisių apsaugos pagrindų įstatymas*), No. I-1234, 14 March 1996, last amendment No. XIV-1512, 10 November 2022. Interinstitutional Child Welfare Council

		<p>as well as images of bullying and violence against children, other persons, or animals.</p> <p>Article 28 (3) states that it is prohibited to show, sell, give away, reproduce and rent or otherwise distribute films, audio and video recordings, literature, newspapers, magazines, other publications, or other items that directly encourage or promote child's disrespect for other persons, cruel behaviour, violence, discrimination, and pornography or otherwise harms the child's physical, mental, spiritual, moral development.</p> <p>Law on Protection of Minors against the Detrimental Effect of Public Information, No. IX-1067⁶⁹ provides the main principles of protection of the interests of minors in the field of public information and defines what public information is considered to have a negative impact on the development of minors.</p> <p>Article 6 of the Law states that it is prohibited to disseminate information that has a negative impact on the development of minors in public information media, if it is related to the personal data of a minor, according to which it is possible to determine his personal identity.</p> <p>Article 7 of the Law specifies the requirements for the distribution of public information that may harm minors. Such public information can be disseminated in the digital space and when using online media only in places where minors cannot access and/or at such a time that minors cannot use it, or when using technical means, it is possible for persons responsible for raising children restrict the availability of such public information. Information can be disseminated without using the specified technical means if they are marked with appropriate indexes and disseminated at the appropriate time. Programs that broadcast information that has a negative impact on minors must be preceded by a notice of the nature of such information, using</p>
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⁶⁹ Lithuania, Seimas (2002), Law on the Protection of Minors against the Detrimental Effect of Public information (*Nepilnamečių apsaugos nuo neigiamo viešosios informacijos poveikio įstatymas*), No. IX-1067, 10 September 2002, last amendment No XIV-181, 14 January 2021.

		<p>descriptive terms, audible warnings, visual signs, or other means. Persons or entities providing access to public computer networks (Internet) must ensure the installation and operation of filtering tools. Manufacturers and/or distributors of computer games are required to mark computer games according to the age of users.</p>
<p>1.3.4 Is there a (regular) child participation policy and/or mechanism and/or body related to child rights and/or other child-related governance at national or sub-national level to ensure children have a (direct) voice in or can indirectly influence policy making, e.g. children’s rights forum, child surveys, child participation platform? <u>If yes, are appropriate child protection and safety measures in place?</u></p>	x	<p>At the policy level, for ensuring that the children’s voices are heard, the issue is addressed in the Family Policy Strengthening Development Program.⁷⁰ § 1.6.2. indicates that it is necessary to hear child’s opinion when solving issues related to care and adoption, planning services for a child, providing services and evaluating their effectiveness, and examining possible violations of the child’s rights, it is also necessary to provide opportunities for children to participate in solving general state problems of child welfare and in the field of child’s rights protection. Children’s participation in decision-making in other areas, such as education, health, justice, etc., is also important.</p> <p>In the legislation, the basis for ensuring the attention to child’s opinion and ensuring the child’s participation is embedded in Civil Code, No. VIII-1864 and the Law on Fundamentals of Protection of the Rights of the Child, No. I-1234.</p> <p>Article 3.164 of the Civil Code, No. VIII-1864⁷¹ foresees that in considering any question related to a child, the child, if capable of formulating his or her views, must be heard directly or, where that is impossible, through a representative. Any decisions on such a question must be taken with regard to the child’s wishes unless they are contrary to the child’s interests. In making a decision on the appointment</p>

⁷⁰ Lithuania, Government (2021), Resolution on the Approval of the Development programme for strengthening of family policy, governed by the Ministry of Social Security and Labour, which is the Manager of the Development Programme for 2021-2030 (*Dėl 2021–2030 metų Plėtros programos valdytojos Lietuvos Respublikos socialinės apsaugos ir darbo ministerijos Šeimos politikos stiprinimo plėtros programos patvirtinimo*), No. 930, 10 November 2021.

⁷¹ Lithuania, Seimas (2000), Civil code (*Lietuvos Respublikos Civilinis kodeksas*), No. VIII-1864, 18 July 2000, last amendment No. XIV-1435, 29 September 2022.

		<p>of a child’s guardian (curator) or on a child’s adoption, the child’s wishes shall be given paramount consideration. If a child considers that his or her parents abuse his or her rights, the child shall have a right to apply to the State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service or, on attaining the age of 14, to bring the matter before the court.</p> <p>Article 4 of the Law on Fundamentals of Protection of the Rights of the Child, No. I-1234⁷² indicates that a child who is capable of formulating views must be heard in all matters related to the child and the child’s opinion must be taken into account, considering the child’s age and maturity, if it does not conflict with the interest of the said child. The child must be heard directly, and if this is not possible, through the child's representative (Article 11 (1)).</p> <p>A child's right to be heard is guaranteed by creating an environment that allows a child to exercise this right, by providing the necessary information, and advice, taking into account the age and maturity, and involving persons with special knowledge when possible and if necessary (Article 11 (1)).</p> <p>Article 51 (3) stipulates that the Interinstitutional Child Welfare Council is established to improve the coordination of activities of state and municipal institutions and bodies, their cooperation with non-governmental organisations and the implementation of legal acts in the field of child rights protection. The Council consists of 18 representatives. Of which 2 are student representatives, representatives of 4 national umbrella non-governmental organisations working in the field of child welfare in at least half of Lithuanian municipalities and 2 representatives of non-governmental organisations working in the field of child welfare.⁷³</p>
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⁷² Lithuania, Seimas (1996). Law on Fundamentals of Protection of the Rights of the Child (*Lietuvos Respublikos Vaiko teisių apsaugos pagrindų įstatymas*), No. I-1234, 14 March 1996, last amendment No. XIV-1512, 10 November 2022.

⁷³ Lithuania, Government (2018), Decision on the establishment of the Interinstitutional Child Welfare Council under the Government of the Republic of Lithuania and the approval of its regulations (*Nutarimas dėl tarpžinybinės vaiko*

		<p>The Council analyses the situation of the protection of children's rights and submits proposals to the Government, ministers, and local municipalities regarding the development of practice, the drafting of laws and other legal acts or the amendment of existing legal acts; analyses whether the laws and other legal acts related to the protection of the child's rights do not conflict with the child's rights and freedoms.</p> <p>The Council submits proposals to the state and/or municipal institutions regarding the cooperation of institutions in the field of child welfare, their cooperation with non-governmental organisations, the implementation of child rights protection measures and the following issues: children's welfare; improving children's health and access to healthcare services; children's formal and informal education, daytime employment; comprehensive assistance and coordinated educational assistance, social and healthcare services for children and their parents, guardians (carers); provision of legal education and state-guaranteed legal aid for children; prevention of child crime, violence against children, child trafficking and other violations of children's rights.</p> <p>It also initiates the organization of events (discussions, conferences, trainings, etc.) to discuss child rights protection policy, application of laws and other legal acts.</p> <p>The inclusion of pupils in decision-making related to the conditions of education in schools is enshrined in The Law on Education, No I-1489⁷⁴</p> <p>Article 46 (1) (9) of the Law notes that every student has the right to participate in school self-government.</p>
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gerovės tarybos prie Lietuvos Respublikos vyriausybės sudarymo ir jos nuostatų patvirtinimo), No 893, 4 September 2018, last amendment No 830, 7 August 2019.

⁷⁴ Lithuania, Seimas (1991), Law on education (*Lietuvos Respublikos švietimo įstatymas*), No. I-1489, 25 June 1991, last amendment No. XIV-1263, 30 June 2022.

		<p>Article 43 (13) notes that student and youth organisations can operate in the school, which increases students' moral, national and civic awareness, and patriotism, fosters cultural and social maturity, and helps meet their self-development and self-expression needs.</p> <p>According to Article 43 (14), favourable conditions must be created for student and youth organisations operating in the school. The state, state and municipal schools or other natural and legal persons can finance these organisations and promote their activities.</p> <p>School student representatives are also members of school councils. The school council is the highest self-governing institution of the school. (Article 60 (3)). Every year, the school council evaluates the school director's annual report and expresses its opinion about it (Article 60 (5)).</p> <p>School students can also participate in the governance of education, join associations, and organisations reflecting student interests, also join unions that carry out educational and cultural tasks set by their members and functions stipulated in their statutes (Article 63 (1)).</p> <p>Educational institutions must provide these organisations and associations with informational and methodological assistance, as well as advise them, and may invite them to act as consultants or experts. (Article 63 (3)).</p> <p>The Law on Youth Policy of the Republic of Lithuania, IX-1871 ⁷⁵ provides the basis for the participation of children from the age of 14 in the management of youth affairs.</p> <p>According to Article 5, each municipality has a Municipal Youth Affairs Council. Its members have delegated representatives on the council of municipal youth organisations operating in the territory of a given municipality. If the municipal council of youth organisations does not exist or it has not delegated representatives, youth representatives are elected at a public general</p>
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⁷⁵ Lithuania, Seimas (2003), Law on Youth Policy (*Lietuvos Respublikos jaunimo politikos pagrindų įstatymas*), No. IX-1871, 4 December 2003, last amendment No. XIII-3204, 29 July 2020.

		<p>meeting of youth organisations and organisations working with youth, students, and/or student self-government representatives operating in the territory of that municipality. The municipality's youth affairs coordinator is responsible for organising this meeting.</p> <p>The municipal youth affairs council examines issues related to youth policy in the municipality and submits proposals to municipal institutions regarding youth policy, its implementation, and funding priorities for youth policy implementation measures in the municipality as well as it submits proposals for draft legislation related to the implementation of youth policy in the municipality.</p> <p>According to Article 4, delegated representatives of the Council of Lithuanian Youth Organizations are members of the Council of Youth Affairs. The Council of Lithuanian Youth Organizations unites 72 largest youth organisations and organizations working with youth and councils of municipal youth organisations.⁷⁶</p> <p>The Council of Youth Affairs is an advisory body at the Youth Affairs Agency under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour (further on - YAA), which implements the youth policy in the Republic of Lithuania.</p> <p>Based on Article 4 (3), the Council of Youth Affairs performs the following functions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Submits proposals regarding the vision, mission, priorities, and strategic goals of YAA; 2. Considers issues related to financing youth policy projects; 3. Submits proposals to the Ministry of Social Security and Labour regarding the implementation of YAA strategic and annual plans; 4. Participates in the formation of youth policy; 5. examines issues related to youth policy and submits proposals to the Government, ministries, and other state and municipal institutions regarding the implementation of
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⁷⁶ The website of the Council of Lithuanian Youth Organizations (*Lietuvos jaunimo organizacijų taryba (LIJOT)*), <https://lijot.lt/>, accessed on 7 March 2023.

		<p>youth policy, funding priorities for youth policy measures, and submits proposals for draft legal acts related to the implementation of youth policy;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Submits proposals for the annual report of the head of YAA and makes recommendations to the Ministry of Social Security and Labour regarding the evaluation of the report; 7. Participates in electing the Head of YAA; 8. Monitors the implementation of youth policy, initiates research in the field of youth policy, evaluates and submits conclusions to the Ministry of Social Security and Labour regarding the conducted research; 9. Considers YAA budget projects and submits proposals to the Ministry of Social Security and Labour regarding budget allocations.
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1.4. Particular groups of children: information on legislative and policy developments (if any) related to their protection

Please report on any significant developments in the last five years and comment briefly.

When answering you should consider all relevant civil, criminal, and administrative legislation, including regulations, ordinances, codes, ministerial decisions. On policy developments please include any relevant action plan, protocol, procedure, or guidance issued by competent authorities. Please always specify how children’s participation in any respective judicial (civil, criminal, and administrative) proceedings are regulated and supported (e.g. procedural safeguards to be in place, ensuring children’s right to be heard).

<p>1.4.1. Children victims of abuse, exploitation, or neglect</p>	
<p>In the areas of online and offline sexual abuse, pornography, exploitation and child labour, trafficking; domestic violence and gender-based violence including harmful practices, such as genital mutilation, child/forced marriage, honour-related violence; abuse or discrimination; ICT and cyber bullying; school bullying; neglect and children at risk of abuse and neglect, including street children (begging or selling things)</p>	
<p>Policy developments</p>	<p>Legislative developments</p>

The Programme of the 18th Government of the Republic of Lithuania⁷⁷

The Programme states, that the Government seeks to eliminate any discrimination and ensure equal opportunities for all social groups. (Article 101.4). The Government emphasizes the need to ensure children's safety in all living environments and circumstances. It undertakes to improve measures for the prevention of any violence against children and implement effective mechanisms for responding to violence. This will allow timely identification of violence and immediate provision of individualized and effective assistance to the child and family. The Government undertakes to implement a comprehensive action to combat all forms of sexual exploitation and violence against disabled children. It also undertakes to ensure that affected children have access to support services, paying particular attention to the most vulnerable groups of children, such as disabled children, children left without parental care, children who grow up in families experiencing social risks, and children who grow up in children care institutions. The government seeks to enhance measures for getting ready for parenthood, increase the role of crisis centres, and strengthen the prevention of bullying. It also undertakes to implement advocacy and awareness-raising measures to promote zero tolerance to violence (Articles 89.5, 103.5). To help children experiencing crises and severe psychosocial difficulties, the Government

The major changes into the **Law on Fundamentals of Protection of the Rights of the Child, No. I-1234**⁸⁴ came into force in 2018 and the law has been updated in the following years.

The child's right to be protected from violence is enshrined in Article 20 (1) of the law. The law emphasizes that all forms of violence against children are prohibited.

Article 2(10) provides that **Violence** against a child is considered a direct or indirect intentional physical, psychological, or sexual impact on a child caused by action or inaction, when, as a result, the child died, child's health and normal development was disturbed, caused pain, or there is a danger to his life or normal development or child's honour and/or dignity was humiliated. Child's neglect is also considered violence against a child.

However, it should be noted that meaning of the physical violence enshrined in the law has changed since 2017. In 2017, the law was amended to ban all forms of violence against children, including all forms corporal punishment.⁸⁵ However, in 2019, the Seimas has changed its approach to the concept of violence, providing that physical force against a child and physical or mental pain to a child are not considered violence, when these actions aim to avoid a greater danger to the child's physical or mental safety, health, or life and a child cannot be saved by other means.⁸⁶

⁷⁷ Lithuania, Seimas (2020), Decision on the Programme of the 18th Government of the Republic of Lithuania (*Nutarimas dėl Aštuonioliktos Lietuvos Respublikos Vyriasybės programos*), No. XIV-72, 11 December 2020.

⁸⁴ Lithuania, Seimas (1996). Law on Fundamentals of Protection of the Rights of the Child (*Lietuvos Respublikos Vaiko teisių apsaugos pagrindų įstatymas*), No. I-1234, 14 March 1996, last amendment No. XIV-1839, 28 March 2023.

⁸⁵ Lithuania, Seimas (2017), Law on amending Articles 2, 6, 10, 49, 56, 57 and supplementing with Article 2-1 the Law on Fundamentals of Protection of the Rights of the Child No. I-1234 (*Lietuvos Respublikos vaiko teisių apsaugos pagrindų įstatymo Nr. I-1234 2, 6, 10, 49, 56, 57 straipsnių pakeitimo ir įstatymo papildymo 2-1 straipsniu įstatymas*), No XIII-204, 14 February 2017, Articles 4 and 5.

⁸⁶ Lithuania, Seimas (2019), Law on amending Articles 2, 3, 4, 9, 12, 14, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 41, 42, 43, 49, 50, supplementing with Articles 36¹, 36², 36³, 36⁴, 36⁵ and the repeal of Articles 38, 39, 40 of the Law on Fundamentals of Protection of the Rights of the Child No. I-1234 (*Lietuvos Respublikos vaiko teisių apsaugos pagrindų įstatymo Nr. I-1234 2, 3, 4, 9, 12, 14, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 41, 42, 43, 49, 50 straipsnių pakeitimo, įstatymo papildymo 36-1, 36-2, 36-3, 36-4, 36-5 straipsniais ir 38, 39, 40 straipsnių pripažinimo netekusiais galios įstatymas*), No XIII-2035, 11 April 2019, Articles 1(6).

undertakes to create effective psychological assistance for them and their families (Article 103.3), quality health and social services at the community level, which are available and sufficient throughout the territory of Lithuania. A proactive approach will be applied to help children (Article 113.2).

In the Program, the Government aims to ensure that high-quality social services that meet the child's individual needs are available to all children (Article 103.4). It is also planned to strengthen the competencies and rights of case managers for the successful coordination of each family case (Article 93.1.)

The Programme foresees the involvement of NGOs in the provision of services. Suitable funds for them are foreseen as well. The biggest part of the funds will be directed to the development of social care services, such as to increased financing of sheltered housing, independent living homes, crisis centres, after-care and other support services, and family social care services (Article 93.2).

The Family Policy Strengthening Development Program⁷⁸ managed by the Ministry of Social Security and Labour, states that prevention, intervention, and postvention measures are underdeveloped in Lithuania. The individualized services to be provided in various crises are not developed enough. Families and communities are not always able to identify the crises that arise and deal with the challenges that arise. Inefficient management of data on social support for family restricts the assessment of the need for these services. Municipalities have different priorities in proactive response to crises.

The Programme foresees such problem-solving measures: to improve the quality and accessibility of social services and to increase the effectiveness of social support in family crises; to develop

Article 3 clarifies the meaning of physical, psychological, or sexual violence as well as the meaning of child neglect. Article 3(1) specifies that physical violence is intentional physical action or actions against the child, including corporal punishment, if as a result the child died, his/her health or normal development was disturbed, or pain or danger was caused to the child's life, health or normal development, or the child's honor and/or dignity was humiliated.

Article 3 (2) specifies that **psychological violence** is considered to be the intentional and systematic violation of the child's right to identity, humiliation of the child, bullying, intimidation, disrupting the activities necessary for the child's normal development, encouraging antisocial behaviour or other non-physical behaviour (actions or inactions) that resulted in child's death, impaired health or restricted normal development or life, health or normal development of a child were endangered or the honour and/or dignity of the child was humiliated.

This article also notes that appropriate and reasonable assessment of child's knowledge and abilities and other actions designed to assess the child's normal development are not considered psychological violence.

Article 3 (3) specifies that **sexual violence** is considered to be intentional criminal acts, as defined in Chapter XXI of the Criminal Code of the Republic of Lithuania "Crimes and misdemeanours against the freedom of sexual self-determination and inviolability of a person" (rape, sexual assault, forced sexual intercourse, a satisfaction of sexual passion in violation of the freedom of sexual self-determination of a minor and (or) untouchability, a seduction of a person under the age of sixteen, molestation of a person under the age of sixteen), committed against a child, as well as profiting from the prostitution of a child, involving a child in prostitution or involving a child to participate in a pornographic event, showing pornography to a

⁷⁸ Lithuania, Government (2021), Resolution on the Approval of the Family Policy Strengthening Development Program, governed by the Ministry of Social Security and Labour, which is the Manager of the Development Programme for 2021-2030 (*Dėl 2021–2030 metų Plėtros programos valdytojos Lietuvos Respublikos socialinės apsaugos ir darbo ministerijos Šeimos politikos stiprinimo plėtros programos patvirtinimo*), No. 930, 10 November 2021.

evidence-based programs and missing services for families, children, and young people; to strengthen the protection of children's rights.

The Program for the Development of Social Solidarity ⁷⁹ managed by the Ministry of Social Security and Labour raises the issue that Lithuanian residents, including children, experience social exclusion due to possible discrimination (based on gender, social status, age, disability, language, origin, race, nationality, citizenship, beliefs or views, sexual orientation, ethnicity, faith, health condition or on other grounds). Social-emotional education does not always meet the needs. The victims of hatred or discrimination do not always get help. The system for reporting hate incidents is not well-functioning. Cases of impunity occur. The social integration system for refugees and nationals of third countries is fragmented.

The Programme foresees such measures to solve the problem: to implement the principles of equal opportunities and gender equality; to develop the system of integration of foreigners.

The Programme also indicates the high level of domestic violence and violence against children in Lithuania. It is caused by insufficiently effective system of assistance and services to victims of domestic violence and people who want to abandon violent behaviour, insufficiently effective inter-institutional cooperation, and tolerance of

child, forcing a child to engage in prostitution, exploiting a child for pornography or possessing pornographic content that depicts a child or presents a person as a child, or involving a child in sexual slavery and other forms of child sexual exploitation.

Article 3 (4) specifies that **child neglect** is a continuous failure or negligence in meeting the physical, emotional, and social needs of a child by the parents or other legal representatives of the child or the person responsible for the care of the child, which resulted in the child's death or impaired health, restricted normal development or endangered the child's life, health or normal development. However, poverty caused by objective reasons is not considered neglect.

Article 20 (2) provides that the child victim of violence has the right to help that meets his/her needs and best interests.

Article 30(1) specifies that persons convicted for sexual violence are not allowed to work with children.⁸⁷ The government has approved a list of employment positions that cannot be performed by persons convicted for child sexual abuse and other intentional serious or very serious crimes.⁸⁸

The Law on Fundamentals of Protection of the

⁷⁹ Lithuania, Government (2021), Resolution on the Approval of the Program for the Development of Social Solidarity for 2022 – 2030, governed by the Ministry of Social Security and Labour (*Dėl 2021–2030 metų Plėtros programos valdytojos Lietuvos Respublikos Socialinės apsaugos ir darbo ministerijos socialinės sutelkties plėtros programos patvirtinimo*), No. 931, 10 November 2021.

⁸⁷ Lithuania, Seimas (1996). Law on Fundamentals of Protection of the Rights of the Child (*Lietuvos Respublikos Vaiko teisių apsaugos pagrindų įstatymas*), No. I-1234, 14 March 1996, last amendments No. XIV-1512, 10 November 2022, Article 30(1).

⁸⁸ Lithuania, Government (2016), Resolution on the Approval of the list of jobs, activities, and services that cannot be performed by persons found guilty of criminal acts specified in Chapter XXI of the Criminal Code of the Republic of Lithuania, or other criminal acts related to child sexual exploitation, child pornography or prostitution, due to direct contact with children (*Dėl Darbu, veiklų ir paslaugų, kurių dirbti, atlikti ar teikti dėl tiesioginių kontaktų su vaikais neturi teisės asmenys, įsiteisėjusiu apkaltinamuoju teismo nuosprendžiu pripažinti kaltais už nusikalstamas veikas, nurodytas Lietuvos Respublikos baudžiamojo kodekso XXI skyriuje, ar už kitas nusikalstamas veikas, susijusias su vaiko seksualiniu išnaudojimu, vaikų pornografija ar prostitucija, sąrašo patvirtinimo*), No. 517, 25 May 2016.

domestic violence in society due to the gaps in education.

To solve the problem, the Programme envisages developing a system of effective prevention of domestic violence and the assistance to victims of violence, strengthening inter-institutional cooperation, and implementing the principles of equal opportunities and gender equality.

The Programme on the Development of Education⁸⁰ managed by the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport indicates the high level of bullying in Lithuanian schools. Educational programs insufficiently develop students' social-emotional competencies. School staff members do not have sufficient competence for developing students' social-emotional competencies. Psychological support for students is insufficient. Bullying prevention programs are implemented unsystematically.

To eliminate bullying in Lithuanian schools, the Programme foresees modern educational content accessible to all, inclusive education, and implementation of the "Teacher First" measures.

Rights of the Child, No. I-1234⁸⁹ states, that the protection of children from domestic violence and assistance to victims is guaranteed by the **Law on Protection against Domestic Violence, No XI-1425**.⁹⁰ On 15 May 2022 the Parliament (Seimas) adopted amendments to the Law on Protection against Domestic Violence⁹¹ which came into force on 1 July 2023. Amendments to the Law substantially change currently existing legal regulations.

The updated law, unlike the previous regulation, provides protection and assistance not only to persons who already have experienced domestic violence but also to those who are at risk of domestic violence (Article 2 (3)). The law regulates the procedure and conditions for the provision of assistance in more detail.

In fighting violence, the Law stipulates a new instrument – the Order on Protection against Domestic Violence. This is a protection measure by which an adult person who attempts to commit violence is obliged to temporarily move out of the place of residence, if a person lives with a person at risk of violence, not to visit this person's place of residence, not to approach that person and those who live with him (including children), do not communicate, do not seek contact with them (Article 2 (1)). Articles 8 – 9 of the Law explain how the Order on Protection against Domestic Violence

⁸⁰ Lithuania, Government (2021), Resolution on the Approval of the Programme on the Development of Education for 2022 – 2030, governed by the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport (*Dėl 2021–2030 m. Plėtros programos valdytojos Lietuvos Respublikos švietimo, mokslo ir sporto ministerijos švietimo plėtros programos patvirtinimo*), No. 1016, 1 December 2021.

⁸⁹ Lithuania, Seimas (1996). Law on Fundamentals of Protection of the Rights of the Child (*Lietuvos Respublikos Vaiko teisių apsaugos pagrindų įstatymas*), No. I-1234, 14 March 1996, last amendment No. XIV-1512, 10 November 2022, Article 23 (6).

⁹⁰ Lithuania, Seimas (2011), Law on protection against domestic violence (*Lietuvos Respublikos apsaugos nuo smurto artimoje aplinkoje įstatymas*), No. XI-1425, 26 May 2011, last amendment No. XIV-934, 15 March 2022.

⁹¹ Lithuania, Seimas (2022), Law on Amendments to the Law on Protection from Domestic Violence No. XI-1425 (*Lietuvos Respublikos apsaugos nuo smurto artimoje aplinkoje įstatymo Nr. XI-1425 pakeitimo įstatymas*), No. XIV-934, 15 May 2022.

The Programme on the Development of Health Preservation and Strengthening⁸¹ managed by the Ministry of Health points out the problem that not all families ensure a living environment suitable for fostering the mental health of children. Some of them are not prepared for parenthood and do not know about conditions for health. The interests of children are not fully protected in families at risk or at social exclusion. The needs of children with psychosocial disabilities and their families are not fulfilled. The needs of children growing up outside the family are not fully fulfilled and life quality is not fully guaranteed. Children with behavioural disorders have few options to choose forms of support and not enough forms of non-formal education.

The Programme also indicates that the environment in schools is not fully suitable for maintaining the mental health of children. A high level of bullying and cyberbullying exists in schools. Children's psychological problems, crises, and mental disorders are not always recognized in schools and after-school activities. The help for children as well as their education in this field is not sufficient.

To solve the problem the Programme foresees improvement of the capabilities in timely overcoming threats and risks. It also notes that measures foreseen in other programs contribute to solving problems as well.

The Public Security Development programme for 2015-2025⁸² has several tasks related to the protection of child's rights.

The first task is to reduce the instances of violence, especially domestic violence (Article 43.3). The directions for the implementation of this task:

- To increase society's intolerance to violence;

must be applied in practice. The decision to apply for the Order on Protection against Domestic Violence is made by a police officer who receives a report about possible domestic violence (Article 8 (2)).

Article 2 (5) provides the meaning of domestic violence. **Domestic violence** is an intentional act (action or inaction) that has a physical, mental, sexual, economic or other effect on a person in the domestic environment, resulting in physical, material and/or non-material damage.

Article 3 explains in detail the principles of combating domestic violence. The fight against domestic violence is guided by the principles of cooperation, participation, complexity, equality, adaptability, accessibility and individualization of services, ensuring the best interests of persons at risk of domestic violence or persons who have experienced violence, and confidentiality. In the previous regulation, the principles were only listed, but their content was not explained.

Article 4 of the Law lists institutions involved in the prevention of domestic violence, protection from domestic violence and providing specialized complex assistance to persons in a dangerous environment and persons who have experienced domestic violence and clearly allocates the fields of responsibility, explains functions and provides legal basis for their cooperation. Governmental institutions, municipalities and non-governmental organizations are involved in the fight against domestic violence.

Prevention, intervention, suppression, punishment, correction, capacity building, advocacy and awareness rising, trainings, monitoring and supervision measures are indicated in fighting the domestic violence.

Articles 5 and 15 of the Law foresee that implementation of instruments for fighting the

⁸¹ Lithuania, Government (2022), Resolution on the Approval of the Programme on the Development of Health Preservation and Strengthening for 2022 – 2030, governed by the Ministry of Health (*Dėl 2022–2030 m. plėtros programos valdytojos Lietuvos Respublikos Sveikatos apsaugos ministerijos Sveikatos išsaugojimo ir stiprinimo plėtros programos patvirtinimo*), No. 66, 26 January 2022.

⁸² Lithuania, Seimas (2015), Resolution On the approval of the public security development programme for 2015-2025 (*Nutarimas Dėl Viešojo saugumo plėtros 2015–2025 metų programos patvirtinimo*), No. XII-1682, 7 May 2015.

- To implement preventive measures for the protection of children at risk of violence;
- To ensure quality of assistance to victims of violence;
- To develop corrective measures for persons prone to violence;
- To implement measures for the prevention of the spread of hate crimes.

The second task is to reduce the possibility of committing criminal acts in cyberspace (Article 45.4). The directions for the implementation of this task:

- To increase inter-institutional cooperation as well as cooperation between the public and private sectors.
- To increase public awareness about cybercrimes and protective measures.

The third task is to develop an effective fight against human trafficking (Article 45.5). The directions for the implementation of this task:

- To strengthen the coordination of the fight against human trafficking;
- To improve the prevention and investigation of human trafficking;
- To strengthen assistance to victims of human trafficking and persons at higher risk of being victims of this crime.

2022-2023 Action plan for the prevention of domestic violence and the provision of assistance to victims⁸³

In the area of protection of children affected by violence, the following is foreseen:

- To allocate funds to NGO projects aimed at preventing domestic violence;

domestic violence are funded by the State and municipalities budgets.

Article 6 of the Law points out that the Council for Prevention of Domestic Violence and Protection from Domestic Violence is formed out of representatives of relevant stakeholders. It examines issues of domestic violence and provides recommendations for improving the system.

Article 7 of the Law states that in each municipality, a Domestic Violence Prevention Commission is established, with main function to provide recommendations at the municipal level.

Article 10 of the Law defines the rights of victims of domestic violence and persons at risk of domestic violence and Article 11 defines the rights of abusers.

Article 12 of the Law clarifies the actions of police officers after receiving information about domestic violence. Article 13 specifies the procedure for the investigation of domestic violence. Article 14 explains specific procedure of provision of specialized comprehensive assistance to the victim.

Article 16 presents the features of the organization of protection against domestic violence and specialized complex assistance for victims of domestic violence and persons at risk of domestic violence. Specialized assistance centres are newly established for the provision of comprehensive help.

The Law on Fundamentals of Protection of the Rights of the Child, No. I-1234⁹² states, that provision of assistance and services to a child victim of crime is also regulated by the **Law on the Assistance of Victims of Crime, XIV-169**,⁹³ the **Law**

⁸³ Lithuania, Ministry of Social Security and Labour (2022), On the approval of the 2022-2023 Action plan for the prevention of domestic violence and the provision of assistance to victims (*Dėl smurto artimoje aplinkoje prevencijos ir pagalbos teikimo nukentėjusiems asmenims 2022–2023 metų veiksmų plano patvirtinimo*), No. A1-264, 11 April 2022, last amendment No. A1-111, 2 February 2023.

⁹² Lithuania, Seimas (1996). Law on Fundamentals of Protection of the Rights of the Child (*Lietuvos Respublikos Vaiko teisių apsaugos pagrindų įstatymas*), No. I-1234, 14 March 1996, last amendment No. XIV-1512, 10 November 2022, Article 23 (9).

⁹³ Lithuania, Seimas (2021), Law on the assistance of victims of crime (*Lietuvos Respublikos pagalbos nuo nusikalstamos veikos nukentėjusiems asmenims įstatymas*), No. XIV-169, 14 January 2021.

- To prepare a methodology for the prevention of violence and bullying which will be used by employees of pre-school education institutions;
- To select and finance projects for comprehensive assistance to victims of violence;
- To ensure funding to institutions that provide emotional (psychological) support by phone or online.

Five Lithuanian institutions - the General Prosecutor's Office, the Police Department, the Ministry of Social Security and Labour, the Office of the Ombudsperson of Child's Rights, and the State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service signed the **Cooperation Agreement on 28/06/2018**. The agreement has established close inter-institutional cooperation for more effective protection of children's rights and legitimate interests taking particular attention to the protection of children's rights in criminal proceedings.

According to this Agreement, among other obligations, the prosecutor's office and the police undertake to provide such information to the Service:

- during the investigation, if it has been established that a child may have suffered from a father (mother) or other legal representative living together with a child, or another person responsible for raising or caring for a child, or from improper performance of the duties of such persons;

on Social Services, No. X-493,⁹⁴ other laws regulating the provision of assistance and services to children.

However, it should be noted that Article 1 (2) of the Law on the Assistance of Victims of Crime refers back to the Law on Fundamentals of Protection of the Rights of the Child.⁹⁵ The Law states that assistance to a child victim of a crime, and relations related to the child's rights, freedoms, and rights protection are regulated in the Law on Fundamentals of Protection of the Rights of the Child and its implementing legal acts. It can be concluded that help under the Law on the Assistance of Victims of Crime is provided to the child to the extent that it is also received by an adult person with whom the child lives.

According to Article 6 (1) of the **Law on Social Services**, preventive, general, and special services are provided to a child.

The updated **Catalogue of Social Services**⁹⁶ entered into force on 01/01/2023. The catalogue presents social services, their content, and the institutions providing these services. Services are divided into groups. Services in the Catalogue are intended not only for adults but also for children to help exercise their rights.

The Law on Education, No I-1489⁹⁷ establishes protection against violence in schools.

A school must ensure a healthy, safe environment that prevents violence, abuse, incl. bullying, and bad habits (Article 43 (11)).

In schools, any violence by students against students, school employees against students,

⁹⁴ Lithuania, Seimas (2006), Law on Social Services (*Lietuvos Respublikos socialinių paslaugų įstatymas*), No. X-493, last amendment No. XIV-952, 17 March 2022.

⁹⁵ Lithuania, Seimas (2021), Law on the assistance of victims of crime (*Lietuvos Respublikos pagalbos nuo nusikalstamos veikos nukentėjusiems asmenims įstatymas*), No. XIV-169, 14 January 2021, Article 1 (2).

⁹⁶ Lithuania, Minister of Social Security and Labour (Socialinės apsaugos ir darbo ministerija) (2022), Order on the approval of the Catalog of Social Services (*Įsakymas Dėl Socialinių paslaugų katalogo patvirtinimo*), No. A1-93, 5 April 2006, last amendment No. A1-451, 30 June 2022.

⁹⁷ Lithuania, Seimas (1991), Law on education (*Lietuvos Respublikos švietimo įstatymas*), No. I-1489, 25 June 1991, last amendment No. XIV-1263, 30 June 2022.

- a medical or other institution has sent a report to the police or prosecutor about an injured child when the child or child’s legal representatives refuse to explain the cause of the injury and there is no evidence that a criminal act was committed;
- child was a victim of a crime and there is evidence that the child was (is) not properly supervised;
- child protection measures must be applied to protect the child from a perpetrator who used violence against a child and/or committed domestic violence and the child may have suffered as a result.

According to the Agreement, the information must be provided immediately, but no later than within 5 days.

According to the Agreement, if a police officer discovers a case of violence against a child or the presence of a child in an environment that is not safe for a child, the officer immediately informs the Service about the fact at any time of the day. The Service undertakes that its representatives will arrive at the child's location and take steps to ensure the child's safety within 1 hour of receiving the notification.

If, for justified reasons, the representatives of the Service cannot come, the Service provides the police officer with information about a nearby person or institution to which a child can be delivered and handed over for care until the Service representative arrives. The Service also contacts the person or institution and warns them that they must take care of the child and ensure child’s safety until the Service's representatives arrive.

Under Cooperation agreement the Service also undertakes to inform immediately, but no later than within 24 hours, the prosecutor's office or the police about the cases of violence against a child that it has become aware of. It also undertakes to

students against school employees, school employees against other employees, and students' parents (guardians, curators) against students and teachers is prohibited (Article 23¹ (1)). Any incident of violence must be reported to the school principal (Article 23¹ (2)).

Mandatory free psychological consultation is provided to the abuser and the victim of violence with their accompanying parents or other legal representatives immediately, but no later than within 5 working days (Article 23¹ (5)). Each child can also receive psychological help at school (Article 23¹ (5)).

Article 23² of the Law establishes the obligation to report bullying and the dissemination of other prohibited or restricted information in cyberspace. Each case must be reported to the Communications Regulatory Authority of the Republic of Lithuania by submitting a report on the website at www.draugiskasinternetas.lt. People also have the right to report any public information that is classified as prohibited information under the Law on Protection of Minors against the Detrimental Effect of Public Information or other information that has a negative impact on minors. The Communications Regulatory Authority organizes the urgent removal of this information from the digital space or organises restriction on access to that information.

The school must provide every student with the opportunity to regularly participate in at least one long-term preventive programme that develops social and emotional competencies, including the prevention of the use of violence, alcohol, tobacco, and other psychoactive substances, and the promotion of a healthy lifestyle. (Article 43 (11)).

The Minister of Education, Science and Sports has approved recommendations for the implementation of violence prevention measures in schools (Article 43 (11)). The Minister has approved the recommendations regarding the application of measures of impact on misbehaving students.⁹⁸

⁹⁸ Lithuania, Ministry of Education and Science (2012), On the approval of recommendations regarding the application of measures of impact to misbehaving students (*Įsakymas Dėl pritarimo rekomendacijoms dėl poveikio priemonių taikymo netinkamai besielgiantiems mokiniams*), No. V-1268, 28 August 2012.

address the prosecutor's office or the police about any other violations of the child's rights that it believes may be classified as crimes.

Changes to mentioned cooperation were made in July 2023 with the aim to ensure more coordinated actions between prosecutor's office, police and Service in the cases of possible sexual abuse of children as well as in cases of missing children

The **Child Welfare Commission** takes care of creating a safe and favourable environment for students in schools (Article 43 (12)). The establishment of the Child Welfare Commission and the organization of its work are carried out according to stipulations in **Description of the Framework for the establishment of the School Child Welfare Commission** and the organization of its work approved by the Minister of Education, Science, and Sports.⁹⁹

The Barnahus model is implemented in Lithuania since 2014. The Support Centre for Sexually Abused Children is the only service in the Lithuania which provides specialized, complex services for sexually abused children and their family members. The Centre is unique among the European Barnahus and similar setups, in that it has 10 places for children and their carers to stay overnight if needed. The average stay is about 3 days, sometimes longer. It provides services to children affected by sexual abuse and their relatives. The Support Centre is providing local and external training to professionals on how to identify sexual abuse and what to do in these situations. In 2018, the Ministry of Social Security and Labor approved a training program "Child sexual abuse: identification and response." This programme has trained a further 100 professionals on theoretical and practical skills.¹⁰⁰

1.4.2. Children with disabilities

Please include children with learning difficulties, autism, and mental health impairments / psycho-social disabilities, severe chronic illnesses that prevent them e.g. from attending onsite school or sports activities

Policy developments

Legislative developments

⁹⁹ Lithuania, Minister of Education, Science and Sport (2011), Order on the approval of the Description of the framework for the establishment of the School Child Welfare Commission and the organization of its work recommendations regarding the application of measures of impact to misbehaving students (*Įsakymas dėl mokyklos vaiko gerovės komisijos sudarymo ir jos darbo organizavimo tvarkos aprašo patvirtinimo*), No. V-579, 11 April 2011, last amendment No. V-1129, 3 August 2020.

¹⁰⁰ Promise. Barnahus Network (2019). [Lithuanian MD/IA centre provides temporary accommodation, trains 1000+ specialists in identifying sexual abuse among children](#). 11 January 2019.

The focused policy change was prompted by the **Programme of the 18th Government of the Republic of Lithuania**¹⁰¹

The Government undertakes to ensure that every child with special needs, has the opportunity to acquire quality education (Articles 10, 38, 39 - 42). For that purpose, it is aimed that all children have quality early education, i. e. the opportunity to attend kindergarten (Articles 43 – 44), quality school education (Articles 45 – 46) and the opportunity to participate in after-class/extra curriculum education (Article 95.3).

The Programme foresees that families raising children with disabilities are going to have the possibility to choose which school their child will attend – specialized or ordinary.

The position of teacher’s assistant is planned to be established to individualize assistant services in the educational process of children with disabilities. (Article 95.3.)

The Government aims to ensure that high-quality social services meeting child’s individual needs are available to all children who need them (Article 103.4).

The program foresees establishing a personal assistant service for disabled children, which they could use as needed. (Article 95.1)

The government undertakes to provide on a one-stop basis early rehabilitation, transportation,

Article 19 of the **Law on Fundamentals of Protection of the Rights of the Child, No. I-1234**¹⁰⁹

states that equally with other children, children with disabilities are entitled to all human rights and fundamental freedoms. The law foresees such guarantees: 1) suitable assistance and full involvement in all areas of public life; 2) right to use all services provided to children in a coordinated and/or complex manner, starting from early intervention and including services provided in the community; 3) full participation in all levels of formal education and participation in non-formal education, self-education, and creative activities together with other children; 4) the ability to easily access all buildings, move freely on the street or use public transport, as the public infrastructure is adapted to the needs of children with disabilities.

All public institutions must ensure the fulfilment of these rights.¹¹⁰

The rights and social integration of children with disabilities are determined by the **Law on Social Integration of the Disabled**,¹¹¹ the **Law on Education**¹¹² and other legal acts of the Republic of Lithuania.

The Law on Social Integration of the Disabled¹¹³

The system of social integration of the disabled includes the provision of medical, professional, and social rehabilitation services, foresees special assistance measures, supports an occupation of the disabled, provides social support, foresees payment of benefits from the State Social Insurance Fund

¹⁰¹ Lithuania, Seimas (2020), Decision on the Programme of the 18th Government of the Republic of Lithuania (*Nutarimas dėl Aštuonioliktos Lietuvos Respublikos Vyriausybės programos*), No. XIV-72, 11 December 2020.

¹⁰⁹ Lithuania, Seimas (1996). Law on Fundamentals of Protection of the Rights of the Child (*Lietuvos Respublikos Vaiko teisių apsaugos pagrindų įstatymas*), No. I-1234, 14 March 1996, last amendment No. XIV-1512, 10 November 2022.

¹¹⁰ Lithuania, Seimas (1996). Law on Fundamentals of Protection of the Rights of the Child (*Lietuvos Respublikos Vaiko teisių apsaugos pagrindų įstatymas*), No. I-1234, 14 March 1996, last amendments No. XIV-1512, 10 November 2022, Art. 19.

¹¹¹ Lithuania, Seimas (1991), Law on Social Integration of the disabled (*Lietuvos Respublikos neįgaliųjų socialinės integracijos įstatymas*), No. I-2044, last amendment No. XIV-1722, 20 December 2022.

¹¹² Lithuania, Seimas (1991), Law on education (*Lietuvos Respublikos švietimo įstatymas*), No. I-1489, 25 June 1991, last amendment No. XIV-1263, 30 June 2022.

¹¹³ Lithuania, Seimas (1991), Law on Social Integration of the disabled (*Lietuvos Respublikos neįgaliųjų socialinės integracijos įstatymas*), No. I-2044, last amendment No. XIV-1722, 20 December 2022.

short-term respite, case management (coordination), psychology, education, social integration, nursing, day employment, day-care, and other services to families raising a child with disabilities (Article 95.2). The Government plans to increase the involvement of non-governmental organizations in the provision of social services. (Article 93.2).

The Implementation Plan of the provisions of the Eighteenth Programme of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania¹⁰² and 2021-2023 Action plan for Social Integration of Disabled Persons¹⁰³ foresee a series of measures for inclusive education and educational services in every school.

2021-2023 Action plan for social integration of disabled persons¹⁰⁴ foresees the continuity of the implementation of measures for the social integration of the disabled, implementation of new measures necessary to integrate the disabled in social life, to encourage state institutions to cooperate with non-governmental organizations working in the field of social integration of the disabled.

The 2021-2024 Action Plan for assistance to persons diagnosed with multiple developmental disabilities¹⁰⁵ approved by three ministers (Minister of Health, Minister of Education, Science, and Sport, and Minister of Social Security and Labour identify specific and focused attention,

and the Mandatory Health Insurance Fund, ensures the provision of education and equal participation in culture, sports and other events. (Article 5).

The Law stipulates that all disabled children must be educated, regardless of their level of disability. The disabled are taught in schools, considering their special educational needs, abilities, and physical and mental condition. (Article 12).

Cultural programs or projects implemented by disabled people's associations and other non-governmental organizations are funded by the State or municipal funds. A personal assistant who accompanies a disabled person to museums, galleries, etc., places of interest, cultural, entertainment, or sports events has the right to purchase a ticket with a 100 percent discount. (Article 15).

Article 14.6 of **the Law on Education¹¹⁴** stipulates that those students, who have learning difficulties or mental health impairments are entitled to individually tailored education. Students can complete formal education programs in a shorter or longer period than the prescribed time, can study with breaks, and can complete the programme in separate modules. Students with very severe disabilities can study in special classes of ordinary schools or special schools until the end of the school year until they turn 21 years old. If students with very severe disabilities have studied with breaks

¹⁰² Lithuania, Government (2021), Resolution on the Approval of the Implementation Plan of the provisions of the Eighteenth Programme of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania (*Dėl Aštuonioliktosios Lietuvos Respublikos Vyriausybės programos nuostatų įgyvendinimo plano patvirtinimo*), No. 155, 10 March 2021, Measure 1.2.11

¹⁰³ Lithuania, Ministry of Social Security and Labour (2022), On the approval of the 2021-2023 action plan for social integration of disabled persons (*Dėl Neįgalųjų socialinės integracijos 2021–2023 metų veiksmų plano patvirtinimo*), No. A1-817, 8 September 2020, last amendment No. A1-892, 28 December 2022.

¹⁰⁴ Lithuania, Ministry of Social Security and Labour (2022), On the approval of the 2021-2023 action plan for social integration of disabled persons (*Įsakymas Dėl Neįgalųjų socialinės integracijos 2021–2023 metų veiksmų plano patvirtinimo*), No. A1-817, 8 September 2020, last amendment No. A1-892, 28 December 2022.

¹⁰⁵ Lithuania, Minister of Health, Minister of Education, Science, and Sport, and Minister of Social Security and Labour, (Sveikatos ministras, Švietimo, mokslo ir sporto ministras, ir Socialinės apsaugos ir darbo ministras) (2020), Order on the approval of the 2021-2024 action plan for assistance to persons diagnosed with multiple developmental disabilities (*Įsakymas dėl pagalbos asmenims, kuriems diagnozuotas įvairiapusis raidos sutrikimas, 2021–2024 metų veiksmų plano patvirtinimo*), No. V-2875/V1946/A1-1254, 10 December 2020.

¹¹⁴ Lithuania, Seimas (1991), Law on Education (*Lietuvos Respublikos švietimo įstatymas*), No. I-1489, 25 June 1991, last amendment No. XIV-1263, 30 June 2022.

measures, reporting and services, especially early services for children, diagnosed with multiple developmental disorders, such as autism. The measures, for educational services, include the creation of the legal and social pre-conditions for educating children, assignment of teacher's assistants, development and introduction of methodological aid for professionals, and implementation of the day-care service for children with disorders. The plan also foresees equipping people with disabilities with technical means, such as sensory or communication enhancement, and similar technical means. The aim to tailor-adjust the living premises for people is indicated together with the implementation of special training for professionals in the field, including teachers and medical professionals.

2022-2023 Action plan for the prevention of domestic violence and the provision of assistance to victims¹⁰⁶

In the area of protection of children with disabilities, the Plan foresees increase in informing persons with disabilities about the activities of institutions providing specialized complex assistance.

National Action Plan for the Implementation of the Child Guarantee in Lithuania for 2023-2030¹⁰⁷

was adopted in 2023. The plan contains information about measures planned to be implemented in 2023-2030 to combat child poverty and social exclusion. The measures of the plan have been

due to the illness, they can study until the end of the school year until they turn 23.

Article 14.8 stipulates such students are entitled to special educational, psychological and medical services.

To provide specific and targeted support for students with disabilities, **Regional Special Education Centres¹¹⁵** have been established.

Regional Centres help the school communities effectively apply the inclusion principle in education in practice. Centres advise regional schools in various forms (mobile team consultation at the school, consultation at the Regional Centre, remote consultation, etc.). Regional Centres organize training for school principals and teachers or their assistants to increase their competencies and share practices and innovations on the ways, methods, or means for inclusive education.

Regional Centres also educate students with high and very high special educational needs on their premises.

¹⁰⁶ Lithuania, Minister of Social Security and Labour (Socialinės apsaugos ir darbo ministerstra) (2022), Order on the approval of the 2022-2023 Action plan for the prevention of domestic violence and the provision of assistance to victims (*Įsakymas Dėl smurto artimoje aplinkoje prevencijos ir pagalbos teikimo nukentėjusiems asmenims 2022–2023 metų veiksmų plano patvirtinimo*), No. A1-264, 11 April 2022, last amendment No. A1-111, 2 February 2023.

¹⁰⁷ Lithuania, Minister of Social Security and Labour, Minister of Health and Minister of Education, Science and Sport, Order on the approval of the action plan for the implementation of the child guarantee system in Lithuania for the years 2023-2030 (*Įsakymas dėl vaiko garantijų sistemos įgyvendinimo 2023–2030 metais Lietuvoje veiksmų plano patvirtinimo*), No A1-388/V-678/V-821, 13 June 2023.

¹¹⁵ Lithuania, Minister of Education, Science and Sport (2022), Order on the creation of regional special education centres and approval of their activity description (*Įsakymas Dėl regioninių specialiojo ugdymo centrų kūrimo ir jų veiklos aprašo patvirtinimo*), No. V-1597, 6 October 2022, last amendment No. V-1914, 5 December June 2022.

prepared considering the results of the in-dept studies conducted by international organizations and national institutions. The analysis examined policies, services, budgets, and mechanisms to address obstacles preventing children from accessing the services as well as unmet needs of children in five thematic areas of the Child Guarantee (early childhood education and care, free education, health, nutrition, and housing). The Lithuanian National Committee of the United Nations Children’s Fund and the UNICEF Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia were the main organizers and coordinators of the process.

UNICEF study “Basis for a European Child Guarantee Action Plan in Lithuania”¹⁰⁸ revealed the following problems related to children with disabilities in Lithuania:

Access to free early childhood education and care (ECEC) remains one of the biggest challenges especially for the youngest children. Due to the large group sizes in public ECEC centres and a lack of learning support specialists, there is also a lack of inclusion with regard to children with SEN (Special Education Needs) and disabilities.

Children with SEN and disabilities do not receive quality education due to teachers’ lack of knowledge about working with such children, as well as a lack of adapted methodology, and a lack of learning support specialists.

The study reveals other problematic issues as well.

1.4.3. Children in the context of migration

Specific thematic areas: unaccompanied-separated children from third countries and within the EU; children in undocumented – irregular migrant families; asylum seeking children; refugee children

Policy developments

Legislative developments

¹⁰⁸ UNICEF, [Basis for a European Child Guarantee Action Plan in Lithuania](#) UNICEF Europe and Central Asia Regional Office (ECARO), 2022, P.22.

State Emergency Management Plan.¹¹⁶

Article 15.5 of Annex 2 of the Plan indicates that in the event of a massive influx of foreigners, the Ministry of Social Security and Labour must organize the provision of social support for foreigners classified as vulnerable groups (including children) and mobilize the material and human resources necessary to accommodate these persons and organize the Lithuanian Red Cross Society and other NGOs to provide social services to foreigners. Article 15.5 specifies, that the Ministry of Education, Science, and Sports must coordinate the education of foreigners according to the kindergarten, preschool, and general school education programs, or vocational training programs.

2023-2025 Strategic plan of the Ministry of Social Security and Labour of the Republic of Lithuania¹¹⁷

The Ministry of Social Security and Labour of the Republic of Lithuania envisages, among other activities, the guarantee for institutional social care for unaccompanied minor foreigners or children left without parental care who arrived from a foreign country affected by a humanitarian crisis, to provide support for the integration of foreigners, to create conditions for the activities of the Refugee Reception Centre, and to implement the measures

Law on Fundamental of Protection of the Rights of the Child, No. I-1234.¹¹⁹

Article 22 stipulates, that a child who is an asylum seeker or who has been granted refugee status or additional protection, or an unaccompanied foreign minor has the right to assistance and protection. The authorities must search for the parents, relatives, or other natural or legal persons of an unaccompanied foreign minor to whom he/she can be transferred. The search for relatives is carried out considering the best interests of a child as well as the protection of a child, protection of child's rights must be ensured.

The provisions of the **Law on Social Services** were amended in 2022. The provisions indicate the possibility for social care institutions to get a licence for providing social care to unaccompanied minors and foreign minors left without parental care from states where a humanitarian crisis has occurred, by a simplified procedure.¹²⁰ In addition to that, the Law specifies that such social care is financed from the state budget.¹²¹

The Law on the Legal Status of Foreigners¹²²

The Law was amended after the Russia's war against Ukraine, but it applies to all unaccompanied children. According to Article 32 (1), a representative is immediately appointed to unaccompanied foreign children (temporary

¹¹⁶ Lithuania, Government (2010), Resolution on the approval of the State emergency management plan (*Nutarimas dėl valstybinio ekstremaliųjų situacijų valdymo plano patvirtinimo*), No. 1503, 10 October 2010, last amendment No. 583, 28 July 2021.

¹¹⁷ Lithuania, Minister of Social Security and Labour (Socialinės apsaugos ir darbo ministerstra) (2022), Order on the approval of the 2023-2025 Strategic Plan of the Ministry of Social Security and Labour of the Republic of Lithuania (*Įsakymas dėl Lietuvos Respublikos Socialinės apsaugos ir darbo ministerijos 2023—2025 metų strateginio veiklos plano patvirtinimo*), No. A1-32, 24 January 2023.

¹¹⁹ Lithuania, Seimas (1996). Law on Fundamentals of Protection of the Rights of the Child (*Lietuvos Respublikos Vaiko teisių apsaugos pagrindų įstatymas*), No. I-1234, 14 March 1996, last amendment No. XIV-1512 10 November 2022.

¹²⁰ Lithuania, Seimas (2006), Law on Social Services (*Lietuvos Respublikos socialinių paslaugų įstatymas*), No. X-493, last amendment No. XIV-952, 17 March 2022, Art. 23 (1¹).

¹²¹ Lithuania, Seimas (2006), Law on Social Services (*Lietuvos Respublikos socialinių paslaugų įstatymas*), No. X-493, last amendment No. XIV-952, 17 March 2022, Art. 34 (5¹).

¹²² Lithuania, Seimas (2004) Law on the Legal Status of Foreigners (*Lietuvos Respublikos įstatymas dėl užsieniečių teisinės padėties*). No. IX-2206, 29 April 2004, last amendment No. XIV-1593, 27 November 2022.

indicated in the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund Program.¹¹⁸

guardianship (curatorship) is established), during their stay in the territory of Lithuania regardless of the legality of their presence. The representative is appointed by the order of the mayor of the municipality On the Establishment of Temporary Guardianship (Curatorship) of the child.

The Law also contains other important changes. In a state of war, a state of emergency, or an emergency has been declared due to a mass influx of foreigners, the procedure on the establishment of the legal representative (temporary guardian (curator)) to the unaccompanied child is simpler and faster than ordinary procedure on the establishment of child's temporary guardianship (curatorship).

The data about all migrants are stored in MIGRIS – Lithuanian Migration Information System, administered by the Migration Department. Each person who arrived in Lithuania is registered by the Migration Department. MIGRIS collects data on the age of each person who arrived, so it is known how many minors have arrived in Lithuania.

All unaccompanied foreign minors, regardless of the legality of their presence on the territory of Lithuania, have the following rights (Law on the Legal Status of Foreigners, Article 32(4)):

- To be provided with living space and subsistence free of charge;
- To study according to the kindergarten, preschool, and general school education or formal vocational training programs. The right to study must be ensured no later than by the end of 3rd month after the discovery of a child;
- To receive free health care and free medicines;
- To receive social services free of charge;
- To receive free legal aid;
- To contact national or international NGOs.

The list of rights is not exhaustive. The Law states that unaccompanied minors have other rights

¹¹⁸ Lithuania, Minister of Social Security and Labour (Socialinės apsaugos ir darbo ministerstra) (2022), Order on the approval of the 2023-2025 Strategic Plan of the Ministry of Social Security and Labour of the Republic of Lithuania (*Įsakymas dėl Lietuvos Respublikos Socialinės apsaugos ir darbo ministerijos 2023–2025 metų strateginio veiklos plano patvirtinimo*), No. A1-32, 24 January 2023, Article 6 of the Progress task No. 2.2. of the Programme 09-003.

guaranteed under international treaties or other national laws.

Social services are provided to unaccompanied foreign minors who have received permission to live permanently or temporarily in the territory of Lithuania by the Law on Social Services. (Article 32 (5)).

The Migration Department, upon receiving information about an unaccompanied foreign minor, must immediately organize a search for child's family members and within 2 days issue a Certificate on person's registration (Article 32 (6)).

Unaccompanied foreign minors who are not asylum seekers are accommodated by the decision of the State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service in accordance with the procedure established by the Minister of Social Security and Labour, the Minister of the Interior and the Minister of Health.

The Procedure for Determining the Age, Accommodation, and other Procedural Actions of Unaccompanied Minor Foreigners who are not Asylum Seekers¹²³

The Description regulates the procedure for questioning, determining the age, finding family members or other legal representatives, appointing a representative and termination of representation, placing them in the Refugee Reception Centre, providing health care services, and determining the legal status of unaccompanied minor foreigners who are not asylum seekers.

Regarding children who arrived in Lithuania with parents or guardians the **Law on the Legal Status of Foreigners¹²⁴** has not been changed. Children, the same as adults, who fled the war in Ukraine can come and settle in Lithuania under the temporary protection status. Their rights are ensured through

¹²³ Lithuania, Minister of Social Security and Labour, Minister of Interior, and Minister of Health, (Socialinės apsaugos ir darbo ministras, Vidaus reikalų ministras Sveikatos apsaugos ministras) (2014) Oder on the approval of the Procedure for determining the age, accommodation and other procedural actions of unaccompanied minor foreigners who are not asylum seekers in the Republic of Lithuania (*Įsakymas dėl Lietuvos Respublikoje nustatytų nelydimų nepilnamečių užsieniečių, kurie nėra prieglobsčio prašytojai, amžiaus nustatymo, apgyvendinimo ir kitų procedūrinių veiksmų tvarkos aprašo patvirtinimo*), No. A1-229/1V-289/V-491, 23 April 2014, last amendment No. A1-538/1V-780/V-1067, 18 September 2019.

¹²⁴ Lithuania, Seimas (2004) Law on the Legal Status of Foreigners (*Lietuvos Respublikos įstatymas dėl užsieniečių teisinės padėties*). No. IX-2206, 29 April 2004, last amendment No. XIV-1593, 27 November 2022.

	<p>guarantees given to their parents or guardians (curators). They have following rights (Article 94):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Free accommodation in State and municipality buildings or places voluntarily provided by the private person. • To receive free health care specified in the Law on Health and free medicines if it is provided for in legal acts. • To receive social services in accordance with the conditions provided for in legal acts. • Children can study in general schools and participate in vocational trainings with the conditions provided for in legal acts. • To receive monetary allowances if needed, benefits for children, funeral allowance, targeted compensation of the costs of nursing and care (assistance), welfare payment. • To receive monetary support for the integration into society (one-time payment for settlement, monthly payment for essential needs, assistance in paying for a child's education). • To receive compensation for a purchase or renting the housing in accordance with the procedure established by the Law. • To receive a one-time payment for a child and a monthly payment for a child, if one of the child's parents (adoptive parents), guardian (curator) or the child has been granted temporary protection.
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1.4.4. Children in alternative care

Specific thematic areas: residential – institutional care; foster care; adoption (including international adoption)

Policy developments	Legislative developments
<p>The Programme of the 18th Government of the Republic of Lithuania¹²⁵</p>	<p>The child rights protection has undergone essential changes in 2018. The legal acts were amended additionally in 2020, establishing additional mechanisms related to children protection. In 2018,</p>

¹²⁵ Lithuania, Seimas (2020), Decision on the Programme of the 18th Government of the Republic of Lithuania (*Nutarimas dėl Aštuonioliktos Lietuvos Respublikos Vyriasybės programos*), No. XIV-72, 11 December 2020.

In the Program, the Government plans to expand and strengthen non-institutional care and improve the activities of guardians on-call Article 103.4).

The Programme emphasizes that human rights violations are not tolerated in mental care institutions. (Article 113.2)

The Government is also committed to subsidizing the purchase of childcare services for working, lower-income parents and other legal representatives of the child. (Article 103.4)

The Government undertakes to expand and strengthen foster care and adoption. This will be done by offering supportive measures to guardians (curators), adoptive parents, and children growing up in their families. The Government is committed to strengthening the quality of the Foster Care Centres' work and increasing the competencies of specialists working in these centres. Measures for the development of community-based children care homes will be implemented to ensure specialised assistance for children considering their special needs. The government undertakes to expand services of guardians on-call and improve the guardians' (curators') readiness and to look after not only younger children but also teenagers, children with behavioural problems, disabled children, etc. (Article 103.6)

the child's rights protection system was centralized.¹²⁸ Since 1 July 2018, the function of child rights protection has been transferred from municipalities (municipal child rights protection units) to the State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour. The Service has become the central institution of the Republic of Lithuania, implementing the child's rights protection policy, and has received the authority to ensure the coordination of actions related to children's rights in all sectors at the national, municipal, and local levels.¹²⁹ State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service has its territorial units in all 60 municipalities of Lithuania. Also, it is important that since 1 July 2018 child rights protection specialists reacts to the reports on possible violations of the child rights 24/7, including all holidays, weekends etc., without any exceptions¹³⁰.

Another important change is the fact that since 1 July 2018, decisions of the child rights protection specialists to remove the child from his/her family must be approved by the court. If the State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service has identified a real and immediate threat to the physical or mental safety, life or health of the child, has removed the child from the family and placed the child in a safe place, it shall apply to the court within 3 business days for permission to remove the child from his/her representatives under the law.¹³¹

¹²⁸ Lithuania, Seimas (2000), Civil Code (*Lietuvos Respublikos Civilinis kodeksas*), No. VIII-1864, 18 July 2000, last amendment No. XIV-1435, 29 September 2022, Art. 3.250 and further.

¹²⁹ Lithuania, Seimas (1996). Law on Fundamentals of Protection of the Rights of the Child (*Lietuvos Respublikos Vaiko teisių apsaugos pagrindų įstatymas*), No. I-1234, 14 March 1996, last amendment No. XIV-1512 10 November 2022, Art. 50.

¹³⁰ Lithuania, Seimas (1996). Law on Fundamentals of Protection of the Rights of the Child (*Lietuvos Respublikos Vaiko teisių apsaugos pagrindų įstatymas*), No. I-1234, 14 March 1996, last amendment No. XIV-1512 10 November 2022, Art. 50(1)(2).

¹³¹ Lithuania, Seimas (2000), Civil Code (*Lietuvos Respublikos Civilinis kodeksas*), No. VIII-1864, 18 July 2000, last amendment No. XIV-1435, 29 September 2022, Art. 3.254¹ (2).

The Family Policy Strengthening Development Program¹²⁶ threat to

The Program foresees increasement of the support to children in guardianship (curatorship) to ensure the fulfilment of the most essential needs (nutrition, health care, education). The Ministry will also seek to strengthen the implementation and protection of children's rights. In this measure, a model of the strengthening of the competences of child rights protection specialists will be developed, the competences and responsibilities of specialists in various fields (education, health, social, justice, culture) will be increased in relation to the implementation of children's rights, and continuous and consistent awareness raising activities on child's rights will be carried out.

The Program underlines that it is important to expand and strengthen the services provided to guardians/adoptive parents, since they do not receive all quality and necessary services on time, often they do not have the opportunity to properly take care of their emotional state and do not have adequate knowledge on how to react to child's challenging behaviour, how to correct it, or strengthen the relationship with child. As a result they do not get an emotional satisfaction on helping child grow and face constant challenges. There is a danger to the guardian/adoptive parent to be burned out. Then the guardian /adoptive parent no longer is able to fulfil the needs of the fostered/adopted child, no longer maintains a

To ensure the unified tool for the assessment of the possible violations of the rights of the child, Description of the Procedure for the Establishment of the Criteria of the Levels of Threat to the Child and Determination of the Level of Threat to the Child was approved by the Minister of Social Security and Labour in 2018¹³². Different threat levels were described in the mentioned documents and the intensity of the measures to be applied depending on the level of the threat to child in the family. When a second threat level was identified in the family, a child was required to be removed from the family in all cases. With time, it was decided, that threat levels put too much focus only on the risks indicated in the family, but do not take into consideration other aspects of child's situation, such as family's and child's strengths and similar. Therefore, in 2020 Description of the Procedure for the Establishment of the Criteria of the Levels of Threat to the Child and Determination of the Level of Threat to the Child was abolished. New tool for the assessment of the possible violations of the rights of the child was developed and approved by the Minister of Social Security and Labour – Description of the Assessment of the Child's Situation¹³³. According to this description, child rights protection specialists must assess the whole situation of the child, taking into account all important aspects, not only the identified risks.

Additional new child protection measures were introduced too, such as child's temporary

¹²⁶ Lithuania, Government (2021), Resolution on the Approval of the Development programme for family policy strengthening, governed by the Ministry of Social Security and Labour, which is the Manager of the Development Programme for 2021-2030 (*Dėl 2021–2030 metų Plėtros programos valdytojos Lietuvos Respublikos socialinės apsaugos ir darbo ministerijos Šeimos politikos stiprinimo plėtros programos patvirtinimo*), No. 930, 10 November 2021.

¹³² Lithuania, Ministry of Social Security and Labour (2018), Regarding the approval of the Description of the Procedure for the Establishment of the Criteria of the Levels of Threat to the Child and Determination of the Level of Threat to the Child (*Dėl Grėsmės vaikui lygių kriterijų ir grėsmės vaikui lygio nustatymo tvarkos aprašo patvirtinimo*), No. A1-221, 21 May 2018, no longer in force.

¹³³ Lithuania, Ministry of Social Security and Labour (2019), Regarding the approval of the Description of the Assessment of the Child's Situation (*Dėl Vaiko situacijos vertinimo tvarkos aprašo patvirtinimo*), No. A1-803, 30 December 2019, last amendment No. A1-254, 19 April 2023.

secure connection with child, sometimes out of desperation, violates the child's rights. This can lead to the breakdown of the foster care or adoption. In such situations, some of the children from foster/adoptive families are at the risk to be placed again in the children care institutions, or a new family must be found for them, thus retraumatizing the child who has already experienced a loss and the child again experiences the feeling of insecurity because of constant changes in child's life.¹²⁷

Five Lithuanian institutions - the General Prosecutor's Office, the Police Department, the Ministry of Social Security and Labour, The Office of the Ombudsperson of Child's Rights, and the State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service signed a **Cooperation agreement** in 28/06/2018, where among other commitments is foreseen that the prosecutor's offices and the police are committed to undertake to apply to the Service within 5 days, when due to the criminal act, it is necessary to resolve urgently the issue of custody and care of the child, as well as when the pre-trial investigation reveals that a child may have suffered from a guardian (curator) or the improper performance of the duties of such a person.

supervision without limiting parental rights¹³⁴. Child's temporary supervision can be established when there is a child protection need – it can be established in the family of child's relatives, a person related to the child emotionally or other person, indicated by child's parents (except cases when there is a need to remove the child from the biological family immediately due to the real danger to the child's physical or mental safety, which may cause significant damage to the child's health or threaten his life). If parents do not specify a person with whom child's temporary supervision could be established, child rights protection specialists can also make a decision to place a child at the social services institution providing social care, together with the child's legal representative or one of them who does not endanger the child's physical and mental security.

Furthermore, the mobile teams were introduced in 2018. The mobile team consists of at least two different professionals - a psychologist and/or a social worker and/or a crisis management specialist. Its main function is to help families in crisis to help manage the crisis, identify and (re)solve the problems, so that the parents or the available single parent can ensure that the child's needs are met, and so that the child can develop and live in a safe environment.¹³⁵

The concept of guardianship (curatorship) in the Civil Code of Lithuania has been updated. The amendments introduced the principle of stability of

¹²⁷ Lithuania, Government (2021), Resolution on the Approval of the Development programme for strengthening of family policy, governed by the Ministry of Social Security and Labour, which is the Manager of the Development Programme for 2021-2030 (*Dėl 2021–2030 metų Plėtros programos valdytojos Lietuvos Respublikos socialinės apsaugos ir darbo ministerijos Šeimos politikos stiprinimo plėtros programos patvirtinimo*), No. 930, 10 November 2021.

¹³⁴ Lithuania, Seimas (1996). Law on Fundamentals of Protection of the Rights of the Child (*Lietuvos Respublikos Vaiko teisių apsaugos pagrindų įstatymas*), No. I-1234, 14 March 1996, last amendment No. XIV-1512 10 November 2022, Art. 36⁴.

¹³⁵ Lithuania, Ministry of Social Security and Labour (2018). Regarding the formation of mobile teams, the selection of specialists and the approval of their work rules (*Dėl Mobilijų komandų sudarymo, specialistų atrankos ir jų darbo tvarkos aprašo patvirtinimo*), No. A1-334, 27 June 2018, last amendments No. A1-769, 22 November 2022.

the environment of a child and of the place of guardianship (curatorship).¹³⁶

The amendments (of 2017 and 2018) of the Civil Code change the provisions on the term of temporary guardianship (curatorship) and limit the time for temporary guardianship (curatorship) to 12 months¹³⁷ and the extension to 6 months.¹³⁸ It is established in the Civil Code that the temporary guardianship (curatorship) may last for a period not longer than 12 months, with a possibility to extend it by 6 months in cases where there is a possibility to return a child to his/her family and additional assistance for the family is needed, but in no cases may this term exceed 18 months.¹³⁹

Furthermore, in addition to the existing forms of guardianship (curatorship) (in a foster family, in a social family (foster care-based household), in a children care institution (in this case, in the community-based children care homes)) the new form - child care in the Foster Care Centre was established in 2017. Foster Care Centres are the legal representative of the child, but the child is placed in the family of a guardian on-call, who is a professional foster parent taking care of the child in a family-based environment.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁶ Lithuania, Seimas (2000), Civil code (*Lietuvos Respublikos Civilinis kodeksas*), No. VIII-1864, 18 July 2000, last amendment No. XIV-1435, 29 September 2022.

¹³⁷ Lithuania, Seimas (2015), Law on Amendments to Articles 3.249, 3.253 and 3.261 of the Civil Code of the Republic of Lithuania (*Lietuvos Respublikos civilinio kodekso 3.249, 3.253 ir 3.261 straipsnių pakeitimo įstatymas*), No. XII-1879, 25 June 2015 (came into force from 1 January 2017).

¹³⁸ Lithuania, Seimas (2018), Law No. XIII-645 amending Articles 3.3, 3.153, 3.212, 3.217, 3.219, 3.224, 3.253, 3.254, 3.259, 3.260, 3.261, 3.269 of the Civil Code of the Republic of Lithuania, declaring Article 3.220 of the Civil Code as null and void, and amending Law No. XIII-645 on the Supplement to the Civil Code with Article 3.254-1 (*Lietuvos Respublikos civilinio kodekso 3.3, 3.153, 3.212, 3.217, 3.219, 3.224, 3.253, 3.254, 3.259, 3.260, 3.261, 3.269 straipsnių pakeitimo, 3.220 straipsnio pripažinimo netekusiu galios ir Kodekso papildymo 3.254-1 straipsniu įstatymo Nr. XIII-645 pakeitimo įstatymas*), No. XIII-1290, 26 June 2018.

¹³⁹ Lithuania, Seimas (2000), Civil Code (*Lietuvos Respublikos Civilinis kodeksas*), No. VIII-1864, 18 July 2000, last amendment No. XIV-1435, 29 September 2022, Art. 3.253.

¹⁴⁰ Lithuania, Seimas (2000), Civil Code (*Lietuvos Respublikos Civilinis kodeksas*), No. VIII-1864, 18 July 2000, last amendment No. XIV-1435, 29 September 2022, Art. 3.252.

The care of a child in a children care institution is possible only in exceptional cases when it is not possible to care for him/her in a family or in a social family. Furthermore, guardianship of a child under the age of 3 may be established in a children care institution only in exceptional cases, upon approval of the State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service. The exceptional situation exists¹⁴¹ when:

- 1) The child needs specialised health care and/or nursing services, the provision of which cannot be ensured in a foster family, in a social family (foster care-based household) or Foster Care Centre.
- 2) Separating the child from siblings would violate the child's best interests.
- 3) Guardianship (curatorship) must be established due to the urgent removal of a child from his/her legal representatives and there is no possibility to establish guardianship (curatorship) of a child in a foster family, a social family, or a Foster care centre.
- 4) Separation of a child from his/her minor parents, who are under the care of a children care institution, would violate the child's best interests.

The amendments of the Civil Code (2017 and 2018) establish the priorities who should be appointed as child guardian (curator), considering to the best interests of the child. The list is as follows:¹⁴²

- 1) relatives;
- 2) persons related to the child by emotional ties;
- 3) families who are already guardians (curators) of the child's brother(s) and/or sister(s);
- 4) other families;
- 5) Foster Care Centres (placements in the families of guardians on-call);
- 6) social families;
- 7) children care institutions (it is important to note that old type of institutions can operate in Lithuania only until the end of 2023. Since 1 January 2024, the only possible institutions for children will be of a

¹⁴¹ Lithuania, Seimas (2000), Civil Code (*Lietuvos Respublikos Civilinis kodeksas*), No. VIII-1864, 18 July 2000, last amendment No. XIV-1435, 29 September 2022, Art. 3.261.

¹⁴² Lithuania, Seimas (2000), Civil Code (*Lietuvos Respublikos Civilinis kodeksas*), No. VIII-1864, 18 July 2000, last amendment No. XIV-1435, 29 September 2022, Art. 3.264 (5).

new type, i.e., community-based children care institutions).¹⁴³

The **Civil Code was changed further** on 28 March 2023. The functions of appointing temporary guardians from the head of administration of the municipality to the mayor of municipality and more stringent requirements for the persons willing to adopt were established.¹⁴⁴

Regarding **financial support to guardians** (curators), from 2022 the guardianship allowance was increased approximately 1,5 times (in relation to regulation prior 2022) and was differentiated according to the age of the child in guardianship (curatorship).¹⁴⁵ Presently it amounts to 254,8 Eur to 318,5 Eur a month (in addition, the guardians receive a targeted supplement of 196 Eur a month).¹⁴⁶

The **Law on Social families was revised** in November 2022.¹⁴⁷ The law was revised in order to clarify the procedure for setting up a social family and ensure clarity and consistency in the legal regulation of social families; to improve the legal regulation of the social families; to encourage the establishment of as many social families as possible so that children without parental care can grow up in a more family-like environment, this was done by

¹⁴³ Lithuania, Ministry of Social Security and Labour (2022), On the approval of the 2014-2023 action plan for the transition from institutional care to family and community-based services for disabled children and children left without parental care ([Dėl Perėjimo nuo institucinės globos prie šeimoje ir bendruomenėje teikiamų paslaugų neįgaliesiems ir likusiems be tėvų globos vaikams 2014–2023 metų veiksmų plano patvirtinimo](#)), No. A1-83, 14 February 2014, last amendment No. A1-1211, 7 December 2020.

¹⁴⁴ Lithuania, Seimas (2023). Law on Amendments to Articles 3.210, 3.241, 3.246, 3.250, 3.260, 3.262, 3.264 and 3.266 of the Civil Code of the Republic of Lithuania (Lietuvos Respublikos civilinio kodekso 3.210, 3.241, 3.246, 3.250, 3.260, 3.262, 3.264 ir 3.266 straipsnių pakeitimo įstatymas). No. XIV-1838, 28 March 2023.

¹⁴⁵ Lithuania, Seimas (2021). Law amending Articles 6, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 17, 18, 19, 21 and the Annex to the Law of the Republic of Lithuania on Child Benefits No. I-621 ([Lietuvos Respublikos išmokų vaikams įstatymo Nr. I-621 6, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 17, 18, 19, 21 straipsnių ir priedo pakeitimo įstatymas](#)), No. XIV-720, 7 December 2021.

¹⁴⁶ Lithuania, Ministry of Social Security and Labour (2023). I'm a guardian of a child: what am I entitled to? ([Globoju vaiką: kas man priklauso?](#)), 1 February 2023.

¹⁴⁷ Lithuania, Seimas (2022), Law amending the Law of the Republic of Lithuania No XI-681 on Social Families ([Lietuvos Respublikos šeimynų įstatymo Nr. XI-681 pakeitimo įstatymas](#)), No. XIV-1511, 10 November 2022.

increasing the income of the social families to meet their needs.

New measures were introduced in the field of helping children who were in **alternative care** to start their **independent adult life**. The Ministry of Social Security and Labour, by order No. A1-810 of November 15, 2021, has included the **Accompaniment service** for young people in the Catalogue of social services.¹⁴⁸

Accompaniment service for young people is a set of interrelated services and/or measures that are provided in order to help young recipients of the accompaniment service adapt to the social environment, develop their abilities to solve emerging social and other problems, i.e. to facilitate the social integration in the community of the recipients of this accompaniment service for young people.¹⁴⁹

Regarding strengthening the incentives for adoption, in March 2017 the **Law on Sickness and Maternity Social Insurance** of the Republic of Lithuania was updated to allow adoptive parents to take maternity and paternity leave on the same conditions that parents can.¹⁵⁰

In the Service's Annual activity report for 2022, it is noted that since the start of military operations in Ukraine, 2110 unaccompanied minor foreign citizens from Ukraine have arrived in the Republic of Lithuania.¹⁵¹ (Note: the number is 750 in 20 July 2023). Pursuant to Article 32 (1) of the Law of the Republic of Lithuania on the Legal Status of

¹⁴⁸ Lithuania, State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service (2022). *Annual Report of 2021*. 31 March 2022.

¹⁴⁹ Lithuania, Ministry of Social Security and Labour (2006). Regarding the Approval of the Catalogue of Social Services (*Dėl Socialinių paslaugų katalogo patvirtinimo*). No. A1-93, 5 April 2006, last amendment No. A1-451, 30 June 2022.

¹⁵⁰ Lithuania, Seimas (2017). Law amending Articles 5, 20, 22, 23 and 24 of the Law on Sickness and Maternity Social Insurance of the Republic of Lithuania No. IX-110 (*Lietuvos Respublikos ligos ir motinystės socialinio draudimo įstatymo Nr. IX-110 5, 20, 22, 23 ir 24 straipsnių pakeitimo įstatymas*), No. XIII-245, 30 March 2017.

¹⁵¹ Lithuania, State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service (2023), Annual activity report for 2022 (*2022 m. Veiklos ataskaita*), No 5-1, 31 March 2023, p. 56.

	<p>Foreigners, unaccompanied Ukrainian minors were immediately assigned temporary guardianship (curatorship) during their stay on the territory of the Republic of Lithuania. During 2022, 2918 decisions on temporary guardianship (curatorship) were taken in Lithuania, of which 2110 were for unaccompanied foreign minors who arrived from Ukraine.¹⁵²</p> <p>In accordance with the Regulations on the organization of child guardianship (curatorship)¹⁵³, the State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service carries out the supervision of temporary and permanent guardianship (curatorship).</p> <p>The Service noted that during the supervision of unaccompanied foreign minors, who came from children houses in Ukraine fleeing the armed conflict, it was established that the children have adapted to the Republic of Lithuania, and their rights and interests are ensured.¹⁵⁴</p>
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1.4.5. Children affected by custody disputes, including parental abduction

Policy developments	Legislative developments
<p>The State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service has issued a review of the practice and</p>	<p>The Civil Procedure Code¹⁵⁶ sets the procedure for the transfer of children specified in the court decision. During the transfer of the child, protection of the child's rights is ensured. (Article 764)</p> <p>If a child is not transferred within the time limit set in the court decision or the bailiff's demand, the bailiff shall issue an order regarding the procedure for executing the decision. The procedure is determined after considering the</p>

¹⁵² Lithuania, State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service (2023), Annual activity report for 2022 (2022 m. Veiklos ataskaita), No 5-1, 31 March 2023, p. 56.

¹⁵³ Lithuania, Government (2002). Regarding the approval of the regulations for the organization of child guardianship (*Dėl Vaiko globos organizavimo nuostatų patvirtinimo*). No. 405, 27 March 2002, last amendments No. 1313, 29 December 2022, Art. 72.

¹⁵⁴ An email from State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service, dated 27 April 2023.

¹⁵⁶ Lithuania, Seimas (2002), Civil procedure code of the Republic of Lithuania (*Lietuvos Respublikos Civilinio proceso kodeksas*), No. IX-743, 28 February 2002, last amendment No. XIV-1748, 22 December 2022

actions of the Service in cases of execution of decisions in civil procedure.¹⁵⁵

The review discussed the execution of a decision obliging a person to allow a separated father (mother) to communicate with a child and the cooperation of the bailiff and the territorial units of the State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service in this matter.

In practice, after the adoption of a court decision on the procedure of communication with a child, individuals usually do not address the bailiff, but the Service or its' territorial units. It should be noted that the Service is not an institution that supervises the execution of the court decisions and the Service, or its territorial units are not given the right by the law to participate in the enforcement of the court decision without a bailiff.

The bailiff, before carrying out coercive actions, warns the Service/its' territorial unit, whose main duty is to ensure the rights and best interests of children in the execution of the court decision (Art. 764(6) of the Civil Procedure Code). The bailiff on his own initiative, notifies the Service/its' territorial unit about the execution process, asks for information about the family and invites the child rights protection specialist to participate in the execution process.

In some cases, a child, who can express his/her opinion, does not agree to meet with a father (mother) who does not live together or refuses to return from a meeting with a parent. In this situation, the bailiff may face difficulties in ensuring the execution of the court decision.

In such case, in order to protect the interests of a child, the bailiff invites child rights protection specialist and/or a psychologist to provide an opinion about the continuity of the enforcement of

recommendations of the state institution for the protection of a child's rights, a police representative and a psychologist. (Article 764 (1).

During the transfer of the child, the person to whom the child is transferred and the representative of the state institution for the protection of the child's rights are present. At the request of any of the parties to the process or the representative of the state institution for the protection of the child's rights, or at the decision of the bailiff, a psychologist participates in the execution process. (Article 764 (2).

If the bailiff's order regarding the handover of the child is not implemented, the court may, at the bailiff's request, grant permission to take the child by force. (Article 764 (3)).

During the forced transfer of a child, the police representatives remove the obstacles, and the representatives of the state institution for the protection of the child's rights take the child and hand it over to the collector. (Article 764 (4)).

The changes to the Civil code¹⁵⁷ regarding the establishment of child's living place indicate that the rights and obligations of father and mother to their children are equal. Parents have equal rights and responsibilities for their children, regardless of whether a child was born to married or unmarried parents, after their marriage was dissolved, declared invalid by a court, or when the parents live separately, regardless of whether child's place of residence is determined by a court decision with one of the parents. Art. 3.174 indicates that the child's father, mother, as well as parents, guardians (curators) of child parents who do not have full legal capacity can apply to the court for determining the child's place of residence. The court resolves the dispute based on the interests of the child, taking into account the child's opinion. The child's opinion may be disregarded only if the child's opinion is against his/her interests.

¹⁵⁵ Lithuania, State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service (2019). Regarding the review of the practice and actions of territorial child rights protection units of the State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service in execution process (*Dėl apžvalgos dėl Valstybės vaiko teisių apsaugos ir įvaikinimo tarnybos prie Socialinės apsaugos ir darbo ministerijos teritorinių vaiko teisių apsaugos skyrių praktikos ir veiksmų vykdymo procese patirtinimo*). No. BV-374, 31 December 2019. Available at <https://www.antstoliurumai.lt/get.php?f.1303>

¹⁵⁷ Lithuania, Seimas (2000), Civil Code (*Lietuvos Respublikos Civilinis kodeksas*), No. VIII-1864, 18 July 2000, last amendment No. XIV-1435, 29 September 2022,

the court decision. In such case, child rights protection specialist, after assessing the circumstances and listening to the child opinion, makes a recommendation on how to deal with the situation in the best interests of the child.

When person keeps a child with him/her in contrary to the law or a court decision and does not hand over a child to the parent with whom the child's place of residence is established, the territorial unit of the Service helps the parent to get the child back. Forms of help: counselling, mediating, explaining to the person who keeps the child contrary with the law or the court decision the obligation to obey the court decision, etc. In each case, the child rights protection specialist takes priority to the best interests of child.

"Taking and transfer" means the transfer of the child to the parent with whom the child's place of residence has been established without violation of the child rights and with ensuring his/her best interests. Only the bailiff has the right to perform the transfer and establish the fact that transfer is finished. Before handing over the child, it is important to discuss the organization of the child's transfer with the bailiff considering the child's age, the attitude of the parties to the enforcement process and other.

The right to take a minor child whose permanent place of residence is in the Republic of Lithuania to a foreign country for permanent residence belongs to the parent with whom the child's place of residence is established, only after receiving the written consent of the second parent. If the second parent refuses to give this consent, the dispute is decided by the court. If the circumstances change or one of the parents, with whom the child's place of residence is determined, gives the child up to be raised and live together with other persons, the persons specified above may file a repeated claim for the determination of the child's place of residence.

The Civil Procedure Code¹⁵⁸ indicates (Article 406) that in case regarding the limitation of parental authority, the court must send a certified copy of the decision to the State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service within three working days after the court decision to limit the authority of parents (or one of them) comes into effect. If the court approves the lawsuit regarding the restriction of parental authority, the issue of the child's place of residence is resolved for the period until the court decision establishing child guardianship (curatorship) takes effect. The temporary guardianship (curatorship) is established with the person or child guardianship (curatorship) institution specified in the lawsuit or in the conclusion of the State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service. If there is no consent from the State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service to transfer the child to the person or children care institution specified in the lawsuit, the court obliges the State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service to take care of the child's living and sustenance conditions. Furthermore, in Art. 407, the Civil Procedure Code stipulates that, when deciding to limit the authority of parents, the court also determines the child's place of residence in the same decision until the court decision on determining the guardianship (curatorship) the child enters into force.

1.4.6. Missing children

¹⁵⁸ Lithuania, Seimas (2002), Civil procedure code of the Republic of Lithuania (*Lietuvos Respublikos Civilinio proceso kodeksas*), No. IX-743, 28 February 2002, last amendment No. XIV-1748, 22 December 2022

Policy developments	Legislative developments
<p>Five Lithuanian institutions - the General Prosecutor's Office, the Police Department, the Ministry of Social Security and Labour, The Office of the Ombudsperson of Child's Rights, and the State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service signed a cooperation agreement in 28/06/2018, where, among other obligations, prosecutor's offices, police, and the Service undertake to inform each other about the fact that a minor is missing. The Service undertakes to inform the police on the day of the child's disappearance. Other actions of these institutions (algorithm of actions) related to the cases of missing children was additionally established in this agreement as well.</p>	<p>The Criminal Code of the Republic of Lithuania is the basis of starting pre-trial investigations into the instances of children who had gone missing. This could have features of criminal activity of trafficking in human beings, hostage taking and other crimes. Therefore, in every instance the pretrial procedure is started upon the report of a child gone missing.¹⁵⁹</p> <p>Description of the Assessment of the Child's Situation¹⁶⁰ determines the procedure for assessing the possible violations of the rights of the child.</p> <p>Article 14 of the Description states that when, during the assessment of child's situation, the location of a child is not known or, upon arrival at the place specified in the report of possible violation of child's rights, the child is not found, the Service or its territorial unit takes steps to find out the circumstances of the child's disappearance (talks with the child's legal representatives, neighbours, child's relatives, or other subjects who may know the child's whereabouts or have important information about it), and in the event of suspicions that the child is missing and/or there may be a threat to his/her health and/or life, or that a child is or may be in an unsafe environment, child rights protection specialists must orally or in writing by any means of communication, apply to the police with a request to organize a search, indicating the child's name, date of birth, available data about the circumstances of child's disappearance (for example, when the child was last seen, the persons who last saw the child said, etc.).</p>

¹⁵⁹ Lithuania, Seimas (2002), Criminal procedure code (*Lietuvos Respublikos Baudžiamojo proceso kodeksas*), No. IX-785, 14 March 2002, amendment No. XIII-2335, 16 July 2019; Lithuania, Seimas (2000). Criminal Code (*Lietuvos Respublikos baudžiamasis kodeksas*). No. VIII-1968, 26 September 2000, last amendment No. XIV-2152, 4 July 2023.

¹⁶⁰ Minister of Social Security and Labour (2019), Order on the approval of the description of the procedure for assessing the child's situation, (*Įsakymas dėl vaiko situacijos vertinimo tvarkos aprašo patvirtinimo*), No. A1-803, 30 December 2019, last amendment No. A1-449, 30 June 2022.

	<p>The Official Register of Wanted Persons, Unidentified Corpses and Unknown Helpless Persons¹⁶¹ collect data on missing children.</p> <p>In the list of indicators of accumulated statistical information about children, approved by Government Resolution no. 695 Regarding approval of the list of indicators of statistical information on children indicates what data is collected in Lithuania about children. It should be noted that on 21 June 2023, the list of indicators was significantly supplemented with new indicators. Part of the data will be collected immediately after the updated list approval, and part of the data will start to be collected from 1 January 2024 or 1 January 2025 (the number of children whose guardian (curator) was changed).¹⁶²</p>
<p>1.4.7. Children at risk of poverty or social exclusion, or severely materially and socially deprived or living in a household with a very low work intensity (AROPE)</p>	
<p>Policy developments</p>	<p>Legislative developments</p>
<p>The Programme of the 18th Government of the Republic of Lithuania¹⁶³</p> <p>The Government undertakes to ensure that every child, regardless of child’s place of residence or social status, must have the opportunity to acquire quality education (Articles 10, 38, 39 - 42). For that purpose, it is aimed that all children must have the opportunity to attend kindergarten (Articles 43 –</p>	<p>The Law on Social Services¹⁷⁰ indicates the social risk factors and circumstances that lead to the social exclusion of families or individuals: adult family members’ lack of social skills for caring or upbringing children properly; the inability of the family to ensure full physical, mental, spiritual, and moral development of children and to provide them with safe environment; the damage suffered by the victims of the criminal act; involvement in criminal activity or potential to be involved in that activity;</p>

¹⁶¹ Minister of Interior (2017), Order on the approval of the reorganization of the official register of wanted persons, unidentified corpses, and unknown helpless persons and the approval of the provisions of the official register of wanted persons, unidentified corpses, and unknown helpless persons (*Isakymas Dėl leškomų asmenų, neatpažintų lavonų ir nežinomų bejėgių asmenų žinybinio registro reorganizavimo ir leškomų asmenų, neatpažintų lavonų ir nežinomų bejėgių asmenų žinybinio registro nuostatų patvirtinimo*), No. 1V-174, 3 March 2017.

¹⁶² Lithuania Government (2023), Resolution Regarding the amendment of Resolution No. 695 of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania of June 8, 2004 "On the Approval of the List of Indicators of Statistical Information on Children" (*Dėl Lietuvos Respublikos Vyriausybės 2004 m. birželio 8 d. nutarimo Nr. 695 „Dėl Statistinės informacijos apie vaikus rodiklių sąrašo patvirtinimo“ pakeitimo*), No 467, 21 June 2023.

¹⁶³ Lithuania, Seimas (2020), Decision on the Programme of the 18th Government of the Republic of Lithuania (*Nutarimas dėl Aštuonioliktos Lietuvos Respublikos Vyriasybės programos*), No. XIV-72, 11 December 2020.

¹⁷⁰ Lithuania, Seimas (2006), Law on Social Services (*Lietuvos Respublikos socialinių paslaugų įstatymas*), No. X-493, last amendment No. XIV-952, 17 March 2022.

44), quality school education (Articles 45 – 46), and participate in after-class extra curriculum education (Article 95.3). The programme plans that in 2024 all children living in families at risk will attend kindergarten from 3 years old (Article 41.1).

In the Program, the Government aims to ensure that high-quality social services meeting the child's individual needs are available to all children who need them (Article 103.4). It is also planned to strengthen the competencies and rights of case managers to successfully coordinate each case of an individual family, to expand available services (Article 93.1.)

The Government is also committed to subsidizing the purchase of childcare services for working, lower-income parents and other legal representatives of the child. The programme envisages providing targeted subsidies for the purchase of preschool childcare services for parents and other legal representatives of the child with lower incomes who are employed. (Article 103.4).

The Family Policy Strengthening Development Program ¹⁶⁴ envisages ensuring the variety and availability of childcare services and increasing the availability of free school meals and support for the purchase of school supplies.

abuse of alcohol and other psychoactive substances; addiction to alcohol, other psychoactive substances, gambling; begging, vagrancy, homelessness; lack of motivation to participate in the labour market.¹⁷¹

The Law (amended in 2017) states that social services for a child experiencing social risk or a child left without parental care, must be aimed at: the creation of a safe and healthy environment for his/her education and development; development of the child's independent living skills; restoring, maintaining and strengthening social ties with family, relatives, and society; organizing support aligned with education and training; and most importantly to search for opportunities for a child to grow up in the family.¹⁷²

Law on Child Maintenance Payments, No. X-987¹⁷³

The new version of the Law was adopted in 2022. The law foresees the payment of child maintenance (subsistence) payments from the funds of the state, if a child has been granted maintenance (subsistence) payments from one of his/her parents but does not receive payments from a parent longer than a month.

Law on Child Benefits, No. I-621 ¹⁷⁴ has been updated in 2018. It foresees the one-time payment and periodic payments to parents and other legal representatives of children. The Law, next to Lithuanian citizens, also applies to certain categories of foreigners listed in the Law. The following types of benefits are established:

¹⁶⁴ Lithuania, Government (2021), Resolution on the Approval of the Development programme for family policy strengthening, governed by the Ministry of Social Security and Labour, which is the Manager of the Development Programme for 2021–2030 (*Dėl 2021–2030 metų Plėtros programos valdytojos Lietuvos Respublikos socialinės apsaugos ir darbo ministerijos Šeimos politikos stiprinimo plėtros programos patvirtinimo*), No. 930, 10 November 2021.

¹⁷¹ Lithuania, Seimas (2006), Law on Social Services (*Lietuvos Respublikos socialinių paslaugų įstatymas*), No. X-493, last amendment No. XIV-952, 17 March 2022. Art. 2 (7).

¹⁷² Lithuania, Seimas (2006), Law on Social Services (*Lietuvos Respublikos socialinių paslaugų įstatymas*), No. X-493, last amendment No. XIV-952, 17 March 2022. Art. 18 (2).

¹⁷³ Lithuania, Seimas (2006), Law on Child Maintenance Payments (*Lietuvos Respublikos vaikų išlaikymo išmokų įstatymas*), No. X-987, last amendment No. XIV-1147, 21 June 2022.

¹⁷⁴ Lithuania, Seimas (1994), Law on Child Benefits (*Lietuvos Respublikos išmokų vaikams įstatymas*), No. I-621, last amendment No. XIV-947, 17 March 2022.

The Income Inequality Reduction Development Program ¹⁶⁵ envisages increasing the income for single parent (adoptive parent, guardian (curator) who is raising (fostering) children alone.

A higher risk of poverty and social exclusion exists in certain regions of Lithuania. The **Regional Development Program** ¹⁶⁶ envisages increasing the availability of education in regions for children experiencing exclusion, and developing various types of education through full-day school activities and non-formal education.

The Programme on the Development of Education ¹⁶⁷ envisages ensuring accessible early education for all, increasing access to education for children experiencing exclusion, developing diverse education through full-day school activities, and ensuring modern educational content accessible to all.

National Action Plan for the Implementation of the Child Guarantee in Lithuania for 2023-2030 ¹⁶⁸ was adopted in 2023. The plan contains information about measures planned to be implemented in 2023-2030 to combat child poverty and social exclusion. The measures of the plan have been prepared considering the results of the in-dept

- 1) One-time payment for a child;
- 2) Monthly child benefit;
- 3) Payment for the simultaneous birth of more than one child;
- 4) Payment to the child of a soldier due to compulsory initial military service;
- 5) Allowance for childcare of a pupil or student;
- 6) One-time payment for a pregnant woman;
- 7) Foster care benefit;
- 8) Target supplement of foster care benefit;
- 9) Child temporary supervision's allowance;
- 10) one-time settlement payment;
- 11) payment upon adoption of a child.

Law on Social Support for Pupils, No. X-686 ¹⁷⁵ was updated in 2019. The following types of social support for students/pupils in schools are established:

- 1) Free meals for students who need social support (breakfast, lunch, dinner, meals at summer recreation camps organized by schools);
- 2) Support for the purchase of school supplies.

The families are eligible if their monthly income does not exceed the amount indicated in the Law.

¹⁶⁵ Lithuania, Government (2021), Resolution on the Approval of the Programme on the Development of the reduction of inequality of income for 2021 – 2030, governed by the Ministry of Social Security and Labour (*Dėl 2021–2030 metų plėtros programos valdytojos Lietuvos Respublikos Socialinės apsaugos ir darbo ministerijos Pajamų nelygybės mažinimo plėtros programos patvirtinimo*), No. 932, 10 November 2021.

¹⁶⁶ Lithuania, Government (2022), Resolution on the Approval of the Regional development programme for 2022 - 2030 (*Dėl 2022 - 2030 metų regionų plėtros programos patvirtinimo*), No. 713, 29 June 2022.

¹⁶⁷ Lithuania, Government (2021), Resolution on the Approval of the Programme on the Development of Education for 2022 – 2030, governed by the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport (*Dėl 2021–2030 m. Plėtros programos valdytojos Lietuvos Respublikos Švietimo, mokslo ir sporto ministerijos Švietimo plėtros programos patvirtinimo*), No. 1016, 1 December 2021.

¹⁶⁸ Lithuania, Minister of Social Security and Labour, Minister of Health and Minister of Education, Science and Sport, Order on the approval of the action plan for the implementation of the child guarantee system in Lithuania for the years 2023-2030 (*Įsakymas dėl vaiko garantijų sistemos įgyvendinimo 2023–2030 metais Lietuvoje veiksmų plano patvirtinimo*), No A1-388/V-678/V-821, 13 June 2023.

¹⁷⁵ Lithuania, Seimas (2006), Law on Social Support for Pupils (*Lietuvos Respublikos socialinės paramos mokiniams įstatymas*), No. X-686, last amendment No. XIV-130, 23 December 2020.

studies conducted by international organizations and national institutions. The analysis examined policies, services, budgets, and mechanisms to address obstacles preventing children from accessing the services as well as unmet needs of children in five thematic areas of the Child Guarantee (early childhood education and care, free education, health, nutrition, and housing). The Lithuanian National Committee of the United Nations Children’s Fund and the UNICEF Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia were the main organisers and coordinators of the process. The action plan includes 38 measures planned to be implemented at the national level, contributing to the achievement of the goals of the Child Guarantee in Lithuania.

UNICEF study “Basis for a European Child Guarantee Action Plan in Lithuania”¹⁶⁹ revealed the following problems in Lithuania:

Access to free early childhood education and care (ECEC) remains one of the biggest challenges, especially for the youngest children. Not enough places are available in public kindergartens, and private for-profit services are very expensive. In addition, ‘hidden’ costs (such as meals and transport) exist even in the public sector, thereby rendering access to ECEC especially problematic for the most vulnerable children, such as children from low-income families and families at social risk.

No equality among schools and regions within the country. Vulnerable children, such as children from low-income families, children from families at social risk, and children in rural areas within Lithuania, receive a lower quality of education. The reason for this is that schools in rural areas and in certain parts of cities lack qualified teachers, necessary learning equipment, up-to-date books, and methodologies.

The issue of ‘hidden’ costs also applies to non-formal education.

¹⁶⁹ UNICEF, [Basis for a European Child Guarantee Action Plan in Lithuania](#) UNICEF Europe and Central Asia Regional Office (ECARO), 2022, P.22.

Socio-economic disadvantages negatively influence children’s access to the healthcare system in Lithuania. In low-income or single-parent families, or in precarious families children’s medical and dental needs may remain unmet due to families’ inability to afford treatment, because some necessary and continuous treatments not being entirely free of charge, long waiting lists, long travel times, or no means of transport, as well as a lack of time due to parents’ work or due to a lack of education and interest in children’s health.

Parents with low incomes cannot afford at least one full healthy, balanced meal per day. Parents at social risk may lack knowledge regarding the importance of nutrition, and parents raising children in remote areas may face additional barriers such as a lack of transport or not affordable costs of transport.

Housing deprivation is a much bigger issue for children living in low-income families compared with other income groups of children in Lithuania.

An allocation of social benefits is not enough individual-based and does not fully take into consideration the specific needs of different vulnerable groups.

1.4.8. Children belonging to minority ethnic groups, e.g. Roma, Sami, etc.

Policy developments

The 2021-2030 National Progress Plan¹⁷⁶ establishes that when implementing the Plan and outlining national development programs, it is mandatory to consider the needs of national minorities and provide measures and indicators implementing the principle of equal opportunities.

Legislative developments

The Equal Opportunities Act¹⁸² The purpose of this Law is to ensure that the provisions of Article 29 of the Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania are implemented, which establish the equality of persons and the prohibition of restricting human rights and granting privileges to people based on gender, race,

¹⁷⁶ Lithuania, Government (2020), Resolution on the Approval of the 2021-2030 National Progress Plan (*Nutarimas Dėl 2021–2030 metų Nacionalinio pažangos plano patvirtinimo*), No. 998, 9 September 2020, last amendment No. 797, 29 September 2021.

¹⁸² Lithuania, Seimas (2003), Law on Equal Opportunities (*Lietuvos Respublikos Lygių galimybių įstatymas*), No. IX-1826, last amendment No. XIV-1725, 20 December 2022.

In implementing Strategic goal 3 of the plan - to increase the inclusiveness and effectiveness of education, to meet the needs of the individual and society, it is planned to remove discrimination, segregation, and exclusion factors, create a safe environment, and reduce bullying.

The plan does not single out individual groups of society for special attention. However, the children belonging to minority ethnic groups, e.g. Roma children, are addressed using general SEC factors. The plan foresees the improvement of the quality of education at various levels, the increase of the achievements of the pupils, and the reduction of the differences in the achievements of individual groups, who fall into different SEC¹⁷⁷ contexts or study in different educational institutions. The plan aims to make education more individualised, which allows better knowledge, evaluation, and response to the individual needs of learners, and seeks to create an educational environment and educational content that motivates and encourages thinking and creating.

In order to achieve the 4th Strategic goal - to strengthen national and civic identity, to increase the development of culture and the creativity of society, it is planned to further promote the integration of national minorities, openness and respect for the languages of national minorities and the uniqueness and diversity of other cultures.

2023-2025 Strategic Activity Plan of the Department of National Minorities under the Government of the Republic of Lithuania¹⁷⁸

To create a harmonious civil society, integrate the cultural and historical heritage of national and ethnic communities into Lithuanian society, and develop cultural diversity, the Department plans to contribute to the enhancement of the culture and heritage of national minorities, to help the children

nationality, language, origin, social status, faith, beliefs or views.

Article 5 (1) establishes that state and municipal institutions must: ensure that equal rights and opportunities are enshrined in all legal acts; prepare, approve, and implement measures to ensure equal opportunities; support the programs of religious communities and societies, public institutions, associations, and charity and support funds, following the procedure established by law, which help to realize equal opportunities for individuals.

Article 6 (1) establishes that schools and other educational institutions must ensure equal conditions for individuals when they: accept children to study according to formal and non-formal education programs; award scholarships or provides loans; create and approve educational programs; evaluate and assess students' learning achievements.

Article 6 (2) establishes that educational institutions must ensure that contents of educational programs, textbooks, and teaching aids are free of discrimination and promotion of discrimination.

Article 6 (3) establishes that educational institutions must ensure that in these institutions there is no harassment, sexual harassment or instructions to discriminate based on gender, race, nationality, citizenship, language, origin, social status, faith, beliefs or views, age, sexual orientation, disability, ethnicity, and religion.

Article 6 (4) establishes that educational institutions must take measures to ensure that students who file a complaint about discrimination, participate in a discrimination case, or report discrimination, their representatives or persons who testify or provide explanations about discrimination are not

¹⁷⁷ SEC - social, economic, and cultural environment. In OECD countries, the difference between the results of students belonging to the lowest and the highest quartile according to SEC status is 89 points. In Lithuania, the difference in 2018 is 90 points (2021-2030 National Progress Plan, P. 29.)

¹⁷⁸ Lithuania, Minister of Culture (2017), Order on the approval of the 2023-2025 strategic activity plan of the Department of National Minorities under the Government of the Republic of Lithuania (*Įsakymas Dėl Tautinių mažumų departamentas prie Lietuvos respublikos vyriausybės 2023–2025 metų strateginis veiklos plano patvirtinimo*), No. JV-29, 12 January 2023.

and youth of national minorities to integrate into the environment where the Lithuanian language is used, and to encourage sociocultural integration of Roma people.

To strengthen the resilience of national minorities to informational threats and to increase public knowledge about national minorities, the Department plans to implement initiatives aimed at promoting non-discrimination and tolerance for national minorities, increasing the information literacy of national minority media outlets and non-governmental organisations, and resilience to the effects of propaganda.

2022-2023 Action Plan for Roma Integration into Lithuanian society¹⁷⁹

The purpose of the Plan is to promote equality by effectively preventing discrimination against all Roma people, including children, persons with disabilities, and stateless persons; to reduce the economic and social exclusion of Roma people in the fight against poverty and society; ensure equal opportunities for all Roma in education at all levels and increase public awareness and tolerance.

The measures of the Action Plan are planned based on the study "Situation of persons of Roma nationality in 2020" carried out by VŠĮ "Diversity Development Group" and incorporation of results of consultations with public administration institutions, Roma people representatives, and non-governmental organisations representing the Roma national minority.

The plan envisages: developing and improving the education of Roma children in kindergartens, pre-school and general education; developing and strengthening civic attitudes of children and youth, promoting participation in non-formal education activities; increasing the openness of Roma culture and society's tolerance; nurturing Roma national culture and traditions, strengthening and ensuring continuity of their dissemination; and reducing discrimination against Roma people.

persecuted and are protected from hostile behaviour or adverse effects.

The Law on Fundamentals of the Rights of the Child (Article 21) states that children belonging to the national minorities of the Republic of Lithuania have the right to nurture their language, culture, customs and traditions.

¹⁷⁹ Lithuania, Director of the Department of National Minorities under the Government of the Republic of Lithuania (2022), Order on the approval of the 2022-2023 action plan for Roma integration into Lithuanian society (*Įsakymas Dėl Romų integracijos į Lietuvos visuomenę 2022–2023 metų veiksmų plano patvirtinimo*), No. JV-33, 1 July 2022.

National Action Plan for the Implementation of the Child Guarantee in Lithuania for 2023-2030¹⁸⁰

was adopted in 2023. The plan contains information about measures planned to be implemented in 2023-2030 to combat child poverty and social exclusion. The measures of the plan have been prepared considering the results of the in-depth studies conducted by international organisations and national institutions. The analysis examined policies, services, budgets, and mechanisms to address obstacles preventing children from accessing the services as well as unmet needs of children in five thematic areas of the Child Guarantee (early childhood education and care, free education, health, nutrition, and housing). The Lithuanian National Committee of the United Nations Children’s Fund and the UNICEF Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia were the main organizers and coordinators of the process. The action plan includes 38 measures planned to be implemented at the national level, contributing to the achievement of the goals of the Child Guarantee in Lithuania.

UNICEF study “Basis for a European Child Guarantee Action Plan in Lithuania”¹⁸¹ revealed the following problems related to the Roma people in Lithuania:

Access to free early childhood education and care (ECEC) remains one of the biggest challenges, especially for the youngest children. There is a lack of inclusion of children from minority groups.

No equality among schools and regions within the country. Children from national minorities within Lithuania, receive a lower quality of education. The reason for this is that schools for national minorities, lack qualified teachers, necessary learning equipment, up-to-date books and methodologies.

¹⁸⁰ Lithuania, Minister of Social Security and Labour, Minister of Education, Science and Sport and Minister of Health (2023), The project of the Order On the approval of the action plan for the implementation of the national child guarantee system in 2023-2030 in Lithuania, No. [23-3603](#), 17 March 2023.

¹⁸¹ UNICEF, [Basis for a European Child Guarantee Action Plan in Lithuania](#) UNICEF Europe and Central Asia Regional Office (ECARO), 2022, P.22.

<p>In Roma families' children's medical and dental needs may remain unmet due to families' inability to afford treatment, because some necessary and continuous treatments not being entirely free of charge, long waiting lists, long travel times, or no means of transport, as well as a lack of time due to parents' work or due to a lack of education and interest in children's health.</p>	
<p>1.4.9. Children involved in judicial proceedings as victims or witnesses or parties</p>	
<p>Policy developments</p>	<p>Legislative developments</p>
<p>The Programme of the 18th Government of the Republic of Lithuania¹⁸³</p> <p>The Government undertakes to pay special attention to the protection of the rights of victims and vulnerable persons during criminal proceedings (Article 195.3). It undertakes to take further measures to improve the quality of state-funded legal aid. (Article 187.7).</p> <p>Public Security Development Programme for 2015-2025¹⁸⁴</p> <p>The Programme envisages improving the competencies of officers participating in criminal proceedings and communicating personally with victims to identify victims and their needs and to treat them respectfully, sensitively, professionally, and without discrimination, as well as to ensure that victims receive clear and consistent information about their rights, the course of the criminal proceedings and performed procedural steps. (Article 43.2.3). It also envisages strengthening the competencies and capacities of</p>	<p>Amendments to the Code of Criminal Procedure</p> <p>On 17 December 2015, the Parliament adopted amendments to the Article 44 (10) of the Code of Criminal Procedure.¹⁸⁶ Article 44 (10) allows victims to demand that the person who committed crime would be identified and adequately punished, to receive compensation for the damage caused as a result of the criminal act, and in cases provided for by law, to receive compensation from the Crime Victims Fund. In addition to that, every victim has the right to receive state-guaranteed legal aid free of charge.</p> <p>On 16 July 2019, the Parliament adopted amendments to Articles 53 (1), 53 (3), and 54 (1) of the Code of Criminal Procedure.¹⁸⁷</p> <p>According to Article 53 (1) of the Code of Criminal Procedure, the legal representatives of the minor victim may participate in the process and defend the interests, except in cases where this would conflict with the interests of the minor or hinder the criminal process.</p> <p>According to the Article 53 (3) of the Code of Criminal Procedure a legal representative under the law, who has submitted a written or oral request, is</p>

¹⁸³ Lithuania, Seimas (2020), Decision on the Programme of the 18th Government of the Republic of Lithuania (*Nutarimas dėl Aštuonioliktos Lietuvos Respublikos Vyriasybės programos*), No. XIV-72, 11 December 2020.

¹⁸⁴ Lithuania, Seimas (2015), Resolution On the approval of the public security development programme for 2015-2025 (*Nutarimas Dėl Viešojo saugumo plėtros 2015–2025 metų programos patvirtinimo*), No. XII-1682, 7 May 2015.

¹⁸⁶ Lithuania, Seimas (2002), Criminal procedure code (*Lietuvos Respublikos Baudžiamojo proceso kodeksas*), No. IX-785, 14 March 2002, amendment No. XII-2194, 17 December 2015.

¹⁸⁷ Lithuania, Seimas (2002), Criminal procedure code (*Lietuvos Respublikos Baudžiamojo proceso kodeksas*), No. IX-785, 14 March 2002, amendment No. XIII-2335, 16 July 2019.

the police forces performing witness and victim protection. (Article 43.2.4).

The Justice System Development Program¹⁸⁵ notes that prosecutors' competencies must be developed regardless of the specifics of criminal acts and priority cases. Competencies are especially important for an ineffective pre-trial investigation in cases where minors are victims. It is planned to raise the qualifications of specialized prosecutors in priority areas.

Five Lithuanian institutions - the General Prosecutor's Office, the Police Department, the Ministry of Social Security and Labour, The Office of the Ombudsperson of Child's Rights and the State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service (hereinafter – Service) signed a **Cooperation Agreement on 28/06/2018**, which established closer inter-institutional cooperation in more effective protection of children's rights and legitimate interests and improving the protection of children's rights in criminal proceedings.

In this Agreement, among other obligations, the prosecutor's office and the police undertake to provide information to the Service about the fact that:

- It is necessary to organize help for a child victim of a crime;
- The child's legal representatives are detained or arrested.

According to the Agreement, the information must be provided immediately, but no later than within 5 days.

The Service also undertakes to investigate the family environment, living and upbringing conditions of a child who is a witness or a victim and to submit this information to the prosecutor or the

allowed to participate in the process when permission is granted by the decision of the pre-trial investigation officer or prosecutor or by court order. A legal representative usually participates in the proceedings together with the person they represent. By the decision of the pre-trial investigation officer, the prosecutor and the court order, it may be refused to allow the legal representative to participate in the process as a representative, if it would be against the interests of the minor or hinder the criminal process. In such a case, as well as when it is not possible to contact the legal representative or the identity of representative is unknown, the pre-trial investigation officer, the prosecutor or the court shall appoint another suitable person to be the minor's legal representative. A minor can choose another person to be the legal representative. While the issue of changing the legal representative is resolved, the pre-trial investigation officer, the prosecutor or the court must temporarily appoint any other person who can properly represent the minor's interests as a representative.

According to the Article 54 (1) of the Code of Criminal Procedure the legal representative has the right to accompany the represented person during the entire criminal process and to help this person exercise the rights granted by law. The legal representative also has the right to receive information about the minor's rights in criminal proceedings.

On 25 September 2014, the Parliament adopted amendments to the Articles 55 (4) and 55 (5) of the Code of Criminal Procedure.¹⁸⁸

According to the Article 55 (4) of the Code of Criminal Procedure the pre-trial investigation officer, prosecutor or court recognizes by reasoned ruling that the participation of an authorized representative is necessary in cases where a minor has suffered injury, minor's health was affected, minor's freedom was violated, freedom of sexual decision-making and personal inviolability were violated, family rights or dignity were violated, as

¹⁸⁵ Lithuania, Government (2021), Resolution on the Approval of the Justice System Development Program, governed by the Ministry of Justice, which is the Manager of the Development Programme for 2021-2030 (*Dėl 2021–2030 metų Plėtros programos valdytojos Lietuvos Respublikos teisingumo ministerijos Teisingumo sistemos plėtros programos patvirtinimo*), No. 861, 20 October 2021, (Problem 5).

¹⁸⁸ Lithuania, Seimas (2002), Criminal procedure code (*Lietuvos Respublikos Baudžiamojo proceso kodeksas*), No. IX-785, 14 March 2002, amendment No. *XII-1148*, 25 September 2014.

police, respectively, who submitted the request, no later than within 7 days.

According to the Agreement, the prosecutor's offices, the Police and the Service undertake to inform each other when there is sufficient reason to believe that the legal representatives of the victimized child may interfere with the pre-trial investigation, oppose and harm the child's interests by participating in the process.

In this Agreement, the police undertake to immediately inform the Service of those situations when it becomes clear that minors are present or may be present at the place where coercive measures are applied.

well as in other cases when the rights and legitimate interests of the minor victim would not be adequately protected without the help of an authorized representative.

According to the Article 55 (5) of the Code of Criminal Procedure in the cases stipulated by the laws regulating the provision of state-guaranteed legal aid, the victim and the civil claimant have the right to receive state-guaranteed legal aid.

On 17 December 2015, the Parliament adopted amendments to the Article 56¹ of the Code of Criminal Procedure.¹⁸⁹

According to the Article 56¹ of the Code of Criminal Procedure the victim may be accompanied by a person of victim's choice during the criminal proceedings. This person must comply with the established procedure during the pre-trial investigation and court hearing. The participation of the person accompanying the victim in the criminal proceedings may be limited by the decision of the pre-trial investigation officer or prosecutor or by the decision of the pre-trial investigation judge or the court, when such participation is against the interests of the victim or hinders the investigation or consideration of the case.

On 28 June 2022, the Parliament adopted amendments to the Article 128 (4) of the Code of Criminal Procedure.¹⁹⁰

According to the Article 128 (4) of the Code of Criminal Procedure the prosecutor or the pre-trial investigation officer must notify the victim of the suspect's arrest and find out whether victim wishes to be notified of the suspect's future release or escape from the prison. The victim is also notified of the protective measures established in legal acts, which may be applied to victim, and the procedure for their appointment. It is not necessary to report the suspect's arrest if the victim's place of residence is unknown, as well as if this report could cause harm to the suspect. If there are many victims, it is sufficient to notify the person(s) representing their interests about the suspect's arrest.

¹⁸⁹ Lithuania, Seimas (2002), Criminal procedure code (*Lietuvos Respublikos Baudžiamojo proceso kodeksas*), No. IX-785, 14 March 2002, amendment No. [XII-1148](#), 25 September 2014.

¹⁹⁰ Lithuania, Seimas (2002), Criminal procedure code (*Lietuvos Respublikos Baudžiamojo proceso kodeksas*), No. IX-785, 14 March 2002, amendment No. [XIV-1200](#), 8 June 2022.

On 16 December 2021, the Parliament adopted amendments to the Article 167 (3) of the Code of Criminal Procedure.¹⁹¹

According to the Article 167 (3) of the Code of Criminal Procedure if certain criminal acts have signs of domestic violence, a pre-trial investigation is started, regardless of whether there is a complaint from the victim or a statement from victim's legal representative.

On 17 December 2015 and on 14 March 2017, the Parliament adopted amendments to the Articles 186 (2), 186 (3) and 186 (4) of the Code of Criminal Procedure.¹⁹²

According to Article 186 (2) of the Code of Criminal Procedure, a minor witness or a minor victim is interviewed during the pre-trial investigation in premises adapted for the interviewing children, usually no more than once. In cases where repeated questioning of a minor witness or a minor victim is necessary during the pre-trial investigation, they are usually interviewed by the same person. Their interview must be video and audio recorded. A minor witness and a minor victim are summoned to a court hearing only in exceptional cases.

According to Article 186 (3) of the Code of Criminal Procedure, in the questioning of a witness under 14 years old or a victim under 14 years old at all times, as well as in the questioning of a minor witness or a minor victim regarding crimes against human life, health, freedom, freedom of sexual decision and inviolability, child and family, for profiting from minor prostitution or involvement of a minor in prostitution or in other cases, when requested by the participants in the process or at the initiative of the pre-trial investigation officer, prosecutor or pre-trial investigation judge, a psychologist must be invited to help interview the minor, taking into account interviewee's social and psychological maturity, as well as a representative of the state child rights protection institution must be invited, who observes from another room, whether the

¹⁹¹ Lithuania, Seimas (2002), Criminal procedure code (*Lietuvos Respublikos Baudžiamojo proceso kodeksas*), No. IX-785, 14 March 2002, amendment No. XIV-1200, 28 June 2022.

¹⁹² Lithuania, Seimas (2002), Criminal procedure code (*Lietuvos Respublikos Baudžiamojo proceso kodeksas*), No. IX-785, 14 March 2002, amendments No. XII-2194, 17 December 2015; No. XIII-217, 14 March 2017.

rights of a minor witness or a minor victim are not violated during the questioning. The representative of the State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service can ask the person being interviewed questions and make requests for the interview. The representative of a minor witness or a minor victim has the right to participate in the questioning of the witness and the victim only after assessing whether the representative will not influence the minor.

According to Article 186 (4) of the Code of Criminal Procedure, the suspect and other participants in the process, except for the psychologist and the representative of the minor witness or the minor victim, are not allowed to be in the room where the questioning is conducted. In such a case, an audio and video recording must be made, and the suspect and other participants in the process must be given the opportunity to observe and hear the questioning from another room and to ask questions through the judge of the pre-trial investigation. If it is impossible to create conditions for the suspect and other participants in the process to observe and hear the interview from another room, the interview is conducted without the suspect and other participants in the process. The audio and video recording made during such questioning is shown immediately after the questioning to the suspect and other participants in the process, who have the right to ask questions of the person being questioned through the judge of the pre-trial investigation.

On 17 December 2015, the Parliament added Article 186¹ to the Code of Criminal Procedure.¹⁹³

Article 186¹ determines the assessment of the victim's special protection needs.

According to Article 186¹ of the Code of Criminal Procedure, no later than during the first interview of the victim, the pre-trial investigation officer or prosecutor must carry out an assessment of the victim's special protection needs. If necessary, a psychologist or other persons with special knowledge or skills can be tasked for assessment. The data collected during the assessment of the victim's special protection needs are taken into account when organising criminal proceedings and

¹⁹³ Lithuania, Seimas (2002), Criminal procedure code (*Lietuvos Respublikos Baudžiamojo proceso kodeksas*), No. IX-785, 14 March 2002, amendment XII-2194, 17 December 2015.

deciding whether it is necessary to apply one or more protection measures to the victim.

The suspect, the accused, the convicted person and the defence attorney are not allowed to get acquainted with the data of the assessment about the special protection needs of the victim.

The article specifies that the Prosecutor General of the Republic of Lithuania determines the procedure for assessing the special protection needs of victims.

On 17 December 2015, the Parliament adopted amendments to Articles 239 (1) and 275 of the Code of Criminal Procedure.¹⁹⁴

Article 239 (1)(2) specifies that after the transfer of the case to the court, when it is necessary to question a minor victim or minor witness additionally, but it is not planned to summon them to the trial, by order of the judge preparing the case for trial, the judge of the pre-trial investigation questions the minor witness or the minor victim.

Article 275 (5) specifies that minor victims and minor witnesses may be asked questions at the court hearing only through the chairperson of the court hearing, and if necessary, through a representative.

On 17 December 2015 and on 14 March 2017, the Parliament adopted amendments to the Articles 280 (1), 280 (2) and 283 (3) of the Code of Criminal Procedure.¹⁹⁵

Article 280 (1) of the Code of Criminal Procedure stipulates that in exceptional court cases, while questioning a witness under 14 years old at all times, as well as in the questioning of a minor witness or a minor victim regarding crimes against human life, health, freedom, freedom of sexual decision and inviolability, child and family, for profiting from minor prostitution or involvement of a minor in prostitution or in other cases, when requested by the participants in the process or at the initiative of the court, a psychologist must be

¹⁹⁴ Lithuania, Seimas (2002), Criminal procedure code (*Lietuvos Respublikos Baudžiamojo proceso kodeksas*), No. IX-785, 14 March 2002, amendment XII-2194, 17 December 2015.

¹⁹⁵ Lithuania, Seimas (2002), Criminal procedure code (*Lietuvos Respublikos Baudžiamojo proceso kodeksas*), No. IX-785, 14 March 2002, amendments XII-2194, 17 December 2015, XIII-217, 14 March 2017.

invited to help interview the minor, taking into account minor's social and psychological maturity, as well as a representative of the State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service must be invited, who observes from another room, whether the rights of a minor witness or a minor victim are not violated during the questioning. The representative of the State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service can ask the person being interviewed questions and make requests for the interview. The representative of a minor witness has the right to participate in the interview of the witness only after assessing whether he will not influence the minor.

According to the Article 280 (2) of the Code of Criminal Procedure, the accused and other participants in the process, except for the psychologist and the representative of the minor witness are not allowed to be in the room where the interview is conducted. In such a case, an audio and video recording must be made, and the accused and other participants in the process must be given the opportunity to observe and hear the questioning from another room and to ask questions of the person being questioned through the judge.

Article 283 (3) of the Code of Criminal Procedure stipulates that in exceptional court cases in the questioning of a victim under 14 years old at all times, as well as in the questioning of a minor victim or a minor victim regarding crimes against human life, health, freedom, freedom of sexual decision and inviolability, child and family, for profiting from minor prostitution or involvement of a minor in prostitution or in other cases, when requested by the participants in the process or at the initiative of the court, a psychologist must be invited to help interview the minor, taking into account minor's social and psychological maturity, as well as a representative of the State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service must be invited, who observes from another room, whether the rights of a minor witness or a minor victim are not violated during the questioning. The representative of the State Institution for the Protection of Child Rights can ask the person being interviewed questions and make requests for the questioning. The accused and other participants in the process, except for the psychologist and the representative of the minor witness, are not allowed to be in the room where the questioning is conducted. In such a case, an

audio and video recording must be made, and the accused and other participants in the process must be given the opportunity to observe and hear the interview from another room and to ask questions of the person being questioned through the judge. The representative of a minor victim has the right to participate in the interrogation of the witness only after assessing whether he will not influence the minor. According to the court's decision, the minor victim and minor's representative can participate in part of the trial.

On 18 February 2015, 10 March 2016, 20 December 2017, 15 June 2018 and 11 February 2022, the Prosecutor General of the Republic of Lithuania adopted amendments to the **Prosecutor's General 16/09/2009 Order No I-126 On approval of recommendations for interview of minor witness and victim.**¹⁹⁶

The Order of the Prosecutor General provides recommendations to the prosecutors and pre-trial investigation institutions on how to conduct questioning of a minor witness and the victim.

Updated Article 3 of the Recommendations requires, that in order to avoid the traumatic impact of the criminal process, procedural actions involving minors, especially involving those who are younger than 14 years, should be carried out only in cases where the circumstances relevant to the case cannot be determined in other ways or it would require high procedural costs. Considering the possible risk of repeated trauma, it is also necessary to aim for the minor to be interviewed once during the pre-trial investigation.

This article also notes that when clarifying the circumstances of a report of a committed criminal act (before the pre-trial investigation has started, as well as after it has started), it is recommended to avoid questioning the minor in detail in a manner not established by the Code of Criminal Procedure (e.g., calling it a conversation, etc.).

After the amendment of Article 8, both a representative of the State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service and a psychologist must

¹⁹⁶ Lithuania, Prosecutor General (2009), On approval of recommendations for interview of minor witness and victim (*Dėl Rekomendacijų dėl nepilnamečio liudytojo ir nukentėjusiojo apklausos patvirtinimo*), No. I-126, 16 September 2009, amendments I-52, 18 February 2015, I-68, 10 March 2016, I-412, 20 December 2017, I-196, 15 June 2018, I-63, 11 February 2022.

participate in the questioning of a minor witness or victim.

The included new article 8¹ states that the person accompanying the minor victim or witness should participate in the process only in exceptional cases, because the minor's interests are ensured by a legal representative, a psychologist or a representative of the State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service. The person accompanying the minor victim cannot be a minor.

The updated Article 11 details in which cases the participation of the authorized representative must be recognized as necessary. Such cases are when:

11.1. A child has suffered from a crime against human life, health, freedom, sexual integrity, child and family or morality;

11.2. The affected child is in institutional guardianship (curatorship), in Social Family (Foster Care-Based Households) guardianship (curatorship) or is educated in a children's socialization centre;

11.3. The pre-trial investigation officer or prosecutor does not allow the legal representative to participate in the process;

11.4. The legal representative of the minor victim cannot adequately ensure the protection of his rights, as well as when the rights and legitimate interests of the minor victim would not be properly protected without the help of the authorized representative.

The amended Article 12 specifies the rights of the authorized representative and notes that the minor and the minor's legal representative have the right to refuse the authorized representative, but the prosecutor is not obliged to grant their request.

The amended Article 13 notes that a psychologist must be invited to help question the minor who is under the age of 14, who is a victim in crime against human life, health, freedom, freedom of sexual decision and inviolability, child and family, in crime related to the profiting from minor prostitution or involvement of a minor in prostitution or in other cases, when the participants in the process request or the court decide that it is necessary. In the same cases, a representative of the State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service should be invited, who observes from another room whether the rights of a minor witness or a minor victim are not violated during the interview (Article 13¹).

If the minor has special needs, is mentally disturbed after a criminal act, etc., in order to avoid repeated trauma during legal procedures, it is recommended to invite a psychologist in all types of cases to help

interview the minor. The representative of the State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service should be invited in all cases as well (Article 14). Article 17 of the Recommendations states that the Survey should be conducted by a pre-trial investigation officer or prosecutor specializing in the field of juvenile justice. Pre-trial questioning of a minor should be conducted once.

The Article 21 of the Recommendations states that A pre-trial investigation officer or a prosecutor who decides to interview a minor themselves, or a prosecutor, before asking a pre-trial investigation judge to interview a minor witness or victim, must consult with a psychologist about interview tactics, the most appropriate formulation of questions and the order in which they are presented.

The Article 29 of the Recommendations states that a minor is questioned by a pre-trial investigation officer, prosecutor or pre-trial investigation judge in a room specially equipped and adapted for questioning the minors.

The main provisions of the new Code of Administrative Offences which came into force on 1 January 2017 with latest amendments

Article 578 (1) of the Code of Administrative Offences¹⁹⁷ provides a definition of the victim.

A **victim** in an administrative offense case is a natural person who has suffered physical, material or non-material damage as a result of an administrative offense, or a legal person who has suffered material or non-economic damage as a result of an administrative offense.

A refusal to recognize a person as a victim may be appealed to the court in accordance with the procedure established by the Code.

The victim may be questioned as a witness (Article 578 (2))

¹⁹⁷ Lithuania, Seimas (2015), Law on the procedure for approval, entry into force and implementation of the Code of Administrative Offences of the Republic of Lithuania. Code of Administrative Offences of the Republic of Lithuania (*Lietuvos Respublikos administracinių nusižengimų kodekso patvirtinimo, įsigaliojimo ir įgyvendinimo tvarkos įstatymas. Lietuvos Respublikos administracinių nusižengimų kodeksas*), No.XII - 1869, 25 June 2015, amendment XIV-785, 16 December 2021.

Article 579 (1) of the Code of Administrative Offences¹⁹⁸ determines the rights of the victim. The victim has the following rights: to get acquainted with the case material; to participate in the hearing of the case in the procedure of the oral process and give testimony; to submit written explanations; to submit documents and items relevant to the case; to submit requests; to have the legal assistance of a lawyer or other authorized representative; to speak the language a victim knows and use the services of an interpreter if a victim does not know Lithuanian; to refuse to testify against family members or close relatives; to appeal the procedural decisions made.

Article 579 (2) of the Code of Administrative Offences¹⁹⁹ determines the obligations of the victim. The victim must: comply with the established legal procedure and not abuse procedural rights; come to the institution investigating the case if summoned.

Article 579 (3) of the Code of Administrative Offences²⁰⁰ determines the criminal and administrative liability of the victim for giving false testimony.

On 16 December 2021, the Parliament added Article 579 (4) to the Code of Administrative Offences.²⁰¹ The article specifies that a person who

¹⁹⁸ Lithuania, Seimas (2015), Law on the procedure for approval, entry into force and implementation of the Code of Administrative Offenses of the Republic of Lithuania. Code of Administrative Offenses of the Republic of Lithuania (*Lietuvos Respublikos administracinių nusižengimų kodekso patvirtinimo, įsigaliojimo ir įgyvendinimo tvarkos įstatymas. Lietuvos Respublikos administracinių nusižengimų kodeksas*), No.XII - 1869, 25 June 2015, amendment XIV-419, 17 June 2021.

¹⁹⁹ Lithuania, Seimas (2015), Law on the procedure for approval, entry into force and implementation of the Code of Administrative Offenses of the Republic of Lithuania. Code of Administrative Offenses of the Republic of Lithuania (*Lietuvos Respublikos administracinių nusižengimų kodekso patvirtinimo, įsigaliojimo ir įgyvendinimo tvarkos įstatymas. Lietuvos Respublikos administracinių nusižengimų kodeksas*), No.XII - 1869, 25 June 2015, last amendment No. XIV – 1773, 23 December 2022.

²⁰⁰ Lithuania, Seimas (2015), Law on the procedure for approval, entry into force and implementation of the Code of Administrative Offenses of the Republic of Lithuania. Code of Administrative Offenses of the Republic of Lithuania (*Lietuvos Respublikos administracinių nusižengimų kodekso patvirtinimo, įsigaliojimo ir įgyvendinimo tvarkos įstatymas. Lietuvos Respublikos administracinių nusižengimų kodeksas*), No.XII - 1869, 25 June 2015, last amendment No. XIV – 1773, 23 December 2022.

²⁰¹ Lithuania, Seimas (2015), Law on the procedure for approval, entry into force and implementation of the Code of Administrative Offenses of the Republic of Lithuania. Code of Administrative Offenses of the Republic of Lithuania

reported an administrative offense and stated that this act caused physical, material or non-material damage has the same rights and obligations as a person recognized as a victim, even if the official investigating the administrative offense refused to recognize a person as a victim.

Article 581 (1) of the Code of Administrative Offences²⁰² explains who is considered a witness. Article states that “Any person who may be aware of any circumstances to be determined in this case may be summoned as a witness in an administrative offense case.”

According to the Article 581 (2) of the Code of Administrative Offences, the witness must appear at the specified time, give truthful testimony, report everything a person knows about the case, and answer the questions.

Article 581 (4) of the Code of Administrative Offences²⁰³ determines the criminal and administrative liability for witness for giving false testimony.

On 20 December 2018, the Parliament added Article 581 (5) to the Code of Administrative Offences.²⁰⁴ The article specifies how the confidentiality of the witness protected under the

(Lietuvos Respublikos administracinių nusižengimų kodekso patvirtinimo, įsigaliojimo ir įgyvendinimo tvarkos įstatymas. Lietuvos Respublikos administracinių nusižengimų kodeksas), No.XII - 1869, 25 June 2015,, amendment XIV-785, 16 December 2021.

²⁰² Lithuania, Seimas (2015), Law on the procedure for approval, entry into force and implementation of the Code of Administrative Offenses of the Republic of Lithuania. Code of Administrative Offenses of the Republic of Lithuania (*Lietuvos Respublikos administracinių nusižengimų kodekso patvirtinimo, įsigaliojimo ir įgyvendinimo tvarkos įstatymas. Lietuvos Respublikos administracinių nusižengimų kodeksas), No.XII - 1869, 25 June 2015, last amendment No. XIV – 1773, 23 December 2022.*

²⁰³ Lithuania, Seimas (2015), Law on the procedure for approval, entry into force and implementation of the Code of Administrative Offenses of the Republic of Lithuania. Code of Administrative Offenses of the Republic of Lithuania (*Lietuvos Respublikos administracinių nusižengimų kodekso patvirtinimo, įsigaliojimo ir įgyvendinimo tvarkos įstatymas. Lietuvos Respublikos administracinių nusižengimų kodeksas), No.XII - 1869, 25 June 2015, last amendment No. XIV – 1773, 23 December 2022.*

²⁰⁴ Lithuania, Seimas (2015), Law on the procedure for approval, entry into force and implementation of the Code of Administrative Offenses of the Republic of Lithuania. Code of Administrative Offenses of the Republic of Lithuania (*Lietuvos Respublikos administracinių nusižengimų kodekso patvirtinimo, įsigaliojimo ir įgyvendinimo tvarkos įstatymas. Lietuvos Respublikos administracinių nusižengimų kodeksas), No.XII - 1869, 25 June 2015, amendment XIII-1843, 20 December 2018.*

	<p>Whistle-blower Protection Law is ensured during the process, if a witness must be questioned. According to the Article such person is generally not called to testify. When the testimony of such person is of fundamental importance for the precise examination of the case, and in witness's absence, there are no other possibilities to determine the circumstances relevant to the case, the institution (official) investigating the case of an administrative offense may decide to summon such person as a witness. The police may be instructed to arrange the attendance of the witness in court in such a way as to ensure witness's confidentiality. The court or the institution (official) investigating the case of an administrative offense must take measures so that the identity of the person whose confidentiality must be ensured is not revealed to the participants in the process or other persons. The document containing the personal data of the witness is kept in an envelope and stored separately from the case material. A witness may be interviewed by means of remote audio and video transmission after creating acoustic and visual obstacles to establish his identity.</p>
<p>1.4.10. Children involved in judicial proceedings as suspects or accused persons</p>	
<p>Policy developments</p>	<p>Legislative developments</p>
<p>The Programme of the 18th Government of the Republic of Lithuania.²⁰⁵ The Government undertakes to take further measures to improve the quality of state-funded legal aid. (Article 187.7). Justice System Development Programme.²⁰⁶ The Programme notes that there is no systematic quality assessment of lawyers providing free legal</p>	<p>On 17 December 2015, the Parliament added Article 27¹ to the Code of Criminal Procedure.²⁰⁷ Article 27¹ specifies which person is considered a minor in criminal proceedings. According to Article 27¹ (1), a minor is a natural person who has not reached the age of 18 at the time of the execution of the process action. To ensure the protection of minors Article 27¹ (2) clarifies, "if the age of a natural person raises doubts as to whether a person</p>

²⁰⁵ Lithuania, Seimas (2020), Decision on the Programme of the 18th Government of the Republic of Lithuania (*Nutarimas dėl Aštuonioliktos Lietuvos Respublikos Vyriasybės programos*), No. XIV-72, 11 December 2020.

²⁰⁶ Lithuania, Government (2021), Resolution on the Approval of the Justice System Development Program, governed by the Ministry of Justice, which is the Manager of the Development Programme for 2021-2030 (*Dėl 2021–2030 metų Plėtros programos valdytojos Lietuvos Respublikos teisingumo ministerijos Teisingumo sistemos plėtros programos patvirtinimo*), No. 861, 20 October 2021. (Problem 3)

²⁰⁷ Lithuania, Seimas (2002), Criminal procedure code (*Lietuvos Respublikos Baudžiamojo proceso kodeksas*), No. IX-785, 14 March 2002, amendment *XII-2194*, 17 December 2015.

aid, there is an insufficient specialization of lawyers, and the processes need to be modernized.

Five Lithuanian institutions - the General Prosecutor's Office, the Police Department, the Ministry of Social Security and Labour, The Office of the Ombudsperson of Child's Rights and the State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service (hereinafter – Service) signed a **Cooperation Agreement on 28/06/2018**, which established closer inter-institutional cooperation in more effective protection of children's rights and legitimate interests and improving the protection of children's rights in criminal proceedings.

In this agreement, among other obligations, the prosecutor's office and the police undertake to provide information to the State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service about the fact that:

- A minor has been declared a suspect;
- The pre-trial investigation is not started or is terminated, because at the time of committing the crime, the person was under the age from which a person can be punished according to criminal law.
- The child's legal representatives are detained or arrested.

is an adult, a person is considered a minor until his age is determined”.

In addition to that, the Article 27¹ (3) explains that if the minor reaches adulthood before the end of the criminal proceedings, a person may continue to be subject to one or more of the guarantees provided for minors.

On 16 July 2019, the Parliament added Article 27² and Article 189¹ to the Code of Criminal Procedure.²⁰⁸

Article 27² specifies what is an individual assessment of a minor suspect or accused. Article 27² states that “the individual assessment of a minor suspect or accused is a summation of information about the personality of a minor suspect or accused, the environment and needs in the areas of protection, education and social integration, which is carried out by the State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service or the prison where the minor is held.

Article 189¹ (1) of the Code ²⁰⁹ specifies the procedure for conducting an individual assessment of the minor suspect or accused. According to Article 189¹ (1) after interviewing a minor suspect for the first time, the pre-trial investigation officer or prosecutor must immediately apply to the State Child Rights Protection Institution for an individual assessment of the minor suspect. The State Child Rights Protection Institution performs assessment based on collected data about the minor's special educational needs, personality and the maturity. The Institution submits individual assessment to the officer or prosecutor conducting the pre-trial investigation. If a minor is arrested, the individual assessment is performed by the prison institution.

Based on the Article 189¹ (2) the individual assessment of a minor suspect is considered when selecting pretrial and other procedural measures of coercion, making decisions on termination of the pre-trial investigation or transfer of the case to the court, organizing procedure, and making decisions

²⁰⁸ Lithuania, Seimas (2002), Criminal procedure code (*Lietuvos Respublikos Baudžiamojo proceso kodeksas*), No. IX-785, 14 March 2002, amendment XIII-2335, 16 July 2019.

²⁰⁹ Lithuania, Seimas (2002), Criminal procedure code (*Lietuvos Respublikos Baudžiamojo proceso kodeksas*), No. IX-785, 14 March 2002, amendment XIII-357, 11 May 2017.

regarding punishment, punitive or educational measures.

If the circumstances that formed the content of the minor's individual assessment change fundamentally, an additional or repeated individual assessment of the minor is performed. (Article 189¹ (3)).

In cases of minor crimes, crimes committed through negligence or misdemeanours an individual assessment of a minor suspect or accused may not be performed, if it does not conflict with the minor's interests. (Article 189¹ (4)).

On 11 May 2017 the Parliament adopted amendments to the Article 44 (8) of the Code of Criminal Procedure.²¹⁰

According to the article 44 (8), every person suspected or accused of committing a criminal offense can defend himself or through a selected defender, and if he does not have sufficient funds to pay for the defender, he must receive free legal aid in accordance with the procedure established by the law regulating the provision of state-guaranteed legal aid. It is forbidden to control the communication of the suspect, the accused, the convicted, the acquitted and their defence counsel - meetings, correspondence, telephone conversations or other forms of communication.

On 16 July 2019, the Parliament adopted amendments to the Articles 53 (1), 53 (3) and 54 (1) of the Code of Criminal Procedure.²¹¹

According to the Article 53 (1) of the Code of Criminal Procedure, legal representatives of minor suspect, accused or convicted may participate in the process and defend the interests of their representatives, except in cases where this would conflict with the interests of the minor or hinder the criminal process.

According to the Article 53 (3) of the Code of Criminal Procedure, a legal representative under the law who has submitted a written or oral request is allowed to participate in the process when permission is granted by the decision of the pre-trial

²¹⁰ Lithuania, Seimas (2002), Criminal procedure code (*Lietuvos Respublikos Baudžiamojo proceso kodeksas*), No. IX-785, 14 March 2002, amendment XIII-357, 11 May 2017.

²¹¹ Lithuania, Seimas (2002), Criminal procedure code (*Lietuvos Respublikos Baudžiamojo proceso kodeksas*), No. IX-785, 14 March 2002, amendment XIII-2335, 16 July 2019.

investigation officer or prosecutor or by court order. A legal representative usually participates in the proceedings together with the person they represent. By the decision of the pre-trial investigation officer, the prosecutor and the court order, it may be refused to allow the legal representative to participate in the process as a representative, if it would be against the interests of the minor or hinder the criminal process. In such a case, as well as when it is not possible to contact legal representative or the identity is unknown, the pre-trial investigation officer, the prosecutor or the court shall appoint another suitable person to be the minor's legal representative. A minor can choose another person to be the legal representative. Before the issue of changing the legal representative is resolved, the pre-trial investigation officer, the prosecutor or the court must temporarily appoint any other person who can properly represent the minor's interests as a representative.

According to the Article 54 (1) of the Code of Criminal Procedure, legal representative has the right to accompany the represented person during the entire criminal process and to help this person exercise the rights granted by law. If the represented person is arrested, the legal representative can see represented person with the permission of the pre-trial investigation officer, prosecutor or judge. The legal representative also has the right to receive information about the minor's rights in criminal proceedings.

On 17 December 2015, on 11 May 2017, on 3 November 2022 the Parliament adopted amendments to the Article 128 (1) of the Code of Criminal Procedure.²¹²

Article 128 (1) details the procedure for informing relatives about an arrested minor.

If the arrested person is a minor, the prosecutor must immediately notify the minor's parents or other legal representatives of the arrest of the minor suspect, and when such notification would be against the interests of the arrested minor, to another suitable adult.

²¹² Lithuania, Seimas (2002), Criminal procedure code (*Lietuvos Respublikos Baudžiamojo proceso kodeksas*), No. IX-785, 14 March 2002, amendments XII-2194, 17 December 2015, XIII-357, 11 May 2017, XIV-1475, 3 November 2022.

If the arrested minor does not have parents or other legal representatives or they cannot be identified, or if notification to these persons would be against the interests of the arrested minor, the arrest of the minor suspect must be immediately reported to the State Child Rights Protection Institution.

On 17 December 2015, on 14 March 2017, on 16 July 2019 the Parliament adopted amendments to the Article 188 (5) of the Code of Criminal Procedure.²¹³

According to the Article 188 (5), when requested by the participants in the process or at the initiative of the pre-trial investigation officer prosecutor or pre-trial investigation judge, a psychologist must be invited to help question a minor, taking into account minor's social and psychological maturity, and (or) representative of the State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service must be invited, who observes, whether the rights of a minor suspect are not violated during the questioning.

The representative of the State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service can ask the person being interviewed questions and make requests for the interview.

At the initiative of the pre-trial investigation officer or the prosecutor, or at the request of the minor suspect or his defender or legal representative, an audio and video recording of the questioning may be made. When interviewing an arrested or detained minor suspect, an audio and video recording is made in all cases.

On 17 December 2015, on 14 March 2017, the Parliament adopted amendments to the Article 272 (4) of the Code of Criminal Procedure.²¹⁴

Article 272 (4) of the Code of Criminal Procedure stipulates that when requested by the participants in the process or at the initiative of the court, a psychologist must be invited to help question a minor, considering minor's social and psychological

²¹³ Lithuania, Seimas (2002), Criminal procedure code (*Lietuvos Respublikos Baudžiamojo proceso kodeksas*), No. IX-785, 14 March 2002, amendments [XII-2194](#), 17 December 2015, [XIII-217](#), 14 March 2017, [XIII-2335](#), 16 July 2019.

²¹⁴ Lithuania, Seimas (2002), Criminal procedure code (*Lietuvos Respublikos Baudžiamojo proceso kodeksas*), No. IX-785, 14 March 2002, amendments [XII-2194](#), 17 December 2015, [XIII-217](#), 14 March 2017.

	<p>maturity, and (or) representative of the State child Rights Protection Institution must be invited, who observes, whether the rights of a minor suspect are not violated during the questioning.</p> <p>The representative of the State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service can ask the person being interviewed questions and make requests for the interview.</p>
1.4.11. Children at risk of harmful practices, including female genital mutilation; child /forced marriages, honour-related violence	
Policy developments	Legislative developments
None	None
1.4.12. Children whose parents are in prison/custody	
Policy developments	Legislative developments
<p>Five Lithuanian institutions - the General Prosecutor's Office, the Police Department, the Ministry of Social Security and Labour, The Office of the Ombudsperson of Child's Rights, and the State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service signed a Cooperation Agreement in 28/06/2018. In this agreement, among other obligations, the prosecutor's offices and police undertake to provide information to the Service about the fact that the child's legal representatives are detained or arrested.</p>	<p>The rights of such children are ensured by the same means as of children who were removed from their families because of domestic violence or because their care cannot be ensured by their parents.</p>
1.4.13. Children who drop out of compulsory education and working children under the legal age for work	
Policy developments	Legislative developments
<p>The Programme of the 18th Government of the Republic of Lithuania.</p>	<p>Description of the Procedure for the Organization of Employment, Work, and Professional Training of Persons under Eighteen years of age, and the Conditions of Employment of Children ²¹⁵</p>

²¹⁵ The Government of the Republic of Lithuania (2017) Ruling Regarding the approval of the Description of the procedure for the organization of employment, work, and professional training of persons under eighteen years of age, and the conditions of employment of children (*Nutarimas Dėl Asmenų iki aštuoniolikos metų įdarbinimo, darbo ir*

<p>In the Program, the Government aims to create and implement social service delivery algorithms for children and families according to their individual needs. It is also planned to strengthen the competencies rights of case managers to successfully coordinate each case of an individual family. (Article 93.1.)</p> <p>The Government undertakes to strengthen social work. It plans to define the specifics of social work in health, education, child welfare, law enforcement, and other areas. It also plans to introduce the social worker's ethical principles. (Article 103.1).</p> <p>The Government plans to raise the qualifications and competencies of social workers and child rights protection specialists, and to create effective means of psychological support for the family. (Article 103.3).</p>	<p>determines the conditions of employment of persons under the age of 18, monitoring their health, determination of their ability to do specific work, organization and implementation of professional training, the duration of practical training provided for in the vocational training program, the employment of children, types of work prohibited for persons under the age of 18, harmful to their health and dangerous factors. (Article 1).</p> <p>The description applies to persons under the age of 18, when the employer concludes an employment contract with a person under the age of 18 or employs a person based on other legal relationships equivalent to employment, or when a person under the age of 18 performs unpaid activities for the employer, as well as when professional training is carried out in the form of practical training. (Article 2).</p> <p>Children are protected from any risks to their safety, health, or development that may arise from their lack of experience, ignorance of what the risks are, or maybe, or their immaturity. (Article 4).</p>
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1.4.14. Children who have infringed the law

Policy developments	Legislative developments
<p>The Programme of the 18th Government of the Republic of Lithuania²¹⁶</p> <p>In the program, the Government aims to create and implement social service delivery algorithms for children and families according to their individual needs. It is also planned to strengthen the competencies and rights of case managers to</p>	<p>The provisions of the updated Law on Fundamentals of Protection of the Rights of the Child, No. I-1234²¹⁷ strengthen the protection of rights for children who have infringed the law. When applying and implementing measures of legal responsibility for children who have violated the law, it is aimed to consider the well-being of these children. The law requires that children should be given the most suitable, and most beneficial means</p>

profesinio parengimo organizavimo tvarkos, vaikų įdarbinimo sąlygų aprašo patvirtinimo) No. 518, 28 June 2017, last amendment No. 376, 15 April 2020.

²¹⁶ Lithuania, Seimas (2020), Decision on the Programme of the 18th Government of the Republic of Lithuania (*Nutarimas dėl Aštuonioliktos Lietuvos Respublikos Vyriasybės programos*), No. XIV-72, 11 December 2020.

²¹⁷ Lithuania, Seimas (1996). Law on Fundamentals of Protection of the Rights of the Child (*Lietuvos Respublikos Vaiko teisių apsaugos pagrindų įstatymas*), No. I-1234, 14 March 1996, last amendment No. XIV-1512 10 November 2022.

successfully coordinate each case of an individual family. (Article 93.1.)

The Government undertakes to strengthen social work. It plans to define the specifics of social work in health, education, child welfare, law enforcement, and other areas. It also plans to introduce the social worker's ethical principles. (Article 103.1).

The Government plans to raise the qualifications and competencies of social workers and child rights protection specialists, and to create effective means of psychological support for the family (Article 103.3).

in meetings their needs.²¹⁸ The Law stresses that the purpose of impact measures is the pursuit of positive social maturity of the child, with the active help from parents or child's relatives, communities, and non-governmental organizations.²¹⁹ Children are encouraged to take personal responsibility for their behaviour through restorative justice.²²⁰ The Law requires that law enforcement officers, prosecutors, judges, probation, and prison officers must have appropriate competencies in order to work with children, they should have knowledge about characteristics of children's illegal behaviour, knowledge of the processes of children's social and psychological maturity, an impact and effectiveness of applied measures on a child²²¹

Article 45 of the Law establishes assistance to a child who has violated the law. According to the Law, a child must be treated with care, honesty, and respect at all stages of imposing legal liability, child's age and maturity level must be considered, and special attention must be paid to the assessment of child's needs and for protection of child's rights.

The main provisions of the new Code of Administrative Offences which came into force on 1 January 2017, with the latest amendments.

Article 6 (1) of the Code of Administrative Offences specifies that administrative responsibility arises for a person who has reached the age of 16 before committing an administrative offense. According to Article 6 (2) of the Code of Administrative

²¹⁸ Lithuania, Seimas (1996). Law on Fundamentals of Protection of the Rights of the Child (*Lietuvos Respublikos Vaiko teisių apsaugos pagrindų įstatymas*), No. I-1234, 14 March 1996, last amendments No. XIV-1512, 10 November 2022, Art. 44(1).

²¹⁹ Lithuania, Seimas (1996). Law on Fundamentals of Protection of the Rights of the Child (*Lietuvos Respublikos Vaiko teisių apsaugos pagrindų įstatymas*), No. I-1234, 14 March 1996, last amendments No. XIV-1512, 10 November 2022, Art. 44 (2).

²²⁰ Lithuania, Seimas (1996). Law on Fundamentals of Protection of the Rights of the Child (*Lietuvos Respublikos Vaiko teisių apsaugos pagrindų įstatymas*), No. I-1234, 14 March 1996, last amendments No. XIV-1512, 10 November 2022, Art. 44 (3).

²²¹ Lithuania, Seimas (1996). Law on Fundamentals of Protection of the Rights of the Child (*Lietuvos Respublikos Vaiko teisių apsaugos pagrindų įstatymas*), No. I-1234, 14 March 1996, last amendments No. XIV-1512, 10 November 2022, Art. 44.

Offences,²²² if an administrative offense has been committed by a minor under the age of 16, the municipal administration director and the State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour are informed about this person and the offense.

The characteristics of the administrative responsibility of minors are determined in Chapter VII of the Code.

Article 42 of the Code specifies the purpose of the administrative responsibility of minors. Articles 43 (1) and 23 indicate what administrative penalties may be imposed on minors who have committed an administrative offense. Such penalties are warning, fine and community service (they are given if the fine is not paid). Article 44 specifies that a fine imposed on a minor is equal to half of the fine imposed on an adult, but not less than 5 and not more than 900 euros.

Articles 43 (1) and 27 specify what administrative measures can be applied to minors who have committed an administrative offense. Such measures are deprivation of a special right granted to a person, confiscation of property, obligation to participate in alcoholism and drug addiction prevention, early intervention, health care, resocialization, violent behaviour change or other programs (courses) and prohibition to attend events held in public places.

When imposing an administrative penalty and a measure of administrative impact on a minor, minor's age and personality are considered, as well as the conditions of life and upbringing of the minor and other circumstances stipulated by law may be considered. (Article 43 (2)).

According to the Article 43 (3)²²³ the institution (official) investigating an administrative offense,

²²² Lithuania, Seimas (2015), Law on the procedure for approval, entry into force and implementation of the Code of Administrative Offenses of the Republic of Lithuania. Code of Administrative Offenses of the Republic of Lithuania (*Lietuvos Respublikos administracinių nusižengimų kodekso patvirtinimo, įsigaliojimo ir įgyvendinimo tvarkos įstatymas. Lietuvos Respublikos administracinių nusižengimų kodeksas*), No.XII - 1869, 25 June 2015, amendmentNr. XIII-1293, 26 June 2018.

²²³ Lithuania, Seimas (2015), Law on the procedure for approval, entry into force and implementation of the Code of Administrative Offenses of the Republic of Lithuania. Code of Administrative Offenses of the Republic of Lithuania

considering the nature of the administrative offense and the personality of the minor, may not impose an administrative penalty or measure of administrative impact measure on the minor and may request that the minor be subject to minimal or moderate supervision in accordance with the procedure established by law.

Article 577 (2) specifies, that a minor who is brought under administrative responsibility has the right to get acquainted with the case materials, participate in the case oral hearing and give explanations, submit written explanations, submit documents and objects relevant to the case, make requests, have the legal assistance of a lawyer or other authorized representative, speak the language a minors knows and use an interpreter service, if a minor does not know the Lithuanian language and to appeal the procedural decisions made.

The new version of the **Law on Minimum and Medium Child Supervision** was adopted in 2021. The law foresees measures that are applied to children who have committed a criminal act or administrative offense but were not punished for that because they have not reached the required age for punishment or if they have not attended more than half of the classes at school.

In such situations, two types of measures can be applied to a child to correct child's behavior.²²⁴

*1. Minimum supervision measures:*²²⁵ educational assistance to the child; social, health care, and other services to the child not removed from legal representative or with temporary removal. Such care measures may be assigned to a child: 1) to see a specialist; 2) to attend a children's day centre or other educational, cultural, sports or social institution or do community service; 3) continue education at an education school or training centre; 4) to participate in sports, arts, or other therapy, in

(Lietuvos Respublikos administracinių nusižengimų kodekso patvirtinimo, įsigaliojimo ir įgyvendinimo tvarkos įstatymas. Lietuvos Respublikos administracinių nusižengimų kodeksas), No.XII - 1869, 25 June 2015, amendment Nr. XIV-415, 17 June 2021-06-17.

²²⁴ Lithuania, Seimas (2007), Law on Minimum and Medium Child Supervision (*Lietuvos Respublikos vaiko minimalios ir vidutinės priežiūros įstatymas*), No. X-1238, last amendment No. XIV-486, 30 June 2021, Articles 2(6) and 2(7).

²²⁵ Lithuania, Seimas (2007), Law on Minimum and Medium Child Supervision (*Lietuvos Respublikos vaiko minimalios ir vidutinės priežiūros įstatymas*), No. X-1238, last amendment No. XIV-486, 30 June 2021, Article 6.

	<p>behavior - changing or social education, and prevention programs; 5) to treat mental and behavioral disorders, pathological craving, addictions to drugs and gambling, and other disorders of habits; 6) to participate in mediation; 7) perform useful activities for the community, educational or other institutions.</p> <p>2. <i>Medium supervision measures</i>.²²⁶ education with a help of educational assistance, social, health care, and other services in a children's socialization centre. The main aims of supervision are: 1) to help a child to change bad habits, develop resistance to negative social impact, and get ready for a self-sustainable, receive education, social, healthcare, and other services; 2) to offer positive socialization, resocialization, and education for a child; 3) to change child's life skills, to help a child to find one's identity, belonging to the community, understanding the responsibility for one's actions and develop respect for human rights and freedoms; 4) to strengthen the child's connections with the environment useful for his development.</p>
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1.4.15. Arrested children, children under probation supervision, children serving a prison sentence

Policy developments	Legislative developments
<p>The Programme of the 18th Government of the Republic of Lithuania.²²⁷</p> <p>The Government, together with experts, intends to outline a clear vision and plan for developing the system of execution of punishments. According to the briefed documents, prisons and other related institutions will be restructured. The main goal is the resocialization of convicts and the implementation of behaviour correction programs. (Article 193).</p>	<p>A new version of the Law on Enforcement of Arrest, I-1175²²⁹ entered into force on 01/01/2023.</p> <p>Based on the Law most of the rights of arrested minors are ensured in the same way as adults:</p> <p>Article 4 (3) specifies that during the arrest, it is forbidden to torture a person, treat a person cruelly or humiliate human dignity. Medical, biological, and other scientific experiments are prohibited with the detainee even with person's consent. It is prohibited, except for the grounds provided for in</p>

²²⁶ Lithuania, Seimas (2007), Law on Minimum and Medium Child Supervision (*Lietuvos Respublikos vaiko minimalios ir vidutinės priežiūros įstatymas*), No. X-1238, last amendment No. XIV-486, 30 June 2021, Article 2(7).

²²⁷ Lithuania, Seimas (2020), Decision on the Programme of the 18th Government of the Republic of Lithuania (*Nutarimas dėl Aštuonioliktos Lietuvos Respublikos Vyriasybės programos*), No. XIV-72, 11 December 2020.

²²⁹ Lithuania, Seimas (1996), Law on Enforcement of Arrest (*Lietuvos Respublikos suėmimo vykdymo įstatymas*), No. I-1175, 18 January 1996, last amendment No. XIV-1772, 23 December 2022.

It undertakes to strengthen the activities of the Lithuanian Probation Service, the competencies of its personnel, and to involve non-governmental organizations, communities, psychologists, mediators and other specialists in the resocialization process. (Article 193).

Public Security Development Programme for 2015-2025.²²⁸

The programme aims to reduce the risk of recidivism by improving the system for controlling the behavior of convicts in places of deprivation of liberty; improving the system of social adaptation of convicted persons; and increasing the possibilities of applying alternative punishments to deprivation of liberty.

legal acts, to film or photograph the arrested person without person's prior consent.

Arrested persons may be kept in custody of the territorial police no longer as it is necessary to perform procedural actions that cannot be performed while person is in the prison. In any case, the duration cannot exceed 7 days when the person is brought from prison and 15 days when the person is newly arrested. (Article 4 (4)).

The person can be arrested only when a pre-trial investigation judge or a court has issued an arrest warrant (Article 6(1)(1)).

Arrested persons are searched and their belongings are checked only in the presence of officers of the same sex. (Article 6 (3)).

Detainees must be introduced to the arrest procedure, their rights, duties, and prohibitions in a language they understand, no later than the day following their arrival at the prison. (Article 6 (4)).

According to Article 6 (5), the person nominated by the arrestee must be notified about the arrestee's arrival at the prison no later than the next day after arrestee's arrival.

Article 7 (1) specifies that arrested persons have the right to meet, correspond with and call their defence counsel without hindrance following the procedure established by the Minister of Justice. The number and duration of meetings and calls, and the number of letters is unlimited. The Law ensures the confidentiality of the communication between the detainee and his defence attorney. (Article 7 (2)).

Article 8 defines that detainees have the right to send and receive an unlimited number of letters. According to the rules established in the Law, detainees have the right to meet with journalists (Article 9), perform religious rites (Article 12), see other persons (Article 13), make phone calls, or use Internet telephony (Article 14), have personal belongings in prison (Article 15), receive and send money transfers (Article 16), and to leave the prison

²²⁸ Lithuania, Seimas (2015), Resolution On the approval of the public security development programme for 2015-2025 (*Nutarimas Dėl Viešojo saugumo plėtros 2015–2025 metų programos patvirtinimo*), No. XII-1682, 7 May 2015, Article 43.

accompanied by prison officials for important reasons. (Article 18).

According to Article 21 (1), the prison must offer each detainee a variety of meaningful activities – so that the time he spends outside the cell is at least 4 hours a day.

The Law also foresees rules for social work with detainees. (Article 23).

For ensuring the rights of arrested minors additional measures are foreseen in the Law.

Articles 27 (1) and 27 (3) require that in prisons, minors must be kept separate from adults. A minor, who reaches the age of 18 before the end of the term of detention may continue to be held together with minors until a person reaches the age of 21 – if this does not conflict with the interests of the minors.

Arrested minors have the right to walk in the fresh air for at least 3 hours every day. (Article 17 (1)). Minors under the age of 16 must have access to education. (Article 22 (1)).

Special attention is paid to health care of minors. Health of arrested minor must be thoroughly checked upon arrival at a prison. If an arrested person, his defender, his close relative, or guardian (caregiver) requests, an additional health examination of the minor is performed. (Article 24 (2)).

Minors who have violated the rules of prison are subject to lighter measures compared to adults. A disciplinary penalty of isolation for no longer than 5 days may be imposed on a minor. (Article 29). Minors in isolation are provided with the opportunity to walk for 3 hours. (Article 33). If no new disciplinary penalty is imposed within 2 months after the day of execution of the disciplinary penalty, it is considered that the minor has no disciplinary penalties. (Article 31 (8)).

A new version of the Law on Probation, XI-1860²³⁰ entered into force on 01/01/2023.

Based on the Law, the rights of minors on probation are almost the same as those of adults. Like adults, they have the right to receive oral and written

²³⁰ Lithuania, Seimas (2011), Law on Probation (Lietuvos Respublikos probacijos įstatymas), No. XI-1860, 22 December 2011, last amendment No. XIV-1204, 28 Jun 2022.

information in a language they understand about the procedure and conditions of probation, their rights and obligations, and they also have the right to receive personal and social assistance. They have the right to apply with proposals, requests (statements), petitions, and complaints to the Probation Service or other state and municipal institutions or officials, public or international organizations, as well as other institutions and organizations. Additionally, the rights of minor probationers can be represented and defended by their legal representatives. (Article 13). Legal representatives also have the right to receive information about the progress of the minor's probation and participate in minor's resocialization (Article 16).

Legal representatives of the minor probationer must cooperate with the probation officer, provide an officer with information necessary to carry out the risk assessment of the probationer, provide information on whether the conditions of probation are being met, arrive at the probation office on time together with the minor probationer and participate in the discussion and appointment of probation measures, ensure that the probationer fulfils the probation requirements and participate in resocialization (Articles 16 (2) and 17 (3)).

Probation is carried out according to the individual supervision plan of the minor probationer drawn up by the Probation Officer. The plan is drawn up considering the minor's social maturity and personality development needs. The probationer and his/her legal representative must participate in its creation. Interested authorities may also be involved in the preparation of the plan. (Article 18).

According to Article 19 the measures for the resocialization of a minor probationer are as follows:

- 1) Individual and group work with the probationer, during which the probationer's abilities to live without crime are developed and his social integration is promoted;
- 2) Means of meeting the probationer's spiritual and social needs;
- 3) Social assistance in solving the probationer's personal and social problems;
- 4) Development of social skills and promotion of employment;

- 5) Implementation of behaviour correction programs that correspond to his/her age, social maturity, educational needs;
- 6) Individual or group psychotherapy;
- 7) Psychological assistance;
- 8) Restorative measures aimed at reconciling the probationer and the victim and compensating the damage caused by the criminal act;
- 9) Other measures, the implementation of which would help the probationer social integration.

Based on Article 32 **Law on Probation, XI-1860** ²³¹ activities of the Probation Service and probation officers are supervised by courts, prosecutors, the Ombudsperson for Children, the Ministry of Justice, and other state institutions.

Probation measures are applied to the convicted person based on the procedures approved by the Order of the **Director of Probation Service No V-18,** ²³² **1 July 2022. The Order foresees** the following guarantees for the protection of the rights of minors:

The **Description of the Procedure for Mediation in the Lithuanian Probation Service** approved by the Order of the Director of Probation Service ²³³ explains that in a situation when one of the parties or both parties are minors, the mediator must involve their legal representatives in the mediation. (Article 30.6). If the mediation party is a minor, consent to the mediation must be signed not only by the mediation party but also by minor's legal representative (Article 11).

Article 53 of the **Description of the Procedure for Execution of Probation and other Criminal Liability measures** approved by the Order of the Director of

²³¹ Lithuania, Seimas (2011), Law on Probation (Lietuvos Respublikos probacijos įstatymas), No. XI-1860, 22 December 2011, last amendment No. XIV-1204, 28 Jun 2022.

²³² Lithuania, Director of the Lithuanian Probation Service (2022), The Order No V-184 Regarding the implementation of Article 13 of the Probation Law of the Republic of Lithuania and the Law on the Activities of Correctional Officers of the Republic of Lithuania (*Dėl Lietuvos Respublikos probacijos įstatymo ir Lietuvos Respublikos pataisos pareigūnų veiklos įstatymo 13 straipsnio įgyvendinimo*), 1 July 2022.

²³³ Lithuania, Director of the Lithuanian Probation Service (2022), The Order No V-184 Regarding the implementation of Article 13 of the Probation Law of the Republic of Lithuania and the Law on the Activities of Correctional Officers of the Republic of Lithuania (*Dėl Lietuvos Respublikos probacijos įstatymo ir Lietuvos Respublikos pataisos pareigūnų veiklos įstatymo 13 straipsnio įgyvendinimo*), 1 July 2022, Para 1.4.

Probation Service²³⁴ specifies a recommendation for the probation officers to cooperate with the legal representatives of the minor, as well as with the State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service when community services, measures of restriction of liberty and measures of upbringing are applied to a minor.

The Description of the Procedure for Voluntary Activity in the Lithuanian Probation Service approved by the Order of the Director of Probation Service²³⁵ specifies the involvement of volunteers in assisting the resocialization of minors on probation. The Description states that at the Probation Service, volunteers perform activities beneficial to society without compensation. (Article 3.2). However, the list of activities for volunteers to contribute, is not provided.

The Description of the Procedure for the Use of Special Measures in the Lithuanian Probation Service approved by the Order of the Director of Probation Service²³⁶ explains how special measures such as electric shock devices Tasers, tear gas, and handcuffs can be used against dangerous persons. However, the use of such measures for minors is not specified. The same description applies to both adults and minors.

A new version of the Code on Execution of Sentences, No. IX-994²³⁷ entered into force on 01/01/2023. It establishes the procedure,

²³⁴ Lithuania, Director of the Lithuanian Probation Service (2022), The Order No V-184 Regarding the implementation of Article 13 of the Probation Law of the Republic of Lithuania and the Law on the Activities of Correctional Officers of the Republic of Lithuania (*Dėl Lietuvos Respublikos probacijos įstatymo ir Lietuvos Respublikos pataisos pareigūnų veiklos įstatymo 13 straipsnio įgyvendinimo*), 1 July 2022, Para 1.3.

²³⁵ Lithuania, Director of the Lithuanian Probation Service (2022), The Order No V-184 Regarding the implementation of Article 13 of the Probation Law of the Republic of Lithuania and the Law on the Activities of Correctional Officers of the Republic of Lithuania (*Dėl Lietuvos Respublikos probacijos įstatymo ir Lietuvos Respublikos pataisos pareigūnų veiklos įstatymo 13 straipsnio įgyvendinimo*), 1 July 2022, Para 1.1.

²³⁶ Lithuania, Director of the Lithuanian Probation Service (2022), The Order No V-184 Regarding the implementation of Article 13 of the Probation Law of the Republic of Lithuania and the Law on the Activities of Correctional Officers of the Republic of Lithuania (*Dėl Lietuvos Respublikos probacijos įstatymo ir Lietuvos Respublikos pataisos pareigūnų veiklos įstatymo 13 straipsnio įgyvendinimo*), 1 July 2022, Para 1.5.

²³⁷ Lithuania, Seimas (2002), Code on execution of sentences (*Lietuvos Respublikos Bausmių vykdymo kodeksas*), No. IX-994, 27 June 2002, last amendment No. XIV-1771, 23 December 2022.

	<p>conditions, and principles for the execution of punishments. (Article 1 (1)).</p> <p>Juveniles are subject to similar sentencing rules as adults. There are several additional conditions for minors.</p> <p>The place of detention of juveniles is separate from that of adults. (Articles 26 (1) (2) and 74 (1)(2)). Juvenile convicts are not transferred to the disciplinary group in case of infringement of the imprisonment rules. (Article 34 (7)). Resocialization takes place according to the juvenile convict's individual resocialization plan, which is drawn up considering their social maturity and personality development needs. (Article 53 (2)). Juvenile convicts who study in general education or vocational training institutions are not included in work activities. (Article 59 (2)).</p>
<p>1.4.16. Children with drug, alcohol and other addictions</p>	
<p>Policy developments</p>	<p>Legislative developments</p>
<p>The Programme of the 18th Government of the Republic of Lithuania.²³⁸</p> <p>The Government undertakes to ensure access to treatment for minors with addiction to alcohol, drugs, or other substances. (Article 103.4).</p> <p>Programme on the Development of Health Preservation and Strengthening²³⁹ notes that there is insufficient prevention for using addictive substances. The demand of drugs is high, it is also high for supply, accessibility of drugs. There are also</p>	<p>The provisions of the updated Law on Fundamentals of Protection of the Rights of the Child, No. I-1234²⁴¹</p> <p>Article 26 (1) of the Law envisages the general duty of all to educate children to refrain from using tobacco products, alcohol, drugs, and other intoxicating substances.</p> <p>Article 26 (2) of the Law stipulates the general duty of everyone to protect a child from the use of tobacco products, alcoholic, energy drinks, drugs, and other psychoactive substances, as well as to</p>

²³⁸ Lithuania, Seimas (2020), Decision on the Programme of the 18th Government of the Republic of Lithuania (*Nutarimas dėl Aštuonioliktos Lietuvos Respublikos Vyriausybės programos*), No. XIV-72, 11 December 2020, (Article 1.2.)

²³⁹ Lithuania, Government (2022), Resolution on the Approval of the Programme on the Development of Health Preservation and Strengthening for 2022 – 2030, governed by the Ministry of Health (*Dėl 2022–2030 m. plėtos programos valdytojos Lietuvos Respublikos Sveikatos apsaugos ministerijos Sveikatos išsaugojimo ir stiprinimo plėtos programos patvirtinimo*), No. 66, 26 January 2022.

²⁴¹ Lithuania, Seimas (1996). Law on Fundamentals of Protection of the Rights of the Child (*Lietuvos Respublikos Vaiko teisių apsaugos pagrindų įstatymas*), No. I-1234, 14 March 1996, last amendment No. XIV-1512 10 November 2022.

other factors that cause addiction (gambling, excessive use of computer games, Internet, etc.).

The Programme aims to strengthen mental health of the population and expand the control and prevention of the use of drugs and the availability of other addictive substances.

State Programme for 2018-2028 on Control and Prevention of Drugs, Tobacco, and Alcohol,²⁴⁰

among other things, provides preventive measures for children, parents of children, and specialists working in institutions or organizations at the municipal and national levels.

The following measures for the prevention of drug or alcohol use for children are provided (Article 21.1):

- Increase the number of programs for the prevention of drug or alcohol use according to children's age groups and topics, to introduce and implement them in educational, health, and social service institutions and NGOs;
- Increase the availability of non-formal education and training programs for children and youth;
- Create and implement drug or alcohol use and gambling prevention programs for children of parents suffering from addiction;
- Increase the diversity and availability of early intervention services for children and youth who use drugs and alcohol irregularly.

The Programme envisages the creation of a support system for parents whose children irregularly use psychoactive substances to help them understand their role, to develop the ability to properly respond to emerging difficulties and to motivate parents to participate in decision-making. (Article 21.2.2)

protect from the production, processing, acquisition, storage, transportation, sending, sale or other use of such substances and their distribution. A child must also be protected from gambling and other addictive influences.

Considering a child's age, health, development, and maturity, preventive, educational, treatment (including addiction treatment) and rehabilitation programs may be applied. (Article 26 (3)).

Article 27 (1) of the Law stipulates that a child cannot consume, manufacture, process, purchase, store, transport, send or distribute alcohol, energy drinks, tobacco or related products (electronic cigarettes and refill containers), narcotic or psychotropic substances, medicines (except for children for treatment) or doping.

It is prohibited to employ a child for tasks related to the production or sale of tobacco products or alcoholic beverages. (Article 27 (2)).

²⁴⁰ Lithuania, Seimas (2018), Resolution on the approval of the State programme for 2018-2028 on control and prevention of drugs, tobacco, and alcohol (*Nutarimas Dėl Valstybinės narkotikų, tabako ir alkoholio kontrolės ir vartojimo prevencijos 2018–2028 metų programos patvirtinimo*), No. XIII-1765, 13 December 2018.

The Programme includes the following measures for specialists working in institutions or organizations at the municipal and national levels: to implement the accreditation system of prevention programs; to introduce general quality standards of prevention activities, improving the competencies of schools, social and health care institutions, representatives of NGOs; promote cooperation between institutions and NGOs in each municipality.

The Programme also foresees awareness-raising activities for general public education on this issue. It also envisages monitoring the application of measures for implementation and implementing changes based on the results obtained.

1.5. Contradictions, conflicts, or gaps between national legislation/policies on child protection and international / EU standards

Are there any contradictions, conflicts, or gaps between national legislation/policies on child protection and international / EU standards that have been pointed out by international bodies, national human rights institutions, ombudspersons, or civil society organisations? Please also refer to any contradictions within national and sub-national legislation.

Ca. 300 words

The latest Government's Report on the Implementation of the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child in Lithuania was submitted to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child in 2020. In May 2023 the Committee issued a list of issues for the Government to report.²⁴² The concluding observations have not yet been adopted.

Lithuania has received formal notice from the Commission of the European Union regarding the non-implementation of Directive 2011/93/EU on combating the sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children and child pornography and replacing Council Framework Decision 2004/68/JHA on 25 July 2019. Lithuania implemented the necessary changes to legal acts. The procedure was closed on 9 June 2021.

UNICEF Report "Basis for a European Child Guarantee Action Plan in Lithuania" (2022)²⁴³ indicates that in Lithuania, access to ECEC (early childhood education and care) remains one of the most important challenges, especially for the youngest children. Not enough places are available in public centres. Private

²⁴² UN Treaty Body Database (2023). [Ratification, Reporting & Documentation for Lithuania](#).

²⁴³ UNICEF (2022), [Basis for a European Child Guarantee Action Plan in Lithuania](#), UNICEF Europe and Central Asia Regional Office (ECARO).

for-profit services are very expensive. Due to the large group sizes in public ECEC centres and a lack of learning support specialists, children with SEN (Special Education Needs), disabilities, and children from minority groups do not have sufficient access to ECEC. The Report also shows that in Lithuania the inequality across schools and regions exists regarding effective access to education. Vulnerable children, such as children from low-income families, children from families at social risk, children in rural areas, and children from national minorities receive a lower quality education in Lithuania. The reason for this is that schools in rural areas and in certain parts of cities, as well as schools for national minorities, lack qualified teachers, necessary learning equipment, up-to-date books, and methodologies. Meanwhile, children with SEN and disabilities do not receive quality education due to teachers' lack of knowledge of how to work with such children, as well as a lack of adapted methodology and learning support specialists.

UNICEF noted that socio-economic disadvantages negatively influence children's access to healthcare system in Lithuania due to families' inability to afford treatment, long waiting lists, long travel times or due to lack of means of transport, or a lack of time due to parents' working commitments, etc. It further pointed out that the most vulnerable children in Lithuania, that is children from low-income families, families at social risk, and children living in remote rural areas do not have proper nutrition. Parents with low incomes cannot afford healthy food as these are often more expensive than less healthy alternatives. Furthermore, housing deprivation is a much bigger issue for children living in low-income families compared with other income groups. Effective access must be ensured to adequate housing and access to housing support services needs to be improved for the most disadvantaged groups in Lithuania: children in low-income households, children of single parents, children from large families, children with disabilities, Roma, and migrant children.

In 2017, the analysis of the human rights situation in Lithuania was carried out by the Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe²⁴⁴. The Commissioner encouraged the Lithuanian authorities to create more training and study opportunities for child rights protection specialists in order to eliminate existing disparities and strengthen locally available support services which will meet the needs of the population. Commissioner suggests that cooperation between the local and central authorities should be enhanced in order to ensure a more uniform application of the existing policies to deliver child-friendly social services, which are in line with the Council of Europe Recommendation CM/Rec (2011)12 on Children's Rights and the Social Services friendly for Children and Families (2011).

Furthermore, the system of placement in socialisation centres should be modified by implementing the deinstitutionalisation of those institutions. Children experiencing behavioural problems should not be placed in closed-type institutions, but instead sufficient support should be provided for their rehabilitation in their families or a family-like environment. The placement of young persons in such centres to prevent juvenile delinquency should be the last option for a minimum necessary period, as stated in Article 46 of the UN Guidelines for the Prevention of Juvenile Delinquency. Behaviour such as school absenteeism, loitering or running away from home should be addressed with child protective measures, including effective support for parents or other caregivers and measures, which address the root causes of such behaviour, as established in international standards. The Commissioner recalled that Article 3 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child states that the best interests of the child must be the primary

²⁴⁴ Council of Europe (2017). [Report by Nils Muižnieks, Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe Report by Nils Muižnieks, Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe Following His Visit to Lithuania from 5 to 9 December 2016. No. CommDH\(2017\)7, 19 April 2017.](#)

consideration in all decisions of the authorities concerning him or her. According to the Committee on the Rights of the Child, this means that rehabilitation and restorative justice should be the overarching principles when dealing with child offenders.

The Commissioner also emphasised that the authorities should continue their efforts to provide adequate and systematic training and/or awareness-raising about children's rights to professionals who work with and for children, most notably judges, lawyers, law enforcement officials, and other civil servants. Collecting testimony from children who may be victims, especially those who have psycho-social and intellectual disabilities, poses special challenges for law-enforcement officials because of the victims' difficulty to express their account of abuse. It is therefore important to ensure that justice is child-friendly and that quality psychological services are made available for children, most notably in the framework of domestic violence-related judicial proceedings.

1.6. Orientation/fragmentation of national child protection policy and legislation

Based on the above information please assess and explain if the national child protection policy and legislation is fragmented and if the child protection system is oriented towards prevention and/or intervention.

Ca. 200 words

At the policy level, the protection of children's rights is lost among a large number of programs. There is no one program, which comprehensively covers and addresses all the measures for children. The UN Committee noted this situation back in 2013. The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child observed that the State has numerous programs and action plans, but lacks a comprehensive child rights strategy or other national policy document covering all areas of child rights protection.²⁰⁵ The situation has not changed significantly since.

In most of the existing contemporary programs, the rights of children are ensured without distinguishing their rights from the rights of adults, i.e. ensuring the rights of children is not separated into a separate group of goals. When implementing such programs, often it is not possible to determine which part of the program's measures is intended for children and which part is for adults. Also, when evaluating the results of such programs, it is difficult to identify how much the protection of children's rights has improved in Lithuania during the implementation of such programmes as they are not aimed solely at children.

At the legislative level, the situation is different. The main law in the area – the **Law on Fundamentals of Protection of the Rights of the Child, No. I-1234** defines all available rights of the child and determines the basis for ensuring these rights. This law also fully transfers provisions of the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child in the national law. However, it should be noted that the protection of individual rights is provided for in different legal acts, in some of them children's rights are protected together with adults, and in others, special attention is paid to the protection of the child's rights.

Although programs and laws indicate considerable attention to measures for prevention, at the practical level of implementation of legal acts, the system is still more oriented towards intervention than prevention. However, it should be noted that the situation has significantly improved compared to previous years, as more and more attention is paid to prevention. This may be illustrated by the amendments to the Law on Social Services which were introduced in 2022, which included preventive social services among the list of social services regulated by the Law. The added article on preventive social services states that preventive social services are provided to all persons (all families) and/or communities who wish to

strengthen the ability of a person/family to take care of his/her own personal life and to participate in society, to strengthen the social activity of the community and to promote the social inclusion of the community, and to strengthen the person's/family's knowledge and skills in order to prevent the emergence of potential social problems and social risks in the future. Preventive social services include a service for identifying potential recipients of social services, complex services for the family, work with the community and other services.²⁴⁵

1.7. Development in the past years: achievements, gaps, and challenges

Based on the output of the 2014 mapping exercise, please briefly describe the development of the child protection legislation and policies in the past 8 years, incl. achievements and (persisting) gaps and challenges.

Ca. 300 words

In 2022 Lithuania has ratified Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on a Communications Procedure, which will facilitate the further development in the increasement of the accountability of Lithuanian institutions in the field of child protection.²⁴⁶

Essential changes to the child rights protection system were introduced in 2018. Since 1 July 2018 the reformed (centralized) child rights protection system became operational; the functions of specialists in different fields in relation to the protection of the rights of the child have been defined; algorithms for responding to violations of children's rights, also for assessing the need of services and other support have been established by laws; all forms of violence, including corporal punishment and child neglect have been prohibited; prohibition to leave children of young age unattended have been established; placements of children under 3 years of age in children care institutions (with some exceptions) e has been prohibited; child care in homes for infants with development disorders has been prevented; professional foster care model was established, Foster Care Centres providing services to foster families, adoptive families, social families (foster care-based household), guardians on-call and children placed in all these families have been introduced; new mechanisms of assistance for family and the child (case management, mobile teams, complex services and other) were introduced, a package of minimum services for families which must be ensured by each municipality (basic package of services) has been established; as well as some legal institutes (e.g. permission issued by the court to take a child from legal representatives, temporary child's

²⁴⁵ Lithuania, Seimas (2021), Law amending the Articles 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 8, 11, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 26, 29, 34, 38 of the Law of the Republic of Lithuania on Social Services (No X-493), supplementing Articles 6-1, 19-3, 20-1, 20-1, 20-2 of the Law, and declaring the Articles 36, 37 of the Law invalid (*Lietuvos Respublikos socialinių paslaugų įstatymo Nr. X-493 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 8, 11, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 26, 29, 34, 38 straipsnių pakeitimo, įstatymo papildymo 6-1, 19-3, 20-1, 20-2 straipsniais ir 36, 37 straipsnių pripažinimo netekusiais galios įstatymas*), No. XIV-877, 23 December 2021.

²⁴⁶ Lithuania, Seimas (2022). Law of the Republic of Lithuania on the ratification of the Optional Protocol to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child on a Communication procedure (*Lietuvos Respublikos įstatymas dėl Jungtinių Tautų vaiko teisių konvencijos fakultatyvaus protokolo dėl pranešimų procedūros ratifikavimo*), No. XIV-1375, 30 June 2022.

supervision, etc.), ensuring that in practice children are taken from legal representatives only as a last resort, after all means have been exhausted to enable the family to take care of the child.²⁴⁷

The child rights protection has undergone essential changes in 2018. The legal acts were amended additionally in 2020, establishing additional mechanisms related to children protection. In 2018, the child's rights protection system was centralized.²⁴⁸ Since 1 July 2018, the function of child rights protection has been transferred from municipalities (municipal child rights protection units) to the State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour. The Service has become the central institution of the Republic of Lithuania, implementing the child's rights protection policy, and has received the authority to ensure the coordination of actions related to children's rights in all sectors at the national, municipal, and local levels.²⁴⁹

To ensure the unified tool for the assessment of the possible violations of the rights of the child, Description of the Procedure for the Establishment of the Criteria of the Levels of Threat to the Child and Determination of the Level of Threat to the Child was approved by the Minister of Social Security and Labour in 2018²⁵⁰. Different threat levels were described in the mentioned documents and the intensity of the measures to be applied depending on the level of the threat to child in the family. When a second threat level was identified in the family, a child was required to be removed from the family in all cases.

With time, it was decided, that threat levels put too much focus only on the risks indicated in the family, but do not take into consideration other aspects of child's situation, such as family's and child's strengths and similar. Therefore, in 2020 Description of the Procedure for the Establishment of the Criteria of the Levels of Threat to the Child and Determination of the Level of Threat to the Child was abolished. New tool for the assessment of the possible violations of the rights of the child was developed and approved by the Minister of Social Security and Labour – Description of the Assessment of the Child's Situation²⁵¹. According to this description, child rights protection specialists must assess the whole situation of the child, taking into account all important aspects, not only the identified risks.

²⁴⁷ Office of the Ombudsperson for Child's rights of the Republic of Lithuania, Submission of the Ombudsperson for Child's Rights, United Nations Human Rights Council Universal Periodic Review, the 3rd cycle (2016 – 2020 year), 2021. P.5 [<http://vtaki.lt/lt/teisine-informacija/vaiko-teisiu-padeties-vertinimas/ataskaitos-tarptautinems-organizacijoms>]

²⁴⁸ Lithuania, Seimas (2000), Civil Code (*Lietuvos Respublikos Civilinis kodeksas*), No. VIII-1864, 18 July 2000, last amendment No. XIV-1435, 29 September 2022, Art. 3.250 and further.

²⁴⁹ Lithuania, Seimas (1996). Law on Fundamentals of Protection of the Rights of the Child (*Lietuvos Respublikos Vaiko teisių apsaugos pagrindų įstatymas*), No. I-1234, 14 March 1996, last amendment No. XIV-1512 10 November 2022, Art. 50.

²⁵⁰ Lithuania, Ministry of Social Security and Labour (2018), Regarding the approval of the Description of the Procedure for the Establishment of the Criteria of the Levels of Threat to the Child and Determination of the Level of Threat to the Child (*Dėl Grėsmės vaikui lygių kriterijų ir grėsmės vaikui lygio nustatymo tvarkos aprašo patvirtinimo*), No. A1-221, 21 May 2018, no longer in force.

²⁵¹ Lithuania, Ministry of Social Security and Labour (2019), Regarding the approval of the Description of the Assessment of the Child's Situation (*Dėl Vaiko situacijos vertinimo tvarkos aprašo patvirtinimo*), No. A1-803, 30 December 2019, last amendment No. A1-254, 19 April 2023.

Additional new child protection measures were introduced too, such as child's temporary supervision without limiting parental rights²⁵²

1.8. Promising practices

Please list and briefly describe any promising practice in child protection legislation and policies that you come across. (if available please include references to documents or URLs in case of online tools/mechanisms)

Ca. 250 words **The Action Plan for Child Welfare for 2022-2026**²⁵³ approved by the Order of the Minister of Social Security and Labour No A1-52 is one of the documents that implements 2023-2025 Strategic Plan of the Ministry of Social Security and Labour, and includes continuous measures for children and families.²⁵⁴ The plan foresees comprehensive measures in the field of child rights, such as increasing the availability of services and other assistance mechanisms to children and their families, increasing public awareness and information on child's rights, developing measures, measures which would help to strengthen children's families, thus ensuring a safe, educational environment for a child, the capacity of the child's parents, guardians (guardians) to properly care for children, as well as to create conditions for children's full and harmonious development.

Another example of good practice is illustrated by **2014-2023 Action Plan for the Transition from Institutional Care to Family and Community-based Services for Children with Disabilities and Children left without Parental Care**²⁵⁵ stipulated the changes in the policies regarding the transition from institutional care to family and community-based services for children with disabilities and children left without parental care; it aims to provide for coherent and coordinated actions for the period 2014-2023, to promote the development of a transition from institutional social care to community services for children and young people with intellectual and/or mental disabilities, children left without parental care, including infants.

²⁵² Lithuania, Seimas (1996). Law on Fundamentals of Protection of the Rights of the Child (*Lietuvos Respublikos Vaiko teisių apsaugos pagrindų įstatymas*), No. I-1234, 14 March 1996, last amendment No. XIV-1512 10 November 2022, Art. 36⁴.

²⁵³ Lithuania, Ministry of Social Security and Labour of the Republic of Lithuania (2022), Order on the Approval of the Action Plan for Child Welfare 2022-2026 (*Lietuvos Respublikos Socialinės apsaugos ir darbo ministro įsakymas 'Dėl vaiko gerovės 2022-2026 metų veiksmų plano patvirtinimo'*), No. A1-52, 24 January 2022, last amendment No A1-409, 19 June 2023. [<https://e-seimas.lrs.lt/portal/legalAct/lt/TAD/27ba5da17d5511ecb2fe9975f8a9e52e/asr>]

²⁵⁴ Lithuania, Ministry of Social Security and Labour of the Republic of Lithuania (2021), Order Regarding the approval of the 2023-2025 strategic plan of the Ministry of Social Security and Labour of the Republic of Lithuania (*Dėl Lietuvos Respublikos socialinės apsaugos ir darbo ministerijos 2023–2023 metų strateginio veiklos plano patvirtinimo*), No. A1-32, 24 January 2023.

²⁵⁵ Lithuania, Ministry of Social Security and Labour (2022), On the approval of the 2014-2023 action plan for the transition from institutional care to family and community-based services for disabled children and children left without parental care (*Dėl Perėjimo nuo institucinės globos prie šeimoje ir bendruomenėje teikiamų paslaugų neįgaliesiems ir likusiems be tėvų globos vaikams 2014–2023 metų veiksmų plano patvirtinimo*), No. A1-83, 14 February 2014, last amendment No. A1-1211, 7 December 2020.

Introduction of preventive services by the amendments to the Law on Social Services were introduced in 2022, which included preventive social services among the list of social services regulated by the Law. The added article on preventive social services states that preventive social services are provided to all persons (all families) and/or communities who wish to strengthen the ability of a person/family to take care of his/her own personal life and to participate in society, to strengthen the social activity of the community and to promote the social inclusion of the community, and to strengthen the person's/family's knowledge and skills in order to prevent the emergence of potential social problems and social risks in the future. Preventive social services include a service for identifying potential recipients of social services, complex services for the family, work with the community and other services.²⁵⁶

²⁵⁶ Lithuania, Seimas (2021), Law amending the Articles 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 8, 11, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 26, 29, 34, 38 of the Law of the Republic of Lithuania on Social Services (No X-493), supplementing Articles 6-1, 19-3, 20-1, 20-1, 20-2 of the Law, and declaring the Articles 36, 37 of the Law invalid (*Lietuvos Respublikos socialinių paslaugų įstatymo Nr. X-493 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 8, 11, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 26, 29, 34, 38 straipsnių pakeitimo, įstatymo papildymo 6-1, 19-3, 20-1, 20-2 straipsniais ir 36, 37 straipsnių pripažinimo netekusiais galios įstatymas*), No. XIV-877, 23 December 2021.

2. Governance, coordination structures, and services

2.1. Primary institutions and main service providers responsible for child protection

Question	Yes	No	Comments
<p>2.1.1. Is there any lead institution/body (e.g. child protection agency, ministry, etc.) primarily responsible for child protection at the national level?</p> <p>If <u>yes</u>, please provide the name in the comments box.</p>	x		<p>The Ministry of Social Security and Labour (<i>Socialinės apsaugos ir darbo ministerija</i>) – in the Ministry, there is a separate unit dedicated for children’s rights issues (i.e., Family and Child Rights Protection Group including the Child Guarantee National Coordinator (<i>Šeimos ir vaiko teisių apsaugos grupė</i>)).²⁵⁷</p> <p>The State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour²⁵⁸</p>
<p>2.1.2. Are there different structures sharing the primary responsibility (e. g. departments in the same or different ministries, different agencies etc.)?</p>	x		<p>Ministry of Justice. The responsibility is shared among the Criminal justice group (<i>Baudžiamosios justicijos grupė</i>), the Sentencing policy group (<i>Bausmių vygdymo politikos grupė</i>), the Legislative policy group (<i>Teisėkūros politikos grupė</i>) and the Legal services policy group (<i>Teisinių paslaugų politikos grupė</i>).²⁵⁹</p>

²⁵⁷ The website of the Ministry of Social Security and Labour <https://socmin.lrv.lt>

²⁵⁸ The website of the State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service <https://vaikoteises.lrv.lt>

²⁵⁹ Website of the Ministry of Justice <https://tm.lrv.lt>

<p>If <u>yes</u>, please provide the name under the comments box and please also mention which body has the lead in coordinating child protection policies and actions.</p>			<p>The Ministry of Education, Science and Sport. The responsibility is divided between the Department of education (<i>Ugdymo departamentas</i>) and the Department of Education Quality and Regional Policy (<i>Švietimo kokybės ir regioninės politikos departamentas</i>).²⁶⁰</p> <p>The Ministry of Health. The responsibility is shared among the Department of Public Health (<i>Visuomenės sveikatos departamentas</i>), the Personal Health Department (<i>Asmens sveikatos departamentas</i>) and the Division of Mental Health (<i>Psichikos sveikatos skyrius</i>).²⁶¹</p> <p>The Ministry of the Interior. The responsibility is divided between the Public Security Policy Group (<i>Viešojo saugumo politikos grupė</i>) and the Migration Policy Group (<i>Migracijos politikos grupė</i>).²⁶²</p>
<p>2.1.3. Are there child focal points or similar in different ministries or agencies?</p> <p>If <u>yes</u>, in which ministry are they located, what are they called, and what role/functions do they have? How do they coordinate?</p>		X	
<p>Please provide in the table below a list of the national/regional/local bodies or authorities having certain responsibilities related to child protection, e.g. child ombuds institution.</p>			

²⁶⁰ The website of the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport <https://smsm.lrv.lt>

²⁶¹ The website of the Ministry of Health <https://sam.lrv.lt>

²⁶² The website of the Ministry of Interior <https://vrm.lrv.lt>

Please note: For the regional and the local levels please indicate only the type of body, do not list all different bodies at regional/local level in the country.

Name of the body	Level (national/regional/local).	Area of responsibility and roles in child protection <i>(for example coordination, legislation, policy making, training, monitoring, financing, implementing)</i>	Comments <i>(for example in case of ombuds institution, compliance with the Paris Principles)</i>
Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania (<i>Lietuvos Respublikos Seimas</i>)	National	Legislation, policy making	The Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania participates in the formulation of child rights protection policy, adopts laws and other legal acts regulating the protection of children's rights, and exercises parliamentary control over their implementation. ²⁶³
The Ombudsperson for Child's Rights of the Republic of Lithuania (<i>Lietuvos Respublikos Vaiko teisių apsaugos kontrolierius</i>)	National	Monitoring, supervision investigation of individual complaints	The Ombudsperson for Child's Rights supervises, monitors and controls the implementation and protection of children's rights and legitimate interests in accordance with the law, investigates individual complaints related to children's rights and legitimate interests, and seeks to improve the situation of child's rights protection in Lithuania. ²⁶⁴

²⁶³ Lithuania, Seimas (1996). Law on Fundamentals of Protection of the Rights of the Child (*Lietuvos Respublikos Vaiko teisių apsaugos pagrindų įstatymas*), No. I-1234, 14 March 1996, last amendments No. XIV-1512, 10 November 2022, Art. 47.

²⁶⁴ Lithuania, Seimas (1996). Law on Fundamentals of Protection of the Rights of the Child (*Lietuvos Respublikos Vaiko teisių apsaugos pagrindų įstatymas*), No. I-1234, 14 March 1996, last amendments No. XIV-1512, 10 November 2022, Art. 47.

The Government of the Republic of Lithuania (<i>Lietuvos Respublikos Vyriausybė</i>)	National	Legislation, policy-making, monitoring, coordination, implementation, financing	The Government ensures the implementation of the child's rights protection policy and coordinates the activities of ministries and Governmental agencies in the implementation of laws and other legal acts regulating the protection of children's rights. ²⁶⁵
Ministry of Social Security and Labour of the Republic of Lithuania (<i>Socialinės apsaugos ir darbo ministerija</i>)	National	Policy making, coordination, allocation of funding, monitoring, implementation	<p>The Ministry of Social Security and Labour participates in the development of the child's rights protection policy, is responsible for it and coordinates its implementation, as well as responsible for the development of the family policy and coordinates its implementation.²⁶⁶</p> <p>The Ministry of Social Security and Labour, while coordinating the implementation of the child rights protection policy:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Together with other state and municipal institutions, ensures adequate protection of the rights of a child; 2) Analyses the information provided by state and municipal institutions and bodies on matters of protection of the rights of a child, evaluates the state of protection of the rights of children in the country; 3) Prepares and submits drafts of legal acts to the Government, gives orders to the State Child Rights

²⁶⁵ Lithuania, Seimas (1996). Law on Fundamentals of Protection of the Rights of the Child (*Lietuvos Respublikos Vaiko teisių apsaugos pagrindų įstatymas*), No. I-1234, 14 March 1996, last amendments No. XIV-1512, 10 November 2022, Art. 47.

²⁶⁶ Lithuania, Seimas (1996). Law on Fundamentals of Protection of the Rights of the Child (*Lietuvos Respublikos Vaiko teisių apsaugos pagrindų įstatymas*), No. I-1234, 14 March 1996, last amendments No. XIV-1512, 10 November 2022, Art. 48.

			<p>Protection and Adoption Service for ensuring the implementation of child's rights protection, and proposals to municipal institutions for ensuring adequate protection of child's rights;</p> <p>4) Finance programs aimed at strengthening families and ensuring child's well-being;</p> <p>5) Cooperates with the Prosecutor's office, the Police Department and other institutions in matters for ensuring the protection of child's rights.²⁶⁷</p> <p>The Regulations of the Ministry states that the Ministry:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Together with other state and municipal institutions and institutions, creates, develops and improves assistance, services and other mechanisms aimed at ensuring the well-being of children and their rights and legitimate interests; 2) Analyses and evaluates the state of protection of child's rights in Lithuania, develops programs aimed at ensuring child well-being and measures for implementation of these programs, finances the implementation of these programs;
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²⁶⁷ Lithuania, Seimas (1996). Law on Fundamentals of Protection of the Rights of the Child (*Lietuvos Respublikos Vaiko teisių apsaugos pagrindų įstatymas*), No. I-1234, 14 March 1996, last amendments No. XIV-1512, 10 November 2022, Art. 48.

			<p>3) Cooperates with the state, municipality level and other institutions to ensure the protection of child rights.²⁶⁸</p> <p>In the field of social services to family the Ministry of Social Security and Labour:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Formulates the policy of social services, organizes, coordinates and controls its implementation; 2) Analyses and evaluates the state of social services in the country and provides proposals to municipalities regarding the planning and organization of social services; 3) Prepares and finances state social service programs and projects.²⁶⁹ <p>The Ministry is also responsible for other issues related to child protection. Different units of the Ministry are responsible for different areas of implementation of child rights protection.</p>
Department of Supervision of Social Services under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour (<i>Socialinių paslaugų priežiūros</i>)	National	Financing, implementation, coordination, control	Department of Supervision of Social Services under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour is a budgetary institution under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour. Its main aims are:

²⁶⁸ Lithuania, The Government (1998). Regarding the approval of the regulation of the Ministry of Social Security and Labour of the Republic of Lithuania (Dėl Lietuvos Respublikos socialinės apsaugos ir darbo ministerijos nuostatų patvirtinimo), No. 892, 17 July 1998, last amendments No. 671, 29 June 2022. Art. 8.9.

²⁶⁹ Lithuania, Seimas (2006), Law on Social Services (*Lietuvos Respublikos socialinių paslaugų įstatymas*), No. X-493, last amendment No. XIV-952, 17 March 2022. Art. 11.

<p><i>departamentas prie Socialinės apsaugos ir darbo ministerijos)</i></p>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To assess, supervise and control the quality of social services at the state and local levels; - To participate in the implementation of the state social services policy; - To implement state social programs, measures and/or projects; - To ensure the functioning of the system of certification of social workers, and improvement of professional competence of social workers and individual care personnel. <p>The Department, in the field of assistance to the family:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Provides methodological assistance to municipalities regarding the organisation of social care for families, as well as quality control of general social services and social care; 2) Controls the assessment of a person's (family's) need for social services financed from the State budget through special targeted grants to municipal budgets, their allocation, provision and assessment of a person's (family's) financial ability to pay for these services; 3) Together with the State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour, supervises the quality of activities of Foster Care Centres; 4) Provides methodological assistance to municipalities regarding the organisation of social
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			<p>care for families, as well as quality control of general social services and social care;</p> <p>5) Controls the assessment of a person's (family's) need for social services financed from the State budget through special targeted grants to municipal budgets, their allocation, provision and assessment of the person's (family's) financial ability to pay for these services;</p> <p>6) Participates in the development of state social programs, measures and/or projects;</p> <p>7) Administers state social programs, measures and/or projects;</p> <p>8) Organizes, coordinates and supervises the implementation of state social programs, measures and/or projects, evaluates and regulates the use of funds allocated to state social programs, measures and/or projects.²⁷⁰</p> <p>The Law on Social Services indicates that the Department of Supervision of Social Services issues the licences for social services, initiates hold of them, and abolishes them. It also oversees their implementation.²⁷¹</p>
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²⁷⁰ Lithuania, Ministry of Social Security and Labour (2006). Regarding the approval of the regulations of the Department of Supervision of Social Services under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour (*Dėl Socialinių paslaugų priežiūros departamento prie Socialinės apsaugos ir darbo ministerijos nuostatų patvirtinimo*), No. A1-182, 1 July 2006, last amendments No. A1-1118, 18 November 2020.

²⁷¹ Lithuania, Seimas (2006), Law on Social Services (*Lietuvos Respublikos socialinių paslaugų įstatymas*), No. X-493, last amendment No. XIV-952, 17 March 2022, Art. 22

Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Lithuania <i>(Lietuvos Respublikos teisingumo ministerija)</i>	National	Policy making, implementation, coordination	The Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Lithuania participates in the formation of the policy for the protection of children's rights in accordance with the regulatory area of the Ministry: 1) Provides conclusions on compliance of draft laws with the rights and freedoms of the child; 2) Implements measures to ensure the provision of state-guaranteed legal aid to children; 3) Ensures the protection of child rights in the institutions assigned to its responsibility area; 4) Together with the National Courts Administration, the Council of Judges, the General Prosecutor's Office of the Republic of Lithuania, and the Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Lithuania organise joint and specialised meetings of judges, prosecutors, police officers working in the field of prevention and support for family and a child, training and professional development courses. ²⁷²
The Ministry of Education, Science and Sport of the Republic of Lithuania <i>(Lietuvos Respublikos Švietimo, mokslo ir sporto ministerija)</i>	National	Policy making, implementation, coordination	The Ministry of Education, Science and Sport of the Republic of Lithuania participates in the implementation of the policy for the protection of the rights of a child in the field of public education policy: 1) Ensures access to and quality of formal and non-formal education, and educational assistance; 2) Implements educational measures aimed at protecting children from violations of child's rights in

²⁷² Lithuania, Seimas (1996). Law on Fundamentals of Protection of the Rights of the Child (*Lietuvos Respublikos Vaiko teisių apsaugos pagrindų įstatymas*), No. I-1234, 14 March 1996, last amendments No. XIV-1512, 10 November 2022, Art. 49

			<p>accordance with the procedure established by law, and develops recommendations on the implementation of violence prevention in schools;</p> <p>3) Coordinates the provision of educational assistance to a student, a teacher, a family and the school;</p> <p>4) Approve recommendations for organisation, coordination and control of the implementation of minimum and medium supervision measures or educational measures in the municipality;</p> <p>5) Collects, organises and analyses data in accordance with the state education monitoring indicators approved by the Minister of Education, Science and Sport and in accordance with the procedure established by the Minister.²⁷³</p>
<p>The Ministry of Health of the Republic of Lithuania (<i>Lietuvos Respublikos sveikatos apsaugos ministerija</i>)</p>	National	Policy making, implementation, coordination	<p>The Ministry of Health of the Republic of Lithuania formulates the policy for the protection of children's rights in the field of health care and implements it in the following ways:</p> <p>1) Guarantees the availability and appropriateness of healthcare services for children;</p> <p>2) Ensures that institutions and bodies assigned to its area of supervision implement the protection of child's rights when carrying out health care activities;</p> <p>3) Develops and implements programs related to improving health status of children;</p>

²⁷³ Lithuania, Seimas (1996). Law on Fundamentals of Protection of the Rights of the Child (*Lietuvos Respublikos Vaiko teisių apsaugos pagrindų įstatymas*), No. I-1234, 14 March 1996, last amendments No. XIV-1512, 10 November 2022, Art. 49.

			<p>4) Collects, organizes and analyses information on children's health issues;</p> <p>5) Creates legal prerequisites for doctors at health care institutions to have the obligation to re-direct parents or other legal representatives of a child in accordance with the law to an institution providing social services for families in a specific municipality, in order to enable the family to receive the necessary services or other assistance.²⁷⁴</p>
<p>The Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Lithuania (<i>Lietuvos Respublikos vidaus reikalų ministerija</i>)</p>	National	Policy making, implementation, coordination	<p>The Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Lithuania participates in the formulation of policy on the protection of the rights of a child within the Ministry's area of responsibility as follows:</p> <p>1) Collects, systematizes and analyses information on criminal offences and misdemeanours committed against children and in relation to them, and on other issues related to the protection of the rights of a child within the competence of the Ministry;</p> <p>2) Develops and implements, within its competence, programmes on prevention of children crimes, violence against children, trafficking of children and other issues related to the prevention of child's rights violations;</p> <p>3) Ensures that the Police Commissioner General creates legal and administrative preconditions for police officers, who, within the scope of their</p>

²⁷⁴ Lithuania, Seimas (1996). Law on Fundamentals of Protection of the Rights of the Child (*Lietuvos Respublikos Vaiko teisių apsaugos pagrindų įstatymas*), No. I-1234, 14 March 1996, last amendments No. XIV-1512, 10 November 2022, Art. 49.

			<p>competences, carry out the protection of the rights of a child, to have the special knowledge necessary to work with children;</p> <p>4) Carries out prevention in the field of juvenile delinquency;</p> <p>5) Creates legal and administrative prerequisites to ensure that, in the event of a threat to the physical or mental safety, health or life of a child, territorial police units cooperate with the State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service/its' territorial units when it is necessary to remove a child from child's parents or other legal representatives or another environment which is unsafe for a child.²⁷⁵</p>
<p>State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour (<i>Valstybės vaiko teisių apsaugos ir įvaikinimo tarnyba prie Socialinės apsaugos ir darbo ministerijos</i>)</p>	National	Implementation, coordination	<p>The State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service implements the policy of protection of child rights in the territories of all municipalities and participates in the formulation of the state policy in the field of protection of child rights, either itself or through its structural units. The Service:</p> <p>1) Performs the functions of the central institution for the international protection of the rights of a child and adoption in the Republic of Lithuania;</p> <p>2) Protects and safeguards the rights of a child and represents the rights and legitimate interests of a child in the municipalities 24 hours a day;</p>

²⁷⁵ Lithuania, Seimas (1996). Law on Fundamentals of Protection of the Rights of the Child (*Lietuvos Respublikos Vaiko teisių apsaugos pagrindų įstatymas*), No. I-1234, 14 March 1996, last amendments No. XIV-1512, 10 November 2022, Art. 49.

		<p>3) Submits proposals to the Minister of Social Security and Labour on the improvement of legal regulation on the protection of the rights of a child, and develops legal acts in accordance with its competences;</p> <p>4) Submits to the Minister of Social Security and Labour for approval the composition of the staff;</p> <p>5) Cooperates with other ministries and other state and municipal institutions and bodies, for the coordination and implementation of child's rights protection policy;</p> <p>6) Organises awareness raising on the protection of the rights of a child;</p> <p>7) Manages information on the state of protection of the rights of a child;</p> <p>8) Keeps and maintains the records of children in need of and subject to measures for the protection of the rights of a child, and organises, through its structural units the establishment of child (foster) care in municipalities;</p> <p>9) Collects information on the state of protection of children's rights in municipalities and provides methodological assistance and suggestions to municipal administrations on improving the implementation of protection of children's rights;</p> <p>10) Coordinates the work of mobile teams for family assistance;</p> <p>11) Ensures the protection of the rights and legitimate interests of all children residing in the territory of municipalities by assessing the situation of a child in the event of a possible violation of the rights of a child,</p>
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			<p>initiates the analysis of a particular case of violation of child's rights, takes decisions on individual cases of protection of children's rights;</p> <p>12) Organises (foster) care and adoption of children, coordinates the supervision of (foster) care;</p> <p>13) Sets up mobile teams to provide intensive family support;</p> <p>14) Defends the rights and legitimate interests of a child in court in the cases and according to the procedure laid out in the Civil Code, participates in court hearings and submits statements to the court, representing the interests of a child;</p> <p>15) Participates in the enforcement of judgments of a non-financial nature taken in respect of a child, in accordance with the procedure laid out by law;</p> <p>16) Represents the interests of a child during pre-trial investigation and/or court proceedings in cases and in accordance with the procedure laid down in the Code of Criminal Procedure;</p> <p>17) Cooperates with state and municipal authorities and non-governmental organisations on issues related to the protection of children's rights.²⁷⁶</p>
Interinstitutional Child Welfare Council under the Government of the Republic of Lithuania (<i>Tarpžinybinė</i>	National	Monitoring, making proposals, cooperation	The Council earlier worked under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour, but from 2018 it was placed under the Government. It is a collegial institution that aims to improve the coordination of

²⁷⁶ Lithuania, Seimas (1996). Law on Fundamentals of Protection of the Rights of the Child (*Lietuvos Respublikos Vaiko teisių apsaugos pagrindų įstatymas*), No. I-1234, 14 March 1996, last amendments No. XIV-1512, 10 November 2022, Art. 50.

<p><i>vaiko gerovės taryba prie Lietuvos Respublikos Vyriausybės)</i></p>			<p>the activities of state and municipal institutions and bodies, their cooperation with non-governmental organizations and the implementation of legal acts in the field of child's rights protection.</p> <p>The Council consists of representatives appointed by the main ministries, other state and municipal institutions, and representatives delegated by non-governmental organizations as well as children.</p> <p>The procedure for establishing the Council is established and the Regulations of the Council's activities are approved by the Government.</p> <p>1) Council analyses the situation of the protection of children's rights and submits proposals to the Government, to ministers in accordance with the areas of responsibilities assigned to them, to municipal institutions regarding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The implementation of policy measures for the protection of child's rights, - The contents of drafted laws and other legal acts regulating the protection of child's rights and legitimate interests or - The amendment of existing legal acts; <p>2) The Council analyses whether laws and other legal acts related to the protection of children's rights do not conflict with the rights and freedoms of a child.</p>
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			3) Performs other functions stipulated in the Regulations of the Council's activities. ²⁷⁷
State-guaranteed legal aid Service (<i>Valstybės garantuojamos teisinės pagalbos tarnyba</i>)	National	Implementation, coordination	The institution organises the provision of legal aid to, inter alia, children; makes decisions on legal aid provision in civil, administrative, and criminal proceedings; selects and appoints a lawyer who provides legal aid. ²⁷⁸
Municipality institutions (<i>Savivaldybės institucijos</i>)	Local	Implementation, coordination, financing of the services, development, organizations and providence of the services to children and families	Municipal institutions in the field of child's rights protection: 1) Organize and finance the availability and complexity of social, health care, education, mediation and other necessary services for a child and family, giving priority to the provision of services in the community; 2) Analyse the state of child's well-being in municipality, plan and ensure the implementation of child rights protection measures; 3) Participate in implementation of the functions of state child's rights protection and cooperate with the State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service or its territorial units, other state and other municipal

²⁷⁷ Lithuania, Seimas (1996). Law on Fundamentals of Protection of the Rights of the Child (*Lietuvos Respublikos Vaiko teisių apsaugos pagrindų įstatymas*), No. I-1234, 14 March 1996, last amendments No. XIV-1512, 10 November 2022, Art. 51.

²⁷⁸ Lithuania, Seimas (2000), Law on State-guaranteed Legal Aid (*Lietuvos Respublikos Valstybės garantuojamos teisinės pagalbos įstatymas*), No.VIII - 1591, 28 March 2000, last amendment No. XIV – 1217, 28 June 2022.

			<p>institutions, non-governmental organizations in the field of child's rights protection;</p> <p>4) Ensure for a child and family primary informational and counselling assistance, organise the provision of social services and other assistance to the family, and ensure that case managers and other specialists participating in the case are appointed in time by the institutions to whom the municipality granted the right to provide social services, take care of providing the measures and services specified in the assistance plans;</p> <p>5) Ensure proper organisation of coordinated services for families with children with special needs, who avoid attending school, and who commit violations of law. Organise, coordinate and control how minimum child supervision measures are implemented in the municipality. The Interinstitutional Cooperation Coordinator reports to the municipal administration about the implementation of minimum and medium child supervision measures or measures of educational impact, the progress and results of their implementation;</p> <p>6) Promote and support the activities of communities and non-governmental organisations in the field of child rights protection;</p> <p>7) Oblige elders (the head of the eldership) to protect children's rights in their eldership and to encourage parents to properly take care of children's safety, care and education;</p>
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		<p>8) Mobilize local community councils, family councils, education councils, community child rights protection councils, informal family movements, active members of communities and municipal non-governmental organisations working in the field of child welfare for joint work with a child and a family;</p> <p>9) Organize preschool, pre-primary-school, general education, vocational training and vocational guidance, and non-formal education of children, decide on the implementation of non-formal education programs for children during school holidays;</p> <p>10) Organize and maintain records of children living in the territory of the municipality; ensure that all children study according to compulsory education programs;</p> <p>11) Organize and coordinate the provision of educational assistance to a pupil, teacher, family, and school, and the implementation of minimum and medium child supervision measures;</p> <p>12) Ensure the implementation of the rights of children with special educational needs;</p> <p>13) Compile and approve a list of guardians on-call, guardians (curators), foster families, social families (foster-based households) and children's social care institutions that can receive a placement of a child left without parental care at any time of the day;</p> <p>14) Ensure the organisation of service provision for persons seeking to foster or adopt a child, as well as those who foster or adopt a child.</p>
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			<p>The mayor of the municipality approves by his/her order every year a list of social workers who can provide case manager services in a specific municipality's territory in municipal social service institutions or other institutions authorised by that municipality to provide social services and other assistance to the family in a certain municipality's territory.²⁷⁹</p> <p>Municipalities organise social services for individuals (families):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Organize the assessment/identification of a person's (family's) need for social services; 2) Assign social services to a person (family) according to the identified need for social services of a person (family); 3) Assess a person's (family's) financial ability to pay for social services and identify the amount of the person's (family's) payment for social services; 4) Select families for foster care and supervises them.²⁸⁰
Non-governmental organisations	National, regional, local	Implementation, advocacy	Non-governmental organisations, in cooperation with state and municipal institutions and bodies, may:

²⁷⁹ Lithuania, Seimas (1996). Law on Fundamentals of Protection of the Rights of the Child (*Lietuvos Respublikos Vaiko teisių apsaugos pagrindų įstatymas*), No. I-1234, 14 March 1996, last amendments No. XIV-1512, 10 November 2022, Art. 52.

²⁸⁰ Lithuania, Seimas (2006), Law on Social Services (*Lietuvos Respublikos socialinių paslaugų įstatymas*), No. X-493, last amendment No. XIV-952, 17 March 2022. Art. 13.

			<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Submit proposals to the state and municipal institutions regarding the improvement of ensuring and implementing the protection of child's rights; 2) Provide the State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service or its territorial units with available information about a child and the family for the purposes of ensuring the protection of the child rights; 3) Participate in examination of a child's case, if they provide services to a child or family, or at the request of family members; 4) Ensure the organisation and provision of services for a child and family in the relevant municipality or part of its territory, which is assigned to it by the municipality, if it meets the requirements for social service providers established by legal acts; 5) Establish children's daycare centres, and family centres that provide assistance to a child and/or family; 6) Help families raise children with special needs, children with disabilities, children experiencing social risk, children who have violated the law; to provide assistance to child victims of crime. <p>State and municipal institutions and institutions, providing support measures and services to child's representatives, cooperate with non-governmental organisations in compliance with the requirements of</p>
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			this law and other legal acts regulating the protection of children's rights. ²⁸¹
<i>(add rows as needed)</i>			

2.1.4. Please indicate if there were in the past five years any important changes concerning the child protection mandate/roles/responsibilities and outline what caused or influenced these changes (for example, a transfer of responsibility for child protection from one ministry to another ministry or a body or merging of responsibilities, etc. Please indicate notably if an integrated approach has been sought and/or achieved.

Ca. 200 words

The child rights protection system has undergone essential changes in 2018. The legal acts were further adjusted in 2020 with the aim of establishing additional child protection mechanisms. In 2018, the management and coordination of the child rights protection system were centralised. On 1 July 2018, the function of child rights protection was transferred from municipalities (municipal child rights protection units) to the State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour. The Service became the central institution of the Republic of Lithuania, implementing the child rights protection policy, and received the authority to ensure the coordination of actions related to children's rights in all sectors at the national, and local levels. The reorganisation of child rights protection was aimed at forming a coherent and coordinated system of child rights protection institutions, ensuring proper protection and representation of children's rights and their legitimate interests, defining the specific tasks, functions, and place of child rights of ministries and other state institutions related to the protection of children's rights in the protection institutional system, determining the field of responsibility, special qualification requirements for child rights protection specialists, strengthening the management and control functions of the child rights protection system, centralising the management and coordination of the system, developing and improving the system of complex services for the child and his/her family.²⁸²

²⁸¹ Lithuania, Seimas (1996). Law on Fundamentals of Protection of the Rights of the Child (*Lietuvos Respublikos Vaiko teisių apsaugos pagrindų įstatymas*), No. I-1234, 14 March 1996, last amendments No. XIV-1512, 10 November 2022, Art. 53.

²⁸² Ministry of Social Security and Labour, <https://socmin.lrv.lt/lt/veiklos-sritys/seima-ir-vaikai/vaiko-teisiu-apsauga/vaiko-teisiu-apsaugos-sistemas-centralizacija>

2.1.5. Please indicate, in the table below, the major service providers at the national level in the area of child protection. Include family support services /measures (i.e. counselling, financial assistance) that are part of the overall social protection/welfare system for children at risk.

Service providers <i>(include the name and the type of institution i.e. public authority, NGOs, religious institutions, private)</i>	Type of services <i>(Include counselling, care institutions, daycare centres, financial assistance, legal advice, rehabilitation services for victims, education awareness –training activities, etc.)</i>	Target groups <i>(For example, children with disabilities, children at risk of or living in poverty, immigrant children, children deprived of parental care, child victims of abuse or exploitation. When relevant, please indicate if third-country nationals and irregular immigrants are entitled to such services)</i>	Funding <i>(national budget, EU funded, other)</i>
State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service	Services of Mobile teams that work with the family and the child in crisis situations; assessments on violations of the child’s rights; making decisions on ensuring the child’s safety: on the placement of the child in a safe environment, on the placement of the child in temporary supervision, on the removal of the child from his/her family etc; representing the child in court; organising awareness-raising activities on child protection. Is a legal representative of the child when the child is removed	All children (in cases when their rights and legitimate interests must be ensured and protected)	State budget, EU funding

	from the family until the guardianship (curatorship) is established.		
State guaranteed legal aid service	Organization of the provision of legal aid and making decision on legal aid provision for children.	Children who need legal aid in civil, administrative, and criminal cases	State budget
Ombudsperson for Child's Rights	Investigation of complains, supervision and control of the rights of the child, making recommendations on removing or preventing violations	Children whose rights are infringed	State budget
Centres of Social Services of municipalities	Various social services: general social services (information, consultation, mediation and representation, organising of nutrition, transport organisation, socio-cultural services, personal hygiene services etc.), specialised social services (help at home, creation and maintaining of social skills, temporary housing, help to guardians (curators), Foster Care Centre, etc.), case management and other services.	Children at risk, children in need of services	Municipal budget, State budget, EU funding

<p>Children's daycare centres (maybe municipal institutions or run by non-governmental organisations)</p>	<p>Service of day social care, development of life skills and social skills, psychological assistance, leisure activities for children, free meals, and work/activities with children's families.</p>	<p>Children living in families at social risk and living in poverty.</p>	<p>State budget, municipal budgets, private support, EU funding</p>
<p>Community family home (may be municipal institutions or run by non-governmental organizations)</p>	<p>Organises complex services for families on municipal level and provides them in certain cases, provides information about complex services, information about other services available in the municipality</p>	<p>All families and children in need of complex services</p>	<p>State budget, municipal budget, EU funds, private donations</p>
<p>Foster Care Centres (may be municipal institutions or run by non-governmental organizations), presently there are 66 Foster Care Centres</p>	<p>The services for guardian on-call, guardians (curators), adoptive parents, social families (foster care-based households) and children placed in these families. Also, Foster Care Centres are responsible for search, selection, training and assessment of new guardian on-call, guardians (curators), adoptive parents, social families (foster care-based households).</p>	<p>Children left without parental care, and their foster families, adoptive families, foster care-based household, professional foster families c</p>	<p>Municipal budget, State budget through projects funding, EU funding</p>

	<p>Services to parents: organization of child-parents' meetings when the child is placed in foster care (guardianship or curatorship).</p> <p>Services to community-based children care homes.</p>		
National Agency for Education	Preparation of drafts of education programs for children, preparation of methodologies, recommendations for the implementation of educational content, supervision of the quality of textbooks and teaching tools, schools' supervision, monitoring and analyses of the situation in education and other.	All children	State budget
Lietuvos aklųjų ir silpnaregių ugdymo centras (<i>Lithuanian Centre for Education for Blind and Visually Impaired</i>)	Education service to children of all ages, from preschool education to secondary education; social skills training; services to deafblind children; educational help; help for parents	Blind and visually impaired children, deafblind children	State budget
Lietuvos kurčiųjų ir neprigirdinčiųjų ugdymo	Education service to children of all ages, from preschool education to	Deaf and audibly impaired children	State budget

centras (<i>Lithuanian Centre for Education of Deaf and Audibly Impaired</i>)	secondary education; social skills training; educational help; help for parents; educational help for pupils studying at home		
Kauno kurčiųjų ir neprigirdinčiųjų ugdymo centras (<i>Kaunas Centre for Education of Deaf and Audibly Impaired</i>)	Education service to children of all ages, from preschool education to secondary education; social skills training; educational help; help for parents; educational help for pupils studying at home	Deaf and audibly impaired children	State budget
Gelbėkit vaikus (<i>Save the Children Lithuania</i>), NGO	Daily care service, psychological help for families, social, financial help, strengthening of parental skills	Children and families in need of services	Private support, State budget through projects funding, EU funding
SOS vaikų kaimai Lietuva (<i>SOS children Lithuania</i>), NGO	Guardianship (curatorship), care centre services, youth home (young adults 18+ to 24), semi-independent home (housing, consulting, help to find employment); family strengthening programmes	Children and families in need of services	Private support, State budget through projects funding, EU funding
Paramos vaikams centras (<i>Children Support Centre</i>), NGO	Big Brother – Big Sister programme, psychological help and psychotherapy for children	Children and families in need of services; the consultations are free of charge for children-victims of violence and their families	Private support, State budget through projects funding, EU funding

	and families, psychological, social, psychiatric help for children and families having experienced violence; consultations for parents and specialists on various questions related to children.		
<p>Globos namai „Užuovėja“ - Vaikų, nukentėjusių nuo seksualinės prievartos pagalbos centras (<i>Help Centre for Children Victims of Sexual Abuse – Lithuanian Barnahus</i>)</p> <p>The institution is under Ministry of Social Security and Labour</p>	<p>Shor term complex services for children who are possible victims of sexual abuse and their families; psychological evaluation, legal interrogation, examination by a forensic medical expert; information; consultation; recommendations on long-term help; organisation of healthcare services; temporary accommodation, incl. catering</p>	<p>Children who are possible victims of sexual abuse</p>	<p>State budget</p>
<p>Asociacija „NVO vaikams konfederacija“ (<i>Association "NGO Confederation for Children"</i>)</p> <p>The umbrella organization uniting 65 NGOs</p>	<p>Submission of proposals on how to improve the child welfare policy, monitoring of child welfare processes, assistance and consultations to other NGOs in solving problems and protecting children's rights, training to increase institutional capacities, dissemination of knowledge on child rights protection policies,</p>	<p>Facilitate activities of other NGOs - network members</p>	<p>Private support, State budget through projects funding, EU funding</p>

participation in various committees, working groups, commissions on child protection issues.		
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2.1.6. Please indicate if any child participation or feedback mechanisms are part of child protection services.

Ca. 200 words

Children participation mechanism comprises a part of the children protection service. The **Law on Youth Policy of the Republic of Lithuania, IX-1871**²⁸³ provides the basis for the participation of children from the age of 14 in the management of youth affairs.

According to Article 5, each municipality has a Municipal Youth Affairs Council. Its members have delegated representatives to the Council by municipal youth organizations operating in the territory of certain municipality. If municipal council of youth organizations does not exist or it has not delegated representatives, youth representatives are elected at a public general meeting of youth organizations and organizations working with youth, students, and/or student self-government representatives operating in the territory of that municipality. The municipality's youth affairs coordinator is responsible for organizing this meeting. The Municipal Youth Affairs Council examines issues related to youth policy in the municipality and submits proposals to municipal institutions regarding youth policy, its implementation, and funding priorities for the youth policy implementation measures in that municipality, also it submits proposals for draft legislation related to the implementation of youth policy in that municipality.

According to Article 4, delegated representatives of the Council of Lithuanian Youth Organizations are members of the Council of Youth Affairs. The Council of Lithuanian Youth Organizations unites the 72 largest youth organizations and organizations working with youth, and councils of municipal youth organizations.²⁸⁴ The Council of Youth Affairs serves as an Advisory body to the Department of Youth Affairs under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour (DYA), which implements the youth policy in the Republic of Lithuania.

²⁸³ Lithuania, Seimas (2003), Law on Youth Policy of the Republic of Lithuania (Lietuvos Respublikos jaunimo politikos pagrindų įstatymas), No. IX-1871, 4 December 2003, last amendment No. XIII-3204, 29 July 2020.

²⁸⁴ The website of the Council of Lithuanian Youth Organizations (*Lietuvos jaunimo organizacijų taryba (LIJOT)*), <https://lijot.lt/>, the website was visited on 7 March 2023.

Based on Article 4 (3) the Council of Youth Affairs performs the following functions:

Submits proposals regarding the vision, mission, priorities, and strategic goals of DYA;

Considers issues related to financing youth policy projects;

Submits proposals to the Ministry of Social Security and Labour regarding the implementation of DYA strategic and annual plans;

Participates in the formation of youth policy;

Examines issues related to youth policy and submits proposals to the Government, ministries, and other state and municipal institutions regarding the implementation of youth policy, funding priorities for youth policy measures, and submits proposals for draft legal acts related to the implementation of youth policy;

1. Submits proposals for the annual report of the head of DYA and makes recommendations to the Ministry of Social Security and Labour regarding the evaluation of the report;
2. Participates in electing the head of DYA;
3. Monitors the implementation of youth policy, initiates research in the field of youth policy, evaluates and submits conclusions to the Ministry of Social Security and Labour regarding the conducted research;
4. Considers DYA budget projects and submits proposals to the Ministry of Social Security and Labour regarding budget allocations.

Children's feedback on specific decisions concerning their situation is given by listening to their opinion. The opinion of the child is heard in **case management** procedure. Case management hearings must be organised in a way that ensures the child's right to be heard - the child must be able to attend the case management hearing if he or she so wishes, unless this is not in the child's best interests. During the hearing, the child shall have the right to express his or her views, suggestions and expectations on an equal footing with other family members.²⁸⁵ If the **assessment of the child situation** is carried out after a report about possible violation of child rights, the representatives of the State Child Rights Protection and Adoption

²⁸⁵ Lithuania, Ministry of Social Security and Labour (2018). Regarding the approval of the description of the case management procedure (*Dėl Atvejo vadybos tvarkos aprašo patvirtinimo*). No. A1-141, 29 March 2018, last amendment No. A1-802, 30 December 2019. Art. 17.

office listen to the opinion of the child about his/her situation.²⁸⁶ During the process of **establishment of temporary and permanent guardianship** (curatorship) the opinion of the child regarding the proposed guardian (curator) is heard and a document recording the child's opinion is drafted, if the child is able to express his/her opinion.²⁸⁷ Furthermore, in the **process of adoption**, when a child over the age of 10 is adopted, written consent is required. The consent is given by the child to the court, and no adoption can take place without this consent. Where a child under the age of ten is adopted, if he or she is capable of expressing his or her views, he or she must be heard by the court and the court must take the child's wishes into account in reaching its decision, provided that they are not contrary to his or her own interests.²⁸⁸

²⁸⁶ Lithuania, Seimas (1996). Law on Fundamentals of Protection of the Rights of the Child (*Lietuvos Respublikos Vaiko teisių apsaugos pagrindų įstatymas*), No. I-1234, 14 March 1996, last amendments No. XIV-1512, 10 November 2022, Art. 36(1).

²⁸⁷ ²⁸⁷ Lithuania, Government (2002). Regarding the approval of the regulations for the organization of child guardianship (*Dėl Vaiko globos organizavimo nuostatų patvirtinimo*). No. 405, 27 March 2002, last amendments No. 1313, 29 December 2022, Art. 43 and 52.

²⁸⁸ Lithuania, Seimas (2000), Civil Code (*Lietuvos Respublikos Civilinis kodeksas*), No. VIII-1864, 18 July 2000, last amendment No. XIV-1435, 29 September 2022, Art. 3.215.

2.2. Civil society organisations active in the area of child protection. Please consider also including information on the role of religious institutions and groups active in the area of child protection.

Question	YES	NO	Comments
<p>2.2.1. Is there a registry of civil society organisations operating in the child protection area?</p> <p><u>If yes</u>, briefly provide information on the legislative-regulatory framework and the responsible authority.</p>		x	<p>In Lithuania, all civil society organizations as public legal entities are registered in the Registry of Entities which is administered by the Centre of Registers.²⁸⁹ However, it is not possible to create a list of non-governmental organizations in the e-Registry of Entities. It is necessary to know the name of the organization, so that after compiling its data, it can be checked whether it is marked in the Registry of Entities that it is a non-governmental organization. It should also be noted that organizations working with children do not have to be registered in the Registry of Entities with the tag that they are a non-governmental organization. If there is no information confirming the characteristics of a non-governmental organization in the Register, the organization can itself provide information about its activities to interested institutions.²⁹⁰</p> <p>None of the state institutions have an official register of non-governmental organizations, in which all NGOs operating in the field of child rights protection in Lithuania would be registered.²⁹¹ State institutions have a list of NGOs with which they cooperate. However, it is not possible to check whether it includes all NGOs operating in the particular field of activity of the institution. Some NGOs are united in umbrella organisations. The</p>

²⁸⁹ Lithuania, Seimas (2013), Law on the Development of Non-Governmental Organizations of the Republic of Lithuania (*Lietuvos Respublikos nevyriausybių organizacijų plėtros įstatymas*), No. XII-717, 19 December 2013, last amendment No. XIV-916, 20 January 2022, Article 2(3).

²⁹⁰ Lithuania, Seimas (2013), Law on the Development of Non-Governmental Organizations of the Republic of Lithuania (*Lietuvos Respublikos nevyriausybių organizacijų plėtros įstatymas*), No. XII-717, 19 December 2013, last amendment No. XIV-916, 20 January 2022, Article 12 (3).

²⁹¹ An email from State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service, dated 27 April 2023.

		<p>members of the two largest umbrella organisations can be found on the websites:</p> <p>the NGOs for Children Confederation http://www.nvoaikamskonfederacija.lt/nariai/,²⁹²</p> <p>National network of poverty reduction organizations https://www.smtinklas.lt/</p>
<p>2.2.2. Is there a legal obligation for the accrediting; licensing; registering; inspecting the activity of any type of civil society organisations, e. g. NGOs, charities, church organisations, etc. in the area of child protection?</p> <p><u>If yes</u>, which is the responsible authority? How frequent are reviews and inspections?</p>	<p>x</p>	<p>In Lithuania, there is no single legal act that sets the requirements for the accrediting, licensing, registering, inspecting the activity of any type of civil society organisations. Different legal act defines the requirements for child-related service providers. Some of them define accrediting, licensing, registering, inspecting the activity of NGO.</p> <p>For example, if the NGO wants to provide social care for children, before starting this activity it must obtain the appropriate type of license for the provision of social care. License is issued in this case by the Department on the Supervision of Social Services under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour.²⁹³ The Department conducts a scheduled inspection of the license holder at least once every 5 years.</p> <p>Institutions seeking to provide other social services of social care must undergo accreditation process.²⁹⁴ The authorising institution is the municipality administration. The types of services that may be provided after accreditation are after-care service for young persons, psychosocial help, services of Children Day Care Centres, etc. The list of social services is contained in the Catalogue for</p>

²⁹² An email from State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service, dated 27 April 2023.

²⁹³ Lithuania, Ministry of Social Security and Labour (2014). Regarding the approval of the licensing rules of social care institutions (*Dėl Socialinės globos įstaigų licencijavimo taisyklių patvirtinimo*). No. A1-684

²⁹⁴ Lithuania, Ministry of Social Security and Labour (2020). Regarding the approval of the description of the Social Care Accreditation Procedure (*Dėl Socialinės priežiūros akreditavimo tvarkos aprašo patvirtinimo*). No. A1-622, 30 June 2020, last amendment No. A1-477, 30 June 2022.

		<p>Social Services.²⁹⁵ Accreditation is provided for three years. Municipality controls the provision of accredited social care services according to the established procedure. It is recommended to include representatives of umbrella national non-governmental organizations in the monitoring of the provision of accredited social supervision.</p>
<p>2.2.3. Are there cooperation agreements/partnerships between government and the civil society at national or local level?</p> <p><u>If yes</u>, What is the prevalence of this practice?</p> <p>Please provide <u>indicative examples</u> and information regarding the main areas covered, type of services targeted, and financial aspects of such partnerships (i.e. if done in view of accessing EU funds).</p>	<p>x</p>	<p>State institutions cooperate with non-governmental organizations operating on national level, municipalities and municipal institutions cooperate with non-governmental organizations operating in the territory of a specific municipality. Municipalities have entered into cooperation agreements with NGOs to provide various services for children and families.</p> <p>For example, Kaunas City Municipality and the NGO Psychological Support and Counseling Center together with partners provided complex psychological, psychotherapeutic, social assistance in the implementation of the project "Kaunas Community Family Houses", financed by the European Social Fund under measure No. 08.4.1.-ESFA-V-416 "Complex services for the family". This project aimed to empower the families of the city of Kaunas to solve the difficulties that have arisen and to carry out the prevention of family crises. The period of the project was from 27 September 2017 to 31 May 2023. Other partners: Kaunas County Women's Crisis Center, Kaunas County Men's Crisis Center, Mother and Child Support-Charity Fund "Aušta", Association "Kaunas Women's Line", Organization "Actio Catholica Patria," Kaunas Archdiocese Family Center, Valakupiai Rehabilitation Center.²⁹⁶</p>

²⁹⁵ Lithuania, Ministry of Social Security and Labour (2006). Regarding the Approval of the Catalogue of Social Services (*Dėl Socialinių paslaugų katalogo patvirtinimo*). No. A1-93, 5 April 2006, last amendment No. A1-451, 30 June 2022.

²⁹⁶ Lithuania, NGO Psychological Support and Counseling Center (2023) website of the organization [Comprehensive services for Kaunas families](#)

2.3. Inter-agency cooperation in the area of child protection

Question	YES	NO	Comments
<p>2.3.1. Is there <u>coordination between national, regional, or local authorities</u> in developing and implementing policies and legislation in the area of child protection?</p> <p><u>If yes</u>, how is this done? Please comment on the strengths and weaknesses.</p> <p><u>For example</u>, is this cooperation – coordination regulated by the legislative framework? Does cooperation take place ad hoc, e.g. addressing specific issues and on specific thematic areas of interest or is it a key feature of the system?</p>	x		<p>Educational assistance, social and health care services provided by a municipality for children and their parents or other legal representatives are coordinated by the civil servant of that municipal administration, that is by the coordinator of inter-institutional cooperation. Qualification requirements for coordinator of inter-institutional cooperation are determined by the Minister of Education, Science and Sports together with the Minister of Social Security and Labour and the Minister of Health.</p> <p>Coordinator of inter-institutional cooperation:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Coordinates educational assistance, social and healthcare services for children and their representatives provided in a coordinated manner in accordance with the law, determines the need for this assistance and services; 2) Initiates and, together with structural units of the municipal administration, other institutions and organizations, develops a plan for the coordinated provision of educational assistance, social and health care services, assembles a group of specialists providing social support and health care services; 3) Carries out monitoring of the availability and quality of the educational assistance, social and health care services provided in a coordinated manner, in accordance with the guidelines established by the Minister of Education, Science and Sports together with the Minister of Social Security and Labour and the Minister of Health Protection. The guidelines outline the availability of the educational assistance, social support, and health care services provided in a coordinated manner and quality monitoring indicators and procedure description; 4) Informs the local community about legal means for children and their representatives to receive educational assistance, social and healthcare services in the municipality;

		<p>5) Performs the functions specified in the Law on Minimum and Medium Child Supervision of the Republic of Lithuania;</p> <p>6) Performs the functions of the chairperson of the Child Welfare Commission of the municipal administration;</p> <p>7) Performs other functions established by legal acts.²⁹⁷</p> <p>Interagency Council on Child Welfare under the Government is a collegial institution that aims to improve the coordination of the activities of state and municipal institutions and bodies, their cooperation with non-governmental organizations and the implementation of legal acts in the field of child rights protection.</p> <p>The Council consists of representatives appointed by ministries, other state and municipal institutions, and representatives delegated by non-governmental organizations.</p> <p>The procedure for establishing the Council is established and the regulations of the Council's activities are approved by the Government.</p> <p>Council analyses the situation of the protection of children's rights and submits proposals to the Government, to ministers in accordance with the areas of responsibility assigned to them, to municipal institutions regarding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The implementation of policy measures for the protection of child rights, - The contents of draft laws and other legal acts regulating the protection of child rights and legitimate interests or - The amendment of existing legal acts; <p>The Council analyses whether laws and other legal acts related to the protection of children's rights do not conflict with the rights and freedoms of a</p>
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²⁹⁷ Lithuania, Seimas (1991). Law on Education (*Lietuvos Respublikos švietimo įstatymas*) No. I-1489, 25 June 1991, last amendment No. XIV-1729, 22 December 2022.

		<p>child and performs other functions provided for in the regulations of the Council's activities.²⁹⁸</p> <p>In other field there are other coordination mechanism between national and local authorities as well. The Association of Local Authorities in Lithuania can submit comments and propose amendments to all draft legal acts.</p>
<p>2.3.2. Is there inter-agency <u>cooperation between the relevant actors</u> having responsibility in the area of child protection (including civil society organisations)?</p> <p><u>If yes, please mention how this is done</u> (for examples are there standing inter-agency committees or meetings, are digital tools used?). Which actor has a leading role?</p>	x	<p>Five Lithuanian institutions - the General Prosecutor's Office, the Police Department, the Ministry of Social Security and Labour, The Office of the Ombudsperson of Child's Rights and the State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service (hereinafter – Service) signed a Cooperation Agreement on 28/06/2018, which established closer inter-institutional cooperation in more effective protection of children's rights and legitimate interests and improving the protection of children's rights in criminal proceedings.</p> <p>In this Agreement, among other obligations prosecutor's offices, police and the Service undertake to participate in events or meetings organized by each other, which deal with issues of child rights protection. The Service also undertakes to organize consultations on the role of the Service's representative in criminal proceedings at least once every six months. Other issues may also be discussed at during these meetings.</p> <p>According to the Agreement, the Ministry of Social Security and Labour and the Ombudsperson of Child's Rights undertake to promote cooperation between the parties and organize consultations. The Ombudsperson of Child's Rights undertakes to organize meetings, discussions and other events for improving the protection of children's rights in the criminal process and improving the cooperation of institutions. Ombudsperson also undertakes to provide initiatives for the improvement of legal acts or the adoption of new laws. Whereas the Ministry of Social Security and Labour undertakes to initiate amendments to legal acts if necessary.</p>

²⁹⁸ Lithuania, Seimas (1996). Law on Fundamentals of Protection of the Rights of the Child (*Lietuvos Respublikos Vaiko teisių apsaugos pagrindų įstatymas*), No. I-1234, 14 March 1996, last amendments No. XIV-1512, 10 November 2022, Art. 51.

		<p>The State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service and the Police Department signed the interinstitutional agreement on 27 May 2020. The aim is to ensure continuous, 24/7 protection of child's rights and help for a child who may have been abused, a child who has witnessed domestic violence or lives in an environment where violence has taken place, and in all other cases when a child needs safe environment immediately. The Service undertakes to ensure that its specialists will arrive at the place of child's presence immediately, but no later than within 1 hour after receiving information about real danger to child's safety, health, or life, and will implement actions specified in the Description of the Procedure for Assessing the Child's Situation.²⁹⁹</p> <p>Article 6 of the Law on Probation³⁰⁰ demonstrates that Probation Service cooperates with state and municipal institutions in carrying out probation. The Probation Service also cooperates with associations, religious communities, other legal entities or their divisions, volunteers and coordinates their work with probationers. (Article 7). When concluding a cooperation agreement with a volunteer, his/her personal qualities, activities, and the ability to positively influence the probationer are considered. Volunteers can be persons who have reached the age of 18 and have the trust of the Probation Service. (Article 7 (4)). The convicted person can choose a volunteer who meets the established requirements. (Article 7 (5)).</p> <p>In addition, state and municipal institutions organize meetings with related institutions according to approved action plans or on an <i>ad hoc</i> basis. For example, the 2022-2023 Action Plan</p>
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²⁹⁹ Lithuania (2020). Cooperation agreement between State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour and Police Department under the Ministry of the Interior. No. BS-4/5-IL-6973. 27 May 2020.

³⁰⁰ Lithuania, Seimas (2011). Law on Probation (*Lietuvos Respublikos probacijos įstatymas*) No. XI-1860, 22 December 2011, last amendments No. XIV-1204, 28 June 2022.

for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and the Provision of Assistance to Victims³⁰¹ stipulates that the Police Department must organize meetings of community officers in local communities on the topic of intolerance of domestic violence, as well as organize meetings of police agencies and special assistance centres to solve relevant issues of cooperation. Meanwhile, the Department of Informatics and Communications is obliged to provide data to the competent state institutions about the victims (of violent crimes, including domestic violence) and data about the punitive measure assigned to violent person - the payment of contributions to the Crime Victims' Fund.

2.3.3. What are the main challenges regarding effective cooperation and coordination? (*For example, lack of clarity regarding responsibilities and roles of actors, overlaps of responsibilities, and communication between organisations is not adequately structured and resourced*)?

Ca. 200 words

The functions and responsibilities of the institutions are separated. Five ministries and their subordinate institutions are involved in the solution of different issues regarding children's rights. The Ministry of Social Security and Labour subordinates the Child Rights and Adoption Service, together they are responsible for general issues regarding child's rights protection, child's custody, and adoption. The Ministry of Education, Science, and Sport ensures a safe environment for children at school. The Ministry of Health ensures children's health. The Ministry of the Interior and its subordinate institution the Police organise prevention of child crime, investigates violations by children, ensure a child-friendly pre-trial investigation environment, etc. The Ministry of Justice, together with the State-Guaranteed Legal Aid Service, ensure provision of legal aid for children. The Ministry of Justice, with its subordinate Prison Service and Probation Service, ensure the rights of convicted children.

However, there is no single institution that coordinates the activities of all institutions in ensuring the full protection of child and his rights. To date, there is still a lack of inter-institutional cooperation in solving specific problems. **The Family Policy Strengthening Development Program**³⁰² states that there is insufficient cooperation between public service providers in identifying the need for assistance and

³⁰¹ Lithuania, Minister of Social Security and Labour (2022), Order on the 'On the approval of the 2022-2023 Action plan for the prevention of domestic violence and the provision of assistance to victims (*Įsakymas Dėl smurto artimoje aplinkoje prevencijos ir pagalbos teikimo nukentėjusiems asmenims 2022–2023 metų veiksmų plano patvirtinimo*), No. A1-264, 11 April 2022, last amendment No. A1-111, 2 February 2023.

³⁰² Lithuania, Government (2021), Resolution on the Approval of the Development programme for family policy strengthening, governed by the Ministry of Social Security and Labour, which is the Manager of the Development Programme for 2021-2030 (*Dėl 2021–2030 metų Plėtros programos valdytojos Lietuvos Respublikos socialinės apsaugos ir darbo ministerijos Šeimos politikos stiprinimo plėtros programos patvirtinimo*), No. 930, 10 November 2021.

undeveloped cooperation between state institutions, municipalities, and non-governmental organizations in the field of family policy. **The Program for the Development of Social Solidarity**³⁰³ indicates that there is insufficient effective inter-institutional cooperation in protecting children from violence. This is indicated as one of the reasons for high level of domestic violence and violence against children. **The Justice System Development Programme**³⁰⁴ emphasizes the lack of inter-institutional cooperation in the process of resocialization of convicts. **The Programme on the Development of Health Preservation and Strengthening**³⁰⁵ notes that one of the reasons for the insufficiently efficient organization of suicide prevention activities is the insufficient coordination of assistance and the excessive distribution of responsibilities between different entities. All programs envisage strengthening inter-institutional cooperation. **2021-2023 Action Plan for Social Integration of Disabled Persons**³⁰⁶ recommends the responsible executors of the Action Plan to cooperate with NGOs working in the field of social integration of the disabled, the academic community, and municipalities. The **Public Security Development Programme for 2015-2025**³⁰⁷ decided to develop partnership between law enforcement, other state institutions and bodies, and the private sector.

Question	YES	NO	Comments
2.3.4. Are child protection authorities engaging in <u>transnational cooperation</u> in the area of child protection, for example with regards to missing	x		According to Article 50 (1)(1) of the Law on Fundamentals of Protection of the Rights of the Child and Article 10.1 of the Statute of the Service ³⁰⁸ The State Child Rights Protection and

³⁰³ Lithuania, Government (2021), Resolution on the Approval of the Programme of Social effort development for 2022 – 2030, governed by the Ministry of Social Security and Labour (*Dėl 2021–2030 metų Plėtos programos valdytojos Lietuvos Respublikos Socialinės apsaugos ir darbo ministerijos socialinės sutelkties plėtos programos patvirtinimo*), No. 931, 10 November 2021.

³⁰⁴ Lithuania, Government (2021), Resolution on the Approval of the Justice System Development Program, governed by the Ministry of Justice, which is the Manager of the Development Programme for 2021-2030 (*Dėl 2021–2030 metų Plėtos programos valdytojos Lietuvos Respublikos teisingumo ministerijos Teisingumo sistemos plėtos programos patvirtinimo*), No. 861, 20 October 2021.

³⁰⁵ Lithuania, Government (2022), Resolution on the Approval of the Programme on the Development of Health Preservation and Strengthening for 2022 – 2030, governed by the Ministry of Health (*Dėl 2022–2030 m. plėtos programos valdytojos Lietuvos Respublikos Sveikatos apsaugos ministerijos Sveikatos išsaugojimo ir stiprinimo plėtos programos patvirtinimo*), No. 66, 26 January 2022.

³⁰⁶ Lithuania, Minister of Social Security and Labour (Socialinės apsaugos ir darbo ministerija) (2022), Oder on the approval of the 2021-2023 action plan for social integration of disabled persons (*Įsakymas Dėl Neįgalųjų socialinės integracijos 2021–2023 metų veiksmų plano patvirtinimo*), No. A1-817, 8 September 2020, last amendment No. A1-892, 28 December 2022.

³⁰⁷ Lithuania, Seimas (2015), Resolution On the approval of the public security development programme for 2015-2025 (*Nutarimas Dėl Viešojo saugumo plėtos 2015–2025 metų programos patvirtinimo*), No. XII-1682, 7 May 2015.

³⁰⁸ Lithuania, Government (2005), Resolution on the Approval of the Statute of the State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour (*Nutarimas dėl valstybės vaiko teisių*

<p>children, parental abduction, or migrant children?</p>		<p>Adoption Service under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour performs the functions of the central authority for the international protection of the child rights and the organization of adoption in the Republic of Lithuania and acts as the central authority for the duties provided for in 1980 Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction, 1996 Hague Convention on Jurisdiction, Applicable Law, Recognition, Enforcement, and Cooperation in the Field of Parental Responsibilities and Child Protection Measures, Council Regulation (EC) No. 2201/2003 of 27 November 2003 on jurisdiction and recognition and enforcement of court decisions related to marriage and parental responsibilities, repealing Regulation (EC) no. 1347/2000 and other international legal acts.</p> <p>The central authority is responsible for assisting parties in the establishment and recovery of maintenance/subsistence and other issues. It sends and receives applications provided for under international conventions and EU regulations and takes all appropriate measures to introduce or facilitate the introduction of the necessary procedures.</p> <p>Central authorities in every EU country must cooperate with each other, promote cooperation among the competent authorities of their country and seek solutions to difficulties that may arise in the application of the Regulation.</p>
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If yes, please briefly comment and include information on transnational agreements-protocols of cooperation as well as on the interaction between child protection authorities and other actors involved in transnational cooperation processes, for example law enforcement and judicial authorities, migration authorities, social services, Central Authorities under Brussels IIbis Regulation/Hague Convention, consular or diplomatic authorities. Are there any challenges relating to transnational cooperation? Are the challenges different for cross-border cases among EU countries or with third countries?

Please provide information on main relevant agreements – cooperation schemes in two of the following areas: missing children, parental abduction, inter-country adoption, migrant children (family tracing-family reunification –return-relocation).

Ca. 250 words

The State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service (*hereinafter the Service*) ensures compliance of the provisions in Lithuanian legislation and the international treaties to which Lithuania is a contracted party. International cooperation covers the collection, analysis and protection of information about: adoption; children, previously permanent residents of Lithuania, who have been adopted by Lithuanian citizens or foreign nationals; children who are Lithuanian nationals and who permanently reside abroad; children who are not Lithuanian citizens, but who permanently reside in the country and are in need of personal protection or protection of their property; children taken away in violation of the rights of guardianship; children who are not Lithuanian citizens, but who are placed under the guardianship in Lithuania; children who are Lithuanian citizens and who became deprived of parental care abroad.

Main documents regulating the international aspects of child's rights protection in Lithuania:

- 1) Rules for Bringing Children left without Parental Care in Foreign Countries to the Republic of Lithuania³⁰⁹. These rules regulate the procedure for decision making on the return of a child left without parental care in a foreign country to the Republic of Lithuania, covering the costs of the return, and accompanying the child.
- 2) 1989 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- 3) The 1961 Convention on the Powers of Authorities and Applicable Law in the Field of Protection of Minors was ratified in Lithuania in 2001. For relations between the contracting states, the 1996 Hague Convention on Jurisdiction, Applicable Law, Recognition, Enforcement and Cooperation in the Field of Parental Responsibilities and Child Protection Measures replaces this Convention. For relations between EU member states, Council Regulation (EC) 2201/2003 replaces this Convention as far as it relates to cases covered by the Regulation.
- 4) The 1996 Convention on Jurisdiction, Applicable Law, Recognition, Enforcement and Cooperation in the Field of Parental Responsibilities and Child Protection Measures, was ratified in Lithuania in 2003. The objectives of this Convention are to determine: 1) the state whose institutions have jurisdiction to take measures to protect the child's person and property, 2) to determine what law such institutions must apply when exercising their jurisdiction, 3) to determine the law applicable to parental responsibilities, 4) to ensure the recognition of such protective measures and enforcement in all Contracting States. This Convention is particularly useful in resolving disputes between parents regarding custody and access rights when placing a child in another state.
- 5) 1980 Convention on Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction was ratified in Lithuania in 2002. The purpose of this Convention is to ensure that children, illegally taken or kept in a foreign country, are quickly returned to the country of their permanent residence and to guarantee that custody rights and the rights to meet a child are respected in all countries.

Lithuania has bilateral (trilateral) agreements regarding civil and family cases with Kazakhstan, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Poland, Moldova, Russia, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, Latvia and Estonia.

³⁰⁹ Lithuania, Government (2004). Rules for bringing children left without parental care in foreign countries to the Republic of Lithuania (Užsienio valstybėse likusių be tėvų globos vaikų parvežimo į Lietuvos Respubliką taisyklės), No. 1655, 24 December 2004, last amendment No. 1015, 2 October 2019.

2.4. Developments in the past years: achievements, gaps, and challenges

Based on the output of the 2014 mapping exercise, please briefly describe the development of the child protection governance, coordination structures, and services in the past 8 years, incl. achievements and (persisting) gaps and challenges

Ca. 300 words

The system of child rights protection has undergone essential changes in 2018. The legal acts were amended additionally in 2020, establishing additional mechanisms related to children protection. In 2018, the child's rights protection system was centralized.³¹⁰ Since 1 July 2018, the function of child rights protection has been transferred from municipalities (municipal child rights protection units) to the State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour. The Service has become the central institution of the Republic of Lithuania, implementing the child's rights protection policy, and has received the authority to ensure the coordination of actions related to children's rights in all sectors at the national, municipal, and local levels.³¹¹ State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service has its territorial units in all 60 municipalities of Lithuania. Also, it is important that since 1 July 2018 child rights protection specialists reacts to the reports on possible violations of the child rights 24/7, including all holidays, weekends etc., without any exceptions³¹².

The change is quite recent; therefore, the challenge may arise with the unification of the practice at different territorial units of the Service, finding the right balance between the protection of child's rights, intervention to family and family's right to privacy and family life. Another challenge is the development of unified model of qualifications for child's rights protection specialist, whereas now the specialists may come from very different educational backgrounds. The system was further tested during the arrival of unaccompanied children fleeing the war in Ukraine, where the guardianship (curatorship) had to be established for a large number of children.

Another important change is the fact that since 1 July 2018, decisions of the child rights protection specialists to remove the child from his/her family **must be approved by the court**. If the State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service has identified a real and immediate threat to the physical or

³¹⁰ Lithuania, Seimas (2000), Civil Code (*Lietuvos Respublikos Civilinis kodeksas*), No. VIII-1864, 18 July 2000, last amendment No. XIV-1435, 29 September 2022, Art. 3.250 and further.

³¹¹ Lithuania, Seimas (1996). Law on Fundamentals of Protection of the Rights of the Child (*Lietuvos Respublikos Vaiko teisių apsaugos pagrindų įstatymas*), No. I-1234, 14 March 1996, last amendment No. XIV-1512 10 November 2022, Art. 50.

³¹² Lithuania, Seimas (1996). Law on Fundamentals of Protection of the Rights of the Child (*Lietuvos Respublikos Vaiko teisių apsaugos pagrindų įstatymas*), No. I-1234, 14 March 1996, last amendment No. XIV-1512 10 November 2022, Art. 50(1)(2).

mental safety, life or health of the child, has removed the child from the family and placed the child in a safe place, it shall apply to the court within 3 business days for permission to remove the child from his/her representatives under the law.³¹³

Furthermore, **the mobile teams** were introduced in 2018. The mobile team consists of at least two different professionals - a psychologist and/or a social worker and/or a crisis management specialist. Its main function is to help families in crisis to help manage the crisis, identify and (re)solve the problems, so that the parents or the available single parent can ensure that the child's needs are met, and so that the child can develop and live in a safe environment.³¹⁴

In addition to the existing forms of guardianship (curatorship) (in a foster family, in a social family (foster care-based household), in a children care institution (in this case, in the community-based children care homes)) the new form - **child care in the Foster Care Centre** was established in 2017. Foster Care Centres are the legal representative of the child, but the child is placed in the family of a guardian on-call, who is a professional foster parent taking care of the child in a family-based environment.³¹⁵

The **Law on Social families was revised** in November 2022.³¹⁶ The law was revised in order to clarify the procedure for setting up a social family and ensure clarity and consistency in the legal regulation of social families; to improve the legal regulation of the social families; to encourage the establishment of as many social families as possible so that children without parental care can grow up in a more family-like environment, this was done by increasing the income of the social families to meet their needs.

The amendments to the Law on Social Services introduced in 2022 included preventive social services among the list of social services regulated by the Law. The added article on preventive social services states that preventive social services are provided to all persons (all families) and/or communities who wish to strengthen the ability of a person/family to take care of his/her own personal life and to participate in society, to strengthen the social activity of the community and to promote the social inclusion of the community, and to strengthen the person's/family's knowledge and skills in order to prevent the emergence of potential social problems and social risks in the future. Preventive social services include a service for identifying potential recipients of social services, complex services for the family, work with the community and other services.³¹⁷

³¹³ Lithuania, Seimas (2000), Civil Code (*Lietuvos Respublikos Civilinis kodeksas*), No. VIII-1864, 18 July 2000, last amendment No. XIV-1435, 29 September 2022, Art. 3.254¹ (2).

³¹⁴ Lithuania, Ministry of Social Security and Labour (2018). Regarding the formation of mobile teams, the selection of specialists and the approval of their work rules (*Dėl Mobilųjų komandų sudarymo, specialistų atrankos ir jų darbo tvarkos aprašo patvirtinimo*), No. A1-334, 27 June 2018, last amendments No. A1-769, 22 November 2022.

³¹⁵ Lithuania, Seimas (2000), Civil Code (*Lietuvos Respublikos Civilinis kodeksas*), No. VIII-1864, 18 July 2000, last amendment No. XIV-1435, 29 September 2022, Art. 3.252.

³¹⁶ Lithuania, Seimas (2022), Law amending the Law of the Republic of Lithuania No XI-681 on Social Families (*Lietuvos Respublikos šeimynų įstatymo Nr. XI-681 pakeitimo įstatymas*), No. XIV-1511, 10 November 2022.

³¹⁷ Lithuania, Seimas (2021), Law amending the Articles 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 8, 11, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 26, 29, 34, 38 of the Law of the Republic of Lithuania on Social Services (No X-493), supplementing Articles 6-1, 19-3, 20-1, 20-1, 20-2 of the Law, and declaring the Articles 36, 37 of the Law invalid (*Lietuvos Respublikos socialinių paslaugų įstatymo Nr. X-493 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 8, 11, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 26, 29, 34, 38 straipsnių pakeitimo*,

Regarding cooperation between different institutions, the new position has been foreseen at municipality level that is the coordinator of inter-institutional cooperation, who is tasked to coordinate educational assistance, social and healthcare services for children and their representatives and carry out other coordinative functions necessary to assist children and families.

2.5. Promising practices

Please list and briefly describe any promising practice in governance, coordination structures, and services that you come across. (if available please include references to documents or URLs in case of online tools/mechanisms)

Ca. 250

Institutions demonstrate willingness to cooperate, regarding child's rights protection, as is evidenced by completion of several cooperation agreements in the field of child's rights protection. The new position is established - coordinator of inter-institutional cooperation, who is tasked to coordinate educational assistance, social and healthcare services for children and their representatives and carries out other coordinative functions necessary to assist children and families.

The quality standards of activity were introduced in the State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service with the adoption of standard of conduct of the civil servants and persons employed at the State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service and the adoption of Code of Ethics for civil servants and employees working under employment contracts of the State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service.

The participation of NGOs working in the field of services to the children is active and important, as they contribute to the system with their specialised knowledge and international experience.

The Multidimensional Family Therapy Program implemented by the State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service together with partners: the Ministry of Social Security and Labor and the Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities should be mentioned as a good practice as well. This is a pilot project. This program works with children aged 11-17 who do not attend school, have conflictual communication, use alcohol or psychotropic substances, are prone to aggression, criminal behavior, have committed administrative offenses or criminal acts, have other behavioral difficulties. During the project, therapists develop short- and long-term plans together with the family, in which they set goals for change and achieve them during weekly meetings with the family. Live meetings with parents and children, conversations by phone or remotely, depending on the family's needs and availability, are held from one to three times a week, for four to six months. If there is a need and if the family shows a desire, the therapy can be extended. The service is free of charge.

3. Capacities (human and financial resources)

3.1. Information on budget allocation and funding

Question	YES	NO	Comments
3.1.1. Is budget allocation on child protection incorporated into legislative and policy instruments?	x		Budget allocations for child protection are included in policy documents – strategy plans and annual activity plans of the Five Ministries (Ministry of Social Security and Labour, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Education, Science and Sports, Ministry of Health and Ministry of Internal Affairs). However, the budgets of each ministry do not allow a clear distinction between the budget for child protection and the budget for other purposes. For example, the legal aid for children, which is administered by the Ministry of Justice is combined with the budget for legal aids for adult. ³¹⁸ Similarly, the budget administered by the Ministry of Social Security and Labor budget for implementing youth policy measures at local, regional and national levels and representing youth policy issues at the international level combines budgets for minors under 18 and young adults and the budget for services for children is combined with the budget for services for families and young people. ³¹⁹ The budget administered by the Ministry of Education, Science, and Sport for ensuring access to education for children experiencing exclusion is combined with the budget for other purposes. ³²⁰ The State budget provides direct funds just for the Office of the Ombudsperson for Child's Rights and municipalities for the performance of individual

³¹⁸ Lithuania, Minister of Justice (2023) Order on the Approval of the 2023-2025 strategic activity plan of the ministry of Justice of the Republic of Lithuania ([Dėl Lietuvos Respublikos Teisingumo ministro valdymo sričių 2023–2025 metų strateginio veiklos plano patvirtinimo](#)), No 1R-29, 23 January 2023, Table No 3, object 13-001-11-05 T.

³¹⁹ Lithuania, Minister of Social Security and Labour (2023) Order on the Approval of the 2023-2025 strategic activity plan of the ministry of Social Security and Labour of the Republic of Lithuania ([Dėl Lietuvos Respublikos socialinės apsaugos ir darbo ministerijos 2023-2025 metų strateginio veiklos plano patvirtinimo](#)), No A1-32, 24 January 2023, p. 50 p. Table No 3 and 68-71 Table No 3.

³²⁰ Lithuania, Minister of Education, Science, and Sport (2023) Order on the Approval of the 2023-2025 strategic activity plan of the ministry of Education, Science, and Sport of the Republic of Lithuania ([Dėl Lietuvos Respublikos socialinės apsaugos ir darbo ministerijos 2023-2025 metų strateginio veiklos plano patvirtinimo](#)), No V-62, 19 January 2023, p. 68-71 Table No 3.

			functions related to child protection. ³²¹ It should also be noted that part of the measures to protect children and ensure their rights are also financed from the municipal budget. In each of the 60 municipalities, the municipal council approves the distribution of funds for the implemented programs. ³²²		
3.1.2. Is the budget allocated to child protection (alternatively on children's rights or on social welfare) clearly specified in the annual national budget? Please refer to the specific budget item allocated to this in 2022?		x	The State budget does not provide funds directly for the protection of children's rights. ³²³ Funds for the protection of children's rights are included in the general budget allocated to the five ministries that are the managers of these funds. Each ministry distributes the received funds, including the funds intended for the protection of children's rights, in accordance with the programs implemented by it and the annual activity plans of each given ministry and the subordinate institutions. Additionally, the State budget provides a separate budget for the functioning of The Office of the Ombudsman of Child's Rights.		
3.1.3. What percentage of the total state budget was allocated to child protection in the last five years? If data is not available, please provide information on the budget allocated to social protection/social welfare in general.					
<p>For the year 2022, in the State budget, funds for social affairs allocated to the Ministry of Social Security and Labour are combined with funds for employment. In the State budget for 2018 – 2021, the funds are allocated to the Ministry of Social Security and Labour without specifying the purpose for which they are allocated. However, considering the functions and areas of activity performed by the Ministry, it can be concluded that during this period, the funds for social affairs were combined with the budget for employment.</p> <p>The table presents data for a period of 5 years on the budget allocated to the Ministry of Social Security and Labour (MSSL). Additionally, data on the budget allocated to the State Child Protection and Adoption Service (SCPAS), the main institution protecting children's rights in Lithuania, are provided.</p>					
	2022,	2021,	2020,	2019,	2018,

³²¹ Lithuania, Seimas (2022) Law on approval of financial indicators of the state budget and municipal budgets of 2023 ([2023 metų valstybės biudžeto ir savivaldybių biudžetų finansinių rodiklių patvirtinimo įstatymas](#)), No XIV-1556, 22 November 2022.

³²² Lithuania, Seimas (2022) Law on approval of financial indicators of the state budget and municipal budgets of 2023 ([2023 metų valstybės biudžeto ir savivaldybių biudžetų finansinių rodiklių patvirtinimo įstatymas](#)), No XIV-1556, 22 November 2022.

³²³ Lithuania, Seimas (2022) Law on approval of financial indicators of the state budget and municipal budgets of 2023 ([2023 metų valstybės biudžeto ir savivaldybių biudžetų finansinių rodiklių patvirtinimo įstatymas](#)), No XIV-1556, 22 November 2022.

	EUR thousand ³²⁴		EUR thousand ³²⁵		EUR thousand ³²⁶		EUR thousand ³²⁷		EUR thousand ³²⁸	
	Budget of MSSL for social security and employment	Part of the Budget of MSSL dedicated to the functioning of SCPAS	Budget of MSSL	Part of the Budget of MSSL dedicated to the functioning of SCPAS	Budget of MSSL	Part of the Budget of MSSL dedicated to the functioning of SCPAS	Budget of MSSL	Part of the Budget of MSSL dedicated to the functioning of SCPAS	Budget of MSSL	Part of the Budget of MSSL dedicated to the functioning of SCPAS
Part of the State Budget	4620438	19960	4029306	16589	3596506	16094	3141457	14757	1432986	8700
Total State budget	17535450	17535450	16615287	16615287	12778539	12778539	11705915	11705915	9560309	9560309
Percentage of the Total State budget	26,35	0,11	24,25	0,10	28,14	0,13	26,84	0,13	14,99	0,09

Note: In 2018, the institutional framework of child protection was reorganized. A decentralized system, where some of the functions of child's protection were carried out by municipalities, became centralized, i. e. the functions of child protection performed by municipalities have been transferred to

³²⁴ Lithuania, Seimas (2021) Law on approval of financial indicators of the state budget and municipal budgets of 2022 (*2022 metų valstybės biudžeto ir savivaldybių biudžetų finansinių rodiklių patvirtinimo įstatymas*), No XIV-745, 14 December 2021, last amendment XIV-1100, 17 May 2022.

³²⁵ Lithuania, Seimas (2020) Law on approval of financial indicators of the state budget and municipal budgets of 2021 (*2021 metų valstybės biudžeto ir savivaldybių biudžetų finansinių rodiklių patvirtinimo įstatymas*), No XIV-102, 22 December 2020, last amendment XIV-430, 22 June 2021.

³²⁶ Lithuania, Seimas (2019) Law on approval of financial indicators of the state budget and municipal budgets of 2020 (*2020 metų valstybės biudžeto ir savivaldybių biudžetų finansinių rodiklių patvirtinimo įstatymas*), No XIII-2695, 17 December 2019, last amendment XIII-3032, 9 June 2020.

³²⁷ Lithuania, Seimas (2018) Law on approval of financial indicators of the state budget and municipal budgets of 2019 (*2019 metų valstybės biudžeto ir savivaldybių biudžetų finansinių rodiklių patvirtinimo įstatymas*), No XIII-1710, 11 December 2018.

³²⁸ Lithuania, Seimas (2017) Law on approval of financial indicators of the state budget and municipal budgets of 2018 (*2018 metų valstybės biudžeto ir savivaldybių biudžetų finansinių rodiklių patvirtinimo įstatymas*), No XIII-868, 12 December 2017, last amendment XIII-1608, 8 November 2018.

the SCPAS. As a result, the budget of the municipalities for child protection was transferred to MSSL and SCPAS.

On 13 June 2023 the **National Action Plan for the Implementation of the Child Guarantee in Lithuania for 2023-2030**³²⁹ was adopted. The Action plan provides that 8.7 percent of "European Social Fund +" funds, which amounts to 98.98 million, will be allocated to the implementation of the measures provided for in the plan in Lithuania. Euros. These funds are distributed: Ministry of Social Security and Labor - 60.25 million. EUR, for the Ministry of Health – 10.9 million. EUR, Ministry of Education, Science and Sports - 27.83 million. EUR.

Question	YES	NO	Comments
<p>3.1.4. Is the existing budget and funding of child protection services/institutions considered sufficient <u>and</u> sustainable (as compared to only project based for a limited period of time)?</p> <p><i>(Please consider available studies, reports at national level conducted by public or private institutions, child protection organisations, civil society, human rights institutions, academic community, and other sources such as the concluding observations of the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child on country reports etc.)</i></p>		x	<p>UNICEF, Basis for a European Child Guarantee Action Plan in Lithuania³³⁰</p> <p>For improving access to ECEC (early childhood education and care) UNICEF provided the following recommendations:³³¹</p> <p>UNICEF suggests rising financial allocations to help children from vulnerable backgrounds to access ECEC.</p> <p>UNICEF indicates that improving the inclusion of children with SEN (Special Education Needs) requires extended training for the ECEC workforce, both during their initial, pre-service studies and while working in ECEC. There is currently a lack of teacher training in this area, mainly due to a lack of financing. More time and finances should be invested in the continuous professional in-service education of working teachers as well as pre-service teacher training.</p>

³²⁹ Lithuania, Minister of Social Security and Labour, Minister of Health and Minister of Education, Science and Sport, Order on the approval of the action plan for the implementation of the child guarantee system in Lithuania for the years 2023-2030 (*Isakymas dėl vaiko garantijų sistemos įgyvendinimo 2023–2030 metais Lietuvoje veiksmų plano patvirtinimo*), No A1-388/V-678/V-821, 13 June 2023, Article 107.

³³⁰ UNICEF, [Basis for a European Child Guarantee Action Plan in Lithuania](#), UNICEF Europe and Central Asia Regional Office (ECARO), 2022.

³³¹ UNICEF, [Basis for a European Child Guarantee Action Plan in Lithuania](#), UNICEF Europe and Central Asia Regional Office (ECARO), 2022, P.5-6.

		<p>Lithuania is currently unable to ensure equal enrolment into ECEC across the country. The level of provision is lower in rural areas than it is in urban areas, moreover, fewer high-quality ECEC resources are available in poorer neighborhoods. Clear guidelines regarding structural quality and financing must be set at a national level, to avoid children suffering an unequal level of services depending on where they are born.</p> <p>Lithuania should ensure that policy goals are oriented towards improving access to and the quality of ECEC. Strong public policy commitment to ECEC is important, and must be backed by a bold vision, strong plans and adequate funds.</p> <p>For improving access to education UNICEF provided the following notes and recommendations:³³²</p> <p>Despite improved financial allocation <...> the hidden costs of education remain, and there is a lack of universal provision of school supplies and other necessary materials.</p> <p>The methods used to recruit teachers should be improved, and salaries should be raised.</p> <p>Any strategy should <...> provide clear timelines, targets, baselines and indicators to monitor progress, as well as adequate financial, material and human resources. Funding on a larger scale should also ensure consistency between richer and poorer regions, to avoid a situation in which municipalities with a higher number of low-income families lack the means to serve the needs of those families. The possibility should be considered of assigning higher weights in the funding formula to socio-economically disadvantaged students. More attention should be devoted to improving</p>
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³³² UNICEF, [Basis for a European Child Guarantee Action Plan in Lithuania](#), UNICEF Europe and Central Asia Regional Office (ECARO), 2022, P.9-10.

		<p>efficiency in the allocation and the use of school maintenance budgets.</p> <p>For improving access to housing UNICEF provided the following recommendations:³³³</p> <p>Additional investment in housing support is needed, with the focus on the regions. Investments should be made in the development and supply of quality housing. Prevention mechanisms to avoid people losing their homes (late payment of loans and for utilities, assuming rent arrears, preventive advice, etc.) should also be introduced.</p> <p>Housing adaptation for families raising children with disabilities should receive greater funding and should be expanded across the country.</p> <p>For improving social services and benefits in cash UNICEF recommended increasing public spending on social protection to reach the EU 27 (2018) average and expanding the use of targeted social assistance measures for vulnerable groups such as Roma children, migrant children and single parents with children.³³⁴</p> <p>The Ombudsperson for Child’s Rights in Ombudsperson’s Submission to the United Nations Human Rights Council Universal Periodic Review, for the 3rd cycle (2016 – 2020 year)³³⁵ noted that “Recommendations (100.34, 100.35) on the support and strengthening of the Office of the Ombudsperson including on the adequate provision with financial and human resources, remain unimplemented.” In the National report submitted in accordance with paragraph 5 of the</p>
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³³³ UNICEF, [Basis for a European Child Guarantee Action Plan in Lithuania](#), UNICEF Europe and Central Asia Regional Office (ECARO), 2022, P.20.

³³⁴ UNICEF, [Basis for a European Child Guarantee Action Plan in Lithuania](#), UNICEF Europe and Central Asia Regional Office (ECARO), 2022, P.22.

³³⁵ Office of the Ombudsperson for Child’s rights of the Republic of Lithuania, [Submission of the Ombudsperson for Child’s Rights, United Nations Human Rights Council Universal Periodic Review](#), the 3rd cycle (2016 – 2020 year), 2021, P. 5.

		annex to Human Rights Council Resolution 16/21, Lithuania admitted that sufficient level of funding has not yet been reached. ³³⁶																		
<p>3.1.5. Do EU funds play a substantial role in the funding of the national child protection system and/or related policies?</p> <p>Please provide information on the child protection areas and related services incl. providers that use EU funds (including what type of funds for which period of time).</p>	x	<p>EU funds play a significant role in the funding of the national child protection system. EU funds finance projects in the fields of education, health, and social security. Projects financed by EU funds were implemented both at the national level and at the local level (municipalities).</p> <p>The Ministry of Social Security and Labour indicates in its 2021 Annual Report that in 2021, the measure financed by the European Regional Development Fund "Transformation of Institutional Care: Investments in Infrastructure" was continued; the measure allocated the budget of 14 million Euros for the creation of community-based children care homes and the creation and/or development of children's day centres. 81 community-based children care homes and 100 children day centres were established and provided with furniture and equipment. At the end of 2021, 102 buildings/premises intended for the provision of services of community-based children care homes and day care centres were renovated.</p> <p>During the implementation of the European Social Fund-financed measure "Transformation of Institutional Care", after-care services for young people leaving institutional care were piloted and provided to 254 young people.³³⁷</p> <p>The table below provides comparative data for the 2018-2022 period on the EU funds received by the State Child Protection and Adoption Service (SCPAS). The data shows that every year SCPAS receives 14% - 33% additional budget from EU funds.</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>2022,</th> <th>2021,</th> <th>2020,</th> <th>2019,</th> <th>2018,</th> </tr> <tr> <th></th> <th>EUR</th> <th>EUR</th> <th>EUR</th> <th>EUR</th> <th>EUR</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		2022,	2021,	2020,	2019,	2018,		EUR	EUR	EUR	EUR	EUR						
	2022,	2021,	2020,	2019,	2018,															
	EUR	EUR	EUR	EUR	EUR															

³³⁶ Lithuania, [National report submitted in accordance with paragraph 5 of the annex to Human Rights Council resolution 16/21](#), 22 October 2021, Para 82.

³³⁷ Lithuania, Ministry of Social Security and Labour (2022) [Annual Report of 2021](#) . No. D5-27 (1.2.1E), 8 March 2022.

	EUR thousand ³³⁸	thousand ³³⁹	thousand ³⁴⁰	thousand ³⁴¹	thousand ³⁴²
EU funds	3217	2335	2669	4913	1613
State budget of SCPAS	19960	16589	16094	14757	8700
Percentage	16,12	14,07	16,59	33,29	18,54

As for projects financed by EU funds at the **local level**, the provision of complex services in municipalities should be noted. For example, Kaunas City Municipality and the NGO Psychological Support and Counseling Center together with partners provided complex psychological, psychotherapeutic, social assistance in the implementation of the project "Kaunas Community Family Houses", financed by the European Social Fund under measure No. 08.4.1.-ESFA-V-416 "Complex services for the family". This project aimed to empower the families of the city of Kaunas to solve the difficulties that have arisen and to carry out the prevention of family crises. The period of the project was from 27 September 2017 to 31 May 2023.³⁴³ EU funds - 2 797 214,85 Eur. Persons (families) of target groups who received social services – 7385.

³³⁸ Lithuania, State Child Protection and Adoption Service, A set of financial statements for the *year ended December 31, 2022* (2022 m. gruodžio 31 dieną pasibaigusių metų finansinių ataskaitų rinkinys), 14 March 2023, [<https://vaikoteises.lrv.lt/lt/administracine-informacija/finansiniu-ataskaitu-rinkiniai>]

³³⁹ Lithuania, State Child Protection and Adoption Service, A set of financial statements for the *year ended December 31, 2021* (2021 m. gruodžio 31 dieną pasibaigusių metų finansinių ataskaitų rinkinys), 15 March 2022, [<https://vaikoteises.lrv.lt/lt/administracine-informacija/finansiniu-ataskaitu-rinkiniai>]

³⁴⁰ Lithuania, State Child Protection and Adoption Service, A set of financial statements for the *year ended December 31, 2020* (2020 m. gruodžio 31 dieną pasibaigusių metų finansinių ataskaitų rinkinys), 21 March 2021, [<https://vaikoteises.lrv.lt/lt/administracine-informacija/finansiniu-ataskaitu-rinkiniai>]

³⁴¹ Lithuania, State Child Protection and Adoption Service, [A set of financial statements for the year ended December 31, 2019](#) (2019 m. gruodžio 31 dieną pasibaigusių metų finansinių ataskaitų rinkinys), 10 April 2020.

³⁴² ³⁴² Lithuania, State Child Protection and Adoption Service, [A set of financial statements for the year ended December 31, 2019](#) (2019 m. gruodžio 31 dieną pasibaigusių metų finansinių ataskaitų rinkinys), 10 April 2020.

³⁴³ Lithuania, NGO Psychological Support and Counseling Center (2023) website of the organization [Comprehensive services for Kaunas families](#)

		<p>In the field of health care, all patients, including children, benefited from the funded projects. For example, with the financing of the structural funds of the European Union for 2014-2020, projects were completed, during which the infrastructure of primary healthcare institutions was modernized (reconstruction of buildings and premises, their repair), necessary medical and other equipment were purchased, and specialized vehicles for patients were purchased visit and provide services at home.³⁴⁴</p> <p>In the field of education, various projects have been financed to improve the activities of pre-school and general education schools. For example, the currently ongoing project funded by European funds no. 09.2.1-ESFA-K-728 <i>Improving the activities of pre-school and general education schools</i> supports the implementation of new general education, pre-school and kindergarten education organization models, implementation of updated educational content, implementation of virtual education and learning environments in pre-school and general education schools, mobilization of the school community and improvement of the quality of general education. Allocated EU funds – 8 593 138,00 Eur. Municipalities, schools and kindergartens can apply for project funding.³⁴⁵</p> <p>On 13 June 2023 the National Action Plan for the Implementation of the Child Guarantee in Lithuania for 2023-2030 ³⁴⁶ was adopted. The Action plan provides that 8.7 percent of "European Social Fund +" funds, which amounts to 98.98 million, will be allocated to the implementation of the measures provided for in the plan in Lithuania. Euros. These funds are distributed: Ministry of Social Security and Labor - 60.25 million. EUR, for</p>
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³⁴⁴ Lithuania, Ministry of Health (2023), 2022 Activity report ([2022 metų veiklos ataskaita](#)), 17 March 2

³⁴⁵ European Social Fund, Cohesion Fund, European Regional Development Fund (2023), website Financing No. 09.2.1-ESFA-K-728 Improving the activities of pre-school and general education schools ([Finansavimas Nr. 09.2.1-ESFA-K-728 Ikimokyklinio ir bendrojo ugdymo mokyklų veiklos tobulinimas](#)).

³⁴⁶ Lithuania, Minister of Social Security and Labour, Minister of Health and Minister of Education, Science and Sport, Order on the approval of the action plan for the implementation of the child guarantee system in Lithuania for the years 2023-2030 ([Isakymas dėl vaiko garantijų sistemos įgyvendinimo 2023–2030 metais Lietuvoje veiksmų plano patvirtinimo](#)), No A1-388/V-678/V-821, 13 June 2023, Article 107.

		<p>the Ministry of Health – 10.9 million. EUR, Ministry of Education, Science and Sports - 27.83 million. EUR.</p>
<p>3.1.6. Is corporate social responsibility developed at national level in relation to child protection services?</p> <p><u>If yes</u>, please provide information on major child protection national programmes and actions that are primarily funded by the private sector or by public-private schemes/ synergies.</p>	<p>x</p>	<p>Charity and Support Fund “Maisto bankas” (Food Bank) campaigns "Donate Food to the Needy" are organised several times a year. A large part of the food collected during "Maisto bankas" campaigns goes to needy persons under the care of social non-profit organizations. These are day care centres that take care of children from poor families; associations for the disabled, children care homes, charity canteens, social service centres and other organizations participate in campaigns. The Maisto bankas/Food Bank organizes and participates in other food and fund-raising campaigns.</p> <p>All information about the activities of this Fund and the conducted fund-raising and donation campaigns can be found at the webpage of “Maisto bankas” https://www.maistobankas.lt/gpm/</p> <p>Periodic charity and support campaigns of LIONS and LEO clubs. Clubs organize fundraising campaigns - collect funds and organize charity concerts, performances. Funds collected during events and by members are allocated to support children with visual impairments (contributed to the creation of Eye bank, which helps purchase the necessary equipment for educational activities for specialized kindergartens and schools for the visually impaired, provides children with vision-correcting glasses, organizes sports and other events for visually impaired children), also to support children with mental disabilities, children with serious oncological diseases, children with diabetes and other seriously ill children. Just recently funds were raised for a little girl with a rare genetic disease to continue her dolphin therapy.</p> <p>Clubs support family support centres, residential homes for people with mental disabilities, and day care centres for children. Clubs also contribute to the adaptation of training, educational and medical facilities for children with disabilities and to the purchase of equipment necessary for them</p>

to work. With these funds, the foster home for mentally challenged children was renovated, specialized educational tools were purchased, a new modern kitchen was installed, etc. Clubs also contributed to adapting the school for the integration of children with physical disabilities (club members equipped computer classrooms, installed an internal Internet network, donated a special bus for transporting disabled students to school, improved the household and educational workshops, installed a lift in the swimming pool, equipped a training room for the disabled and purchased a set of training equipment to develop various muscle groups). The rehabilitation centre for the disabled was also renovated with their funds, exercise equipment and foot massagers were bought for children with cerebral palsy.

Clubs organize children's summer camps. They also support talented but underprivileged young musicians. These school students are given financial support to purchase instruments or some other necessary additional tools; additional classes or courses, trips to important competitions are paid for, etc. Other charity and support activities are also carried out.

All information about the activities of the clubs can be found at the webpage of Lions Clubs Association <https://www.lionsclubs.lt/>

A large amount of support was collected (and continues to be collected) by private individuals and companies for the Ukrainian children. All information about the forms and methods of **support for the Ukrainians (including children)** can be found on the online platform <https://paramaukrainai.lt/>, which has been created and administered by the communication agency "co:agency" together with the digital marketing agency "Relevant".

“Gelbėkit vaikus“ (Save the Children Lithuania) organization. It was founded in 1991. The purpose of the organization's activities is to advocate for children's rights, to seek implementation of children's rights in the country, and to help children experiencing poverty, violence or other

		<p>problems. This organization strongly advocated for the ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in Lithuania and the adoption of all laws guaranteeing the implementation of children's rights in the country. It opened the first children day centre in Lithuania.</p> <p>During the thirty years of operation, the organization implemented many projects for supporting children: ensuring children's rights, promoting positive parenting, reducing poverty, educating children, reducing domestic violence, providing social services to children and their families, and other areas. In 2011, the organization collected support for the Japanese children affected by the tsunami. Organisation also helped children in Zambia, Nepal, and Ukraine, who are experiencing difficulties.</p> <p>More information about the activities of this organization can be found at the organization's website https://gelbokitvaikus.lt/</p>
<p>3.1.7. Has the involvement of the private sector in child protection recently significantly increased? Are there projects or programmes receiving governmental funding which outsource protection services for children? Please include civil society organisations and private companies contracted by government/local authorities to provide services.</p> <p><u>If yes</u>, please explain the changes and the reasons hereof. Please provide information on the legal provisions regulating this and on the main services / groups of children that are covered. Provide information based on indicative examples.</p>	x	<p>The legal basis for the involvement of the private sector in child's protection</p> <p>Law on Fundamentals of Protection of the Rights of the Child, No. I-1234³⁴⁷</p> <p>Article 47 (6) states that non-governmental organizations are involved in ensuring children's rights and providing them with services. Article 47 (7) foresees that state and municipal institutions encourage and support activities of non-governmental organisations, including traditional Lithuanian religious communities and associations, in the field of child's rights protection. Article 53 stipulates the competences of non-governmental organizations in the field of child's rights protection. Non-governmental organizations, in cooperation with state and municipal institutions and bodies, can submit proposals to state and municipal institutions regarding the improvement of ensuring and implementing the protection of children's rights; participate in the examination of child's case; ensure the organization and provision</p>

³⁴⁷ Lithuania, Seimas (1996). Law on Fundamentals of Protection of the Rights of the Child (*Lietuvos Respublikos Vaiko teisių apsaugos pagrindų įstatymas*), No. I-1234, 14 March 1996, last amendment No. XIV-1512 10 November 2022.

		<p>of services for a child and family in the relevant municipality or part of its territory; establish children's day care centres, family centres that provide assistance to a child and/or family; can help a family educate children with special needs, children with disabilities, children experiencing social risk, children who have violated the law; organisations can provide assistance to child - victim of crime. Article 34 (2) indicates that municipalities must ensure the provision of comprehensive assistance for prevention to child and family. When organizing and providing assistance, municipal institutions are obliged to cooperate with non-governmental organizations and local communities. Article 34 (5) foresees that municipality with the help of non-governmental organizations and volunteers, organizes events and other measures involving families in community activities, contributes to organization of family education, and initiates safe neighbourhood activities. Article 44 (2) stipulates, that communities and non-governmental organizations must be used for the implementation of various child protection measures.</p> <p>The Law on Social Services³⁴⁸</p> <p>Based on the Article 2 (11) private sector can be involved in the establishment of the Community family home. The Community family home is a social service institution operating in the territory of the municipality, which organizes and, if necessary, provides complex services for the family.</p> <p>Private sector also can be involved in services of guardians on-duty (professional foster families). Article 2 (2) states that Guardian on-duty is a natural person who, in accordance with the mutual cooperation and service provision agreement concluded with a Foster Care Centre, takes care of children left without parental care, children experiencing social risk, or provides other assistance to child's parents in cases specified in</p>
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³⁴⁸ Lithuania, Seimas (2006), Law on Social Services (*Lietuvos Respublikos socialinių paslaugų įstatymas*), No. X-493, last amendment No. XIV-952, 17 March 2022.

		<p>this contract, with the aim of returning a child to the family. The Guardian on-duty is a self-employed person working under an Individual activity certificate.</p> <p>In 2021 an NGO fund started operating in Lithuania. The main objective of the NGO Fund is to strengthen the institutional capacity of NGOs and invest in the sector, ensuring the sustainable development of trusted partners in the state. The Fund distributes funds to NGOs for the formulation and implementation of their development policies. The Fund is administered by the Ministry of Social Security and Labour of the Republic of Lithuania, which disposes of the Fund's resources, announces the selection of applications, ensures the implementation of the decisions adopted by the Fund's Council and informs the public about the Fund's activities. It has started its activity in 2021. Projects aimed at helping children may be funded if they are awarded the funds during different programmes. It is mostly aimed at strengthening the abilities of NGO and their development.³⁴⁹</p> <p>The NGOs providing some types of social services may be accredited and receive constant financing for such services, for example, children day care centres³⁵⁰ or social care centres³⁵¹. Furthermore, Foster care centre's functions may also be transferred to NGOs³⁵², which is the case, for example, in Vilnius city municipality.³⁵³</p>
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³⁴⁹ Lithuania, Ministry of Social Security and Labour (2023). [NGO fund](#) (NVO fondas).

³⁵⁰ Lithuania, Ministry of Social Security and Labour (2020). Concerning the approval of the Requirements and Guidelines for the Provision of Accredited Children's Social Day Care (*Dėl Akredituotos vaikų dienos socialinės priežiūros teikimo reikalavimų ir rekomendacijų patvirtinimo*). No. A1-658, 10 July 2020, last amendment No. A1-428, 21 June 2022.

³⁵¹ Lithuania, Ministry of Social Security and Labour (2020). Concerning the approval of the description of the procedure for the accreditation of social care (*Dėl Socialinės priežiūros akreditavimo tvarkos aprašo patvirtinimo*), No. A1-622, 30 June 2020, last amendment No. A1-458, 7 July 2023.

³⁵² Lithuania, Ministry of Social Security and Labour (2018). Regarding the Organisation of the Activity of the Care Centre and of the Care Provided by the Guardians on Duty and the Approval of the Description of the Quality Control Procedure (*Dėl Globos centro veiklos ir vaiko budinčio globotojo vykdomos priežiūros organizavimo ir kokybės priežiūros tvarkos aprašo patvirtinimo*). No. A1-28, 19 January 2018. Last amendments No. A1-440, 11 June 2021, Art. 3.

³⁵³ Lithuania, Social Centre for Children and Adolescents (2023). Foster care centre ([Globos centras](#)).

		<p>Law on Social Families (Foster Care-Based Households)³⁵⁴</p> <p>According to Article 2 (1) private sector can be involved in the establishment of a Social Family (Foster Care-Based Household). The Social Family (Foster Care-Based Household) is a non-profit public legal entity with limited civil liability that fosters children (in temporary care or permanent care) and/or takes care of children placed in temporary accommodation of 4 or more children in a family environment.</p> <p>The Law on Social Integration of the Disabled³⁵⁵</p> <p>Article 16(2)(7) foresees that Associations of the disabled represent the interests of the disabled, help implement measures and projects for the social integration of the disabled, such as organize the provision of social rehabilitation services for the disabled, recreation for the disabled, sports, tourism, cultural activities, participate in international cooperation. When organizing their activities, associations of the disabled cooperate with state and municipal institutions and can receive financial support from these institutions.</p> <p>Law on Education, No I-1489³⁵⁶</p> <p>Based on the Article 33, private sector can be involved in the provision of non-formal education.</p> <p>Non-governmental organizations and other legal and natural persons can provide social services and educational assistance for education of children from poor families experiencing social exclusion, refugee children, or children who do not study in school.</p> <p>According to Article 15, non-formal children's education and other educational institutions, freelance teachers, other education providers can provide non-formal education services for</p>
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³⁵⁴ Lithuania, Seimas (2010). Law on Social Families (*Lietuvos Respublikos šeimynų įstatymas*), No. XI-681, 11 February 2010, last amendment No. XIV-1511, 10 November 2022.

³⁵⁵ Lithuania, Seimas (1991), Law on Social Integration of the disabled (*Lietuvos Respublikos neįgaliųjų socialinės integracijos įstatymas*), No. I-2044, last amendment No. XIV-1722, 20 December 2022.

³⁵⁶ Lithuania, Seimas (1991), Law on education (*Lietuvos Respublikos švietimo įstatymas*), No. I-1489, 25 June 1991, last amendment No. XIV-1263, 30 June 2022.

		<p>children. Non-formal education includes pre-school education and other non-formal education of children (as well as education complementary (e.g., extra-curriculum) to formal education).</p> <p>Law on Youth Policy of the Republic of Lithuania³⁵⁷</p> <p>Based on the Article 2 (19), any legal entity can work with the youth. The article states that any legal entity, one of the objectives of which is to work with youth, is considered an organization working with youth. Such an organization works in the following forms (Article 7 (2)): 1) open work with youth; 2) work with youth on the street; 3) mobile work with youth; 4) development of practical skills of young people; 5) informing and counselling young people; 6) other forms.</p> <p>Law on the Assistance of Victims of Crime³⁵⁸</p> <p>The Law foresees that any private or public entity or organization can provide accredited assistance to crime victims after receiving accreditation from the Department of Social Services Supervision under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour. After accreditation, it becomes the Help for Victims of Crime service. The Help for Victims of Crime service: 1) assesses the needs a victim of a crime, together with the victim draws up an assistance plan and organizes provision of assistance; 2) informs about the rights of victim and provides a victim with contact information about institutions that can protect these rights (including information about the State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service; 3) provides information about institutions and organizations providing social services; 4) provides emotional and/or psychological support or organizes it; 5) organizes temporary accommodation for a victim who needs a safe place (temporary accommodation service, if necessary, is provided immediately at any time of the day); 6) provides information to victim about</p>
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³⁵⁷ Lithuania, Seimas (2003), Law on Youth Policy of the Republic of Lithuania (*Lietuvos Respublikos jaunimo politikos pagrindų įstatymas*), No. IX-1871, 4 December 2003, last amendment No. XIII-3204, 29 July 2020.

³⁵⁸ Lithuania, Seimas (2021), Law on the assistance of victims of crime (*Lietuvos Respublikos pagalbos nuo nusikalstamos veikos nukentėjusiems asmenims įstatymas*), No. XIV-169, 14 January 2021.

		<p>services provided by health care institutions; 7) organizes victim's escort to other institutions and organizations; 8) organizes the provision of other related services.</p> <p>Law on Protection against Domestic Violence³⁵⁹</p> <p>Article 4 of the Law foresees that non-governmental organizations together with Governmental institutions and municipalities are involved in fight against domestic violence. In order to prevent domestic violence, non-governmental organizations can be involved in implementation of the following prevention measures and projects: public education and information campaigns promoting zero tolerance to violence; public legal education about actions that are considered domestic violence, legal consequences of these actions and the inevitability of responsibility for committing them; conducting courses that teach the methods of peaceful resolution of conflicts arising in a domestic environment; organization and implementation of research, and collection of statistical data on domestic violence and analysis of this data; other preventive measures and projects.</p> <p>Law on Minimum and Medium Child Supervision³⁶⁰</p> <p>According to the Law, private sector can be involved in child's social integration process. Article 4 (1)(6) states that child supervision and social integration (reintegration) is based on the cooperation and mutual assistance of all persons participating in this process, the local community, non-governmental organizations, state and municipal institutions, institutions, companies, and organizations. Article 6, indicates that as a measure of minimum care, a child may be obliged to attend a children day care centre or another institution providing educational, cultural, sports, social or other services or performing work activities in the</p>
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³⁵⁹ Lithuania, Seimas (2011), Law on protection against domestic violence (*Lietuvos Respublikos apsaugos nuo smurto artimoje aplinkoje įstatymas*), No. XI-1425, 26 May 2011, last amendment No. XIV-934, 15 March 2022.

³⁶⁰ Lithuania, Seimas (2007), Law on Minimum and Medium Child Supervision (*Lietuvos Respublikos vaiko minimalios ir vidutinės priežiūros įstatymas*), No. X-1238, last amendment No. XIV-486, 30 June 2021.

		<p>community, including a non-governmental organization; participate in sports, arts or other therapy, in non-formal children's education, behaviour change, social education, prevention programs conducted by various institutions, companies, organizations and non-governmental organizations, which aim to positively influence the child's behaviour; and participate in the mediation process.</p> <p>On the website of the Department of Supervision of Social Services under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour https://sppd.lrv.lt/lt/veiklos-sritys/projektu-konkursai information is presented on the projects selected and financed in the following areas in 2022 and 2023:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Projects for mobile work with youth and work with youth on street; - Projects for the provision of social assistance to persons who have suffered or may have suffered from human trafficking; - Projects for the provision of comprehensive services to children who have suffered from direct or indirect domestic violence (witnesses) and their family members; - Provision of specialized comprehensive assistance to persons who have experienced and are experiencing domestic violence; - Projects aimed at preventing domestic violence and changing violent behaviour; - Emotional (Psychological) Support Projects for services providing emotional (psychological) support over the phone; - Projects supporting the activities of disabled associations. <p>In 2023, it is planned to finance additionally these projects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Projects of non-governmental organizations aimed at providing services to children and families in crisis situations (adolescent crisis, divorce crisis); - Projects of methodological assistance and services aimed at ensuring the prevention of sexual violence.
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		<p>Since 2016, the continuous project "Complex services (KOPA)" has been implemented, the purpose of which is to ensure the provision and development of complex services for the family for individuals of the target group (including provision of services through Community Family Homes) in all municipalities of Lithuania. According to it, preventive psychosocial services are financed for Lithuanian residents of all age groups, with the aim of strengthening psychological, social and crisis coping skills. The following activities are financed by the project: individual and/or group consultations for persons experiencing difficulties in their personal life and/or family; organizing and conducting mutual support groups for persons who have experienced difficulties in their personal life and/or family; organizing and conducting social skills groups for children and teenagers; parenting training; family mediations; family counselling at a person's (family's) home - counselling at a person's (family's) home after the birth of a baby, when a disability and/or special needs of a person have been identified, etc.; shuttle services for individuals (families) receiving complex services; childcare services, when other complex services are provided to parents. Project budget - 60 mln Eur. In the period of 2021-2027, the project is financed with the funds of the EU structural funds.³⁶¹</p> <p>Law on State-guaranteed Legal Aid, No VIII - 1591³⁶²</p> <p>According to the Law private sector can be involved in the provision of legal aid for children. Article 15 (3) foresees that for the provision of primary legal assistance to residents (including children), municipalities may conclude contracts with public institutions, lawyers or attorneys' assistants. Article 17 states that secondary legal aid is provided by lawyers with whom the State</p>
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³⁶¹ <https://www.esf.lt/veiklos-sritys/kompleksines-paslaugos/1139#c-50/t-85>

³⁶² Lithuania, Seimas (2000), Law on State-guaranteed Legal Aid (*Lietuvos Respublikos Valstybės garantuojamos teisinės pagalbos įstatymas*), No.VIII - 1591, 28 March 2000, last amendment No. XIV – 1217, 28 June 2022.

		<p>Guaranteed Legal Aid Service has concluded an agreement.</p> <p>Criminal Procedure Code³⁶³</p> <p>Based on the Code, private sector can be involved in provision of psychological assistance to minor victims, witnesses, suspects and accused in the criminal proceeding. According to Article 89 (5), psychologists help interview minor victims, minor witnesses, minor suspects, minor defendants or minor victims with special protection needs, taking into account their social and psychological maturity and/or special protection needs. If necessary, psychologists participate in other steps of the criminal process.</p> <p>Activities of psychologists are administered by the State-guaranteed Legal Aid Service ³⁶⁴</p> <p>Psychologists are private service providers who are included in the State list of psychologists according to the criteria established by law.</p> <p>A list of lawyers providing legal aid and a list of psychologists can be found on the website of the State-guaranteed Legal Aid Service https://vgtpt.lrv.lt/lt/prokurorams-tyrejams-ir-teismams/advokatu-mediatoriu-ir-psichologu-sarasai-1</p> <p>Law on Probation³⁶⁵</p> <p>According to Article 193, non-governmental organizations, communities, psychologists, mediators and other specialists are involved in resocialization process. Article 7 requires the cooperation of the Lithuanian Probation Service and associations, religious communities, other legal entities and volunteers.</p>
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³⁶³ Lithuania, Seimas (2002), Criminal procedure code (*Lietuvos Respublikos Baudžiamojo proceso kodeksas*), No. IX-785, 14 March 2002, last amendment No. XIV-1750, 22 December 2022.

³⁶⁴ Minister of Justice (2015), Order on the approval of the Statute of the State-guaranteed Legal Aid Service, (*Dėl Valstybės garantuojamos teisinės pagalbos tarnybos nuostatų patvirtinimo*), No. IX-743, 12 June 2015, last amendment No. 1R-254, 10 August 2020, para 9.7.

³⁶⁵ Lithuania, Seimas (2011), Law on Probation (*Lietuvos Respublikos probacijos įstatymas*), No. XI-1860, 22 December 2011, last amendment No. XIV-1204, 28 June 2022.

			In 2022, the Probation Service cooperated with more than 500 social partners. ³⁶⁶
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3.2. Information on human resources, qualification requirements, and training

Question	YES	NO	Comments
<p>3.2.1. Are the allocated human resources in the area of child protection at all levels sufficient? (services, institutions etc.)?</p> <p><i>(Please consider available studies, reports at national levels conducted by public or private institutions, child protection organisations, civil society, human rights institutions, academic community, and other sources such as concluding observations of the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child on country reports etc.)</i></p>		X	<p>The State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service currently employs 666 persons in the territory of Lithuania (data as of January 2023).³⁶⁷</p> <p>According to the explanatory note to the Family Policy Strengthening Development Program, which analyses the situation of social workers in general, about 13 thousand workers in the field of social services work in Lithuania, including appr. 5 thousand social workers and 7,6 thousand individual care personnel. Since 2008 the number of employees in the field of social services increased by 59 percent (in 2008 there were 8.16 thousand employees). They work with various target groups (families, children, disabled people, elderly people, persons at social risk, etc.) in various types of institutions (care institutions, day care centres, shelters, crisis centres, psychosocial rehabilitation institutions, home help services etc.). About 8 thousand of them work in municipal institutions and 2.5 thousand in state institutions. They work in the fields of health protection, education, science and sports, prisons, NGOs, and the private sector. According to the data of the Employment Service under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour in 2021, there was a shortage of social workers and consultants in 19 municipalities and shortage of assistants of the social workers – in 27 municipalities.</p> <p>In public sector the social services face various challenges. The social work profession is not popular among young people, the low prestige of the profession of social work leads to a lack of qualified specialists, especially in smaller towns and villages. While there is a shortage of specialists, but the number of persons (families) in need of help does not decrease. The</p>

³⁶⁶ Lithuanian Probation Service (2023), [Annual Activity Report for 2022 \(2022 metų veiklos ataskaita\)](#), No. S-73, 2 February 2023.

³⁶⁷ <https://atvira.sodra.lt/imones/detaliai/index.html?code=62592>

		<p>remaining specialists struggle with an increased workload, although the workload for certain specialists working with families (case managers, social workers) is defined in relevant legal acts.³⁶⁸</p> <p>National Audit office has indicated that effective work with families and children may be hindered by the lack of specialists. To be effective the case manager does not have to have more than 25-30 at a time. However, the differences among municipalities vary greatly. In 2021, in 31 percent of municipalities the case manager had higher workloads (up to 31 - 49 families per case manager), and 22 percent had smaller workloads (up to 11-19 families). The number of families that a social worker works at a time cannot exceed 15. However, in 2021, in 9 percent of municipalities, the social worker worked with the higher number of families (with 18-22 families), and 22 percent - with a lower number (with 7-10 families). The survey results show that in 10 selected municipalities 2 out of 9 respondents from social service centres indicated the shortage of case managers and social workers.³⁶⁹</p> <p>The survey of National Audit office of foster care centres, 17 (out of 56 respondents) indicated that there are <u>not</u> enough social workers working with families. 84 per cent of foster care centres implement measures to increase staff motivation: financial benefits, flexible work schedules, and payment for training to improve qualifications. The remaining 9 care centres did not indicate any motivating measures for employees, although 4 of the care centres were understaffed.³⁷⁰</p>
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³⁶⁸ Lithuania, Ministry of Social Security and Labour (2021). Justification of the Programme on the Strengthening and Development of Family Policy of the Ministry of Social Security and Labour as the manager of the 2021 – 2030 development programme (2021–2030 metų plėtros programos valdytojo Lietuvos Respublikos socialinės apsaugos ir darbo ministerijos šeimos politikos stiprinimo plėtros programos pagrindimas).

³⁶⁹ Lithuania, National Audit Office (*Valstybės kontrolė*) (2022), National audit report. Ensuring child rights and interests in guardianship and adoption of children (Valstybinio audito ataskaita. Vaiko teisių ir interesų užtikrinimas globojant ir įvaikinant vaikus), No. VAE-8, 22 September 2022, p. 7.

³⁷⁰ Lithuania, National Audit Office (*Valstybės kontrolė*) (2022), National audit report. Ensuring child rights and interests in guardianship and adoption of children (Valstybinio audito ataskaita. Vaiko teisių ir interesų užtikrinimas globojant ir įvaikinant vaikus), No. VAE-8, 22 September 2022, p. 8.

			<p>Regarding the operation of mobile teams under the State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service, firstly, it should be noted that the mobile team consists of at least two different professionals - a psychologist and/or a social worker and/or a crisis management specialist.. According to the data of the State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service, in 2019-2021, all their regional units lacked mobile team specialists, especially psychologists and specialists working with persons with addictions. These specialists were not available in 2 out of the 12 regional units in 2020-2021. Municipalities indicate that there should be more psychological consultations of mobile teams.³⁷¹</p> <p>National Audit Office indicated that almost all Foster Care Centres (55 out of 56 respondents) stated facing the problem of attracting guardians (curators) and adoptive parents. 45 percent indicate that the most evident problem is insufficient public education, society stereotypes, 23 percent indicate difficulties to find guardians (curators) for teenagers. Foster Care Centres should use communication tools to publicize their activities, to educate the public on issues of guardianship (curatorship), adoption, and activities of the guardian on-duty (professional foster families).³⁷²</p>
<p>3.2.2 Are the allocated human resources competent in the area of child protection and appropriately trained?</p> <p><i>(Please consider available studies, reports at national levels conducted by public or private institutions, child protection organisations, civil society, human rights institutions, academic community, and other sources such as</i></p>		X	<p>The professionals working with children receive training that is appropriate for work with children, but however, there are certain problems in this field.</p>

³⁷¹ Lithuania, National Audit Office (*Valstybės kontrolė*) (2022), National audit report. Ensuring child rights and interests in guardianship and adoption of children (*Valstybinio audito ataskaita. Vaiko teisių ir interesų užtikrinimas globojant ir įvaikinant vaikus*), No. VAE-8, 22 September 2022.

³⁷² Lithuania, National Audit Office (*Valstybės kontrolė*) (2022), National audit report. Ensuring child rights and interests in guardianship and adoption of children (*Valstybinio audito ataskaita. Vaiko teisių ir interesų užtikrinimas globojant ir įvaikinant vaikus*), No. VAE-8, 22 September 2022.

<p><i>concluding observations of the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child on country reports etc.)</i></p>		<p>The Ombudsperson for Child's Rights ³⁷³ in the Annual report of 2021 states, that the number of complaints and initiated investigations against the State Child Right Protection and Adoption Service slight decreased. It can be attributed to the clearer and more detailed regulation of procedures in ensuring and protecting children's rights; involvement of courts in deciding to take a child from the family; increased public awareness and transparency of processes due to the clear allocation of competences of institutions. However, the decrease in complaints can happened because of changing the complains procedure. The decisions, actions or inaction of territorial units of the Service, can be appealed to the central administration of the Service.</p> <p>In 2020, the malpractice of the Service (territorial units) was found in 124 cases. The biggest number is attributed to the Service's territorial units in big cities. It can be due to fact that people in big cities are more active (big number of complaints) and more aware about the role of the Service in the child rights protection.</p> <p>According to Article 20¹ of the Law on Social Services the social workers must develop their professional competence in training for at least 16 academic hours every year. However, the National Audit office has noted in the report about the social workers' failure to fulfil the requirement of the law. In 10 selected municipal social service centres employees did not have sufficient training. Social service centres and foster care centres indicated such barrier to having training: lack of funds, incompatibility of time schedules due to high workload for employees, shortage of supply of necessary training themes. To provide high-quality services to family and a child, it is important to balance the workload of the specialists who provide</p>
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³⁷³ Lithuania, the Ombudsperson of Child's Rights (2021) Annual Report of 2021 (2021 metų veiklos ataskaita). No. 4-3, 31 March 2022.

		<p>services and ensure continuous improvement of their qualifications.³⁷⁴</p> <p>A Centre for the Professional Competence Development for Social Services Workers is operational in Lithuania from 2022 to 2024. The activities of the Centre are implemented by the Lithuanian Association of Social Workers under the project "Centre for the Professional Competence Development of Social Service Workers: competences shaping the future of social work in Lithuania". The project is financed by the Ministry of Social Security and Labour of the Republic of Lithuania. The project started on 26 October 2022 and will end on 31 December 2024. The project activities are free of charge for Lithuanian social services workers.³⁷⁵</p>
<p>3.2.3. Is there a <u>compulsory certification or licencing</u> process for social workers and other professionals who work for child protection?</p> <p>If <u>yes</u>, briefly describe the process.</p>	<p>x</p>	<p>The process of certification of social workers is regulated by the Order of the Minister of Social Security and Labour.³⁷⁶ The Department of Supervision of Social Services under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour is tasked with the responsibility.</p> <p>A social worker must have a university degree in social work or related fields. The assistant of a social worker must undergo professional teaching of social assistants. An individual care worker may work as social assistant after an initial training of a minimum of 40 hours (if the training has not been acquired in previous professional training).³⁷⁷ The training focusses</p>

³⁷⁴ Lithuania, National Audit Office (*Valstybės kontrolė*) (2022), *National audit report. Ensuring child rights and interests in guardianship and adoption of children* (*Valstybinio audito ataskaita. Vaiko teisių ir interesų užtikrinimas globojant ir įvaikinant vaikus*), No. VAE-8, 22 September 2022.

³⁷⁵ Lithuania, Centre for the Professional Competence Development (2023). About us ([Apie mus](#)).

³⁷⁶ Lithuania, Ministry of Social Security and Labour (2006), Regarding the approval of the description of the procedure for improving the professional competence of employees in the field of social services and the description of the procedure for the attestation of social workers and heads of social service institutions (*Dėl socialinių darbuotojų ir socialinių darbuotojų padėjėjų kvalifikacinių reikalavimų, socialinių darbuotojų ir socialinių darbuotojų padėjėjų profesinės kvalifikacijos kėlimo tvarkos bei socialinių darbuotojų atestacijos tvarkos aprašų patvirtinimo*). No. A1-92, 5 April 2006, last amendment A1-789, 25 November 2022.

³⁷⁷ Lithuania, Ministry of Social Security and Labour (2006), Regarding the approval of the description of the procedure for improving the professional competence of employees in the field of social services and the description of the procedure for the attestation of social workers and heads of social service institutions (*Dėl*

		<p>on teaching the basics of social work and does not include specific topics about child rights.³⁷⁸</p> <p>The training and certification of social workers and their assistants is supervised by the Department of Supervision of Social Services under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour. Social workers and assistants have to participate in training programmes that are accredited by the Department of Supervision of Social Services under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour³⁷⁹.</p> <p>The minimum duration of qualification improvement for a social worker depends on the qualification category that social worker seeks to acquire or continue, and which is established in the Description of the Procedure for the Attestation of Social Workers approved by the Minister of Social Security and Labour.</p> <p>The cost of training and certification of social workers is to be covered by the employer or the social worker himself or herself.</p> <p>A social worker is certified when: a person seeks to obtain a qualification category for the first time; wishes to obtain a higher qualification category; wishes to continue the existing qualification category; the qualification category he/she holds expires.³⁸⁰</p>
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socialinių darbuotojų ir socialinių darbuotojų padėjėjų kvalifikacinių reikalavimų, socialinių darbuotojų ir socialinių darbuotojų padėjėjų profesinės kvalifikacijos kėlimo tvarkos bei socialinių darbuotojų atestacijos tvarkos aprašų patvirtinimo). No. A1-92, 5 April 2006, last amendment A1-789, 25 November 2022.

³⁷⁸ A phone call to a specialist of Department of Supervision of Social Services responsible for the registration of trainings, 19 May 2023.

³⁷⁹ Lithuania, Ministry of Social Security and Labour (2006). Concerning the approval of the Procedures for the Development of the Professional Competence of Social Service Workers and the Procedures for the Attestation of Social Workers and Managers of Social Service Institutions (*Dėl Socialinių paslaugų srities darbuotojų profesinės kompetencijos tobulinimo tvarkos aprašo bei Socialinių darbuotojų ir socialinių paslaugų įstaigų vadovų atestacijos tvarkos aprašo patvirtinimo*), No. A1-92, 5 April 2006, last amendment No. A1-470, 17 July 2023.

³⁸⁰ Lithuania, Ministry of Social Security and Labour (2006). Concerning the approval of the Procedures for the Development of the Professional Competence of Social Service Workers and the Procedures for the Attestation of Social Workers and Managers of Social Service Institutions (*Dėl Socialinių paslaugų srities darbuotojų profesinės kompetencijos tobulinimo tvarkos aprašo bei Socialinių*

		<p>For persons who were found guilty of crimes against the freedom of sexual self-determination and integrity of a person, for exploiting a child for pornography, profiting from the prostitution of a child, involving a child in prostitution or possessing objects of pornographic content depicting a child or a person presented as a child, buying or selling a child, as well as for other intentional serious or very serious crimes or for similar acts provided for in the criminal laws of other states, regardless of whether the conviction has disappeared or been cancelled, it is prohibited:</p> <p>1) To work or engage in voluntary activities in institutions, companies and organizations providing children's rights protection, children's social, educational and sports, health care services;</p> <p>2) To work in other institutions, companies and organizations, as well as to engage in voluntary activities in these organisations, if this work or voluntary activities are related to the upbringing, education, care or safety of children through direct and regular contacts;</p> <p>3) To engage in individual activities, if these activities are directly and regularly related to raising, teaching, caring for children or ensuring their safety.³⁸¹</p>
<p>3.2.4. Are there any <u>selection criteria</u> (for example qualification requirements) and <u>vetting procedures</u> for volunteers working with children in various areas?</p> <p><u>If yes</u>, please describe briefly.</p>		<p>The selection criteria and vetting procedures for volunteers working with children is not regulated in the field of child's rights protection. Except the requirement that volunteers cannot be persons who were found guilty of crimes against the freedom of sexual self-determination and integrity of a person, for exploiting a child for pornography, profiting from the prostitution of a child, involving a child in prostitution or possessing objects of pornographic content depicting a child or a person presented as a child, buying or selling a</p>

darbuotojų ir socialinių paslaugų įstaigų vadovų atestacijos tvarkos aprašo patvirtinimo), No. A1-92, 5 April 2006, last amendment No. A1-470, 17 July 2023.

³⁸¹ Lithuania, Seimas (1996). Law on Fundamentals of Protection of the Rights of the Child (*Lietuvos Respublikos Vaiko teisių apsaugos pagrindų įstatymas*), No. I-1234, 14 March 1996, last amendment No. XIV-1512 10 November 2022, Art. 30.

		<p>child, as well as for other intentional serious or very serious crimes or for similar acts provided for in the criminal laws of other states, regardless of whether the conviction has disappeared or been cancelled.</p> <p>Article 6 of the Law on Probation³⁸² indicates that Probation Service cooperates with associations, religious communities, other legal entities or their divisions, and volunteers, and coordinates their work with probationers (Article 7). When concluding a cooperation agreement with a volunteer, person's personal qualities, activities, and person's ability to positively influence a probationer are considered. Volunteers can be persons who have reached the age of 18 and have the trust of the Probation Service (Article 7 (4)). A convicted person can choose a volunteer who meets the established requirements (Article 7 (5)).</p> <p>Based on Article 14 of the Description of the Procedure for Voluntary Activity in the Lithuanian Probation Service approved by the Order of the Director of Probation Service³⁸³ before starting volunteering at the Probation Service, volunteers are instructed. Volunteer training can be organized if necessary.</p>
<p>3.2.5. Is there <u>regular training</u> on issues related to the identification, referral, and intervention for children delivered to specialists involved in this area?</p> <p><u>If yes</u>, please include information on the training of law enforcement officials (judges, persecutors, police),</p>	x	<p>The State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service, implementing the Action Plan for Child Welfare of 2019-2021,³⁸⁴ measure 3.1 "To prepare and implement the measures for assessment and improvement of the competencies of specialists working in the field of protection of children's rights and/or child welfare", in 2021 organized training for specialists working in the field of child's welfare, with the aim of strengthening the special</p>

³⁸² Lithuania, Seimas (2011), Law on Probation (*Lietuvos Respublikos probacijos įstatymas*), No. XI-1860, 22 December 2011, last amendment No. XIV-1204, 28 June 2022.

³⁸³ Lithuania, Director of the Lithuanian Probation Service (2022), The Order No V-184 Regarding the implementation of Article 13 of the Probation Law of the Republic of Lithuania and the Law on the Activities of Correctional Officers of the Republic of Lithuania (*Dėl Lietuvos Respublikos probacijos įstatymo ir Lietuvos Respublikos pataisos pareigūnų veiklos įstatymo 13 straipsnio įgyvendinimo*), 1 July 2022, Para 1.1.

³⁸⁴ Lithuania, Ministry of Social Security and Labour (2018) On the approval of the action plan for child welfare for 2019-2021 (*Dėl vaiko gerovės 2019–2021 m veiksmų plano patvirtinimo*) No. A1-612, 5 November 2018, last amendment No. A1-642, 3 September 2021.

health and education personnel (doctors, nurses, teachers, school counsellors).

Please provide information on the mandatory nature of training, its frequency, funding, if it relates to specific needs of children, etc.

competences of employees in their professional field:

1) **Listening to the opinion of a child in guardianship (curatorship) process to better select a guardian (curator) that meets child's needs.** Purpose of the training is to enable the employees of care centres to better select a guardian (curator) who meets the needs of a child who has lost parental care and is able to satisfy them. Employees of 39 Foster Care Centres participated in the training. These trainings were also organized in 2020.

2) **Ensuring the rights of unaccompanied minor refugee and migrant children.** Purpose of the training was to acquaint employees of the Service with the differences in the legal status of minor foreign citizens, the specifics of ensuring their rights and interests and possible difficulties, and to discuss the good practices of foreign countries. 230 employees of the Service participated in the training.

3) **Hearing child's opinion in civil and criminal proceedings.** Purpose of the training was to develop the ability to correctly and objectively assess a child's situation, child's needs and represent child's interests, to acquaint employees of the Service with the legal regulation for hearing child's opinion in civil and criminal proceedings and the difficulties (problems) arising in practice, and to offer possible ways of solving these difficulties. 150 employees of the Service participated in the training.

4) **Improving the competences of persons who have the right to prepare, train and assess guardians (curators), guardians on-duty (professional foster families), adoptive parents, members of social families (foster care-based households), and provide training for employees of Foster Care Centres and community-based children's care homes (GIMK specialists).** 104 GIMK specialists participated in the training.

5) **Teambuilding.** The aim of the training is to improve the teamwork and cooperation of specialists working in the field of child welfare when working with cases of temporary or permanent guardianship (curatorship) of a child, while reducing the consequences of the virus

COVID-19 for children in guardianship (curatorship) or adopted children, guardians (curators), guardians on-duty (professional foster parents), adoptive parents, social family members (members of foster care-based households) by improving the availability of psychological help in Foster Care Centres. 234 specialists working in the field of child welfare participated in training, including 52 employees of the Service. These trainings were also organized in 2020.

6) Identification of victims of child trafficking and provision of assistance. The aim of the training is to deepen the knowledge and practical skills of specialists working in the field of child welfare, which are necessary for identifying possible victims of child trafficking, ensuring the safety of minors who are victims of human trafficking and providing the necessary assistance. 241 specialists working in the field of child welfare participated in the training, including 90 employees of the Service. These trainings were also organized in 2020.

7) Ensuring the interests of siblings under guardianship (curatorship) while growing up together and/or separately, compensation for non-pecuniary damage to the child, if the representative does not fulfil or improperly fulfils his/her duties in accordance with the law. The purpose of this training is to expand the competences and practical skills of specialists working in the field of child welfare, which are necessary for ensuring the best interests of children under care and their rights guaranteed by law. 128 specialists working in the field of child welfare participated in the training, including 59 employees of the Service. These trainings were also organized in 2020.

8) Trainings according to the training and counselling programme for guardians (curators), guardians on-duty (professional foster parents), adoptive parents, community-based children's care home workers (hereinafter referred to as the GIMK program) are intended for persons seeking to carry out verification and evaluation of the readiness of individuals to foster or adopt a child, provide services of guardians on-duty (professional foster parents). 44 persons participated in the

		<p>training, aiming to carry out verification and assessment of persons' readiness to foster (care) or adopt a child.</p> <p>9) Training for employees of community-based children's care homes according to the GIMK program. 176 employees of community-based children's care homes participated in the training. Training continued in 2022.</p> <p>10) Training in accordance with the programme "Helping traumatized children and strengthening the competences of guardians (curators)". The purpose of the training is to provide information to the Service personnel about all 9 modules of the TCC program, including training parts on trauma and its impact on a child's life, quality child care, recognition of personal expectations, characteristics of a competent guardian (curator) and 7 skills necessary for successful foster care, forms of trauma-bereavement, parenting style, signs of post-traumatic stress, child's most important relationships and specialist questions, preparing for a visit to visit a fostered child, the importance of self-care. 38 employees of the Service participated in the training.</p> <p>11) Identifying and providing assistance to persons who have experienced in their close environment. Purpose of the training is to deepen the knowledge and practical skills of specialists working in the field of child welfare, necessary for identifying possible victims of violence in the intimate environment, including minors, ensuring the protection/safety of the victims and initiating and providing the necessary assistance, in accordance with the legal acts of the Republic of Lithuania. 416 specialists working in the field of child welfare participated in the training, including 109 employees of the Service.</p> <p>12) Effective mediation in resolving parental disputes regarding children. The aim of the training is to strengthen the mediation skills of the Service's employees in resolving parental disputes regarding children, to enable the Service's specialists to smoothly mediate when disputes arise between parents who live separately regarding communication with the child and participation in raising it, the child's</p>
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		<p>communication with relatives. 282 employees of the Service participated in the training.</p> <p>13) Support for children with multiple developmental disabilities and their families. The aim of the training is to deepen knowledge about the specifics of multifaceted developmental disorders, characteristic features of development and behaviour, and to provide practical skills in providing assistance to a child who may have or has been diagnosed with multiple developmental disorder(s) and child's family. 166 specialists working in the field of child welfare participated in the training, including 51 employees of the Service.</p> <p>14) Conference "Controversies over Children: Service Provision and Situation in Lithuania". About 700 specialists working in the field of child welfare participated in the conference, including 123 employees of the Service.</p> <p>15) Annual Conference of Care Centres "Towards Successful Care". The conference was attended by 538 specialists working in the field of child welfare, including 54 employees of the Service.</p> <p>16) Training Preparation for Accompanied Care – Child Rights Protection System intended for Professionals and Young people was held on 20-21 and 27-28 of October'22 in Kaunas and on 10-11 and 14-15 in November'22. This training is a part of the project "Preparation of Children and Young People for independent life, using sports-based methodology". During the training 78 case managers, youth workers, social workers, psychologists, representatives of city municipalities, and other specialists from Vilnius and Kaunas municipalities were trained. In the training, the participants talked about foster care, shared experiences about starting an independent life, discussed, and acquired methods for maintaining a relationship with a young person in foster care, discussed losses and other traumatic experiences, as well as young person's resilience to them, advocacy in foster care and other important topics. The project was</p>
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		<p>financed by the EEA and/or Norwegian financial mechanisms (www.norwaygrants.org).³⁸⁵</p> <p>Training and other measures will continue as part of the Action Plan for Child Welfare 2022-2026³⁸⁶</p> <p>The Ministry of Social Security and Labor in the 2022-2023 Action plan for the prevention of domestic violence and the provision of assistance to victims³⁸⁷ foresees the following quality development measures:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Organize training for specialists working in the field of child welfare about recognizing psychological violence in close environment, deepening the knowledge of specialists working in the field of child welfare about the signs that may indicate people who have experienced psychological violence in close environment, including minors, the most common manifestations of psychological violence, effects of violence on child's health and general development. 2) Organize training aimed at strengthening competencies of prosecutors and assistant prosecutors to examine domestic violence cases. 3) Organize training for police officers on how to react more effectively in cases of domestic violence. 4) To improve the competences of specialists in punishment execution system who work with law violators convicted of violent crimes.
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³⁸⁵ More information available at <https://maltieciai.lt/ivyko-pasiruosimas-palydimajai-globai-vaiko-teisiu%CC%A8-apsaugos-sistema-skirta-specialistams-ir-jaunimui-mokymai/>

³⁸⁶ Lithuania, Ministry of Social Security and Labour of the Republic of Lithuania (2022), Order on the Approval of the Action Plan for Child Welfare 2022-2026 (*Lietuvos Respublikos Socialinės apsaugos ir darbo ministro įsakymas 'Dėl vaiko gerovės 2022-2026 metų veiksmų plano patvirtinimo'*), No. A1-52, 24 January 2022, last amendment No A1-409, 19 June 2023, measure 3.1.

³⁸⁷ Lithuania, Ministry of Social Security and Labour (2022). On the approval of the 2022-2023 Action plan for the prevention of domestic violence and the provision of assistance to victims (*Dėl smurto artimoje aplinkoje prevencijos ir pagalbos teikimo nukentėjusiems asmenims 2022–2023 metų veiksmų plano patvirtinimo*), No. A1-264, 11 April 2022, last amendment No. A1-111, 2 February 2023.

		<p>5) To improve the competence of specialists of the Lithuanian Probation Service who work with law violators convicted of violent crimes.</p> <p>6) To prepare methodical materials for prevention of violence and bullying for employees of preschool education institutions.</p> <p>The programmes of training of judges are established each year by a decision of Council of Judges of Lithuania.</p> <p>In 2021, the training programme for judges making decisions in family law had the following topics: Current affairs of family law; Peculiarities of examining family cases with an international element; Discussion of different case practices in family disputes on child place of residence and a parent–child communication.³⁸⁸ The training continued in 2022,³⁸⁹ and will continue in 2023.³⁹⁰</p> <p>Other teaching modules in 2021 included training on “Administrative responsibility for administrative offenses related to children and family, environmental protection, transport and public order”.³⁹¹</p> <p>Teaching programme “Juvenile justice” of 2021 included the following topics:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Basic concept, recognition and assessment of child abuse. Psychological characteristics of children's age stages. Understanding child abuse and its damaging effects on children's development. Short-term and long-term consequences of abuse and harm to the child. Psychological factors of child participation in legal research and their
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³⁸⁸ Lithuania, Council of Judges (2020) Programme of training of judges for 2021. No. 13P-107-(7.1.2), 30 October 2020.

³⁸⁹ Lithuania, Council of Judges (2021) Programme of training of judges for 2022 No. 13P-140-(7.1.2.) 29 November 2021.

³⁹⁰ Lithuania, Council of Judges (2022) Programme of training of judges for 2023 No. 13P-203-(7.1.2), 28 October 2022.

³⁹¹ Lithuania, Council of Judges (2020) Programme of training of judges for 2021. No. 13P-107-(7.1.2), 30 October 2020.

			<p>assessment. Factors influencing the child's testimony.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Conducting inquiries of children. Effective ways and methods of listening to the child's opinion in cooperation with a forensic psychologist, taking into account the individual characteristics of the child's age, development, maturity, other features. Surveys of complex cases, children with special needs, children with special intelligence, development, cognitive processes, etc. disorders 3. Forensic psychiatry and psychological expertise for minors in civil cases, solving issues of place of residence, order of communication with them. 4. Forensic psychiatry, psychological expertise for children in criminal cases.³⁹² <p>In 2022 the training programme for judges working with children included the following topics:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Conducting inquiries of children. Effective ways and methods of listening to the child's opinion in cooperation with a forensic psychologist, taking into account the individual characteristics of the child's age, development, maturity, etc. features. Surveys of complex cases, children with special needs, children with special intellectual, developmental, cognitive processes, other disorders. 2. Basic concept, recognition and assessment of child abuse. Psychological characteristics of children's age stages. Understanding child abuse and its damaging effects on children's development. Short-term and long-term consequences of abuse and harm to the child. Psychological factors of child participation in legal research and their assessment. Factors influencing the child's testimony. 3. When victims of abuse do not testify: numbers, reasons and solutions
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³⁹² Lithuania, Council of Judges (2020) Programme of training of judges for 2021. No. 13P-107-(7.1.2), 30 October 2020.

		<p>4. Sexuality/gender-related behaviour of children - how to assess it in cases of sexual abuse.³⁹³</p> <p>Similar programme was conducted in 2023.³⁹⁴</p> <p>2023 training included the following topics related to child rights:³⁹⁵</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Implementation and application of Regulation (EU) 2020/1784 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 November 2020 on the service of judicial and extrajudicial documents in civil or commercial cases in the Member States (service of documents) (new version) 2. Application of Regulation (EU) 2019/1111 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 June 2019 on jurisdiction and the recognition and enforcement of judgments relating to marriage and parental responsibility and international child abduction <p>The training of health professionals related to children is more oriented towards ensuring the health of children, but they also have a course on domestic violence.³⁹⁶ The programmes of raising of qualification of teachers provided by National Education Agency do not include specific programmes about child rights.³⁹⁷</p> <p>The following training programs are designed for police officers to teach children's rights.³⁹⁸</p> <p>"Tactical Aspects of Juvenile Interviewing with a Psychologist". In 321 officers trained under this program in 2020 - 2022.</p> <p>"Work of police officers with children at the scene". The program consists of two parts. Part I</p>
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³⁹³ Lithuania, Council of Judges (2021) Programme of training of judges for 2022 No. 13P-140-(7.1.2.) 29 November 2021.

³⁹⁴ Lithuania, Council of Judges (2022) Programme of training of judges for 2023 No. 13P-203-(7.1.2), 28 October 2022.

³⁹⁵ Lithuania, Council of Judges (2022) Programme of training of judges for 2023 No. 13P-203-(7.1.2), 28 October 2022.

³⁹⁶ Lithuanian University of Health Sciences (2023). Prevention of domestic violence.

³⁹⁷ Lithuania, National Education Agency (2023). Qualification programmes for teachers.

³⁹⁸ Information is prepared based on the email of the Police Department, 11 May 2023. Information is not available publicly.

		<p>(theoretical distance training) is mandatory for officers. 3343 officers attended it. Part II training (contact training) is carried out depending on available finances. 2034 officers completed this training in 2020 - 2022.</p> <p>The program of special training modules "Formation and improvement of the main competences of officers of specialized criminal intelligence units" contains modules:</p> <p>"Peculiarities of the interview of children in the criminal process: preparation for the interview and the tactics of its execution" 120 officers studied in 2019 - 2022.</p> <p>"The police officer is a witness in the trial". During the training, police officers are taught how to provide immediate protection to a child victim of sexual abuse, so that children experience as little stress as possible. 170 officers were trained in 2019 - 2022.</p> <p>In 2019, the qualification improvement program "General Basics of Activities" was approved, which includes the topic: "Actions with children, the State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour, working together with psychologists". This training program is mandatory for all new officers. 7388 officers participated in the program remotely.</p> <p>Specialized trainings on ensuring children's rights are not organized for officers of the State Border Guard Service. Two training programs on human rights issues are intended for officials, which also touch on the issues of ensuring children's rights: "Fundamental rights" and "Combating human trafficking."³⁹⁹</p> <p>After completing the training "Combating human trafficking," the officer is able to:</p> <p>Describe the phenomenon of human trafficking, the legal aspects of the crime of human trafficking, the nature of the crime, its participants and consequences, and related human rights violations;</p> <p>Identify signs indicating that a person may be vulnerable or a victim of human trafficking;</p>
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³⁹⁹ Information is prepared based on the email of the State Border Guard Service 4 May 2023. Information is not available publicly.

		<p>Identify potential victims of human smuggling or human trafficking, paying special attention to children and other vulnerable groups;</p> <p>Conducts interviews of potential victims and traffickers in various circumstances, using effective communication methods and ensuring the protection of human rights.</p> <p>After completing the training "Fundamental rights", the officer is able to:</p> <p>Explain the fundamental rights and responsibilities of all border crossing persons in the context of border protection based on national, EU and international principles of fundamental rights and legal acts.</p> <p>To identify cases of violation of human rights in the context of border protection.</p> <p>Describe the role and responsibility of the border guard in ensuring access to international protection and the asylum procedure in compliance with national, EU and international legislation.</p>
<p>3.2.6. Are child rights and child protection topics included in the curriculum of studies for professionals other than social workers and psychologists involved in child protection systems? (Please include information regarding law enforcement officials, judges, prosecutors, lawyers, health, and education personnel)</p> <p><u>If yes</u>, please describe briefly.</p>	<p>X</p>	<p>Lithuanian higher education institutions offer several study programmes in the field. A second cycle study programme Child Rights Protection in the field of a studies of social work is offered at Mykolas Romeris University.⁴⁰⁰</p> <p>Vilnius University offers a specialisation of Child's rights Management in study programme: Education.⁴⁰¹</p> <p>Kolpingo college (kolegija) offers (in the study field: social work) study programme Child Welfare and Social protection.⁴⁰²</p> <p>Judges, prosecutors, and lawyers have to have a law degree in order to have the right in these professions.</p> <p>The Description of law studies which lists mandatory requirements for law studies, does <u>not</u> include child rights education among</p>

⁴⁰⁰ Mykolas Romeris University (2023). [Master Study Programme in Child Right Protection](#).

⁴⁰¹ Vilnius University (2023). [Master Study programme Educology, specialisations Management of Education, Management of Child Right Protection](#).

⁴⁰² More information at <https://www.kolpingokolegija.lt/vaiko-gerove-ir-socialine-apsauga-2/>

		<p>mandatory subjects for law studies.⁴⁰³ The main law study programmes (offered by Vilnius University, Mykolas Romeris University, Vytautas Magnus university) at most include only family law, but not the issues of child right protection.</p> <p>Master study programmes for law also do <u>not</u> contain special subjects on child right protection.</p> <p>In order to become a Law enforcement officer (police officer) a person must have a law degree like judges, prosecutors or lawyers, or have to complete Police School training.</p> <p>Police officer's modular professional training programme includes some aspects regarding police work and children.⁴⁰⁴ The module "Ensuring public safety and public order" develops the competence "Helping persons due to their physical or mental helplessness, as well as persons who have suffered from criminal acts, administrative offenses, emergency situations or similar factors." One of the learning outcomes in this direction is "Communicating with victims of various social groups and persons in need of psychological and social assistance." The topic Violence in the intimate environment includes information about communication with victims of violence in the intimate environment, perpetrators, and children.</p> <p>In the module "Disclosure and investigation of administrative offenses and recognition of signs of criminal acts" the competence "Perform initial actions at the scene of the incident" is developed, the training outcome is "To perform the actions of a police officer at the scene of the incident when the presence of a child is detected". During this module, the topic "Actions of police officers at the scene when the presence of a child is detected" is analysed, which discusses: psychological characteristics of children; appropriate communication taking into account the child's needs, development and</p>
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⁴⁰³ Lithuania, Ministry of Education, Science and Sports (2020) Regarding the approval of the description of the field of Law studies (*Dėl Teisės studijų krypties aprašo patvirtinimo*) No. V-1557, 13 October 2020.

⁴⁰⁴ Qualifications and vocational education and training development centre (2023) [Modulinės profesinio mokymo programos \(Modular professional training programmes\)](#)

		<p>psychological capabilities; procedural and other necessary actions of police officers at the scene when minors are present.</p> <p>The evaluation criteria indicate that the future policemen who have mastered this knowledge are able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) describe the psychological features characteristic of children's age stages; 2) correctly choose the communication method and style required for a child of each age; 3) describe the criteria for determining the presence of a child in an unsafe environment at the scene of the incident; 4) describe the possibilities of applying procedural and coercive measures when there are children at the scene of the incident; 5) properly perform procedural steps after determining the presence of a child in an unsafe environment; 6) properly applied procedural and coercive measures when children are present at the scene; 7) explain the rights, duties, responsibility requirements of persons representing minors; 8) explain in detail how to provide the minor with physical and mental safety at the scene; 9) properly ensure the minor's physical and mental safety at the scene. <p>Also, in the program of introductory courses, the module "Administrative Law and Justice" contains the topic "Peculiarities of the administrative responsibility of minors".⁴⁰⁵</p> <p>There are no topics exclusively dedicated to the protection of children's rights in the training programs of border guards. This issue is</p>
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⁴⁰⁵ Information is prepared based on the email of the Police Department, 11 May 2023. Information is not available publicly.

		<p>addressed in general training on the protection of human rights.⁴⁰⁶</p> <p>After completing the module "General aspects of state border protection" of the initial professional training program "Border guards' modular professional training program"⁴⁰⁷, the border guard is able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain the requirements of national, European Union and international legal acts, policy documents and procedures that ensure human rights during state border protection. • Apply legislation regulating the protection of human rights while ensuring border security. • Act independently according to the guidelines set by the managers in ensuring the protection of human rights while performing functions in the State Border Guard Service. <p>The health system professionals do not receive specialised training in their study courses, they only study about the health of children.⁴⁰⁸ Neither do the education professionals have any specialised study subjects for child rights.⁴⁰⁹</p> <p>Since 1 January 2021 The General Prosecutor's Office together with the NGO Children's Support Centre implements the project "Together we can protect and help", financed by the European Commission. The project is dedicated to fight the violence against children and its prevention. The main goal of the project is to promote early identification of children affected by violence and ensure their protection, considering the specific needs of children in the criminal proceedings, as well as providing complex</p>
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⁴⁰⁶ The email of the Border Guard School of the State Border Guard Service under the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Lithuania, 28 April 2023.

⁴⁰⁷ Border Guard School of the State Border Guard Service under the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Lithuania, website [Training of border guards](#)

⁴⁰⁸ [Medicinos krypties aprašas](#) (*Medicine studies description*). (2013).

⁴⁰⁹ [Švietimo ir ugdymo studijų kryptių aprašas](#) (*Education and training studies description*). (2014).

		<p>assistance. During the implementation of the project, 20 3-day trainings were organized for representatives of the police, courts, prosecutor's office, State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service and psychologists.⁴¹⁰ In 2022, 18 trainings for psychologists, representatives of the police, courts, prosecutor's office, State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service were organized. In total, about 400 specialists participated in the trainings.⁴¹¹</p>
<p>3.2.7. Are there <u>joint training activities</u> involving professionals and personnel from various disciplines in place?</p> <p>Please provide some examples.</p>	<p>x</p>	<p>The trainings provided by the State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service are open to the representatives of other institutions.</p> <p>Since 1 January 2021 The General Prosecutor's Office together with the NGO Children's Support Centre implements the project "Together we can protect and help", financed by the European Commission. The project is dedicated to fight the violence against children and its prevention. The main goal of the project is to promote early identification of children affected by violence and ensure their protection, considering the specific needs of children in the criminal proceedings, as well as providing complex assistance. During the implementation of the project, 20 3-day trainings were organized for representatives of the police, courts, prosecutor's office, State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service and psychologists.⁴¹²</p> <p>In 2022, 18 trainings for psychologists, representatives of the police, courts, prosecutor's office, State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service were organized. In total, about 400 specialists participated in the trainings.⁴¹³</p>

⁴¹⁰ Lithuania, Office of Prosecutor General (2022). [Annual Report of 2021.](#)

⁴¹¹ Lithuania, Office of Prosecutor General (2023). [Annual Report of 2022.](#)

⁴¹² Lithuania, Office of Prosecutor General (2022). [Annual Report of 2021.](#)

⁴¹³ Lithuania, Office of Prosecutor General (2023). [Annual Report of 2022.](#)

3.2.8. Outline briefly the main challenges and/ or gaps relating to human resources, qualification requirements and training underlined the relevant authorities and/ or child protection civil society organisations.

The analysis of the legal acts carried out by Žalimienė et. al. and published in a reviewed scientific journal, child rights protection specialists, who are entrusted with significant tasks to ensure children's rights and legitimate interests, receive little attention in the main legal acts, they are not considered an important separate category of workers next to other specialists, and the principles of their activities are not systematized.⁴¹⁴

The analysis shows that key legislation does not distinguish professionals in the child rights protection system as a separate category of employees/specialists with clearly defined functions, positions and principles of operation. Their activities are defined in a very general way in these legal acts as child rights enforcement of children's rights. The legal acts list the functions of the institution (State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service and its territorial units), but it does not refer to the functions of the specialists.⁴¹⁵

The authors indicate that although the legal acts emphasize the importance of improving the competence of child rights protection specialists and improving their qualifications, there are no requirements for the content of the qualification, the procedure for its improvement and attestation, the work of specialists is defined more by the functions they perform rather than by their professional competence. Despite the fact that employees work in emotionally complex, risky conditions, measures on protecting their safety and health are not clearly defined.⁴¹⁶

The authors stressed the importance of guidelines for conducting specific procedures during the course of child rights protection, but also the importance of possibility of individualisation of the measures to fit the needs of the family. In such a complex and dynamic work, where the individual needs and resources of children and families must be

⁴¹⁴ Žalimienė, L., Gvaldaitė, L., Gevorgianienė, V., Petružytė, D., Seniutis, M., Šumskienė, E. (2020). 'Vaiko teisių apsaugos specialistų darbo organizavimo klausimai teisinio reglamentavimo kontekste' (Issues of work organization of child rights protection specialists in the context of legal regulation). *Socialinis darbas. Patirtis ir metodai*. Vol. 25, No. 1, p. 40-41.

⁴¹⁵ Žalimienė, L., Gvaldaitė, L., Gevorgianienė, V., Petružytė, D., Seniutis, M., Šumskienė, E. (2020). 'Vaiko teisių apsaugos specialistų darbo organizavimo klausimai teisinio reglamentavimo kontekste' (Issues of work organization of child rights protection specialists in the context of legal regulation). *Socialinis darbas. Patirtis ir metodai*. Vol. 25, No. 1, p. 35.

⁴¹⁶ Žalimienė, L., Gvaldaitė, L., Gevorgianienė, V., Petružytė, D., Seniutis, M., Šumskienė, E. (2020). 'Vaiko teisių apsaugos specialistų darbo organizavimo klausimai teisinio reglamentavimo kontekste' (Issues of work organization of child rights protection specialists in the context of legal regulation). *Socialinis darbas. Patirtis ir metodai*. Vol. 25, No. 1, p. 41.

constantly taken into account, it is important that the principle of individualization established in the Law on Fundamentals of Protection of the Rights of the Child enables employees to act flexibly and creatively.⁴¹⁷

According to the National Audit office, the lack of specialists remained a challenge. Case managers in 1/3 of municipalities had higher workloads, and some of the social workers had higher number of families that they work with than indicated in legal acts.⁴¹⁸ Foster care centres also indicated that there are not enough social workers working with the families, and even incentive measures implemented do not attract personnel to the relevant positions.⁴¹⁹

3.3. Developments in the past years: achievements, gaps, and challenges

Based on the output of the 2014 mapping exercise, please briefly describe the development of the child protection capacities in the past 8 years, incl. achievements and (persisting) gaps and challenges

Ca. 300 words

The caseload of the case managers, social workers working with families are uneven, in some municipalities these persons have more cases/families to work with than in other municipalities. In general, there is a shortage of social workers in care centres and in municipality social services providers. There is a shortage of specialists to compose mobile teams under State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service as well. This might be due to still low prestige of the profession in the society, or lower-than-average wages in the field, among other factors.

Family Policy Strengthening Development Program⁴²⁰ notes that the public sector lacks qualified workers in the field of social services, the salary of social workers is 11% lower than the national average

⁴¹⁷ Žalimienė, L., Gvaldaitė, L., Gevorgianienė, V., Petružytė, D., Seniutis, M., Šumskienė, E. (2020). 'Vaiko teisių apsaugos specialistų darbo organizavimo klausimai teisinio reglamentavimo kontekste' (Issues of work organization of child rights protection specialists in the context of legal regulation). *Socialinis darbas. Patirtis ir metodai*. Vol. 25, No. 1, pp. 27-46

⁴¹⁸ Lithuania, National Audit Office (*Valstybės kontrolė*) (2022), National audit report. Ensuring child rights and interests in guardianship and adoption of children (*Valstybinio audito ataskaita. Vaiko teisių ir interesų užtikrinimas globojant ir įvaikinant vaikus*), No. VAE-8, 22 September 2022, p. 7.

⁴¹⁹ Lithuania, National Audit Office (*Valstybės kontrolė*) (2022), National audit report. Ensuring child rights and interests in guardianship and adoption of children (*Valstybinio audito ataskaita. Vaiko teisių ir interesų užtikrinimas globojant ir įvaikinant vaikus*), No. VAE-8, 22 September 2022, p. 8.

⁴²⁰ Lithuania, Government (2021), Resolution on the Approval of the Development programme for family policy strengthening, governed by the Ministry of Social Security and Labour, which is the Manager of the Development

wage, the improvement of the professional competence of workers in the field of social services is fragmented. However, it may be noted that improvement in this field is noticed, the salaries of social workers have increased by 19 percent in 2022.⁴²¹

Further problem is the shortage of persons willing to become guardians (curators), this problem is especially prominent in the field of curatorship of teenagers.

There are certain drawbacks in management of cases by the child rights protection specialists of the State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service, as established in the reports of the Ombudsperson for Child's Rights, but some improvement in this area is noticed.

3.4. Promising practices

Please list and briefly describe any promising practice in child protection capacities that you come across. (if available please include references to documents or URLs in case of online tools/mechanisms)

Ca. 250 words

The **Family Policy Strengthening Development Program**⁴²² foresees the necessity to increase the prestige and remuneration of the social workers.

The process of certification and assessment of social workers encourages them to increase their competencies. The changes in Law on Social Services in 2021 have introduced a system of strengthening the competences of social workers, establishing a requirement of raising professional qualification for 16 hours per year, and 8 hours of supervision per year. The time is included in the working time of the social worker.⁴²³

Further help for them is the newly created Centre for the Professional Competence Development for Social Services Workers, which is operational in Lithuania from 2022 to 2024. The activities of the Centre are implemented by the Lithuanian Association of Social Workers under the project "Centre for the Professional Competence Development of Social Service Workers: competences shaping the future of social work in Lithuania". The project is financed by the Ministry of Social Security and Labour of the

Programme for 2021-2030 (*Dėl 2021–2030 metų Plėtros programos valdytojos Lietuvos Respublikos socialinės apsaugos ir darbo ministerijos Šeimos politikos stiprinimo plėtros programos patvirtinimo*), No. 930, 10 November 2021.

⁴²¹ 'Salaries of social workers have increased' ([Augo socialinių darbuotojų atlyginimai](http://www.alkas.lt)) (2022). www.alkas.lt, 14 July 2022.

⁴²² Lithuania, Government (2021), Resolution on the Approval of the Development programme for family policy strengthening, governed by the Ministry of Social Security and Labour, which is the Manager of the Development Programme for 2021-2030 (*Dėl 2021–2030 metų Plėtros programos valdytojos Lietuvos Respublikos socialinės apsaugos ir darbo ministerijos Šeimos politikos stiprinimo plėtros programos patvirtinimo*), No. 930, 10 November 2021.

⁴²³ Lithuania, Seimas (2006), Law on Social Services (*Lietuvos Respublikos socialinių paslaugų įstatymas*), No. X-493, last amendment No. XIV-952, 17 March 2022.

Republic of Lithuania. The project started on 26 October 2022 and will end on 31 December 2024. The project activities are free of charge for Lithuanian social services workers.⁴²⁴

Private initiatives to help children in need are well developed, such as “Maisto bankas” (Food Bank) campaigns "Donate Food to the Needy", Periodic charity and support campaigns of LIONS and LEO clubs, campaigns of support by private individuals and companies for the Ukrainian children; the activity of “Gelbėkit vaikus” (Save the Children Lithuania) organization.

⁴²⁴ Lithuania, Centre for the Professional Competence Development (2023). About us ([Apie mus](#)).

4. Care

4.1. Prevention measures and services

4.1.1. Please provide information on the interaction between the child protection system and the social welfare and social protection system in place. Is there an inherent coordination of measures and interventions? Are responsible authorities and service providers the same or different?

Families and persons may receive social services when they need services. In Lithuania the social services provided **by municipalities** are preventive, general and special. Each municipality is responsible for ensuring provision of social services to the residents of its territory by planning and organizing social services, controlling the quality of general social services and social care.⁴²⁵ Social workers are assigned for work with a family.

System of **child protection** is activated when the State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service (further – Service) receives information about the possible violation of child's rights, then the Service **starts the procedure of assessment of such report**. Child rights protection specialists communicate with the family and the child about the situation. If there is a need, the child can be interviewed by a psychologist.⁴²⁶

The assessment may lead to several outcomes. The examination may lead to several outcomes. If the information collected does not prove that a violation was committed, the procedure is **finished**.⁴²⁷ If there is no evidence that the rights of the child were violated, the procedure is finished.⁴²⁸ If there are grounds for further examination, the procedure may lead to three different outcomes: 1) urgent removal of a child from an unsafe environment; 2) the assessment of the child protection need; 3) the assessment of child / family help need.

In all cases cooperation between the child protection system and the case managers providing help to the family is established.

1. First outcome – urgent child removal from unsafe environment: if a child rights protection specialist has determined the necessity due to a real and immediate danger to child's physical or mental safety, health or life, he/she urgently takes the child from an unsafe environment.⁴²⁹ Then

⁴²⁵ Lithuania, Seimas (2006), Law on Social Services (*Lietuvos Respublikos socialinių paslaugų įstatymas*), No. X-493, last amendment No. XIV-952, 17 March 2022. Art. 13.

⁴²⁶ Lithuania, Seimas (1996). Law on Fundamentals of Protection of the Rights of the Child (*Lietuvos Respublikos Vaiko teisių apsaugos pagrindų įstatymas*), No. I-1234, 14 March 1996, last amendments No. XIV-1512, 10 November 2022, Art. 36 (1).

⁴²⁷ Lithuania, Seimas (1996). Law on Fundamentals of Protection of the Rights of the Child (*Lietuvos Respublikos Vaiko teisių apsaugos pagrindų įstatymas*), No. I-1234, 14 March 1996, last amendments No. XIV-1512, 10 November 2022, Art. 36 (1).

⁴²⁸ Lithuania, Seimas (1996). Law on Fundamentals of Protection of the Rights of the Child (*Lietuvos Respublikos Vaiko teisių apsaugos pagrindų įstatymas*), No. I-1234, 14 March 1996, last amendments No. XIV-1512, 10 November 2022, Art. 36 (1).

⁴²⁹ Lithuania, Seimas (1996). Law on Fundamentals of Protection of the Rights of the Child (*Lietuvos Respublikos Vaiko teisių apsaugos pagrindų įstatymas*), No. I-1234, 14 March 1996, last amendments No. XIV-1512, 10 November 2022, Art. 36 (4).

the child rights protection specialist performs the further assessment to identify, if there is child protection need or the child/family help need.

2. Second outcome – the assessment of the child protection need: When after an analysis of the situation of possible infringement of child rights, the child rights protection specialist identifies a real danger to the child's physical or mental safety, health or life, or a danger that can cause significant damage to child's health, he/she makes assessment of the child protection need. This is based on the risk factors of the child's capacity and social environment and risk factors of the child's parents or other legal representatives and their relationship with the child.⁴³⁰

After the assessment of the child protection need the Service immediately establishes **temporary supervision** of the child. The Service initiates the appointment of a **case manager** and organizes the formation of a **mobile team** no later than the next working day. When establishment of temporary supervision is not possible, the Service takes the child from parents or other legal representatives.⁴³¹

Temporary supervision is the care of the child performed by relatives or persons connected to the child by emotional ties either at the place of residence of the child (where the person appointed takes care of the child together with the parents), or at appointed person's residence place. Another option is a placement of the child in crisis centre together with one of the parents, who does not pose any danger to the child, or both parents, when they do not pose any danger to the child.⁴³² If during the temporary supervision the help services to the family are unsuccessful and the threat to child's physical or mental safety, health or life, still exist, the child is taken from his/her parents or other legal representatives.

3. Third outcome – the assessment of child/family help need. In this case the child is not taken from his/her family, but **case manager** is appointed to evaluate the needs of the child/family and coordinate the help for the child/family⁴³³.

When the child protection need is established, or the child/family help need is established, a **case manager is appointed**⁴³⁴. The case manager is an employee of the social service institution which can be municipal institution or NGO. To perform case management functions the social services

⁴³⁰ Lithuania, Seimas (1996). Law on Fundamentals of Protection of the Rights of the Child (*Lietuvos Respublikos Vaiko teisių apsaugos pagrindų įstatymas*), No. I-1234, 14 March 1996, last amendments No. XIV-1512, 10 November 2022, Art. 36¹ (3).

⁴³¹ Lithuania, Seimas (1996). Law on Fundamentals of Protection of the Rights of the Child (*Lietuvos Respublikos Vaiko teisių apsaugos pagrindų įstatymas*), No. I-1234, 14 March 1996, last amendments No. XIV-1512, 10 November 2022, Art. 36³.

⁴³² Lithuania, Seimas (1996). Law on Fundamentals of Protection of the Rights of the Child (*Lietuvos Respublikos Vaiko teisių apsaugos pagrindų įstatymas*), No. I-1234, 14 March 1996, last amendments No. XIV-1512, 10 November 2022, Art. 36⁴.

⁴³³ Lithuania, Seimas (1996). Law on Fundamentals of Protection of the Rights of the Child (*Lietuvos Respublikos Vaiko teisių apsaugos pagrindų įstatymas*), No. I-1234, 14 March 1996, last amendments No. XIV-1512, 10 November 2022, Art. 36².

⁴³⁴ Lithuania, Seimas (1996). Law on Fundamentals of Protection of the Rights of the Child (*Lietuvos Respublikos Vaiko teisių apsaugos pagrindų įstatymas*), No. I-1234, 14 March 1996, last amendments No. XIV-1512, 10 November 2022, Art. 36⁴.

institution must be authorised by the head of municipal administration.⁴³⁵ The case manager determines the complex of the social services which the child or the family needs. The case manager coordinates the whole process of providing help to the family, including involvement of all needed specialists from different areas to provide necessary services to the child and his/her family. These can be specialists working in the field of healthcare, education, social services, law enforcement, or other fields.⁴³⁶ Other specialists such as child rights protection specialists (who participate in the first case management meeting), representatives of municipality etc. can be involved too.

Furthermore, **a mobile team** is appointed in the cases when child protection need is established (this means that the family is in crisis). This team is appointed by the State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service and provides intensive help for this family in crisis.⁴³⁷ It is composed of at least two specialists, i. e., psychologist and/or social worker and/or crisis management specialist.⁴³⁸

The Ministry of Social Security and Labour has concluded an analysis in 2021. It indicates in the Family Policy Strengthening Development Program⁴³⁹ that currently, the social assistance provided to family is not sufficiently complex, flexible and high-quality for meeting individual needs of a family, and not always assistance is provided using available resources effectively. When planning and organizing social services, different attitudes of municipalities towards the significance of social services surface, moreover, the growing social need of the population encourage the search for new and more effective measures to respond to them. Preventive services, qualitative interventions, in the event of certain challenges in family are also important in ensuring the five basic rights covered by the Child Guarantee Mechanism. Support system often misses postvention, which is provided to people who have survived crises to speed up their return to their normal level of life and functioning. Currently, social service policies are mainly focused on the most vulnerable groups of society. For a long time, assistance measures for individuals (families) were focused on families (individuals) experiencing social risks and in need, and the funds were directed at programmes to help those families.⁴⁴⁰

⁴³⁵ Lithuania, Ministry of Social Security and Labour (2018). Regarding the approval of the description of the case management procedure (*Dėl Atvejo vadybos tvarkos aprašo patvirtinimo*). No. A1-141, 29 March 2018, last amendment No. A1-802, 30 December 2019, Art. 6.

⁴³⁶ Lithuania, Seimas (1996). Law on Fundamentals of Protection of the Rights of the Child (*Lietuvos Respublikos Vaiko teisių apsaugos pagrindų įstatymas*), No. I-1234, 14 March 1996, last amendments No. XIV-1512, 10 November 2022, Art. 37(2).

⁴³⁷ Lithuania, Seimas (1996). Law on Fundamentals of Protection of the Rights of the Child (*Lietuvos Respublikos Vaiko teisių apsaugos pagrindų įstatymas*), No. I-1234, 14 March 1996, last amendments No. XIV-1512, 10 November 2022, Art. 2 (7).

⁴³⁸ Lithuania, Ministry of Social Security and Labour (2018). Regarding the formation of mobile teams, the selection of specialists and the approval of their work rules (*Dėl Mobilųjų komandų sudarymo, specialistų atrankos ir jų darbo tvarkos aprašo patvirtinimo*), No. A1-334, 27 June 2018, last amendments No. A1-769, 22 November 2022. Art. 4.

⁴³⁹ Lithuania, Ministry of Social Security and Labour (2021). Justification of the Programme on the Strengthening and Development of Family Policy of the Ministry of Social Security and Labour as the manager of the 2021 – 2030 development programme (*2021–2030 metų plėtros programos valdytojo Lietuvos Respublikos socialinės apsaugos ir darbo ministerijos šeimos politikos stiprinimo plėtros programos pagrindimas*).

⁴⁴⁰ Lithuania, Ministry of Social Security and Labour (2021). Justification of the Programme on the Strengthening and Development of Family Policy of the Ministry of Social Security and Labour as the manager of the 2021 –

It should also be noted that some of the potential recipients of social services do not receive social services. There is a lack of systematized, up-to-date, regularly updated, accessible and conveniently accessible information about all social services and social support. Families miss clear, well-structured and centralized information. Individuals, families, potential service recipients need to know institutional points and specific locations for information and counselling. The survey showed that due to low cultural capital, very low motivation to read and take an interest in the policy, some families are not sufficiently aware of the full package of support, assistance, and services available to them, nor does the relevant information reach them. On the other hand, part of the families is aware of the package of support and services but avoid accessing them because of stigma ("what will people think").⁴⁴¹

4.1.2. Is there evidence that families are supported in their role of primary caregivers? Is the primary position of families in child caregiving and protection recognised and supported through universal and targeted services and through every stage of the intervention, particularly through prevention? Which type of support (incl. financial, medical, psycho/social advice, legal advice, care staff, care equipment, guidance and training etc.) is available to families in need.

Ca. 250 words

The Law on Fundamentals of Protection of the Rights of the Child foresees main principles aimed at supporting the role of family as primary caregivers.

The priority of the biological family – when making decisions or taking any actions related to a child, the natural right of the child to grow up in the biological family and preserve kinship ties must be considered, if this does not conflict with child's interests. Separation of children and parents against their will is possible only in extreme cases, when, considering the best interests of the child, it is unavoidable and necessary to protect the child from a real danger to child's physical and mental safety, health or life, or the occurrence of significant harm to child's health, and there are no opportunities to protect the child in other ways.⁴⁴²

Subsidiarity – the implementation and protection of the child rights is primarily ensured by the child's parents or other legal representatives of the child, therefore the State provides them with support if child's parents or other legal representatives are unable to ensure the conditions necessary for child's well-being in accordance with the law.⁴⁴³

Article 33 of Law on Fundamentals of Protection of the Rights of the Child foresees that the **child's biological family is the main institution of the society** in which child lives and which ensures the child's protection and development. The Law further states that a child can develop fully and

2030 development programme (2021–2030 metų plėtros programos valdytojo Lietuvos Respublikos socialinės apsaugos ir darbo ministerijos šeimos politikos stiprinimo plėtros programos pagrindimas).

⁴⁴¹ Lithuania, Ministry of Social Security and Labour (2021). Justification of the Programme on the Strengthening and Development of Family Policy of the Ministry of Social Security and Labour as the manager of the 2021 – 2030 development programme (2021–2030 metų plėtros programos valdytojo Lietuvos Respublikos socialinės apsaugos ir darbo ministerijos šeimos politikos stiprinimo plėtros programos pagrindimas).

⁴⁴² Lithuania, Seimas (1996). Law on Fundamentals of Protection of the Rights of the Child (*Lietuvos Respublikos Vaiko teisių apsaugos pagrindų įstatymas*), No. I-1234, 14 March 1996, last amendments 10 November 2022, Art. 4.2.

⁴⁴³ Lithuania, Seimas (1996). Law on Fundamentals of Protection of the Rights of the Child (*Lietuvos Respublikos Vaiko teisių apsaugos pagrindų įstatymas*), No. I-1234, 14 March 1996, last amendments 10 November 2022. Art. 4.8.

harmoniously only by growing up in his family, feeling happiness, love, understanding, parental care and responsibility. The child's civil rights begin with the child's biological family, which is the main intermediary in informing a child about human rights and protecting them, ensuring respect for human values, cultural identity and heritage. A child has the right to grow up in child's biological family – it is the best environment for a child, regardless of possible short-term or even long-term social and other problems of child's biological family. If risk factors to child's functioning and social environment appear, as well as risk factors related to child's parents and their relationship with the child, it must be sought to be eliminate negative factors by means other than taking a child from family, if it is possible. In this case preventive and/or complex assistance to child and parents is provided in accordance with the procedure established by law.⁴⁴⁴

The principle of **subsidiarity** is also established in the area of social services as foreseen in the Law on Social Services.⁴⁴⁵ This principle means that in managing, assigning and providing social services, aid is organized in such a way that the care of state and/or municipal institutions enables the full functioning of individuals, families, communities, encourages them and helps them to maintain dignity, initiative and solidarity. The institutions should not take over the responsibilities and tasks that can be performed by individual, the family, the community.

In general, it is established in the Law on Social Services that social services are provided to a person, (family) taking into account his/her individual interests and needs, helping a person (family) to solve social problems and/or to avoid them in the future, constantly assessing whether social services make it possible to effectively develop or compensate a person's (family's) capabilities and abilities to take care of personal (family) life or participate in public life.⁴⁴⁶

Preventive social services are provided to all families and are aimed at strengthening family's ability to independently take care of their personal (family's) life and the person's (family's) participation in society, to strengthen the social activity of the community and to encourage social inclusion of the community, as well as strengthening the knowledge of the person (family) and developing his/her skills in order to prevent possible social problems and social risks in the future. Preventive social services include the search service for potential recipients of social services, complex services for the family, work with the community and other services⁴⁴⁷.

General social services are provided to a person (family) whose abilities to independently take care of personal (family) life and participate in public life can be developed or compensated by separate services provided without constant specialist's assistance. General social services include information, consultation, mediation and representation, socio-cultural services, organization of transport, organization of meals, provision of essential clothing and footwear and other services.⁴⁴⁸

⁴⁴⁴ Lithuania, Seimas (1996). Law on Fundamentals of Protection of the Rights of the Child (*Lietuvos Respublikos Vaiko teisių apsaugos pagrindų įstatymas*), No. I-1234, 14 March 1996, last amendments 10 November 2022. Art. 33.

⁴⁴⁵ Lithuania, Seimas (2006), Law on Social Services (*Lietuvos Respublikos socialinių paslaugų įstatymas*), No. X-493, last amendment No. XIV-952, 17 March 2022. Art. 4 (10).

⁴⁴⁶ Lithuania, Seimas (2006), Law on Social Services (*Lietuvos Respublikos socialinių paslaugų įstatymas*), No. X-493, last amendment No. XIV-952, 17 March 2022. Art. 18.

⁴⁴⁷ Lithuania, Seimas (2006), Law on Social Services (*Lietuvos Respublikos socialinių paslaugų įstatymas*), No. X-493, last amendment No. XIV-952, 17 March 2022. Art. 6¹

⁴⁴⁸ Lithuania, Seimas (2006), Law on Social Services (*Lietuvos Respublikos socialinių paslaugų įstatymas*), No. X-493, last amendment No. XIV-952, 17 March 2022. Art. 7.

Special social services are provided to a person (family) whose abilities to independently take care of personal (family) life and to participate in social life, to develop or to compensate for them, preventive and/or general social services are insufficient. Special services include: 1) social supervision; 2) social care. Social supervision is a set of services that provide comprehensive assistance to a person (family) that does not require constant specialist's care. Social care includes home help, development and support of social skills, children's day social care, temporary accommodation, social rehabilitation for the disabled in the community and other services.⁴⁴⁹ Social care is a set of services that provide complex assistance to a person, which requires constant supervision by specialists.

Furthermore, the case management process can also be initiated at the request of the child's parents or institutions and organisations that organise and help children and/or families, in accordance with the description of case management procedures.⁴⁵⁰

The following child benefits are available to families in Lithuania raising children: child benefit (child money); one-time child benefit; one-time pregnant woman benefit; benefit for the birth of twins, triplets, etc.; childcare allowance for a school student; care allowance; targeted supplement to the care allowance.⁴⁵¹

4.1.3. When a child in need of care is identified, who coordinates support to the family and the child to ensure protection and prevent abuse and/ or placement of the child and how?

The process is initially led by **the State Child Protection and Adoption Service** (further – Service). If a child rights protection specialist of the Service has determined a **real and immediate danger** to the child's physical or mental safety, health or life, he/she **urgently takes the child from an unsafe environment**.⁴⁵² In such case, the State Child Protection and Adoption Service must, within three working days, and in exceptional cases, when this is objectively impossible, within five working days, apply to the court for permission to take the child from his/her legal representatives.⁴⁵³

If there is no immediate danger, but the child rights protection specialist of the Service establishes **child protection need**, which is determined when the child rights protection specialist identifies a real danger to the child's physical or mental safety, health or life, or a danger that can cause significant damage to the child's health, which is related to risk factors of the child's functioning and social environment and risk factors related to the child's parents or other legal representatives and their

⁴⁴⁹ Lithuania, Seimas (2006), Law on Social Services (*Lietuvos Respublikos socialinių paslaugų įstatymas*), No. X-493, last amendment No. XIV-952, 17 March 2022. Art. 8.

⁴⁵⁰ Lithuania, Seimas (1996). Law on Fundamentals of Protection of the Rights of the Child (*Lietuvos Respublikos Vaiko teisių apsaugos pagrindų įstatymas*), No. I-1234, 14 March 1996, last amendments No. XIV-1512, 10 November 2022, Art. 37 (2).

⁴⁵¹ Lithuania, Seimas (1994), Law on benefits for children (*Lietuvos Respublikos išmokų vaikams įstatymas*), No. - 621, 3 November 1994, last amendment No. XIV-1842, 28 March 2023.

⁴⁵² Lithuania, Seimas (1996). Law on Fundamentals of Protection of the Rights of the Child (*Lietuvos Respublikos Vaiko teisių apsaugos pagrindų įstatymas*), No. I-1234, 14 March 1996, last amendments No. XIV-1512, 10 November 2022, Art. 36 (4).

⁴⁵³ Lithuania, Seimas (2000), Civil Code (*Lietuvos Respublikos Civilinis kodeksas*), No. VIII-1864, 18 July 2000, last amendment No. XIV-1435, 29 September 2022. Art. 3.

relationship with the child.⁴⁵⁴ The Service, having performed an assessment of the child's situation and determined the child's need for protection, immediately: 1) provides a child with temporary supervision, or 2) if it is not possible to apply child's temporary supervision, takes the child from the parents or other representatives of the child in accordance with the law. The service, which has determined the need for child protection, initiates the appointment of a **case manager** and organizes the formation of a mobile team no later than the next working day.⁴⁵⁵

Further process of work with the family (case management) is coordinated by the **case manager**. The case manager is an employee of the social service institution which can be municipal institution or NGO. To perform case management functions the social services institution must be authorised by the head of municipal administration.⁴⁵⁶ The case manager determines the complex of the social services which the child or the family needs. The case manager coordinates the whole process of providing help to the family, including involvement of all needed specialists from different areas to provide necessary services to the child and his/her family. The specialists working in the field of healthcare, education, social services, law enforcement, or other fields as well as representatives of municipality can be asked for help by decision of the case manager.⁴⁵⁷

Furthermore, the **mobile team** works with the family which is in crisis (only in cases of child protection need). This team is appointed by the Service and provides intensive help for the family in crisis.⁴⁵⁸ It is at least two specialists, i. e., psychologist and/or social worker and/or crisis management specialist.⁴⁵⁹

4.1.4 What are the crisis emergency responses in place?

Ca. 150 words

If the State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service or its territorial unit receives a report about the possible use of violence against a child, a possible danger to child's physical or mental safety,

⁴⁵⁴ Lithuania, Seimas (1996). Law on Fundamentals of Protection of the Rights of the Child (*Lietuvos Respublikos Vaiko teisių apsaugos pagrindų įstatymas*), No. I-1234, 14 March 1996, last amendments No. XIV-1512, 10 November 2022, Art. 36¹ (3).

⁴⁵⁵ Lithuania, Seimas (1996). Law on Fundamentals of Protection of the Rights of the Child (*Lietuvos Respublikos Vaiko teisių apsaugos pagrindų įstatymas*), No. I-1234, 14 March 1996, last amendments No. XIV-1512, 10 November 2022, Art. 36³.

⁴⁵⁶ Lithuania, Ministry of Social Security and Labour (2018). Regarding the approval of the description of the case management procedure (*Dėl Atvejo vadybos tvarkos aprašo patvirtinimo*). No. A1-141, 29 March 2018, last amendment No. A1-802, 30 December 2019, Art. 6.

⁴⁵⁷ Lithuania, Seimas (1996). Law on Fundamentals of Protection of the Rights of the Child (*Lietuvos Respublikos Vaiko teisių apsaugos pagrindų įstatymas*), No. I-1234, 14 March 1996, last amendments No. XIV-1512, 10 November 2022, Art. 37(2).

⁴⁵⁸ Lithuania, Seimas (1996). Law on Fundamentals of Protection of the Rights of the Child (*Lietuvos Respublikos Vaiko teisių apsaugos pagrindų įstatymas*), No. I-1234, 14 March 1996, last amendments No. XIV-1512, 10 November 2022, Art. 2 (7).

⁴⁵⁹ Lithuania, Ministry of Social Security and Labour (2018). Regarding the formation of mobile teams, the selection of specialists and the approval of their work rules (*Dėl Mobilųjų komandų sudarymo, specialistų atrankos ir jų darbo tvarkos aprašo patvirtinimo*), No. A1-334, 27 June 2018, last amendments No. A1-769, 22 November 2022. Art. 4.

health or life, or the child's presence in an unsafe environment, the meeting with a child and the family is organised, the situation is evaluated no later than within 6 hours of the receipt of the report, and the Service completes all actions within 3 working days at the latest.⁴⁶⁰ When child protection need is established, the temporary supervision of the child is organized or the child is taken from his/her parents and placed in temporary guardianship (curatorship).⁴⁶¹

The guardians on-duty (professional foster families) can accept a child immediately if such need arises. The guardian on-duty (professional foster families) takes care of the child at child's place of residence and in the natural family environment, ensuring emotional and physical safety, full-fledged education, upbringing, and daily care that meets the child's needs. The guardian on-duty (professional foster families) performs the following functions:⁴⁶²

- 1) Takes care of the child in crisis situations (up to 3 months), when child needs to be placed urgently in a safe environment at any time of the day;
- 2) Takes care of the child when it is necessary to provide temporary respite to other guardians on duty (professional foster families), guardians (curators), and if possible, to family members (up to 2 weeks, in exceptional cases and only if the child is over 7 years old, up to 1 month);
- 3) Takes care of the child until the temporary guardianship (curatorship) of the child ends and child is returned to family, permanent guardianship (curatorship) is established for child or child is adopted. In exceptional cases, when the court determines child's permanent guardianship (curatorship) in a foster care centre - until permanent guardianship (curatorship) is established for child in the social family (foster care-based household) or the child is adopted.

4.2. Identification and reporting procedures

Question	Yes	No	Comments
4.2.1. Is there an identification/ reporting obligation foreseen in the legislation? <u>If yes</u> , please provide the relevant provisions and indicate authorities and/or individuals	X		The Law on Fundamentals of Protection of the Rights of the Child indicates that every natural or legal person who learns and/or has reasonable information about a child who has suffered from a criminal act and/or may need help as a result, must report this to the police and (or) to the State

⁴⁶⁰ Lithuania, Seimas (1996). Law on Fundamentals of Protection of the Rights of the Child (*Lietuvos Respublikos Vaiko teisių apsaugos pagrindų įstatymas*), No. I-1234, 14 March 1996, last amendments No. XIV-1512, 10 November 2022, Art. 36(2).

⁴⁶¹ Lithuania, Seimas (1996). Law on Fundamentals of Protection of the Rights of the Child (*Lietuvos Respublikos Vaiko teisių apsaugos pagrindų įstatymas*), No. I-1234, 14 March 1996, last amendments No. XIV-1512, 10 November 2022, Art. 36³, 36⁵.

⁴⁶² Lithuania, Ministry of Social Security and Labour (2018). Regarding the Organisation of the Activity of the Foster Care Centre and of the Care Provided by the Guardians on Duty and the Approval of the Description of the Quality Control Procedure (*Dėl Globos centro veiklos ir vaiko būdinčio globotojo vykdomos priežiūros organizavimo ir kokybės priežiūros tvarkos aprašo patvirtinimo*). No. A1-28, 19 January 2018. Last amendments No. A1-440, 11 June 2021, Art. 13.1.

<p>that have identification/ reporting obligations.</p>		<p>Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service or its territorial unit.⁴⁶³</p> <p>Employees of education, personal health care, protection of children's rights, social services, law enforcement and other institutions and bodies, non-governmental organizations whose work is related to the upbringing, training, care of children or ensuring their safety have the duty to discipline the child, excluding any form of violence if a child does not comply with generally accepted norms of behaviour, violates the rights and freedoms of others or public order. If the discipline fails, they should inform the parents (if they are known), if they are not found or not known, - inform the State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service or its territorial department or the police.⁴⁶⁴</p> <p>The mentioned persons having reasonable information about the committed or potentially committed criminal act against a child, must immediately inform the police and/or the State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service or its territorial department.⁴⁶⁵</p> <p>Employees of education, personal health care, protection of children's rights, social services, law enforcement and other institutions, as well as other persons who have data about a child's behaviour that poses a risk to his health or life, or about minor children left without parental care or the need to protect the rights and legitimate interests of children (due to abuse of parental authority, violence against a child, parental illness, death, departure or disappearance, refusal of parents to pick up children from educational, upbringing or medical institutions or similar reasons), must immediately inform the police and/or the State Child Rights Protection and</p>
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⁴⁶³ Lithuania, Seimas (1996). Law on Fundamentals of Protection of the Rights of the Child (*Lietuvos Respublikos Vaiko teisių apsaugos pagrindų įstatymas*), No. I-1234, 14 March 1996, last amendments No. XIV-1512, 10 November 2022, Art. 29 (3).

⁴⁶⁴ Lithuania, Seimas (1996). Law on Fundamentals of Protection of the Rights of the Child (*Lietuvos Respublikos Vaiko teisių apsaugos pagrindų įstatymas*), No. I-1234, 14 March 1996, last amendments No. XIV-1512, 10 November 2022, Art. 35.

⁴⁶⁵ Lithuania, Seimas (1996). Law on Fundamentals of Protection of the Rights of the Child (*Lietuvos Respublikos Vaiko teisių apsaugos pagrindų įstatymas*), No. I-1234, 14 March 1996, last amendments No. XIV-1512, 10 November 2022, Art. 35.

		<p>Adoption Service or its territorial unit according to the child's or own place of residence.⁴⁶⁶</p> <p>Summarising, every person and every organization that has information about possible violation of the rights of the child is obliged by the law to inform State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service and (or) police (in cases of violence, or other crimes against a child).</p> <p>The right to discipline the child mentioned in point 1) is not further elaborated in the Law, therefore there is ambiguity regarding this term, but it is important to note, that this excludes any form of violence that are considered violence by law. Violence is described in the Law as direct or indirect intentional physical, psychological, sexual impact on a child by action or inaction, which resulted in the death of a child, disturbance of his/her health or normal development, he experienced pain, or if danger to his/her life, health, normal development was posed, or his honour or dignity were violated⁴⁶⁷. This includes the prohibition of corporal punishment. Child neglect is also considered violence against a child. However, it should be noted, that not all actions involving physical force against a child are considered violence. Actions that involve physical force against a child and cause physical or mental pain to the child are not considered violence, when these actions aim to avoid a greater danger to the child's physical or mental safety, health, or life and this cannot be achieved by other means.⁴⁶⁸</p>
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4.2.2. Please describe available national and/or sub-national reporting procedures for cases of abuse, exploitation, violence, harassment, discrimination, or neglect against children in all available reporting mechanisms, including, helplines and hotlines. Include the legislative and regulatory framework, actors involved (e.g. police, child protection centres, victims support organisations), and timeframe.

⁴⁶⁶ Lithuania, Seimas (1996). Law on Fundamentals of Protection of the Rights of the Child (*Lietuvos Respublikos Vaiko teisių apsaugos pagrindų įstatymas*), No. I-1234, 14 March 1996, last amendments No. XIV-1512, 10 November 2022, Art. 35.

⁴⁶⁷ Lithuania, Seimas (1996). Law on Fundamentals of Protection of the Rights of the Child (*Lietuvos Respublikos Vaiko teisių apsaugos pagrindų įstatymas*), No. I-1234, 14 March 1996, last amendments No. XIV-1512, 10 November 2022, Art. 2(10).

⁴⁶⁸ Lithuania, Seimas (1996). Law on Fundamentals of Protection of the Rights of the Child (*Lietuvos Respublikos Vaiko teisių apsaugos pagrindų įstatymas*), No. I-1234, 14 March 1996, last amendments No. XIV-1512, 10 November 2022, Art. 2(10).

Please provide details such as if there a common or different procedures or helplines/hotlines for specific issues. What is the profession of the staff receiving the reporting? Is the staff competent and trained for the purpose?

Ca. 250 words

The reporting of the possible case of the violation of child's rights may be done 24/7 by a free phone line of State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service (further – Service) by any person having witnessed the possible infringement or having knowledge about it.⁴⁶⁹

There is an electronic form on the website of the Service which allows to report a possible violation of child rights online. When filling out the form, it is mandatory to fill out information about the child (his/her name, surname, address), and the circumstances of possible violation of child rights. It also allows to request anonymity of the reporting person.⁴⁷⁰

Furthermore, the police officers, who arrive answering a help call or in other circumstances witness a possible child rights' violation, inform the State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service.⁴⁷¹ There is an interinstitutional agreement between the State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service and the Police Department signed on 27 May 2020.⁴⁷² The aim is to ensure continuous, round-the-clock protection of the child's rights and help for a child who may have been abused, a child who has witnessed domestic violence or lives in an environment where violence has taken place, and in all other cases when it is necessary to ensure a safe environment for a child.

One of the most important points of the Agreement is the prompt response to events related to children. The Service undertakes that its specialists immediately, but no later than within 1 hour after receiving information about a real danger to the child's safety, health or life, go to the place of the child's presence and take the actions specified in the description of the procedure for assessing the child's situation.⁴⁷³

Additionally, **Child rights helpline** is administered by State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service. It is aimed at the consultation regarding any issues related to the child rights – any person, incl. children themselves can call for the consultation. It may be reached by phone number 8 800

⁴⁶⁹ Lithuania, Seimas (1996). Law on Fundamentals of Protection of the Rights of the Child (*Lietuvos Respublikos Vaiko teisių apsaugos pagrindų įstatymas*), No. I-1234, 14 March 1996, last amendments No. XIV-1512, 10 November 2022, Art. 35.

⁴⁷⁰ Lithuania, State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service (2023). [Report a possible violation of a child's rights](#). (Pranešk apie galimą vaiko teisių pažeidimą.).

⁴⁷¹ Lithuania, Seimas (1996). Law on Fundamentals of Protection of the Rights of the Child (*Lietuvos Respublikos Vaiko teisių apsaugos pagrindų įstatymas*), No. I-1234, 14 March 1996, last amendments No. XIV-1512, 10 November 2022, Art. 36 (3).

⁴⁷² Lithuania (2020). [Cooperation agreement between State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour and Police Department under the Ministry of the Interior](#). No. BS-4/5-IL-6973. 27 May 2020.

⁴⁷³ Lithuania (2020). [Cooperation agreement between State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour and Police Department under the Ministry of the Interior](#). No. BS-4/5-IL-6973. 27 May 2020.

10 800, by email (konsultacijos@vaikoteises.lt) and by real time chat at vaikoteises.lrv.lt . Reports on possible child rights violations can be submitted using this line as well.

Additionally, there is Child Line run by NGO. Child Line is an emotional support service for children and teenagers, providing free and anonymous help by phone and online. Since 1997 the activity of Child Line is based on voluntary work. Currently, more than 400 volunteer counsellors provide assistance to children and adolescents.⁴⁷⁴ Child Line is a long-standing member of the Lithuanian Emotional Support Services Association (LEPTA), and also belongs to the international organization "Child Helpline International" (CHI), which unites 192 children's lines in 145 countries of the world. The activities of Child Line in Lithuania are organized by: in Vilnius - VšĮ "Vaikų linija", in Kaunas - VšĮ "Vaikų linija" and the Kaunas Dainava youth centre, in Klaipėda - the Klaipėda Pedagogical Psychological Service.⁴⁷⁵ The consultation of children may lead to involvement in situations where a child is suspected to be exposed or is exposed to danger due to abuse or violence. In such cases, the Children's Line closely cooperates with the mentioned Child rights helpline administered by the State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Services. If the consultants answering the phone call encounter such a situation or during the conversation it becomes clear that the caller (or the child for whom the call is made) needs additional help, the call is redirected or information about him is transmitted to the State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service.⁴⁷⁶

NGO "SOS vaikų kaimai Lietuva" (SOS children villages Lithuania) has an online form where a child may fill out if he/she thinks that their child rights are affected. It is available at: <https://sos-vaikukaimai.lt/pranesimas-apie-vaiko-teisiu-pazeidima/>

Children may also address their complaints to the Ombudsperson of Child's Rights who is an independent state institution for the supervision and control of the rights of the child. Children may address this institution if they think that their rights are infringed.⁴⁷⁷

Question	Yes	No	Comments
4.2.3. Do children have the right to report independently? <u>If yes</u> , please provide information on the availability of <u>age-appropriate</u> and child-	X		When any issue related to the child is being decided, the child who is capable of formulating his views must be heard directly, or if this is not possible, through a representative and his wishes must be taken into account when making a decision, if this does not conflict with the child's best interests ⁴⁷⁸ . When deciding on the

⁴⁷⁴ Vaikų linija (Children's line) (2023). [Apie mus.](#) (About us).

⁴⁷⁵ Vaikų linija (Children's line) (2023). [Apie mus.](#) (About us).

⁴⁷⁶ Vaikų linija (Children's line) (2023). [Vaiko teisių apsaugos politika](#) (Child Rights Protection Policy).

⁴⁷⁷ Lithuania, Seimas (2000). The Law on the Ombudsperson for the Protection of the Rights of the Child of the Republic of Lithuania (*Lietuvos Respublikos vaiko teisių apsaugos kontrolieriaus įstatymas*), No. VIII-1708, 25 May 2000, last amendment No. XIV-1998, 25 May 2023, Art. 17 (2).

⁴⁷⁸ Lithuania, Seimas (1996). Law on Fundamentals of Protection of the Rights of the Child (*Lietuvos Respublikos Vaiko teisių apsaugos pagrindų įstatymas*), No. I-1234, 14 March 1996, last amendments No. XIV-1512, 10 November 2022, Art. 4(4).

<p><u>friendly</u> reporting procedures (to whom and how children can report child rights' violations and abuse). Is the anonymity and confidentiality of the child in the reporting protected? Please comment briefly.</p>		<p>appointment of a guardian (curator)) or adoption, the child's wishes must be exclusively taken into account.⁴⁷⁹</p> <p>Children (without any age limits) can report independently about their rights being violated to the State Child Rights Protection Service, the Office of the Ombudsperson for Child's Rights, and upon reaching the age of fourteen – also to the court.⁴⁸⁰ Child Line and Child Rights Line can be used by children to report about their violated rights too.</p> <p>The Law on the Fundamentals of the Protection of Child Rights indicates that “A child may independently apply to the Child Rights Protection Ombudsman of the Republic of Lithuania, the State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service or its territorial unit, the police or an educational, health care or other institution, and upon reaching the age of 14, - to the court for violation of his rights.”⁴⁸¹</p>
<p>4.2.4. Are children informed of their right to report and how they can do it? If yes, by whom and how?</p>	<p>X</p>	<p>Children are informed online. The Ministry of Social Security and Labour has a websites – “Convention on the Rights of the Child for Children”⁴⁸² and “Protection of the rights of the child”.⁴⁸³ There an understandable guide for children and their legal representative is provided. Furthermore, the website of the Office of the Ombudsperson for Child's Rights also has a section dedicated to children, where children may read information about the Ombudsperson and their rights.⁴⁸⁴</p>

⁴⁷⁹ Lithuania, Seimas (2000), Civil Code (*Lietuvos Respublikos Civilinis kodeksas*), No. VIII-1864, 18 July 2000, last amendment No. XIV-1435, 29 September 2022. Art. 3.249 (2) and 3.215.

⁴⁸⁰ Lithuania, Seimas (2000), Civil Code (*Lietuvos Respublikos Civilinis kodeksas*), No. VIII-1864, 18 July 2000, last amendment No. XIV-1435, 29 September 2022. Art. 3.164.

⁴⁸¹ Lithuania, Seimas (1996). Law on Fundamentals of Protection of the Rights of the Child (*Lietuvos Respublikos Vaiko teisių apsaugos pagrindų įstatymas*), No. I-1234, 14 March 1996, last amendments No. XIV-1512, 10 November 2022, Art. 29.

⁴⁸² Ministry of Social Security and Labour (2023). [Vaiko teisių konvencija - vaikams](#). (*Convention on the Rights of the Child – for children*).

⁴⁸³ Ministry of Social Security and Labour (2023). [Vaiko teisių apsauga](#) (*Protection of the rights of the child*).

⁴⁸⁴ Ombudsperson for the Rights of the Child (2023). [Vaikams](#). (*For Children*).

		<p>From December 6, 2022, the new website of the State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service https://vaikoteises.lrv.lt was launched, and with it a new opportunity to consult children and to consult and negotiate with child rights defenders on all issues related to children's rights, not only by free phone at number 8 800 10 800 or by submitting a request by e-mail konsultatios@vaikoteises.lt but also by initiating a real-time conversation (English "chat") on the new website, by filling in the dedicated box "Let's talk". Real-time chats are only available during Child Rights Line working hours. The Child Rights Line https://vaikoteises.lrv.lt/lt/veiklos-sritys/vaiko-teisiu-linija is intended for everyone: children, parents, teachers, and every responsible citizen of Lithuania.</p> <p>To increase awareness of the Child Rights Line, the State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service distributed messages to social partner NGOs, asking them to share the news through their network.⁴⁸⁵</p> <p>Issues of ensuring children's rights, issues of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and sources of help are discussed in schools, but this is not a systematic dissemination of information, it is more an individual initiative of individual schools. Information about these initiatives is not continuously collected and systematized. Individual schools provide information for children in child friendly way on their websites.⁴⁸⁶</p> <p>Information campaigns related to informing of children about their rights are mostly organised by the State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service.</p> <p>The main activities of the State Child Rights Protection and Adoption service in the field of children education in 2021:</p> <p>On 1 June on the country's big outdoor screens, children were congratulated on the occasion of</p>
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⁴⁸⁵ Website of The Department for the Affairs of Disabled under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour, <https://www.ndt.lt/atidaryta-vaiko-teisiu-linija-i-kuria-skambinti-ir-konsultuotis-gali-tiek-vaikai-tiek-suaugusieji/>, 8 December 2022; Klaipėda district municipality website <https://klaipedos.r.lt/pradejo-veikti-nemokama-vaiko-teisiu-linija/>, 7 December 2022.

⁴⁸⁶ Website of school Senosios Varėnos Andriaus Ryliškio pagrindinė mokykla, Mokinių teisės ir pareigos ([Students' rights and responsibilities](#)),

		<p>International Children's Day - a congratulatory clip from the Service was shown.</p> <p>In the third quarter of the year, the Science and Knowledge Day campaign was carried out - "A Child's Constitution for every first grader in the country". The purpose of the campaign is to give every first-class pupil in the country (almost 30,000 children) a Children's Constitution - a booklet that specifies the child's basic rights and the responsibilities arising from them. With such a gift, children are encouraged to take the first steps towards civic education and become familiar with their basic rights. The booklet is written in child-friendly language, is available in Lithuanian language.</p> <p>Besides the activity of State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service, there are various activities organised in the field of child rights protection, but they are more as separate projects or private initiatives.</p> <p>UNICEF initiatives:</p> <p>2022 World Children's Day in Lithuania was celebrated by UNICEF at Vilnius Pilaitė Gymnasium, where children talked with decision-makers about the future of education, about their expectations, about dialogue with adults in improving the content of education and helping children fully prepare for independent life. Activists of the Children's Council at the State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service, the Lithuanian School Students' Union, and Pilaitė Gymnasium spoke with the Chairman of the Human Rights Committee of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania T. V. Raskevičius and the decision-makers of the Vilnius municipality. The event was also broadcasted online.⁴⁸⁷</p> <p>Every year UNICEF organised the UNICEF Runs, to increase awareness about child rights. In 2019 it took place in 6 cities and towns in Lithuania. An important goal of UNICEF children's runs is to develop community spirit among young members of society. Every year, UNICEF children's runs are actively supported by the media and well-known people in society. The UNICEF Kids' Run is a 500-1km fun run for children aged 2-14 to help children suffering from malnutrition and deadly diseases in disaster-stricken countries. It is an event that unites children around the world and gives them</p>
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⁴⁸⁷ UNICEF (2022). '[Pasaulinę vaikų dieną vaikai kalbėjosi apie švietimo ateitį](#)' (On International Children's Day, children talked about the future of education).

the opportunity to help UNICEF save the lives of the world's children.⁴⁸⁸

4. 2.5. What are the main challenges and/or gaps relating to identification and reporting procedures underlined by relevant authorities and/or child protection civil society organisations?

Ca. 250 words

The Office of the Ombudsperson of Child's Rights of the Republic of Lithuania has noted in its report on the practice of the establishment of safe environment for children that the reaction of the employees of the State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service to the possible cases of infringement of child rights was not always carried out in accordance with the procedure and deadlines set by legal acts, even in cases where reports of possible violence against children are received.

Cases were also identified when the assessment of the situation was incomplete, the specified risk factors and the facts supporting them were contradictory, their circumstances were not clarified, some of them were based on the subjective opinion of the child's parents who were in conflict with each other, and protective factors were not specified. The need for child protection was determined and a decision was made to take the child from the family and apply temporary supervision to him, in the absence of sufficient data that the physical or mental safety, health or life of the child was in danger in the family, or a danger that could cause significant damage to the child's health.⁴⁸⁹

There is no smooth inter-institutional cooperation in ensuring the protection of children. This is particularly noticeable in relation to irregular unaccompanied child-migrants. The Border Guard Service often does not report about these children to the State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service, although sometimes there are clearly visible signs of a possible violation of the child's rights. The Ombudsperson for Child's Rights has noted in the report that the Border Guard Service did not provide information to the Service about unaccompanied children from Cameroon, one of whom may have experienced sexual abuse and was expecting a baby. The fact that the Service does not receive information about the identified unaccompanied children prevents the Service from making decisions regarding their accommodation and custody.⁴⁹⁰

⁴⁸⁸ 15min.lt (2019) '[Vyks UNICEF vaikų bėgimas, skirtas JT vaiko teisių konvencijos 30-mečiui](#)'. (The UNICEF Children's Run will take place to mark the 30th anniversary of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child) 24 May 2019.

⁴⁸⁹ Lithuania, The Child Rights Protection Ombudsman of the Republic of Lithuania (2022). [Report Regarding the practice of establishing of safe environment for children](#) (*Pažyma dėl saugios aplinkos vaikams užtikrinimo praktikos*). No. (6.7.-2022-57)PR-156, 29 December 2022.

⁴⁹⁰ Lithuania, the Ombudsperson for Child's Rights (2023), Report on the initiative of the investigation of the Ombudsperson for Child's Rights on Ensuring the rights and legitimate interests of unaccompanied foreign children passing through Lithuania from another European Union country ([dėl tyrimo Vaiko teisių apsaugos kontrolieriaus iniciatyva, Dėl nelydimų nepilnamečių užsieniečių, vykstančių per Lietuvą iš kitos Europos Sąjungos valstybės, teisių ir teisėtų interesų užtikrinimo](#)), No (6.7-2023-34)PR-119, 8 August 2023.

4.3. Referral procedures(s) and investigation and protection

4.3.1. Please describe the referral mechanisms in place following reporting and identification procedures.

In the answer please include the legislative and regulatory framework, interagency protocols and guidelines, the actors involved and their role and responsibilities, as well as the applicable timeline. Please also specify the procedure, if different, for other groups of children (e.g. with disabilities, migrant, victim of a particular form of violence etc.)

The system of **child protection** is activated when the State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service (further – Service) receives information about the possible violation of child rights and **starts the procedure of examination of such allegations**. The child rights protection specialists of the Service communicate with the family and the child about the situation. The data about the child and the family is collected from all relevant sources too, e.g., school, healthcare institutions and other. The child can be interviewed separately from his/her parents or other legal representatives, when the child rights protection specialists believes that their presence can influence child's statements. When it is necessary,

the child is heard by a psychologist.⁴⁹¹

The examination may lead to several outcomes. If the information collected does not prove that a violation was committed, the procedure is finished.⁴⁹²

If there are grounds for the examination, the procedure may lead to three different outcomes:

- 1) urgent removal of the child from unsafe environment;
- 2) the assessment of the child protection need;
- 3) the assessment of the need to evaluate the demand for help for the child or the family.

First outcome – urgent child removal from unsafe environment: if a child rights protection specialist has determined the necessity due to a real and immediate danger to child's physical or mental safety, health or life, he/she urgently takes the child from an unsafe environment.⁴⁹³ Then the child rights protection specialist performs the further assessment to identify, if there is child protection need or the need to evaluate child's and (or) family's help needs.

Second outcome – the assessment of the child protection need: When after an analysis of the situations the child rights protection specialist identifies a real danger to the child's physical or mental safety, health or life, or a danger that can cause significant damage to child's health, he/she makes assessment of the child protection need. This is based on the risk factors of the child's capacity and

⁴⁹¹ Lithuania, Seimas (1996). Law on Fundamentals of Protection of the Rights of the Child (*Lietuvos Respublikos Vaiko teisių apsaugos pagrindų įstatymas*), No. I-1234, 14 March 1996, last amendments No. XIV-1512, 10 November 2022, Art. 36 (1).

⁴⁹² Lithuania, Seimas (1996). Law on Fundamentals of Protection of the Rights of the Child (*Lietuvos Respublikos Vaiko teisių apsaugos pagrindų įstatymas*), No. I-1234, 14 March 1996, last amendments No. XIV-1512, 10 November 2022, Art. 36 (1).

⁴⁹³ Lithuania, Seimas (1996). Law on Fundamentals of Protection of the Rights of the Child (*Lietuvos Respublikos Vaiko teisių apsaugos pagrindų įstatymas*), No. I-1234, 14 March 1996, last amendments No. XIV-1512, 10 November 2022, Art. 36 (4).

social environment and risk factors of the child's parents or other legal representatives and their relationship with the child.⁴⁹⁴

After the assessment of the child protection need the Service immediately establish temporary supervision of the child. The Service initiates the appointment of a case manager and organizes the formation of a mobile team no later than the next working day. When establishment of temporary supervision is not possible, the Service takes the child from parents or other legal representatives.⁴⁹⁵

Temporary supervision is the care of the child performed by relatives or persons connected to the child by emotional ties either at the place of residence of the child (where the person appointed takes care of the child together with the parents), or at appointed person's residence place. Another option is a placement of the child in crisis centre together with one of the parents, who does not pose any danger to the child, or both parents, when they do not pose any danger to the child.⁴⁹⁶ If during the temporary supervision the help services to the family are unsuccessful and the threat to child's physical or mental safety, health or life, still exist, the child is taken from his/her parents or other legal representatives.

Third outcome – the assessment of child/family help need. In this case the child is not taken from his/her family, but **case manager** is appointed to evaluate the needs of the child/family and coordinate the help for the child/family⁴⁹⁷.

When the child protection need is established, or the need to evaluate child's and (or) family's help needs is established, a **case manager is appointed**⁴⁹⁸. The case manager is an employee of the social service institution which can be municipal institution or NGO. To perform case management functions the social services institution must be authorised by the head of municipal administration.⁴⁹⁹ The case manager determines the complex of the social services which the child or the family needs. The case manager coordinates the whole process of providing help to the family, including involvement of all needed specialists from different areas to provide necessary services to the child and his/her family. These can be specialists working in the field of healthcare, education, social services, law

⁴⁹⁴ Lithuania, Seimas (1996). Law on Fundamentals of Protection of the Rights of the Child (*Lietuvos Respublikos Vaiko teisių apsaugos pagrindų įstatymas*), No. I-1234, 14 March 1996, last amendments No. XIV-1512, 10 November 2022, Art. 36¹ (3).

⁴⁹⁵ Lithuania, Seimas (1996). Law on Fundamentals of Protection of the Rights of the Child (*Lietuvos Respublikos Vaiko teisių apsaugos pagrindų įstatymas*), No. I-1234, 14 March 1996, last amendments No. XIV-1512, 10 November 2022, Art. 36³.

⁴⁹⁶ Lithuania, Seimas (1996). Law on Fundamentals of Protection of the Rights of the Child (*Lietuvos Respublikos Vaiko teisių apsaugos pagrindų įstatymas*), No. I-1234, 14 March 1996, last amendments No. XIV-1512, 10 November 2022, Art. 36⁴.

⁴⁹⁷ Lithuania, Seimas (1996). Law on Fundamentals of Protection of the Rights of the Child (*Lietuvos Respublikos Vaiko teisių apsaugos pagrindų įstatymas*), No. I-1234, 14 March 1996, last amendments No. XIV-1512, 10 November 2022, Art. 36².

⁴⁹⁸ Lithuania, Seimas (1996). Law on Fundamentals of Protection of the Rights of the Child (*Lietuvos Respublikos Vaiko teisių apsaugos pagrindų įstatymas*), No. I-1234, 14 March 1996, last amendments No. XIV-1512, 10 November 2022, Art. 36⁴.

⁴⁹⁹ Lithuania, Ministry of Social Security and Labour (2018). Regarding the approval of the description of the case management procedure (*Dėl Atvejo vadybos tvarkos aprašo patvirtinimo*). No. A1-141, 29 March 2018, last amendment No. A1-802, 30 December 2019, Art. 6.

enforcement, or other fields.⁵⁰⁰ Other specialists such as child rights protection specialists (mandatory participation in the first case management meeting, representatives of municipality etc. can be involved too.

Furthermore, a **mobile team** works with the family where a child protection need was established (that means that the family is in crisis). This team is appointed by the Service and provides intensive help for the family in crisis.⁵⁰¹ It is composed of at least two specialists, i. e., psychologist and/or social worker and/or crisis management specialist.⁵⁰² The law enforcement institutions are not involved in the formation of the mobile teams.

On 28 June 2018 the heads of the General Prosecutor's Office, the Police Department, the Ministry of Social Security and Labour, the Office of the Ombudsperson for Child's rights, and the State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service signed an inter-institutional cooperation agreement aimed at ensuring children's rights as effectively as possible and protecting them in various emergency situations. The agreement was updated 23 July 2023.⁵⁰³ By signing this document, each of the listed institutions assumed very specific, clearly described obligations and responsibilities regarding the actions, procedures, mutual information and other cooperation that must be carried out within the specified time in various situations when the state has to urgently take care of the rights and safety of a specific child.⁵⁰⁴

There is an interinstitutional agreement between the State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service and the Police Department signed on 27 May 2020.⁵⁰⁵ The aim is to ensure continuous, 24/7 protection of the child's rights and help for a child who may have been abused, a child who has witnessed domestic violence or lives in an environment where violence has taken place, and in all other cases where it is necessary to ensure a safe environment for the child immediately. One of the most important points is the response to events related to children. The Service undertakes that its

⁵⁰⁰ Lithuania, Seimas (1996). Law on Fundamentals of Protection of the Rights of the Child (*Lietuvos Respublikos Vaiko teisių apsaugos pagrindų įstatymas*), No. I-1234, 14 March 1996, last amendments No. XIV-1512, 10 November 2022, Art. 37(2).

⁵⁰¹ Lithuania, Seimas (1996). Law on Fundamentals of Protection of the Rights of the Child (*Lietuvos Respublikos Vaiko teisių apsaugos pagrindų įstatymas*), No. I-1234, 14 March 1996, last amendments No. XIV-1512, 10 November 2022, Art. 2 (7).

⁵⁰² Lithuania, Ministry of Social Security and Labour (2018). Regarding the formation of mobile teams, the selection of specialists and the approval of their work rules (*Dėl Mobilųjų komandų sudarymo, specialistų atrankos ir jų darbo tvarkos aprašo patvirtinimo*), No. A1-334, 27 June 2018, last amendments No. A1-769, 22 November 2022. Art. 4.

⁵⁰³ Lithuania (2018), [Agreement of Cooperation between Prosecutor General's Office of the Republic of Lithuania, Police Department under the Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Social Security and Labour, Office of the Ombudsperson for Child's rights, and the State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service](#). No. 9.11-17/5-IL-4325/D4-8/SB-1/BS-1. 28 June 2018; [amended 23 July 2023](#).

⁵⁰⁴ Lithuania (2018), [Agreement of Cooperation between Prosecutor General's Office of the Republic of Lithuania, Police Department under the Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Social Security and Labour, Office of the Ombudsperson for Child's rights, and the State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service](#). No. 9.11-17/5-IL-4325/D4-8/SB-1/BS-1. 28 June 2018; [amended 23 July 2023](#)

⁵⁰⁵ Lithuania (2020). [Cooperation agreement between State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour and Police Department under the Ministry of the Interior](#). No. BS-4/5-IL-6973. 27 May 2020.

specialists immediately, but no later than within 1 hour after receiving information about a real danger to the child's safety, health or life, go to the place of the child's presence (finding) and take the actions specified in the description of the procedure for assessing the child's situation.⁵⁰⁶

Question	Yes	No	Comments
<p>4.3.2. Are there applicable standards in the form of legal provisions, guidelines, protocols, interagency agreements or regulatory frameworks regarding investigation and assessment procedures following reporting and identification procedures?</p>	X		<p>The detailed procedure of the investigation of the child rights violations is set out in the Decree of the Ministry of Social Security and Labour of 30 December 2019 “On the adoption of the description of the procedure for assessing the situation of a child”. The Description establishes the procedure for assessing the situation of a child about whom a report of a possible violation of the rights of the child has been received, the risk and protection factors to be determined during the assessment of the child's situation, the procedure for determining the necessity to assess the need for assistance to the child and/or family or the need for child protection.</p> <p>Furthermore, a 4 March 2021 decree by Head of the State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service regulates the mentioned procedure. It sets out detailed procedures and terms of the reaction to the possible case of child rights violations.⁵⁰⁷ It ensures round the clock reaction to the notifications about possible violations, if there is such need arising from the situation. The reports and the reaction are registered in the IT system, which enables traceability.</p> <p>The work of mobile teams is regulated by a decree of the Minister of Social Security and Labour of 27 June 2018 “Concerning the approval of the description of the procedures for the establishment, selection and work of the Mobile Teams”, which regulates the requirements for the members of mobile team, the rules on its</p>

⁵⁰⁶ Lithuania (2020). [Cooperation agreement between State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour and Police Department under the Ministry of the Interior](#). No. BS-4/5-IL-6973. 27 May 2020.

⁵⁰⁷ Lithuania, State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service (2021). Description of the procedure for examining, taking actions and making decisions in cases related to possible violations of child rights (*Atveju, susijusių su galimais vaiko teisių pažeidimais, nagrinėjimo, veiksmų atlikimo ir sprendimų priėmimo tvarkos aprašas*). No. BV-81, 4 March 2021.

		<p>composition, the functions and working rules of mobile teams.⁵⁰⁸</p> <p>Case management procedure is regulated by an order of Minister of Social Security and Labour of 29 March 2018 “Regarding the approval of the description of the case management procedure” which regulates the procedure for the initiation and application of case management, examination of the case, assessment of the child's and/or family's needs for assistance, development and implementation of a comprehensive assistance plan, monitoring of the family, review of the assistance plan, conclusion of the case management process, and coordination of the case management in the municipality.⁵⁰⁹</p> <p>The standard of conduct of all child rights protection specialists and other employees of State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service is approved by the Order of the Director of the Service No. BV-117 dated 2 April 2019⁵¹⁰, and Code of ethics for civil servants and employees working under employment contracts of the State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service, approved by the Order of the Director No. BV-118 dated 2 April 2019.⁵¹¹</p>
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⁵⁰⁸ Lithuania, Ministry of Social Security and Labour (2018). Regarding the formation of mobile teams, the selection of specialists and the approval of their work rules (*Dėl Mobilijų komandų sudarymo, specialistų atrankos ir jų darbo tvarkos aprašo patvirtinimo*), No. A1-334, 27 June 2018, last amendments No. A1-769, 22 November 2022.

⁵⁰⁹ Lithuania, Ministry of Social Security and Labour (2018). Regarding the approval of the description of the case management procedure (*Dėl Atvejo vadybos tvarkos aprašo patvirtinimo*). No. A1-141, 29 March 2018, last amendment No. A1-802, 30 December 2019.

⁵¹⁰ Lithuania, State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service (2019). Regarding the standard of conduct of the civil servants and persons under employment of the State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour (*Dėl Valstybės vaiko teisių apsaugos ir įvaikinimo tarnybos prie Socialinės apsaugos ir darbo ministerijos valstybės tarnautojų ir darbuotojų, dirbančių pagal darbo sutartis, elgesio standarto patvirtinimo*). No. BV-117, 2 April 2019.

⁵¹¹ Lithuania, State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service (2019). Regarding the code of ethics for civil servants and employees working under employment contracts of the State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour (*Dėl Valstybės vaiko teisių apsaugos ir įvaikinimo tarnybos prie Socialinės apsaugos ir darbo ministerijos valstybės tarnautojų ir darbuotojų, dirbančių pagal darbo sutartis, etikos kodekso patvirtinimo*). No. BV-118, 2 April 2019.

<p>4.3.3. Is the assessment carried out by a multidisciplinary team of professionals?</p>	<p>x</p>	<p>The initial assessment of the report on the possible violation of the rights of the child and situation of the child and the family is carried out by the child rights protection specialists of the Service. As mentioned before, child rights protection specialists have the right to ask for additional information from different sources about the child and his/her family, e.g., school, kindergarten, healthcare institutions and similar.⁵¹² If child rights protection specialists identify that there is a possible violation of the rights of the child and either child protection need or the need to evaluate child's and (or) family's help needs is established, the family is always referred to case management.⁵¹³ Case manager carries out comprehensive assessment of child's and family's needs, and organizes meeting of specialists from different areas. During this first meeting, the opinion of the child, if he/she participates in the meeting, as well as the opinion of the family members regarding the situation of the child and the family, the main problems, their possible causes and solutions is heard. All specialists participating in the meeting present the available information about the child and his/her parents, the situation in the family. At the first meeting, the goals, tasks, methods, measures of helping the child and/or family are discussed and individual family assistance plan is developed. This plan must include recommendations of the mobile teams of State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service if they worked with the family (such teams are organized for work with the family in cases when child protection need is established). During the meeting it is also discussed what other specialists and their services should be included in the case management process. The family and the child can also make suggestions as to which specialists, members of the local community, representatives of non-governmental organizations they would like to be involved in their case. If the child and the family want certain specialists, members of the local</p>
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⁵¹² Lithuania, Seimas (1996). Law on Fundamentals of Protection of the Rights of the Child (*Lietuvos Respublikos Vaiko teisių apsaugos pagrindų įstatymas*), No. I-1234, 14 March 1996, last amendments No. XIV-1512, 10 November 2022, Art. 50 (2).

⁵¹³ Lithuania, Seimas (1996). Law on Fundamentals of Protection of the Rights of the Child (*Lietuvos Respublikos Vaiko teisių apsaugos pagrindų įstatymas*), No. I-1234, 14 March 1996, last amendments No. XIV-1512, 10 November 2022, Art. 37 (2)

			community, representatives of non-governmental organizations to be included, they can be invited only if both parents or other legal representatives of the child agree to it. ⁵¹⁴ Furthermore, a mobile team works with the family which is in crisis. This team is appointed by the Service and provides intensive help for the family in crisis. It is composed of at least two specialists, i. e., psychologist and/or social worker and/or crisis management specialist. ⁵¹⁵
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4.3.4. Please provide information on who is responsible to investigate and assess the situation of the child and the family and how this is done. Please provide information and describe the role and responsibilities of judicial authorities in the reporting and referral procedure.

1. Initial evaluation of the report on violation of child rights. This is the responsibility of **State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service (further – Service)**, which evaluates the situation of the child, if a report about a possible violation has been received. The exact procedure, risk factors to be evaluated are listed in a Decree of Minister of Social Security and Labour of 30 December 2019.⁵¹⁶ The outcome of the evaluation may be the urgent removal of the child from the family; direction of the situation to child need assessment; direction of the situation to the child / family help assessment.

2A. Urgent removal of the child from the family – the decision is taken by the Service⁵¹⁷. The Service has to address the **court** within 3 days to get the decision to take the child from the family confirmed.⁵¹⁸ The situation in the family is evaluated and the child protection need is established for the child. The Service initiates the appointment of the **case manager** and formation of **mobile team** who work with the family with the aim to solve the underlying problems with the aim of returning the child to the family.

⁵¹⁴ Lithuania, Ministry of Social Security and Labour (2018). Regarding the approval of the description of the case management procedure (*Dėl Atvejo vadybos tvarkos aprašo patvirtinimo*). No. A1-141, 29 March 2018, last amendment No. A1-802, 30 December 2019. Art. 16.

⁵¹⁵ Lithuania, Ministry of Social Security and Labour (2018). Regarding the formation of mobile teams, the selection of specialists and the approval of their work rules (*Dėl Mobiliųjų komandų sudarymo, specialistų atrankos ir jų darbo tvarkos aprašo patvirtinimo*), No. A1-334, 27 June 2018, last amendments No. A1-769, 22 November 2022.

⁵¹⁶ Lithuania, Ministry of Social Security and Labour (2019). Concerning the adoption of the description of the procedure for assessing the situation of a child (*Dėl Vaiko situacijos vertinimo tvarkos aprašo patvirtinimo*), No. A1-803, 30 December 2019, last amendment No. A1-254, 19 April 2023.

⁵¹⁷ Lithuania, Seimas (1996). Law on Fundamentals of Protection of the Rights of the Child (*Lietuvos Respublikos Vaiko teisių apsaugos pagrindų įstatymas*), No. I-1234, 14 March 1996, last amendments No. XIV-1512, 10 November 2022, Art.36 (4).

⁵¹⁸ Lithuania, Seimas (2000), Civil Code (*Lietuvos Respublikos Civilinis kodeksas*), No. VIII-1864, 18 July 2000, last amendment No. XIV-1435, 29 September 2022, Art. 3.254¹(2).

2B. Establishment of child protection need. The establishment of child protection need is the responsibility of the **Service**⁵¹⁹. Upon establishment of child protection need, the Service either 1) establishes temporary child supervision measure, or 2) addresses the **court** with a request to remove a child from the family.

Service initiates the appointment of the **case manager** and formation of **mobile team** who work with the family with the aim to solve the underlying problems.⁵²⁰

2C. Establishment of child/family help need. The **Service** takes a decision that the family/child help need has to be assessed. The assessment itself is carried out by **case managers** during case management procedure.

The responsibility of **mobile teams** when they are formed is intensive individual or group counselling and/or other psychological and social support to the family in crisis to help manage the crisis, identify and (re)solve the problems.⁵²¹

The **case manager** determines the complex of the social services which the child or the family needs. The case manager coordinates the whole process of providing help to the family, including involvement of all needed specialists from different areas to provide necessary services to the child and his/her family.⁵²²

Parents or other representatives of the child have the right to complain to the **court** about unjustified actions and decisions of the employees of the State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service or its territorial unit, police officers or employees of other public authorities, and also have the right to appeal to Ombudsperson for Children Rights and other institutions that have the right to hear such complaints.⁵²³

⁵¹⁹ Lithuania, Seimas (1996). Law on Fundamentals of Protection of the Rights of the Child (*Lietuvos Respublikos Vaiko teisių apsaugos pagrindų įstatymas*), No. I-1234, 14 March 1996, last amendments No. XIV-1512, 10 November 2022, Art.36³

⁵²⁰ Lithuania, Seimas (1996). Law on Fundamentals of Protection of the Rights of the Child (*Lietuvos Respublikos Vaiko teisių apsaugos pagrindų įstatymas*), No. I-1234, 14 March 1996, last amendments No. XIV-1512, 10 November 2022, Art.36³

⁵²¹ Lithuania, Ministry of Social Security and Labour (2018). Regarding the formation of mobile teams, the selection of specialists and the approval of their work rules (*Dėl Mobilųjų komandų sudarymo, specialistų atrankos ir jų darbo tvarkos aprašo patvirtinimo*), No. A1-334, 27 June 2018, last amendments No. A1-769, 22 November 2022.

⁵²² Lithuania, Seimas (1996). Law on Fundamentals of Protection of the Rights of the Child (*Lietuvos Respublikos Vaiko teisių apsaugos pagrindų įstatymas*), No. I-1234, 14 March 1996, last amendments No. XIV-1512, 10 November 2022, Art. 37(2).

⁵²³ Lithuania, Seimas (1996). Law on Fundamentals of Protection of the Rights of the Child (*Lietuvos Respublikos Vaiko teisių apsaugos pagrindų įstatymas*), No. I-1234, 14 March 1996, last amendments No. XIV-1512, 10 November 2022, Art. 29.

Question	Yes	No	Comments
4.3.5. Are the roles and responsibilities of the various actors and professionals involved in these procedures (including civil society organisations) clearly stated in the legislative and regulatory framework?	X		The Law on the Fundamentals of the Protection of Child Rights ⁵²⁴ as well as other legal acts related to the protection of the rights of the child clearly set out the roles and obligations of the participating actors and professionals, including civil society organizations.
4.3.6. Are there any inter-agency cooperation protocols and agreements in place to strengthen cooperation between actors with responsibility in the referral procedure and enhance the efficiency of their actions?	X		In 2020 an updated agreement was signed between State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service and Police department regarding the reaction to possible cases of infringement of child rights. ⁵²⁵ Furthermore, five institutions have signed an agreement in 2018 regarding the cooperation in the field of protection of child rights, which was updated in 2023. ⁵²⁶
4.3.7. Is it likely that procedures will differ, depending on the migration – residential status of the child concerned? <i>Please also consider potential divergences depending on main actors involved.</i>		X	The Law on the Protection of the Rights of the Child states clearly that its provisions are applied to all children on the territory of the Republic of Lithuania, the procedures do not differ for children with different residential status. Therefore, all procedures related to the assessment of the violations of the rights of the child are always the same for all children, without any differences. The only difference is related to the appointment of the guardians (curators) of the unaccompanied child, as the requirements for

⁵²⁴ Lithuania, Seimas (1996). Law on Fundamentals of Protection of the Rights of the Child (*Lietuvos Respublikos Vaiko teisių apsaugos pagrindų įstatymas*), No. I-1234, 14 March 1996, last amendments No. XIV-1512, 10 November 2022.

⁵²⁵ Lithuania (2020). [Cooperation agreement between State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour and Police Department under the Ministry of the Interior](#). No. BS-4/5-IL-6973. 27 May 2020.

⁵²⁶ Lithuania (2018), [Agreement of Cooperation between Prosecutor General's Office of the Republic of Lithuania, Police Department under the Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Social Security and Labour, Office of the Ombudsperson for Child's rights, and the State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service](#). No. 9.11-17/5-IL-4325/D4-8/SB-1/BS-1. 28 June 2018; [amended 23 July 2023](#)

		such person are simplified in order to ensure their legal representation and daily care without delay. ⁵²⁷ Furthermore, the conditions for obtaining the licence for care of unaccompanied children fleeing armed conflict were simplified in order to grant them guardianship (curatorship) in short time because of the exceptional circumstances. ⁵²⁸
4.3.8. Are affected children heard as part of the procedures? <u>If yes</u> , are the hearings child-sensitive and designed age-appropriately and in child-friendly language? Do children receive information and support by competent and trained professionals?	X	<p>The children are heard by the State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service specialists, who can involve psychologist when needed, during the investigation of possible violation of the rights of the child.⁵²⁹ The child rights protection specialists are obliged by the law to hear child’s opinion, except cases when that is not possible to perform (e.g., when the child is missing, the child’s health makes it impossible for the child to be hear and similar).⁵³⁰</p> <p>The State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service has assured⁵³¹ that during the investigation of a possible violation of child rights children are met and heard, without restrictions, and if necessary, without legal representatives. The State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service specialists take into account the child’s age and maturity and listen to the child in a manner acceptable to him/her about a possible violation of his/her rights. The aim of such conversation is the need to assess the child’s living and/or social environment and the child’s relationship with his parents or other legal representatives of the child, as well as child’s opinion about situation. If there are suspicions that the child has suffered violence,</p>

⁵²⁷ Lithuania, Seimas (2004) Law on the Legal Status of Foreigners (*Lietuvos Respublikos įstatymas dėl užsieniečių teisinės padėties*). No. IX-2206, 29 April 2004, last amendment No. XIV-1593, 27 November 2022, Art. 140²⁷.

⁵²⁸ Lithuania, Seimas (2022). Law on the Amendment of Articles 2,23, 24 and 24 of the Law on Social Services No. X-493 (*Lietuvos Respublikos socialinių paslaugų įstatymo Nr. X-493 2, 23, 24 ir 34 straipsnių pakeitimo įstatymas*), No. XIV-952, 17 March 2022.

⁵²⁹ Lithuania, Seimas (1996). Law on Fundamentals of Protection of the Rights of the Child (*Lietuvos Respublikos Vaiko teisių apsaugos pagrindų įstatymas*), No. I-1234, 14 March 1996, last amendments No. XIV-1512, 10 November 2022, Art. 29.

⁵³⁰ Lithuania, Seimas (1996). Law on Fundamentals of Protection of the Rights of the Child (*Lietuvos Respublikos Vaiko teisių apsaugos pagrindų įstatymas*), No. I-1234, 14 March 1996, last amendments No. XIV-1512, 10 November 2022, Art. 11.

⁵³¹ An email from State Child Rigths Protection and Adoption Service, dated 27 April 2023.

		<p>or if the child has special needs, developmental and/or other disorders, a psychologist can be called to speak with the child. For the making decision, the child's voice is very important and significant for the Service. In all cases, after receiving a notification about a possible violation of the child's rights, the State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service specialists seek to meet and talk with the child about the possible violation of his rights. When meeting with a child, the first aim is to establish a relationship with him and only then the child is asked to speak freely about the situation, how the child understands it, and the need for help for him and/or the family is inquired about. The child is communicated with in accordance with his age and maturity, in a manner and language that is suitable for his age and maturity. Additionally, it should be noted that expressing an opinion is a child's right, not an obligation, therefore, when the child refuses or otherwise expresses unwillingness to communicate, the State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service specialists respect the child's refusal to express an opinion. The specialist listen to the child's opinion in accordance with the recommendations presented in the methodological guide for hearing the child's opinion.⁵³²</p> <p>The methodological guide for Listening to the Opinion of the child,⁵³³ developed by the State Child Rights Protection Service and Mykolas Romeris university in 2023, states that all children have the right to participate and be heard. There is no minimum age limit for a child's opinion to be heard. All children must be given the same conditions to participate and express their opinion. The methods and forms of listening to the child's opinion must correspond to his age and maturity, emotional state, applied in order not only to hear the opinion, but primarily to help him present it. The guidelines state that a child's age alone cannot be an obstacle for him to listen. There is no specific age limit, because the child's</p>
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⁵³² Intė, O., Sondaitė, J., Tvaronavičienė, A. (2023). *Vaiko nuomonės išklausymo metodinis vadovas (Methodical guide on hearing the opinion of the child)*. Lithuania, State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service, Mykolas Romeris University.

⁵³³ Intė, O., Sondaitė, J., Tvaronavičienė, A. (2023). *Vaiko nuomonės išklausymo metodinis vadovas (Methodical guide on hearing the opinion of the child)*. Lithuania, State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service, Mykolas Romeris University.

		<p>ability to formulate his own opinion is more important. The guide lists psychological features of each age group, indicating that one cannot listen to the opinion of the child 0-2 years of age, and that observation is needed, but from 3 years old the person communicating with the child needs to know what type of information the child may provide.⁵³⁴</p> <p>The law on Fundamentals of Protection of the Rights of the Child explains the meaning of the best interests of the child. The Law states that “when making decisions or taking any action related to a child, the best interests of the child are paramount. This principle is applied considering circumstances related to the child. While assessing and determining what is the best for the child in the future, the child’s opinion is taken into account. In ensuring this principle, it is important to safeguard the identity of the child, the family environment and family ties, to maintain relationships. The principle requires that the development of child’s needs be taken into account, proper development was ensured, his/her satisfaction, physical and mental safety were guaranteed. The child’s right to health and education and other special needs of the child have to be secured. The child must be provided with such protection as is necessary for his well-being, applying all possible coordinated complex assistance.”⁵³⁵</p> <p>Furthermore, if their age and maturity allows, they participate in case management meetings. The Description of the Case Management Procedure approved by the Minister of Social Security and Labour points out that the case management hearings must be organized in such a way that ensures the fulfilment of the child’s right to be heard – the child must be allowed to participate in the case hearing when he/she expresses such a wish, except in cases where this is against the child’s best interests.</p>
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⁵³⁴ Intė, O., Sondaitė, J., Tvaronavičienė, A. (2023). *Vaiko nuomonės išlausymo metodinis vadovas (Methodical guide on hearing the opinion of the child)*. Lithuania, State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service, Mykolas Romeris University.

⁵³⁵ Lithuania, Seimas (1996). Law on Fundamentals of Protection of the Rights of the Child (*Lietuvos Respublikos Vaiko teisių apsaugos pagrindų įstatymas*), No. I-1234, 14 March 1996, last amendments No. XIV-1512, 10 November 2022, Art. 4(1).

			<p>During the case management meeting, the child has the right to express his/her opinion, suggestions, and expectations with equal rights with other family members. The Procedure foresees that for the protection of the child from possible negative impact, the Service or its authorized territorial department may decide not to invite the child to the case management meeting. In such a case, the child rights protection specialist must first listen to the child's opinion on all issues related to him and submit it to the case manager before the case management meeting. The case manager, when inviting the child to participate in the case management meeting, must verbally provide the child with information about activities performed with the child's family before the case management meeting (explain the meaning of the case management, the purpose of the meetings, what are the outcome of the meetings, what expectations or wishes of the child have been taken into account (if the child had expressed them), and which ones had not, indicating the reasons for not taking them into account).⁵³⁶</p>
<p>4.3.9. Are there mental health support services available for affected children?</p> <p><u>If yes</u>, how are services working together? How is it ensured that the child is informed and can make use of these services?</p>	X		<p>Social services related to the psychological wellbeing of children are intensive help for overcoming of crisis and psycho-social help.⁵³⁷ If the case management procedure is started, complex help, including psychological help, is coordinated by case manager.⁵³⁸</p>
<p>4.3.10. What are the main challenges and gaps in the referral and investigation highlighted by relevant authorities, child protection, and civil society organisations? Briefly describe.</p>			

⁵³⁶ Lithuania, Ministry of Social Security and Labour (2018). Regarding the approval of the description of the case management procedure (*Dėl Atvejo vadybos tvarkos aprašo patvirtinimo*). No. A1-141, 29 March 2018, last amendment No. A1-802, 30 December 2019. Art. 17.

⁵³⁷ Lithuania, Ministry of Social Security and Labour (2006). Regarding the Approval of the Catalogue of Social Services (*Dėl Socialinių paslaugų katalogo patvirtinimo*). No. A1-93, 5 April 2006, last amendment No. A1-451, 30 June 2022.

⁵³⁸ Lithuania, Ministry of Social Security and Labour (2018). Regarding the approval of the description of the case management procedure (*Dėl Atvejo vadybos tvarkos aprašo patvirtinimo*). No. A1-141, 29 March 2018, last amendment No. A1-802, 30 December 2019. Art. 2.6.

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In the investigations carried out by the Ombudsperson for Child's Rights **in 2022**, it was repeatedly established that the **deadlines** for informing parents set in the legal acts cited by the State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service (further – Service) are not being followed, for example, the child's parents were not informed about the completed and registered child's temporary accommodation document within the deadline set by the legal act, even in cases where the parents apply for the provision of such information.⁵³⁹

The deficiencies in the activity of the Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service were indicated in the analysis of the complaints against the Service investigated **in 2020** by the Ombudsperson for Child's Rights. The analysis was carried out on the basis of reports adopted in 2020 by the Ombudsperson for Child's Rights. The following **deficiencies in public administration and processing of applications** in the Service were identified in the studies conducted during the period in question:

- 1) applicants' requests are incompletely examined (all specified circumstances are not assessed, incompletely assessed and examined);
- 2) inappropriate form of answers (written requests are not answered in writing);
- 3) insufficient informing of parents about the decisions made and their reasons;
- 4) failure to provide information about the possibilities to appeal the decisions made and failure to provide the decisions to the applicants. When examining applicants' complaints, a tendency has been noticed and attention should be paid to when, after examining applicants' requests (for example, a person's request to appoint him as a child's guardian, etc.), the examination results were not clearly presented in written responses, where the focus was on indication of the procedure for appealing the response rather than on providing the details of the decision itself. An informative letter is not and cannot be equated with an administrative decision, they are not subject to the procedure for appealing administrative decisions, therefore the rights of individuals to appeal the decisions themselves are restricted;
- 5) applicants' requests are processed for an unreasonably long time, in violation of the deadlines established by legal acts. In one of the identified cases, a person's application for appointment as a guardian was not answered for 7 months, without indicating any reasons and/or grounds for extending the examination of the application;
- 6) administrative offense is carried out without complying with the requirements of legal acts.⁵⁴⁰

The complaints investigated by the Ombudsperson for Child's Rights, shows a number of cases where the child rights protection specialists of the Service responded to potential violations of children's

⁵³⁹ Lithuania, The Child Rights Protection Ombudsman of the Republic of Lithuania (2022). [Report Regarding the practice of establishing of safe environment for children](#) (*Pažyma dėl saugios aplinkos vaikams užtikrinimo praktikos*). No. (6.7.-2022-57)PR-156, 29 December 2022.

⁵⁴⁰ Lithuania, The Child Rights Protection Ombudsman of the Republic of Lithuania (2021). Analysis of the most frequently recurring cases of non-operation and/or improper performance of official duties by the State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service identified during 2020 ([2020 metų laikotarpiu nustatytų ir dažniausiai pasikartojančių Vaiko teisių apsaugos ir įvaikinimo tarnybos neveikimo ir \(ar\) netinkamo tarnybinių pareigų atlikimo atvejų apžvalga](#)). No. (6.7.-2020-51)PR-5, 22 January 2021

rights in an inefficient manner, did not take all necessary steps to ensure children's rights, and did not always promptly transfer information about possible crimes to law enforcement agencies. It is also noted that the documents required by legislation are not always prepared on time, sometimes were not elaborated enough, without indicating all significant circumstances.⁵⁴¹

The Ombudsperson for Child's Rights also draw an attention to the description of the shortcomings in the child's situation assessment questionnaire. It does not clearly and specifically mention violence, alcohol abuse, etc. The questionnaire only indicates the points of the child's situation assessment in numbers and some circumstances of the situation. Regarding risk factors, the situation is not always individualised and explained. For example, in the description of the family living conditions it is written, "many animals are kept in a one-room apartment", but it is not explained how the specific factors shows that the living conditions endanger the child's physical or mental safety, health, etc. For example, whether there is a lack of space; whether the hygiene is not being followed; etc. In the description of the child's situation assessment results the risk factors in the child's situation assessment questionnaire must be substantiated with specific circumstances and reasoning. Also, when defining a specific risk factor, it must be indicated whether it is applicable for one of the child's legal representative or for both.⁵⁴²

The Ombudsperson for Child's Rights states, the analysis shows that in many cases the participation of the Service (its territorial units) in case management (during the process of helping the child and family) was superficial, passive and incomplete. In the assessment of the child's situation, not all available, but fragmentary (only recently revealed) information is analysed. It was also noticed that the change of child rights protection specialists of the Service in the case management process also affects the achievement of the goals set in the case management process. Furthermore, the report of the Ombudsperson for Child's Rights underscores that municipalities delay in organizing help to the family (guardians/curators). The ineffective assistance does not create prerequisites for solving the family problems and does not allow to avoid unsuccessful cases of guardianship (curatorship).⁵⁴³

⁵⁴¹ Lithuania, The Child Rights Protection Ombudsman of the Republic of Lithuania (2021). [Analysis of the most frequently recurring cases of non-operation and/or improper performance of official duties by the State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service identified during 2020](#) (2020 metų laikotarpiu nustatytų ir dažniausiai pasikartojančių Vaiko teisių apsaugos ir įvaikinimo tarnybos neveikimo ir (ar) netinkamo tarnybinių pareigų atlikimo atvejų apžvalga). No. (6.7.-2020-51)PR-5, 22 January 2021.

⁵⁴² Lithuania, The Child Rights Protection Ombudsman of the Republic of Lithuania (2021). [Analysis of the most frequently recurring cases of non-operation and/or improper performance of official duties by the State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service identified during 2020](#) (2020 metų laikotarpiu nustatytų ir dažniausiai pasikartojančių Vaiko teisių apsaugos ir įvaikinimo tarnybos neveikimo ir (ar) netinkamo tarnybinių pareigų atlikimo atvejų apžvalga). No. (6.7.-2020-51)PR-5, 22 January 2021.

⁵⁴³ Lithuania, The Child Rights Protection Ombudsman of the Republic of Lithuania (2021). [Analysis of the most frequently recurring cases of non-operation and/or improper performance of official duties by the State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service identified during 2020](#) (2020 metų laikotarpiu nustatytų ir dažniausiai pasikartojančių Vaiko teisių apsaugos ir įvaikinimo tarnybos neveikimo ir (ar) netinkamo tarnybinių pareigų atlikimo atvejų apžvalga). No. (6.7.-2020-51)PR-5, 22 January 2021.

4.4. Placement decisions – care orders

4.4.1. Following the investigation and assessment of the child’s situation, who is responsible to decide upon issuing a care order/decision and the placement of the child in alternative care?

The decision to take the child from parents / legal representatives

The court makes a decision to take the child from their parents / legal representatives. In urgent cases (when there is real and immediate danger to the child’s physical or mental safety, health or life) the State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service (further – Service) may take the child from the family urgently⁵⁴⁴ and then within 3 days have to apply to the court to get the decision to take the child from the family.⁵⁴⁵

Other grounds for taking the child from his/her parents or legal representatives are when the safe environment for the child is not ensured even after applying temporary supervision measures, or the child’s parents or other legal representatives do not make any efforts, do not change their behaviour, and there remains a real risk to the child's physical or mental safety in the family environment, which is liable to result in significant harm to the child's health or life.⁵⁴⁶

The State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service is the legal representative of the child until the guardian (curator) is appointed.

The establishment of temporary guardianship (curatorship)

After receiving the court decision to take the child from the parents or other legal representatives, the **Service** specialist submits a request to the **municipality** to appoint the guardian (curator) for the child.⁵⁴⁷ The request can specify the guardian (curator) that the Service proposes to appoint. The guardian (curator) is appointed by the decision of mayor. If a candidate is not proposed by the Service, the Foster Care Centre can recommend the candidate.⁵⁴⁸ Temporary guardianship (curatorship) may not last more than 12 months, with the possible extension for additional 6 months.⁵⁴⁹

The establishment of permanent guardianship (curatorship).

The court makes decision on establishment of permanent guardianship (curatorship) to the child. The Service submit application to the court requesting the establishment of permanent guardianship

⁵⁴⁴ Lithuania, Seimas (1996). Law on Fundamentals of Protection of the Rights of the Child (*Lietuvos Respublikos Vaiko teisių apsaugos pagrindų įstatymas*), No. I-1234, 14 March 1996, last amendments No. XIV-1512, 10 November 2022, Art.36 (4).

⁵⁴⁵ Lithuania, Seimas (2000), Civil Code (*Lietuvos Respublikos Civilinis kodeksas*), No. VIII-1864, 18 July 2000, last amendment No. XIV-1435, 29 September 2022, Art. 3.254¹(2).

⁵⁴⁶ Lithuania, Seimas (1996). Law on Fundamentals of Protection of the Rights of the Child (*Lietuvos Respublikos Vaiko teisių apsaugos pagrindų įstatymas*), No. I-1234, 14 March 1996, last amendments No. XIV-1512, 10 November 2022, Art.36⁵.

⁵⁴⁷ Lithuania, Government (2002). Regarding the approval of the regulations for the organization of child guardianship (*Dėl Vaiko globos organizavimo nuostatų patvirtinimo*). No. 405, 27 March 2002, last amendments No. 1313, 29 December 2022, Art. 33.

⁵⁴⁸ Lithuania, Seimas (2000), Civil Code (*Lietuvos Respublikos Civilinis kodeksas*), No. VIII-1864, 18 July 2000, last amendment No. XIV-1435, 29 September 2022, Art. 3.264.

⁵⁴⁹ Lithuania, Seimas (2000), Civil Code (*Lietuvos Respublikos Civilinis kodeksas*), No. VIII-1864, 18 July 2000, last amendment No. XIV-1435, 29 September 2022, Art. 3.253.

(curatorship). Permanent guardianship (curatorship) is established for children left without parental care who cannot return to their family under current conditions.⁵⁵⁰

Unaccompanied minors arriving from Ukraine cannot be placed under permanent guardianship (curatorship), they also cannot be adopted. The appointment of a temporary guardian (curator) is ensured for children fleeing Ukraine, in accordance with the provisions of the Law of the Republic of Lithuania on the Legal Status of Foreigners.⁵⁵¹

Question	Yes	No	Comments
<p>4.4.2. Are there legislative and or regulatory provisions clearly stating the criteria that should be taken into consideration in the assessment of the situation and in the decision-making process?</p> <p>Are there provisions specifying the criteria that should be considered when deciding to remove the child from its family? Are the principles of necessity and appropriateness considered?</p>	X		<p>The Civil Code indicates that the principles of determining child guardianship (curatorship) are:⁵⁵²</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) priority to the best interests of the child; 2) the child's relatives and other persons with emotional ties with the child have a priority to become guardians (curators) of the child, if this does not contradict to the child's best interests; 3) priority should be given to child's guardianship (curatorship) in the family settings; 4) non-separation of siblings, except in cases where this violates the best interests of the child; 5) stability of the child's environment and place of (foster) care. <p>When establishing and terminating a child's guardianship (curatorship), appointing a guardian (curator), a child who can express his opinion is given the opportunity to be heard and his opinion is important in decision-making.⁵⁵³</p> <p>The regulations on the establishment of guardianship (curatorship) allow the persons who are relatives of the child or are related to him/her by emotional ties to become guardians according to the simplified procedure, when they may</p>

⁵⁵⁰ Lithuania, Seimas (2000), Civil Code (*Lietuvos Respublikos Civilinis kodeksas*), No. VIII-1864, 18 July 2000, last amendment No. XIV-1435, 29 September 2022, Art. 3.256.

⁵⁵¹ Lithuania, Seimas (2004) Law on the Legal Status of Foreigners (*Lietuvos Respublikos įstatymas dėl užsieniečių teisinės padėties*). No. IX-2206, 29 April 2004, last amendment No. XIV-1593, 27 November 2022, Art. 140²⁷.

⁵⁵² Lithuania, Seimas (2000), Civil Code (*Lietuvos Respublikos Civilinis kodeksas*), No. VIII-1864, 18 July 2000, last amendment No. XIV-1435, 29 September 2022, Art. 3.249.

⁵⁵³ Lithuania, Seimas (2000), Civil Code (*Lietuvos Respublikos Civilinis kodeksas*), No. VIII-1864, 18 July 2000, last amendment No. XIV-1435, 29 September 2022, Art. 3.249.

			undergo the guardianship training while already appointed as guardians. ⁵⁵⁴
4.4.3. Are there provisions requiring that the views of the child should be taken into consideration in the decision-making process? <u>If yes</u> , please specify if this is mandatory or left to the discretion of the responsible authorities, and if there are age-related requirements.	X		<p>The Civil Code indicates that when establishing and terminating a child's guardianship (curatorship), appointing a guardian (curator), a child who can express his opinion is given the opportunity to be heard and his opinion is important in decision-making.⁵⁵⁵</p> <p>Law on Fundamentals of Protection of the Rights of the Child, Art. 4 lists the principle of the best interests of the child, which includes the obligation to take into account the opinion of the child,⁵⁵⁶ as well as the principle of listening to the child's opinion and ensuring the child's participation, which means that “a child who is able to formulate his/her views must be heard on all issues related to him/her and the child's opinion must be considered, taking into account his age and maturity, if this does not conflict with the child's best interests”.⁵⁵⁷ Furthermore, Art. 11 defines that “A child who is able to formulate his own opinion must be heard in all matters related to him and his opinion must be taken into account, if it does not conflict with the child's interests. The child must be heard directly, and if this is not possible, through the child's representative according to the law or through the persons specified by the law. The child's right to be heard is guaranteed by creating an environment that allows the child to use this right, by providing the necessary information and advice, taking into account his age and maturity, by using persons</p>

⁵⁵⁴ Lithuania, Government (2002). Regarding the approval of the regulations for the organization of child guardianship (*Dėl Vaiko globos organizavimo nuostatų patvirtinimo*). No. 405, 27 March 2002, last amendments No. 1313, 29 December 2022, Art. 35(6).

⁵⁵⁵ Lithuania, Seimas (2000), Civil Code (*Lietuvos Respublikos Civilinis kodeksas*), No. VIII-1864, 18 July 2000, last amendment No. XIV-1435, 29 September 2022, Art. 3.249.

⁵⁵⁶ Lithuania, Seimas (1996). Law on Fundamentals of Protection of the Rights of the Child (*Lietuvos Respublikos Vaiko teisių apsaugos pagrindų įstatymas*), No. I-1234, 14 March 1996, last amendments 10 November.

⁵⁵⁷ Lithuania, Seimas (1996). Law on Fundamentals of Protection of the Rights of the Child (*Lietuvos Respublikos Vaiko teisių apsaugos pagrindų įstatymas*), No. I-1234, 14 March 1996, last amendments No. XIV-1512, 10 November 2022, Art. 4.

		<p>with special knowledge as far as possible, when necessary.”⁵⁵⁸</p> <p>The State Child Rights Protection and Adoption service together with Mykolas Romeris university have prepared a detailed guide on the hearing the opinion of the child in different fields related to the child rights.⁵⁵⁹</p> <p>The opinion of the child while establishing guardianship (curatorship) is documented by the representatives of the territorial department of the Service. In both appointing the temporary guardian (curator), as well as the permanent guardian (curator), the representatives of the Service visit the child listen to his/her opinion on the selection of a particular person and indicate it in the act of hearing the child's opinion, the form of which is approved by order of the Director of the Service.⁵⁶⁰</p> <p>The Commission formed by the Foster Care Centre provides recommendation on the candidate to be a guardian (curator). Upon deciding on the candidate, the Commission considers the opinion of the child.⁵⁶¹ The candidate then is presented to mayor for appointment (in case of temporary guardianship (curatorship) or to the court (in case of permanent guardianship (curatorship)).</p> <p>The State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service has stated that it follows all the legal procedures indicated in the legal acts. The representatives of the Service, when listening to the child's opinion in the process of determining guardianship (curatorship), consider his/her</p>
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⁵⁵⁸ Lithuania, Seimas (1996). Law on Fundamentals of Protection of the Rights of the Child (*Lietuvos Respublikos Vaiko teisių apsaugos pagrindų įstatymas*), No. I-1234, 14 March 1996, last amendments No. XIV-1512, 10 November 2022, Art. 11.

⁵⁵⁹ Intė, O., Sondaitė, J., Tvaronavičienė, A. (2023). *Vaiko nuomonės išklauso metodinis vadovas (Methodical guide on hearing the opinion of the child)*. Lithuania, State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service, Mykolas Romeris University.

⁵⁶⁰ Lithuania, Government (2002). Regarding the approval of the regulations for the organization of child guardianship (*Dėl Vaiko globos organizavimo nuostatų patvirtinimo*). No. 405, 27 March 2002, last amendments No. 1313, 29 December 2022, Art. 52.

⁵⁶¹ Lithuania, Government (2002). Regarding the approval of the regulations for the organization of child guardianship (*Dėl Vaiko globos organizavimo nuostatų patvirtinimo*). No. 405, 27 March 2002, last amendments No. 1313, 29 December 2022, Art. 43(3).

			emotional relationship with the potential guardian (curator), psychological and physical needs, expressed anxieties. ⁵⁶²
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4.5. Types of care with focus on alternative care

Types of care existing in the country	Yes	No	Who is offering such services? (State, regional, local authorities, civil society, religious institutions)	Please make differences between the different types of care explicit
Foster care	X		<p>1. Children may be under guardianship (curatorship) in the foster family. The guardians (curators) are natural persons who have undergone training for guardians (curators) and have been deemed suitable to become guardians (curators). The number of children under guardianship (curatorship) in the foster family – no more than three (total of six when counting the children of the guardians (curators)).⁵⁶³</p> <p>2. Child guardianship (curatorship) in a Social family (Foster Care-Based Household) is a form of foster care when a legal entity (social family) takes care of four or more children (the total number of children in the family with their own children– no more than eight children) in a family environment.⁵⁶⁴ The purpose of the social family is to ensure the upbringing and care of a child in an environment where he/she could safely grow, develop and improve.⁵⁶⁵</p> <p>3. Guardianship in the Foster Care centre – it is a form of guardianship (curatorship) where the legal representative of the child is a Foster Care centre, but the child is placed in the family of guardians on-duty (professional foster family) who take care for the child in a family-based environment. The Centre provides and organises social services and assistance as needed for the child and the guardian on-duty</p>	

⁵⁶² An email from State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service, dated 27 April 2023.

⁵⁶³ Lithuania, Seimas (2000), Civil Code (*Lietuvos Respublikos Civilinis kodeksas*), No. VIII-1864, 18 July 2000, last amendment No. XIV-1435, 29 September 2022, Art. 3.259.

⁵⁶⁴ Lithuania, Seimas (2000), Civil Code (*Lietuvos Respublikos Civilinis kodeksas*), No. VIII-1864, 18 July 2000, last amendment No. XIV-1435, 29 September 2022, Art. 3.260.

⁵⁶⁵ Lithuania, Seimas (2010). Law on Social Families (*Lietuvos Respublikos šeimynų įstatymas*), No. XI-681, 11 February 2010, last amendment No. XIV-1511, 10 November 2022, Art. 3.

		(professional foster family), as well as cooperates with professionals who assist the child's biological parents to return the child to the family.
Residential – institutional care	X	<p>There are two types of residential – institutional care in Lithuania: community-based children care homes and foster childcare institutions. About 20 percent of children in guardianship (curatorship) are cared for in institutional care. Out of those, about 70 percent are cared for in community-based children care homes.⁵⁶⁶ In general, this form of guardianship (curatorship) is an exceptional measure, used only in cases where the other forms of guardianship (curatorship) are not available. For children under 3 years of age the guardianship may be established in the institution only if this is required due to his/her health status; or if there is a need not separate the child from his brothers or sisters; when his/her parents are minors who are under guardianship (curatorship) in the institution; or in case of urgent removal of the child from the family there is no possibility to place him/her in another form of guardianship (foster family, social family (Foster Care-Based household), foster care centre).⁵⁶⁷</p> <p>1. Community-based children care homes. Each municipality, if it does not have the possibility to determine the guardianship (curatorship) of a child in a foster family, foster care centre, Social Family (Foster Care-Based household) and/or if, when the child lives in the biological family, the assistance, services and other measures provided were ineffective, must ensure the child the opportunity to grow up in a close family environment – community-based children care homes. The services of community-based children care homes can be provided by social care institutions whose field of activity is the provision of social services, whose social care is provided in accordance with social care norms and which have a license to provide social care.⁵⁶⁸</p> <p>2. Foster childcare institutions. The care of children is established in institutions licenced to provide foster childcare services. The social care norms established by the</p>

⁵⁶⁶ Lithuania, Ministry of Social Security and Labour (2023). [Changes in the childcare system: fewer children in institutions, more on-duty guardians](#) (Vaikų globos sistemos pokyčiai: mažesnis vaikų institucijose skaičius, daugiau budinčių globotojų). 31 March 2023.

⁵⁶⁷ Lithuania, Seimas (2000), Civil Code (*Lietuvos Respublikos Civilinis kodeksas*), No. VIII-1864, 18 July 2000, last amendment No. XIV-1435, 29 September 2022, Art. 3.261 (2).

⁵⁶⁸ Lithuania, Ministry of Social Security and Labour (2021). Regarding the approval of the activity description of the Community Childcare Home (*Dėl Bendruomeninių vaikų globos namų veiklos aprašo patvirtinimo*). No. A1-24, 13 January 2021.

			Ministry of Social Security and Labour ⁵⁶⁹ indicate the requirements on carrying out the childcare in these institutions. About 30 percent of children under guardianship (curatorship) in institutional care are placed in childcare institutions. The number of children in this type of guardianship (curatorship) had increased in 2022 due to arrival of groups of children from childcare institutions in Ukraine.
Other forms of family-based or family-like care placements		x	
Supervised independent living arrangements for children		x	
Question	Yes	No	Comments
4.5.1. Is there data available on the number of children in care (disaggregated by type of care, gender/age, length of placement, etc)?	x		<p>Family Social Support Information System (hereinafter referred to as SPIS) is an information system administered by the Ministry of Social Security and Labour. The purpose of SPIS is to uniformly register and collect information on social support provided in municipalities (social benefits and compensations, social support for students, social services, activities carried out in the field of child rights protection, etc.), to analyse this information according to municipalities, types of support and recipients of support, as well as prevent the receipt of support in several municipalities at the same time.⁵⁷⁰</p> <p>One of the purposes of the processing of personal data stored in SPIS is to enable the relevant officials to collect data and carry out various activities in the field of child rights protection in accordance with the Law on the Protection of Children's Rights and its implementing legislation.</p> <p>In SPIS, information about children in care is included too. Statistical data is disaggregated by type of care, place of care, child's gender, age groups. There is also more in-depth information (accessible only to specialists working with</p>

⁵⁶⁹ Lithuania, Ministry of Social Security and Labour (2007), [Regarding the Description of social care norms](#) (*Dėl Socialinės globos normų aprašo patvirtinimo*), No. A1-46, 20 February 2007, last amendment No. A1-536, 18 August 2022.

⁵⁷⁰ Lithuania, Ministry of Social Security and Labour (2008). Regarding the approval of the regulations on the Family Social Support Information system and the regulations of data security of Family Social Support Information System (*Dėl Socialinės paramos šeimai informacinės sistemos nuostatų ir Socialinės paramos šeimai informacinės sistemos duomenų saugos nuostatų patvirtinimo*). No. A1-172, 29 May 2008, last amendment No. A1-116, 23 February 2023.

	<p>children) related to the start and end of care, length of care, reasons of the end of care or change of care, etc., and also data related to all individual cases.</p> <p>In SPIS the information is also collected about cases of violence against children; registration, examination and account of possible violations of child rights; information regarding assessment of the child situation; about temporary supervision of the child at the request of the child's parents or other legal representatives; regarding performance the functions of a mobile team; regarding guardianship (curatorship); about foster families, foster childcare institutions, community-based children care homes, foster care centres, guardians on-duty; about the restriction of parental authority and the separation of the child from the parents; to carry out accounting of families experiencing social risk; keep records of court authorizations and representation in courts.⁵⁷¹</p> <p>Data providers are in the child rights field are:</p> <p>1) foster care centres providing data on natural persons who are ready to become a child's guardian (curators), the founders or member of social family (foster care-based household), guardians on-duty (professional foster families), and their readiness for the guardianship (curatorship).</p> <p>2) The State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service, which provides data on children in guardianship (curatorship), appointed guardians (curators), guardians (curators), who have been removed from such services, about temporary guardianship (curatorship) of the child and persons appointed to carry out it.⁵⁷²</p> <p>The annual report of the State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service presents the specific numbers of children in care each year. The number of children in permanent guardianship (curatorship) in 2019 was 6015, in 2020 – 5736, in 2021 – 5365. The number of children in temporary guardianship (curatorship) in 2019 was 1143, in 2020 – 1053</p>
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⁵⁷¹ Lithuania, Ministry of Social Security and Labour (2008). Regarding the approval of the regulations on the Family Social Support Information system and the regulations of data security of Family Social Support Information System (*Dėl Socialinės paramos šeimai informacinės sistemos nuostatų ir Socialinės paramos šeimai informacinės sistemos duomenų saugos nuostatų patvirtinimo*). No. A1-172, 29 May 2008, last amendment No. A1-116, 23 February 2023.

⁵⁷² Lithuania, Ministry of Social Security and Labour (2008). Regarding the approval of the regulations on the Family Social Support Information system and the regulations of data security of Family Social Support Information System (*Dėl Socialinės paramos šeimai informacinės sistemos nuostatų ir Socialinės paramos šeimai informacinės sistemos duomenų saugos nuostatų patvirtinimo*). No. A1-172, 29 May 2008, last amendment No. A1-116, 23 February 2023, Art. 9.4.2.2 and 9.4.2.3.

and in 2021 – 931. In total, there were 7158 children in alternative foster care in 2019, 6789 children in 2020, and 6296 in 2021.⁵⁷³

In 2021, 17 percent of children in guardianship (curatorship) were placed in the foster care in an institutional setting (in community-based children care homes and foster childcare institutions) (162 children), 58 percent were placed for foster care in a foster family (556 children), 2 percent – in social families (foster care-based households) (17 children) and 23 percent – in foster care centres (218 children). The segregation according to the age and in different types of foster care is also provided in the annual report of the Service mentioned above.

Evaluating the number of children under guardianship (curatorship), according to their age and forms of foster care, it can be seen that the majority of children in the age group of 10-14 are cared for in the foster family, in the Foster care centre – children in the age group of 0-3 years, in the social family (foster care-based household) – children in the age group of 10-14 years, in the foster childcare institution and community-based children care homes – children in the age group of 15-17 years.⁵⁷⁴

In 2021, guardianship (curatorship) was mostly established for children aged 10-14, i.e. 29 percent of the total number. Out of the total number of 6,296 children in foster care, the largest number of children was in the group of children 10-14 years old (2,247), i.e. 36 percent and in the group of 15-17 year old (2,158), i.e. 34 percent.⁵⁷⁵

Foster Care in different types of foster care according to age:⁵⁷⁶

Age	In family	In social family (foster care-based household)	In foster care centre (guardians on-duty)	Foster care in institution
0-3	278	7	78	24

⁵⁷³ Lithuania, State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service (2022). Annual Report of 2021. 31 March 2022, p. 42.

⁵⁷⁴ Lithuania, State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service (2022). Annual Report of 2021. 31 March 2022, p. 46-47.

⁵⁷⁵ Lithuania, State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service (2022). Annual Report of 2021. 31 March 2022, p. 46-47.

⁵⁷⁶ Lithuania, State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service (2022). Annual Report of 2021. 31 March 2022, p. 46-47.

			4-6	508	22	42	53
			7-9	672	40	28	139
			10-14	1591	121	40	495
			15-17	1369	89	22	679
			Total	4418	279	210	1390
4.5.2. Is there data available on the number of children placed in alternative care that disappeared and/or went missing from residential care institutions?	X		<p>'There is data available on the number of children placed in care that disappeared and/or went missing from residential care institution as well as from foster family or other placements.</p> <p>The Official register of wanted persons, unidentified corpses and unknown helpless persons⁵⁷⁷ collects data on missing children.</p> <p>The register collects the following data about missing and wanted children: personal data (personal identification code, name(s), surname(s), date of birth, place of birth, gender, citizenship; data on a document confirming personal identity, data on the place of residence, name or title of the search initiator, date of disappearance, place of disappearance, country of disappearance, circumstances of disappearance, date of receipt of a report on a missing person at the police station.</p> <p>The State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service has indicated that it does not collect information of missing children segregated according to their belonging to vulnerable groups (risk of poverty, children with disabilities, migrants, children of ethnic minorities).⁵⁷⁸ The police however collects the information about the living place of the child who is missing, therefore have the data on children missing from residential care institutions.⁵⁷⁹</p>				

⁵⁷⁷ Lithuania, Ministry of the Interior (2017), Order on the approval of the reorganization of the official register of wanted persons, unidentified corpses, and unknown helpless persons and the approval of the provisions of the official register of wanted persons, unidentified corpses, and unknown helpless persons (*Įsakymas Dėl ieškomų asmenų, neatpažintų lavonų ir nežinomų bejėgių asmenų žinybinio registro reorganizavimo ir ieškomų asmenų, neatpažintų lavonų ir nežinomų bejėgių asmenų žinybinio registro nuostatų patvirtinimo*), No. 1V-174, 3 March 2017.

⁵⁷⁸ An email from State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service, dated 27 April 2023.

⁵⁷⁹ Lithuania, Prosecutor General (2008). Dėl Rekomendacijų dėl ikiteisminio tyrimo pradžios ir jos registravimo tvarkos patvirtinimo), No. I-110, 11 August 2008, last amendment No. I-148, 30 June 2023.

<p>4.5.3. Is there a <u>national</u> registry of foster care families?</p> <p>How many children can be fostered in one family?</p>	<p>x</p>	<p>Guardians (curators) caring for children in family settings are registered in Family Social Support Information System (hereinafter referred to as SPIS) is an information system operating under Ministry of Social Security and Labour.⁵⁸⁰ They are registered after they complete all the steps of the preparation to become guardians (curators).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The foster family may care for not more than 3 children (the total number of children in the foster family together with family's biological children should not exceed 6 children).⁵⁸¹ Exception can be made and bigger number of children may be in the foster family when there is a need to place together brothers and sisters; - The family of guardians on-duty (professional foster families) may care for not more than 3 children (the total number of children in the family together with family's biological children should not exceed 6 children).⁵⁸² Exception can be made when there is a need to place together brothers and sisters; - Social Family (Foster Care-Based household) cares for 4 and more children (the total number of children together with family's biological children should not exceed 8 children).⁵⁸³ Exception can be made when there is a need to place together brothers and sisters. The number can be also less in difficult cases, e.g., placement of the child with disability.
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4.5.4. How and by whom foster families are recruited, vetted, and trained? Provide information on the legal framework and responsible authorities, recruitment requirements, selection criteria, reimbursement of costs, etc.

Ca. 150 words

The organisation of guardianship (curatorship) in Lithuania starts with the **preparation phase**. Preparation for child guardianship (curatorship) is the examination of the readiness for child guardianship (curatorship) of a natural person who wants to become a child guardian (curator), social

⁵⁸⁰ Lithuania, Ministry of Social Security and Labour (2008). Regarding the approval of the regulations on the Family Social Support Information system and the regulations of data security of Family Social Support Information System (*Dėl Socialinės paramos šeimai informacinės sistemos nuostatų ir Socialinės paramos šeimai informacinės sistemos duomenų saugos nuostatų patvirtinimo*). No. A1-172, 29 May 2008, last amendment No. A1-116, 23 February 2023.

⁵⁸¹ Lithuania, Seimas (2000), Civil Code (*Lietuvos Respublikos Civilinis kodeksas*), No. VIII-1864, 18 July 2000, last amendment No. XIV-1435, 29 September 2022 3.259.

⁵⁸² Lithuania, Seimas (2000), Civil Code (*Lietuvos Respublikos Civilinis kodeksas*), No. VIII-1864, 18 July 2000, last amendment No. XIV-1435, 29 September 2022 3.259.

⁵⁸³ Lithuania, Seimas (2000), Civil Code (*Lietuvos Respublikos Civilinis kodeksas*), No. VIII-1864, 18 July 2000, last amendment No. XIV-1435, 29 September 2022 3.259.

family (Foster Care-Based household) founder or participant. The process consists of 1) the initial assessment, 2) organization of training for preparation for child guardianship (curatorship) and the 3) preparation of a conclusion on the readiness of a natural person who wants to become a child's guardian (curator) or the founder or participant of social family (Foster Care-Based household).⁵⁸⁴

The requirements for the possible guardians (curators) or founders or participants of social families (Foster Care-Based households) are set out in the Civil Code, Art. 3.269, and include the requirements of age (at least 21 years, to 65 years, with some exceptions), requirements of proper behaviour (absence of any infringements in this field, such as previous separation of the child from the possible guardian, termination of previous guardianship (curatorship) due to improper behaviour etc., no previous certain criminal or administrative convictions etc.), requirements on health, among others.⁵⁸⁵

The possible candidates for guardianship submit their requests to the **State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service** (further – Service). The territorial unit of the Service gathers information about the candidates and their family members from various state registries, and makes a decision regarding **positive or negative initial evaluation** of the candidate.⁵⁸⁶

If the candidate has received a positive initial evaluation, the territorial unit forwards the decision and related documents to the Foster care centre which organises **the training** for future guardians and prepares the final conclusion on the candidate.⁵⁸⁷ The training of future foster parents is mandatory to the guardian (curator) and his/her spouse.⁵⁸⁸ The training is organized according to the programme established by the Service, and taught by persons certified by the Service.⁵⁸⁹

The training and counselling programme for guardians (curator), guardians on-duty (professional foster family), adoptive parents and staff of community-based children care homes includes:

⁵⁸⁴ Lithuania, Government (2002). Regarding the approval of the regulations for the organization of child guardianship (*Dėl Vaiko globos organizavimo nuostatų patvirtinimo*). No. 405, 27 March 2002, last amendments No. 1313, 29 December 2022, Art. 18.

⁵⁸⁵ Lithuania, Seimas (2000), Civil Code (*Lietuvos Respublikos Civilinis kodeksas*), No. VIII-1864, 18 July 2000, last amendment No. XIV-1435, 29 September 2022, 3.269.

⁵⁸⁶ Lithuania, Government (2002). Regarding the approval of the regulations for the organization of child guardianship (*Dėl Vaiko globos organizavimo nuostatų patvirtinimo*). No. 405, 27 March 2002, last amendments No. 1313, 29 December 2022, Art. 9-13.

⁵⁸⁷ Lithuania, Government (2002). Regarding the approval of the regulations for the organization of child guardianship (*Dėl Vaiko globos organizavimo nuostatų patvirtinimo*). No. 405, 27 March 2002, last amendments No. 1313, 29 December 2022, Art. 18.

⁵⁸⁸ Lithuania, Government (2002). Regarding the approval of the regulations for the organization of child guardianship (*Dėl Vaiko globos organizavimo nuostatų patvirtinimo*). No. 405, 27 March 2002, last amendments No. 1313, 29 December 2022, Art. 21.

⁵⁸⁹ Lithuania, State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service (2018) Regarding the approval of the training and counselling programme for guardians (curators), on-duty guardians, adoptive parents, community childcare home employees (*Dėl Globėjų (rūpintojų), budinčių globotojų, įtėvių, bendruomeninių vaikų globos namų darbuotojų mokymo ir konsultavimo programos patvirtinimo*), No. BV-66, 1 June 2018.

1. The core part of the training and counselling programme for guardians (curators), guardians on-duty (professional foster families), adoptive parents and staff of community-based children care homes;
2. The specialised part of the training and counselling programme for persons intending to provide social childcare services and for the staff of community children care homes;
3. The follow-up part of the training and counselling programme for guardians (curators), guardians on-duty (professional foster families), adoptive parents and staff of community-based children care homes;
4. Part of the training programme for close relatives willing to become guardians (curators).⁵⁹⁰

After the training the Foster Care centre prepares the **final conclusion** on the ability of the candidates to become guardians (curators).⁵⁹¹

The information about the **new guardian is submitted to SPIS system**, which is a centralised system for the appointed guardians (curators) (available at www.spis.lt). The duty to store centralised information about guardianship (curatorship) includes the duty to store information about children, for whom the guardianship (curatorship) is established, about guardians (curators), guardians (curators), who have been removed from their duties as guardians (curators), or about persons who are ready to become guardians (curators) for a child.⁵⁹²

The support for guardians is provided by the Foster care centres. The purpose of the activities of the Foster Care centre is to ensure that all children who have lost parental care, adopted children, children under the care of guardians (curators), children in social family (Foster Care-Based household), children under the care of guardians on-duty (professional foster families), guardians on-duty (professional foster families), social family (Foster Care-Based household) members, guardians (curators), adoptive parents and their family members living together or persons intending to become adoptive parents would be available and provided with the necessary counselling, psychosocial, legal and other assistance in order to properly educate and raise the child, adopted child in a family environment.⁵⁹³

4.5.5. Are any types of care (foster homes, residential care, other form of care arrangements) monitored once children are placed therein? If so, provide information on the applicable

⁵⁹⁰ Lithuania, State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service (2018) Regarding the approval of the training and counselling programme for guardians (curators), on-duty guardians, adoptive parents, community childcare home employees (*Dėl Globėjų (rūpintojų), budinčių globotojų, įtėvių, bendruomeninių vaikų globos namų darbuotojų mokymo ir konsultavimo programos patvirtinimo*), No. BV-66, 1 June 2018.

⁵⁹¹ Lithuania, Government (2002). Regarding the approval of the regulations for the organization of child guardianship (*Dėl Vaiko globos organizavimo nuostatų patvirtinimo*). No. 405, 27 March 2002, last amendments No. 1313, 29 December 2022, Art. 22.

⁵⁹² Lithuania, Seimas (2000), Civil Code (*Lietuvos Respublikos Civilinis kodeksas*), No. VIII-1864, 18 July 2000, last amendment No. XIV-1435, 29 September 2022, Art. 3.276¹.

⁵⁹³ Lithuania, Regarding the approval of the description of the activities of the Foster Care Centre and the organization and quality of care of the performance by the guardian on duty of the child (*Dėl Globos centro veiklos ir vaiko budinčio globotojo vykdomos priežiūros organizavimo ir kokybės priežiūros tvarkos aprašo patvirtinimo*), No. A1-28, 19 January 2018, last amendment No. A1-440, 11 June 2021, Art. 8.

legislative provisions on monitoring procedures. Please specify the difference between the monitoring of different types of care. How frequently are they monitored, how and by whom?

Ca. 150 words

All types and forms of childcare are monitored, and such obligation is established in the law. The Civil Code indicates that State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service (further – Service) is responsible for supervision of guardianship (curatorship) in all types of child foster care. The Service cooperates with the administration of municipalities, foster care centres, childcare institutions (community-based children foster care homes and foster childcare institutions), other state and municipal institutions, non-governmental organisations, which work in the field of child protection.⁵⁹⁴

The legal acts in Lithuania establish that the supervision of the guardianship (curatorship) takes on the following forms:⁵⁹⁵

- 1) Visits of a child who is in guardianship (curatorship);
- 2) Revisions of child permanent guardianship (curatorship);
- 3) Revisions of child temporary guardianship (curatorship).

After the establishment of temporary guardianship (curatorship), the representative of the territorial office of the Service visits a child for the first time no later than after the first month after the decision regarding the temporary guardianship (curatorship) by the mayor been adopted; other visits are organised according to the need, however at least every six months starting with the date that the decision was made. If the territorial office decides to prolong the temporary foster (guardianship) for additional six months, a visit must be organised at least once per that period.⁵⁹⁶

Once the permanent guardianship (curatorship) is approved, a child is visited no later than a month after the day the permanent guardianship (curatorship) has been established by the court; other visits are organised according to the need, but at least two times year during the first year, and at least once per year during the next years of guardianship (curatorship).⁵⁹⁷

Question	Yes	No	Comments
4.5.6. Are children placed in foster care homes geographically <u>close to their biological families</u> , school,	X		Yes, the process of guardianship (curatorship) is organised on the basis of municipality. The territorial unit of the State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service has the obligation to check whether the child, who is placed for guardianship (curatorship), has relatives or other people with whom emotional ties have been previously established

⁵⁹⁴ Lithuania, Seimas (2000), Civil Code (*Lietuvos Respublikos Civilinis kodeksas*), No. VIII-1864, 18 July 2000, last amendment No. XIV-1435, 29 September 2022, Art. 3.267.

⁵⁹⁵ Lithuania, Government (2002). Regarding the approval of the regulations for the organization of child guardianship (*Dėl Vaiko globos organizavimo nuostatų patvirtinimo*). No. 405, 27 March 2002, last amendments No. 1313, 29 December 2022, Art. 71.

⁵⁹⁶ Lithuania, Government (2002). Regarding the approval of the regulations for the organization of child guardianship (*Dėl Vaiko globos organizavimo nuostatų patvirtinimo*). No. 405, 27 March 2002, last amendments No. 1313, 29 December 2022, Art. 73.

⁵⁹⁷ Lithuania, Government (2002). Regarding the approval of the regulations for the organization of child guardianship (*Dėl Vaiko globos organizavimo nuostatų patvirtinimo*). No. 405, 27 March 2002, last amendments No. 1313, 29 December 2022, Art. 74.

friends, and/or community?			or whether there are individuals who are guardians of the child's siblings. If there are no such persons available or they are not suitable for the child as possible guardians (curators), a possible guardian (curator) is sought from the same municipality. Only if there are no available guardians (curators) from the same municipality, a guardian (curator) from another municipality is sought. ⁵⁹⁸
4.5.7. Is there a <u>national registry</u> of residential institutions for children? <u>If yes</u> , please provide information regarding the existent number of residential institutions and their capacity (beds).	X		In accordance with legal acts, the State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service manages the accounting of children placed in guardianship (curatorship) in children foster care institutions, whose owner's rights and duties are implemented by the Ministry of Social Security and Labour and organizes the placements of children to these institutions. Furthermore, all childcare institutions (community-based children care homes and foster childcare institutions) are accounted for. The information about all institutions providing foster childcare are listed in the website of the Ministry of Social Security and Labour. ⁵⁹⁹
4.5.8. Are there <u>accreditation and licensing procedures</u> for residential institutions in place? <u>If yes</u> , please provide information on the legislative framework, the responsible authority and procedure.	X		The residential institutions (community-based children care homes and foster childcare institutions) have to obtain a licence for social care (i.e., residential care). A license to provide social care in a social care institution may be issued to a legal person or other organization or their division wishing to provide social care – in particular, institutional social care in the institution of social care, except for social family (Foster Care-Based household). ⁶⁰⁰ Licenses are managed by the Department of Supervision of Social Services under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour in accordance with legal acts. ⁶⁰¹ A license may be issued to an institution that meets all of the following conditions : 1) is adequately prepared to provide social care– the social care provided by the institution meets the requirements set out in the social care norms for the structure, number, education, premises and the list, quantity and period of

⁵⁹⁸ Lithuania, Government (2002). Regarding the approval of the regulations for the organization of child guardianship (*Dėl Vaiko globos organizavimo nuostatų patvirtinimo*). No. 405, 27 March 2002, last amendments No. 1313, 29 December 2022, Art. 33.

⁵⁹⁹ Lithuania, Ministry of Social Security and Labour (2021). Childcare institutions ([Vaiku globos įstaigos](#)). Last renewed 14 April 2021.

⁶⁰⁰ Lithuania, Seimas (2006), Law on Social Services (*Lietuvos Respublikos socialinių paslaugų įstatymas*), No. X-493, last amendment No. XIV-952, Art. 21.

⁶⁰¹ Lithuania, Seimas (2006), Law on Social Services (*Lietuvos Respublikos socialinių paslaugų įstatymas*), No. X-493, last amendment No. XIV-952, Art. 23.

	<p>personal protective equipment and other measures necessary to ensure the performance of the activity;</p> <p>2) during the last one year before the date of submission of the application for the issuance of a license:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">a) did not provide social care without a license and/or</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">b) the institution's license to provide social care has not been revoked;</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">c) the heads of the institution or other responsible persons have not been given an administrative fine twice or more for providing social care without a license or not complying with the conditions of licensed activity.⁶⁰²</p> <p>If the institution intends to provide social care only to unaccompanied migrant children (in cases when there is a need to receive such children from countries where humanitarian crises took place), a license is issued if:</p> <p>1) the institution ensures continuous care, suitable living premises and meals for unaccompanied children foreigners or children left without parental care;</p> <p>2) the institution's planned provision of institutional social care meets the requirements set out in social care norms for the list, amount and duration of protective measures.</p> <p>Institutions wishing to provide social care services must obtain an appropriate type of license for the provision of social care before starting this activity. Licensing of social care institutions is carried out through the Social Care Licensing Electronic Instrument (SGLEP), to which the institution joins and submits an application for the issuance of a new license, revision or supplementing of an already issued license with new data on the performance of the licensed activity.</p> <p>Social care norms are established by a Decree of Minister of Social Affairs and Labour, and include the requirements for the service of child social care in an institution.⁶⁰³</p>
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⁶⁰² Lithuania, Seimas (2006), Law on Social Services (*Lietuvos Respublikos socialinių paslaugų įstatymas*), No. X-493, last amendment No. XIV-952, Art. 23.

⁶⁰³ Lithuania, Ministry of Social Security and Labour (2007). Regarding the approval of the description of the social care norms (*Dėl Socialinės globos normų aprašo patvirtinimo*). No. A1-46, 20 February 2007, last amendment No. A1-536, 18 August 2022.

<p>4.5.9. Are there <u>national applicable standards</u> relating to the operational framework of such institutions (requirements or quality standards related to the personnel, the infrastructures, the living conditions, and daily care of children)?</p>	<p>X</p>	<p>The Decree of the Minister of Social Affairs and Labour on the “Description of the norms of social care”⁶⁰⁴ indicates the main principles of the provision of social care:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. ensuring individual rights. When organizing and providing social care, it is prohibited to unreasonably and illegally restrict personal rights. All personal problems are solved with the respect, understanding, and sensitivity shown to the person, ensuring and recognizing the individual's right to privacy. When exercising his rights, a person must not restrict the rights of another person; 2. participation and cooperation. In order to ensure the best interest of the person and the well-being of the family, all issues of the organization and provision of social care are resolved with the participation and cooperation of the person himself, his guardian (curator) or the parents of a child, if necessary, other family members or close relatives and representatives of competent institutions. The child's social care is combined with assistance to his family; 3. choice and appropriateness of social care. Social care is organized and provided based on a detailed and comprehensive assessment of a person's need for social care and an assessment of the social care institution's ability to provide these services, recognizing the person's right to choose assistance that meets their reasonable expectations and legitimate interests. A person's opinion, if it does not conflict with the person's legitimate interests, is taken into account, ensuring that the choices of other persons will not be violated; 4. development of personal independence and social integration. In the provision of social care, a person is given the opportunity for self-expression and skills development, is encouraged to manage his own household independently, providing assistance that does not violate human dignity, encourages maintaining or compensating for lost independence and developing the ability to live in society, exercising his rights and fulfilling his duties, maintaining social relations with society, family and close relatives. By providing social care for children, a safe and healthy environment for the child's education and development is ensured, independent life skills are formed from an early age, based on close mutual relations with family and close relatives;
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⁶⁰⁴ Lithuania, Ministry of Social Security and Labour (2007). Regarding the approval of the description of the social care norms (*Dėl Socialinės globos normų aprašo patvirtinimo*). No. A1-46, 20 February 2007, last amendment No. A1-536, 18 August 2022, Art. 3.

5. non-discrimination. Social care is organized and provided according to the assessed needs of the person, and it does not depend on the person's gender, disability, race, nationality, citizenship, origin, social status, faith, age, beliefs or views, sexual orientation and other circumstances not related to social care.⁶⁰⁵

All other requirements or quality standards related to the personnel, the infrastructures, the living conditions, and daily care of children are set out in detail in the Decree of the Minister of Social Affairs and Labour regarding the description of the norms of social care.⁶⁰⁶

4.5.10. How is the residential care staff recruited, vetted, and trained?

The Law on Social Services⁶⁰⁷ stipulates that **social workers, individual care workers** and other employees in the field of social services may work in a social services institution, whose list of positions and performed functions is approved by the Minister of Social Security and Labour. The social services institutions may as well employ education, health care specialists and other workers.⁶⁰⁸

The law stipulates that the **head of a social service institution** must have a higher education and improve professional competence. The performance of the head of the social service institution is evaluated every year in accordance with the procedure established by the Minister of Social Security and Labour.⁶⁰⁹

According to the law, the following person has the right to work as social worker:

1) a person who has obtained a social work qualification (professional bachelor's, bachelor's, master's) degree or who has completed a social work study programme and obtained a social science qualification (professional bachelor's, bachelor's, master's) degree, or

2) a person who, by 31 December 2014, has obtained another qualification (professional bachelor's, bachelor's, master's) degree and a social worker qualification or has completed a social work study

⁶⁰⁵ Lithuania, Ministry of Social Security and Labour (2007). Regarding the approval of the description of the social care norms (*Dėl Socialinės globos normų aprašo patvirtinimo*). No. A1-46, 20 February 2007, last amendment No. A1-536, 18 August 2022, Art. 3.

⁶⁰⁶ Lithuania, Ministry of Social Security and Labour (2007). Regarding the approval of the description of the social care norms (*Dėl Socialinės globos normų aprašo patvirtinimo*). No. A1-46, 20 February 2007, last amendment No. A1-536, 18 August 2022, Annex 1.

⁶⁰⁷ Lithuania, Seimas (2006), Law on Social Services (*Lietuvos Respublikos socialinių paslaugų įstatymas*), No. X-493, last amendment No. XIV-952, Art. 19.

⁶⁰⁸ Lithuania, Ministry of Social Security and Labour (2007). Regarding the approval of the description of the social care norms (*Dėl Socialinės globos normų aprašo patvirtinimo*). No. A1-46, 20 February 2007, last amendment No. A1-536, 18 August 2022, annex 1, Art. 18.

⁶⁰⁹ Lithuania, Seimas (2006), Law on Social Services (*Lietuvos Respublikos socialinių paslaugų įstatymas*), No. X-493, last amendment No. XIV-952, Art. 19.

program, or has completed training for the practical activities of a social worker in accordance with the procedure established by the Minister of Social Security and Labour, or

3) a person who has obtained a social pedagogy qualification (professional bachelor's, bachelor's, master's) degree or social pedagogue qualification, if he/she works with children and/or families.⁶¹⁰

The social care norm applied to childcare institutions states that “The satisfaction of the child's needs is ensured by a qualified team of specialists, which includes personnel with the appropriate personal qualities to work with children.”⁶¹¹

Persons who have the right to work as **personal care worker** if:

1) a person has obtained the qualification of a social worker's assistant or a visiting care worker, or an individual care worker according to the professional training programme of a social worker's assistant or visiting care worker or a personal care worker, or

2) a person who has attended 40 academic hours of introductory training in accordance with the procedure established by the Minister of Social Security and Labour, and having started working within 12 months – has attended no less than 160 academic hours of training, or

3) a person who has obtained the professional qualification of a nurse's assistant in accordance with the procedure established by the Minister of Health and attended 40 academic hours of introductory training in accordance with the procedure established by the Minister of Social Security and Labour.

A **pastoral worker** can work in a social service institution. A pastoral worker loses the right to do pastoral work when the traditional religious community or community revokes the permission or referral.

The social care norm stipulates the following criteria for ensuring the quality of childcare services:

1. The suitability of the head of the social care institution to perform his duties is assessed in accordance with the procedure established by legal acts, he/she has a higher education (since 2015) and knowledge of pedagogy, psychology, nursing and social work.

2. The social care institution employs personnel who have the necessary professional education defined in legal acts, who have completed training, obtained licenses and attestation certificates in accordance with the procedure established by legal acts. Employees of community-based children's care homes who work directly with children (social workers, individual care staff, employment specialists, etc.) have attended training in accordance with the training and counselling programme for guardians (curators), guardians on-duty (professional foster families), adoptive parents, community-based children's care home employees, approved by order of the Director of the State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour. Employees must attend these trainings within 6 months from the start of work in community-based children's care homes.

⁶¹⁰ Lithuania, Seimas (2006), Law on Social Services (*Lietuvos Respublikos socialinių paslaugų įstatymas*), No. X-493, last amendment No. XIV-952, Art. 20.

⁶¹¹ Lithuania, Ministry of Social Security and Labour (2007). Regarding the approval of the description of the social care norms (*Dėl Socialinės globos normų aprašo patvirtinimo*). No. A1-46, 20 February 2007, last amendment No. A1-536, 18 August 2022, annex 1, Art. 18.

3. The child and parents (guardians, curators) are assured that the staff follows the norms of human ethics and the ethical codes of the respective professions in their work. The child is satisfied and speaks well of the staff's human qualities.

4. The social care institution has a description of the procedure for the admission of volunteers to the social care institution approved by the administration of the social care institution, as well as other documents regulating the performance of voluntary work in accordance with the procedure established by legal acts (if volunteers work in the institution). The child and parents (guardians, curators) are assured that the services provided by the volunteers are of high quality. The activities of volunteers are collegially supervised by the specialists of the social care institution and this is recorded in the documents of the social care institution.

5. The child and parents (guardians, curators) are assured that, when accepting employees or mobilizing volunteers to help, the administration of the social care institution is convinced of their suitability to work with children (e.g., the requirements for employees are defined in the rules of conduct for employees or the code of conduct approved by the social care institution). The social care institution has written obligations of volunteers regarding proper treatment of children and confidentiality of data about children.

6. The teamwork of the staff is ensured in the social care institution to solve the child's problems in a complex manner. The child and parents (guardian, carer) know that the social care institution cooperates with the State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service, institutions of education, health care, law enforcement, employment and other. Employees working with children in a social care institution have knowledge about the organization of teamwork and constantly deepen it, can describe the principles of teamwork applied in the institution, as well as the principles of inter-institutional cooperation used in making decisions related to the satisfaction of the best interest of the child.

7. The child and parents (guardians, curators) are guaranteed professional actions of the staff, and it is also ensured that in cases where the child's actions endanger himself/herself and others, the measures used in the interest of his/her safety do not violate the child's rights and his/her legitimate interests. Staff are given the opportunity to acquire and deepen psychological knowledge on how to deal with children during and after unfortunate events, crises and similar cases.

8. The relationship between the staff and the child, parents (guardians, curators) is based on the principles of mutual respect, mutual understanding and agreement. Communication between the child and the staff shows a respectful and warm relationship.

9. The social care institution guarantees that the staff will ensure the confidentiality of information about the child, his parents, guardian (curator) or close relatives.

10. The administration of the social care institution ensures the application of measures related to creating safe and healthy working conditions for the staff and this is recorded in the documents of the social care institution.⁶¹²

Question	Yes	No	Comments
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⁶¹² Lithuania, Ministry of Social Security and Labour (2007). Regarding the approval of the description of the social care norms (*Dėl Socialinės globos normų aprašo patvirtinimo*). No. A1-46, 20 February 2007, last amendment No. A1-536, 18 August 2022, annex 1, Art. 18.

<p>4.5.11. Are children placed in alternative care allowed to <u>lodge complaints</u> against the personnel /foster parents and care workers and report abuse or violations of their rights? Are these procedures child-friendly and respectful of confidentiality?</p> <p><u>If yes</u>, briefly describe to whom and how children can lodge complaints.</p>	<p>X</p>	<p>Inside the childcare institution (community-based children care homes and foster childcare institutions) the constructive reaction to the complaints by children, their parents, guardians or curators is encouraged. The Social Care Norm requires that “A benevolent and constructive reaction to complaints and requests prevails”.⁶¹³ In the implementation of this norm the Description of the social care norms indicates and requires of the social care institution that “the child, according to his age and maturity, his parents (guardians, curators), close relatives and staff of the social care home are given the opportunity to contact the administration of the social care institution regarding the problems that have arisen and they receive understanding and supportive constructive reactions in solving them.”⁶¹⁴ Also, it is required that “the child, according to his age and maturity, his parents (guardians, curators), close relatives are ensured prompt, benevolent reaction of the employees of the social care institution to their complaints and help is provided in solving the issues raised in them. In the institutions of social care, the suggestions and complaints of children, their parents (guardians, curators) are recorded and the answers are given to them in time according to the procedure provided for in the social care institution and the procedure established by legal acts.⁶¹⁵ This question has to be addressed in the internal regulations of each social care institution.</p> <p>Speaking about ensuring the quality of the social service provided to the child, The Law on Social Services foresees the right to complain only to persons who have full legal capacity. The law indicates that a person (one of the adult family members) or his guardian, curator, or other interested persons may complain to the director of the municipal administration against the social services institution regarding the inappropriate provision of general social services and social care⁶¹⁶. Having identified violations in the</p>
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⁶¹³ Lithuania, Ministry of Social Security and Labour (2007). Regarding the approval of the description of the social care norms (*Dėl Socialinės globos normų aprašo patvirtinimo*). No. A1-46, 20 February 2007, last amendment No. A1-536, 18 August 2022.

⁶¹⁴ Lithuania, Ministry of Social Security and Labour (2007). Regarding the approval of the description of the social care norms (*Dėl Socialinės globos normų aprašo patvirtinimo*). No. A1-46, 20 February 2007, last amendment No. A1-536, 18 August 2022.

⁶¹⁵ Lithuania, Ministry of Social Security and Labour (2007). Regarding the approval of the description of the social care norms (*Dėl Socialinės globos normų aprašo patvirtinimo*). No. A1-46, 20 February 2007, last amendment No. A1-536, 18 August 2022, annex 1, Art. 21.

	<p>provision of general social services and social care, the director of the municipal administration must demand that the deficiencies be eliminated within the set deadline. If the offender does not eliminate the shortcomings, the director of the municipal administration has the right to initiate the social services institution to suspend or terminate the provision of general social services and social care. Furthermore, a person (one of the adult family members) or his guardian, curator, or other interested persons may complain to the Department of the Supervision of Social Services about a social care institution providing inadequate social care. Having identified violations of the provision of social care, the Social Services Supervision Department has the right to suspend or revoke the license issued to the social care institution in accordance with the procedure established by the Law on Social Services.⁶¹⁷</p> <p>The right to complain about child rights' violations in general is established in the Law on Fundamentals of Protection of the Rights of the Child which states that a child may independently apply to the Ombudsman on the Protection of the Rights of Child, the State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service or its authorized territorial department, the police or an educational, health care or other institution, and upon reaching the age of 14, - to the court for violation of his rights.⁶¹⁸ Any child may address these institutions, whether living in foster family, or in any form of guardianship (curatorship).</p> <p>The State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service has underscored that children's complaints are addressed during the supervision of guardianship (curatorship). The Service carries out the supervision of guardianship (curatorship) of all children in guardianship (curatorship), whether they cared for in foster family, social family (Foster Care-Based household), by guardians on-duty (professional foster families), or in institutional settings (community-based children care homes and foster childcare institutions). The representatives of the Service visit the child, communicate with him/her without restrictions, listen to his/her opinion on the conditions of guardianship (curatorship), his/her relationship with the guardian (curator), relations with parents or close relatives, other relatives and other persons with whom he/she has emotional ties. When during the visit</p>
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⁶¹⁸ Lithuania, Seimas (1996). Law on Fundamentals of Protection of the Rights of the Child (*LR Vaiko teisių apsaugos pagrindų įstatymas*), No. I-1234, 14 March 1996, last amendments No. XIV-1512, 10 November 2022, Art. 29.

		<p>of the child the signs that the child's guardian (curator) may not perform his duties properly are indicated, or he/she does not ensure the protection of the rights and legitimate interests of the child, uses his/her rights for selfish purposes, the territorial department of the Service organizes the review of guardianship (curatorship), during which there is communication with the child. When communicating with a child in the process of establishing guardianship (curatorship) or in the course of supervision the specialists of the territorial department of the Service explain to him/her about his/her rights at any time to contact the Service if he/she thinks his/her rights may be violated.</p> <p>It should also be noted that the Service has a Children Rights Line, which advises children and legal representatives on matters of concern to them.⁶¹⁹</p>
<p>4.5.12. What is the <u>assistance available to adolescents that leave alternative care to live independently?</u></p> <p>(e.g. financial, housing, vocational, educational, employment, life skills, mental health services, social or emotional)?</p> <p>Briefly describe who is responsible for such assistance?</p>	x	<p>During the implementation of the European Social Fund-financed measure "Transformation of Institutional Care", after-care services for young people leaving institutional care were piloted: 254 young people received the after-care care service. The Ministry, taking into account the successfully provided pilot services for young people and aiming to facilitate the social integration of young people in the community, encourages the continuation of this service. By order No. A1-810 of November 15, 2021, the Accompaniment service for young people was included in the Catalogue of social services.⁶²⁰</p> <p>Accompaniment service for young people is a set of interrelated services and/or measures that are provided in order to help young recipients of the accompaniment service adapt to the social environment, develop their abilities to solve emerging social and other problems, i.e. to facilitate the social integration in the community of the recipients of this accompaniment service for young people.⁶²¹</p> <p>Beneficiaries are children left without parental care (from 16 years old) who are cared for in a childcare institution (community-based children care homes and foster childcare institutions), children experiencing social risk (from 16 years old), children (from 16 years old) who live in families experiencing social risk, adults (up to 24 years old), who were cared for in a childcare institution (community-based</p>

⁶¹⁹ An email from State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service, dated 27 April 2023.

⁶²⁰ Lithuania, State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service (2022). *Annual Report of 2021*. 31 March 2022.

⁶²¹ Lithuania, Ministry of Social Security and Labour (2006). Regarding the Approval of the Catalogue of Social Services (*Dėl Socialinių paslaugų katalogo patvirtinimo*). No. A1-93, 5 April 2006, last amendment No. A1-451, 30 June 2022.

	<p>children care homes and foster childcare institutions) or who lived in families experiencing social risk.</p> <p>The service can be provided at a social services institution, or at a person's home. The service is provided until the recipient of the service turns 24 years old.</p> <p>For children left without parental care (from 16 years old) who are placed in a childcare institutions (community-based children care homes and foster childcare institutions): help with accommodation in an independent living home is provided for at least 10 hours per day; assistance without accommodation in independent living homes is provided as needed.</p> <p>For children experiencing social risk (from 16 years old), children (from 16 years old) living in families experiencing social risk, help is provided from 1 to 10 hours per week.</p> <p>For persons who have reached the age of adulthood (and are up to 24 years old), who were cared for in a childcare institution (community-based children care homes and foster childcare institutions) or who lived in families experiencing social risk (both providing services with accommodation in independent living homes or sheltered housing, and without accommodation), assistance is provided from 1 to 10 hours a week.</p> <p>Composition of the service: Communication, organization of psychological and psychotherapeutic assistance, development and maintenance of daily life skills (personal budget skills, purchasing necessary goods, services and paying taxes, planning and doing housework, etc.), development of social skills, support and (or) restoration, development of work skills, other services.</p> <p>Specialists providing services can be social workers, individual care workers, psychologists, other specialists.</p> <p>The service with accommodation in an independent living home can be provided:</p> <p>for children left without parental care (from 16 years of age), who are place in childcare institution (community-based children care homes and foster childcare institutions);</p> <p>persons who have reached the age of majority (up to 24 years old), who were earlier placed in childcare institutions (community-based children care homes and foster childcare institutions) or who lived in families experiencing social risk.</p> <p>The service with accommodation in sheltered housing can be provided for persons who have reached the age of majority (up to 24 years old), who placed in a childcare institution (community-based children care homes and foster childcare</p>
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	<p>institutions) or who lived in families experiencing social risk.⁶²²</p> <p>The description of the social supervision accreditation procedure approved by the Minister of Social Affairs and Labour regulates the submission of applications and documents required for the provision of accredited social supervision, their evaluation, social supervision accreditation procedures, the powers and functions of the municipal administration, and the accounting of accredited institutions providing social supervision.⁶²³</p> <p>Monthly financial support is provided to young adults who were formerly in guardianship (curatorship) if, after the child's guardianship (curatorship) has ended due to majority, emancipation or marriage, the person is studying in a general education curriculum, a formal vocational training curriculum, or a full-time higher education curriculum, during the period of his/her education, but not beyond the age of 24. Currently the monthly care allowance and the targeted supplement amount to 514,5 Eur.⁶²⁴</p> <p>A person is granted a lump-sum settlement allowance of 75 basic social allowances (EUR 3,675 as of 1 January 2023) after the end of the guardianship (care) due to his/her coming of age, emancipation or getting married.</p> <p>The lump-sum settlement allowance may be used:</p> <p>for the purchase of a dwelling (residential premises); for the payment of part of a loan for the construction or purchase of a dwelling; for the rent of a dwelling; for the payment of utility bills for the rented or owned dwelling; for the repair or reconstruction of a dwelling; for the purchase of furniture, household appliances, video and sound equipment, household goods, one personal computer, one mobile phone; for the cost of studies and non-formal education; and for the purchase of learning and working materials; the purchase of a plot of land; the cost of paid health care goods and services; the purchase of a car, moped, motorcycle, provided that the person holds a valid driving licence</p>
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⁶²² Lithuania, Ministry of Social Security and Labour (2006). Regarding the Approval of the Catalogue of Social Services (*Dėl Socialinių paslaugų katalogo patvirtinimo*). No. A1-93, 5 April 2006, last amendment No. A1-451, 30 June 2022.

⁶²³ Lithuania, Ministry of Social Security and Labour (2020). Regarding the approval of the description of the Social Care Accreditation Procedure (*Dėl Socialinės priežiūros akreditavimo tvarkos aprašo patvirtinimo*), No. A1-622, 30 June 2020, last amendment A1-447, 30 June 2022.

⁶²⁴ Lithuania, Ministry of Social Security and Labour (2022) Benefits for children without parental care ([Išmokos tėvų globos netekusiems vaikams](#)). 30 December 2022.

		certifying that he/she has the right to drive a motor vehicle in the relevant category, a bicycle, a motorised bicycle (including an electric scooter) or a scooter without a motor. ⁶²⁵
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4. 5.13. What assistance is provided to families— while the child is placed to alternative care— to support the return of the child in the family? By whom? Who coordinates the assistance? Please briefly describe.

Ca. 150 words

The assistance is organised as part of **case management procedure**. After the start of the case management process, a group of specialists formed by the case manager works with the family, in which representatives of the State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service or its territorial units, institutions providing healthcare, education, social services in that municipality, and relevant law enforcement institutions are invited by the case manager to participate, or specialists in other fields according to the needs of the child and family. Wardens, representatives of the local community and non-governmental organizations may also be invited to participate.⁶²⁶ When applying case management, assistance to the child and family must be focused on the organization of complex assistance to the child and his family, provision of services, provision of various assistance when complex long-term continuous assistance is needed to help the child and family solve the problems that have arisen.

If the child **was taken from the family** due to real and immediate danger to the child's psychological or physical safety, and if during the review of the family assistance plan during the case management, it becomes clear that the **circumstances** that caused a real danger to the physical or mental safety, health or life of the child **disappear**, or the **family fulfils** all the conditions set during the case management process, a case management meeting is immediately organized. During the meeting a decision is made on the urgent return of the child to the family. The case management meeting, during which a decision is made on the urgent return of the child to the family, is immediately organized in cases where the conditions set for the family during the case management can be fulfilled while the child is in the family, without causing a real danger to the child's physical or mental safety, health or life.⁶²⁷

Otherwise, while **the child is removed from the family**, the services for the family are provided with the aim of solving the underlying problems which led to the removal of the child from the family, up to 12 months. The child is then in temporary guardianship (curatorship) until it can be established that the parents have changed their behaviour and there is no more danger to the physical or mental safety, health or life of the child. The period of the temporary guardianship (curatorship) may be extended, but not more than 6 months. The family is the recipient of complex social services indicated in the social services catalogue, and other services if needed.

⁶²⁵ Lithuania, Ministry of Social Security and Labour (2022) Benefits for children without parental care ([lšmokos tėvų globos netekusiems vaikams](#)). 30 December 2022.

⁶²⁶ Lithuania, Seimas (1996). Law on Fundamentals of Protection of the Rights of the Child (*LR Vaiko teisių apsaugos pagrindų įstatymas*), No. I-1234, 14 March 1996, last amendments No. XIV-1512, 10 November 2022, Art. 37.

⁶²⁷ Lithuania, Seimas (1996). Law on Fundamentals of Protection of the Rights of the Child (*LR Vaiko teisių apsaugos pagrindų įstatymas*), No. I-1234, 14 March 1996, last amendments No. XIV-1512, 10 November 2022, Art. 37.

Mobile team also works with the family in crisis in case if the child is in temporary guardianship (curatorship). This team is appointed by the State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service, and provides intensive help for the family in crisis.⁶²⁸ It is composed of at least two specialists, i. e., psychologist and/or social worker and/or crisis management specialist

<p>4.5.14. Is any <u>assistance</u> provided to children and families <u>upon return of the child in the family</u>? Briefly describe. Who is responsible for such assistance?</p> <p>Is there any monitoring and follow-up of such cases?</p> <p>Who is coordinating assistance and support?</p>	X		<p>Upon return of the child to the family the case manager and other specialists assist the family under the family assistance plan. The case manager, if necessary, organizes the adjustment of the family assistance plan or coordinates the implementation of the measures provided for in the family assistance plan.⁶²⁹</p> <p>There is no comprehensive monitoring system of such cases though.</p>
<p>4.5.15. Are decisions of placement in alternative care reviewed?</p> <p><u>If yes</u>, please provide the applicable legislative provisions. How frequently is this done? By whom?</p> <p>Are the children’s views taken into consideration?</p>	X		<p>The decision depends on the behaviour and efforts of parents to change their behaviour and on the progress of implementation of the family assistance plan established in the process of case management procedure.</p> <p>There may be the following situations where a review of decisions is made⁶³⁰:</p> <p>1. The case manager and other specialists participating in the case management process determine that the child's parents or one of the parents have changed their inappropriate behaviour towards the child, so there is no real danger to his physical or mental safety, health or life and no social risk factors remain. In this case, the territorial unit of the State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service (hereinafter – Service) immediately, but no later than on the</p>

⁶²⁸ Lithuania, Seimas (1996). Law on Fundamentals of Protection of the Rights of the Child (*Lietuvos Respublikos Vaiko teisių apsaugos pagrindų įstatymas*), No. I-1234, 14 March 1996, last amendments No. XIV-1512, 10 November 2022, Art. 2 (7).

⁶²⁹ Lithuania, Ministry of Social Security and Labour (2018). Resolution Regarding the approval of the description of the case management procedure (*Nutarimas Dėl Atvejo vadybos tvarkos aprašo patvirtinimo*), No. A1-141, 29 March 2018, last amendment A1-802, 39 December 2019.

⁶³⁰ Lithuania, Government (2002). Regarding the approval of the regulations for the organization of child guardianship (*Dėl Vaiko globos organizavimo nuostatų patvirtinimo*). No. 405, 27 March 2002, last amendments No. 1313, 29 December 2022, Art. 84-88.

next working day from the date of receipt of the reasoned proposal of the persons involved in the case management, submits an order to the municipal administration that established the child's temporary guardianship (curatorship) to cancel the child's temporary guardianship (curatorship) and returns the child to the parents or one of the parents, if only one parent can provide a safe environment for the child.

2. The case manager and other specialists involved in the case management process determine **that the child's parents have begun to change their behaviour, take care of the child's safety, upbringing, care**, so there is no real danger to the child's physical or mental safety, health or life, but part of the child's functioning and social environmental risk factors or part of risk factors related to the child's parents or other legal representatives, their relationship with the child remain. In this case, the territorial department of the Service shall, within three working days from the date of receipt of the reasoned proposal, submit an order to the municipal administration that established the child's temporary guardianship (curatorship) to cancel the child's temporary guardianship (curatorship), and return the child to the parents (father or mother), and the case manager, if necessary, organizes the adjustment of the family assistance plan or coordinates the implementation of the measures provided for in the assistance plan.

3. The case manager and other professionals participating in the case management process determine **that the child's parents are trying to change their behaviour** or there are other reasons that can reasonably be expected to exist in the future to return the child to the family, but risk factors remain for the child's functioning and social environment or risk factors related to the child's parents or other legal representatives and their relationship with the child. In such a case, the territorial department of the Service makes a decision to continue temporary guardianship (curatorship), but not longer than six months, and the case manager organizes the adjustment of the assistance plan.

4. The case manager and other specialists participating in the case management process determine **that the child's parents do not try and change their behaviour, avoid fulfilling their responsibilities** to raise the child, abuse parental authority or do not take care of the child (i.e. the support provided and provided in the assistance plan did not help the parents). In this case, the territorial department of the Service applies to the court within twenty working days from the day of receipt of the reasoned proposal regarding the limitation of the authority of the parents or the existing sole parent, the determination of the child's permanent guardianship (curatorship) and the awarding of maintenance

	<p>to the child. In such a case, the child's temporary guardianship (curatorship) continues until the court makes a decision regarding the limitation of parental authority, determining the child's permanent guardianship (curatorship) and awarding maintenance to the child.</p> <p>5. The case manager and other professionals participating in the case management process determine that the child's parents do not try and change their behaviour, avoid fulfilling their responsibilities, raise the child, abuse parental authority or do not take care of the child (i.e. do not accept the help and services provided in the family assistance plan). In such a case, the territorial department of the Service, in accordance with Article 3.180, Part 2 of the Civil Code, within sixty calendar days from the day of determining the child's temporary custody, applies to the court regarding the limitation of parental (father or mother) authority. In such a case, the child's temporary guardianship (curatorship) continues until the court makes a decision on the indefinite limitation of parental authority, determining the child's permanent guardianship (curatorship) and awarding maintenance to the child.</p> <p>When a decision is made to replace temporary guardianship (curatorship) with permanent guardianship (curatorship), the Service applies to the municipal administration in order to end temporary guardianship (curatorship). The mayor of the municipality, upon receiving the request to cancel the child's temporary guardianship (curatorship) adopted in the above-mentioned cases, within three working days from the day of receiving it, issues an order on the end of the child's temporary guardianship (curatorship). The permanent guardianship (curatorship) is then established by the court.</p> <p>If a decision is made to return the child to his/her parents (one of the parents), the process is organized by the territorial department of the Service, in the territory of which the child lives. The territorial department of the Service returns the child to the parents immediately, but no later than the next working day from the date of adoption of the order of the mayor of the municipality on the cancellation of the child's temporary guardianship (curatorship). When returning the child to the parents (one of the parents), the child's parents (one of the parents), a representative of the territorial department of the Service, and the child's guardian (curator) are involved.⁶³¹</p>
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⁶³¹ Lithuania, Government (2002). Regarding the approval of the regulations for the organization of child guardianship (*Dėl Vaiko globos organizavimo nuostatų patvirtinimo*). No. 405, 27 March 2002, last amendments No. 1313, 29 December 2022, Art. 84-88.

		An important update from 2019 to the Law on Fundamentals of Protection of the Rights of the Child allows parents or other representatives of the child, in accordance with the law, to complain to the court about illegal actions and decisions of the employees of the State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service or its authorised territorial department, police officers or employees of other authorities, and also have the right to apply to Ombudsman of the Rights of the Child and other institutions with the right to examine such complaints. ⁶³²
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4.5.16. Is there a legal framework regarding adoption? Briefly describe the core elements and responsible authorities, also considering differences between within-country and between-country adoptions. Is private adoption permitted in the country?

Ca. 200 words

In Lithuania, adoption is regulated in detail in the Civil Code⁶³³.

Article 3.180 of the Civil Code states that when parents (father or mother) avoid their duties to raise children, abuse parental authority, treat children cruelly, have a harmful influence on children with their immoral behaviour, or do not take care of children, the court can make a decision on the temporary or indefinite restriction of parental authority (of father or mother). Indefinite restriction of parental authority can be applied when the court concludes that the parents (father or mother) cause special damage to the child's development or do not care for him/her at all, and there is no evidence that the situation may change. After limiting parental authority for an indefinite period, the child can **be adopted** without the separate consent of the parents⁶³⁴.

Article 3.209 of the Civil Code indicates that adoption is possible only in the interests of the child. It is allowed to adopt only those **children** who are listed in the list of children to be adopted, except in cases where a spouse's child is adopted or when a child living in the adopter's family is adopted. Adoption is allowed only for minor children who are at least three months old. It is not allowed to adopt your own children, sisters and brothers. Only the spouse of the adopter (stepmother or stepfather) is allowed to adopt an adopted child. Adoption by separation of siblings is allowed only in exceptional cases, when it is not possible to ensure the life of sisters and brothers together due to their health, or when, due to various circumstances, sisters and brothers have already been separated and it is not possible to ensure their life together⁶³⁵.

⁶³² Lithuania, Seimas (1996). Law on Fundamentals of Protection of the Rights of the Child (*LR Vaiko teisių apsaugos pagrindų įstatymas*), No. I-1234, 14 March 1996, last amendments No. XIV-1512, 10 November 2022, Art. 29.

⁶³³ Lithuania, Seimas (2000), Civil Code (*Lietuvos Respublikos Civilinis kodeksas*), No. VIII-1864, 18 July 2000, last amendment No. XIV-1435, 29 September 2022

⁶³⁴ Lithuania, Seimas (2000), Civil Code (*Lietuvos Respublikos Civilinis kodeksas*), No. VIII-1864, 18 July 2000, last amendment No. XIV-1435, 29 September 2022

⁶³⁵ Lithuania, Seimas (2000), Civil Code (*Lietuvos Respublikos Civilinis kodeksas*), No. VIII-1864, 18 July 2000, last amendment No. XIV-1435, 29 September 2022

Article 3.210 of the Civil Code indicates that **adopters** can be adults of working age of both sexes, who are properly prepared for adoption in accordance with the procedure established by the Government⁶³⁶. In exceptional cases, the court may allow adoption for older persons as well. Spouses have the right to adopt. In exceptional cases, an unmarried person or one of the spouses is allowed to adopt. Two unmarried persons cannot adopt the same child. Persons wishing to adopt a child (except for the spouse and relatives of the child's mother (father)) must be included in the record of persons wishing to adopt a child maintained by State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service⁶³⁷.

Article 3.211 of the Civil Code foresees that the **age difference** between the adopter and the child to be adopted must not be less than eighteen years. When adopting your spouse's children or adopted children, the age difference can be reduced by the court to fifteen years⁶³⁸.

Article 3.212 indicates that adoption requires the **written consent** of the child's parents, approved by the court. If a child to be adopted has a permanent guardian (curator) appointed according to the procedure established by law, and guardianship (curatorship) has been established for this child in the foster family, the written consent of the guardian (curator) approved by the court is necessary. Reasons for refusing consent to adoption must be justified. The court, having established that the reasons for refusing consent to adoption are unfounded, may make a decision to adopt without the consent of the guardian (curator). Parents can give consent to adopt a child to a specific adopter only if he is a relative. Article 3.213 states that parents can withdraw their consent to adoption if a court decision has not yet been made regarding the adoption. Article 3.214 states that the consent of the parents of the child to be adopted is not required if the parents are unknown or dead, if the parents have unlimited parental authority or if the parents have been declared dead⁶³⁹.

Regarding the **consent of the child**, Article 3.215 states that when a child over the age of ten is adopted, their written consent is required. The child gives his/her consent to the court, without this consent, adoption is not possible. When a child under the age of ten is adopted, if he/she is able to express his/her opinion, he/she must be heard in court, and the court must take into account the child's opinion when making a decision, if it does not conflict with his best interests⁶⁴⁰.

Article 3.217 indicates that persons certified by the State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service find out whether there are no obstacles to adoption provided for in the Civil Code for future adopters, examine their living conditions, way of life, collect information about their health status and present

⁶³⁶ Lithuania, Government (2002), On the approval of the Provisions on the organisation of adoption and the description of the procedure for keeping records of persons wishing to adopt children and children available for adoption in the Republic of Lithuania (*Dėl Jvaikinimo organizavimo nuostatų ir Asmenų, norinčių jvaikinti vaikus, ir galimų jvaikinti vaikų apskaitos Lietuvos Respublikoje tvarkos aprašo patvirtinimo*). No. 1422, 10 September 2002, last amendment No. 689, 29 June 2022.

⁶³⁷ Lithuania, Seimas (2000), Civil Code (*Lietuvos Respublikos Civilinis kodeksas*), No. VIII-1864, 18 July 2000, last amendment No. XIV-1435, 29 September 2022

⁶³⁸ Lithuania, Seimas (2000), Civil Code (*Lietuvos Respublikos Civilinis kodeksas*), No. VIII-1864, 18 July 2000, last amendment No. XIV-1435, 29 September 2022

⁶³⁹ Lithuania, Seimas (2000), Civil Code (*Lietuvos Respublikos Civilinis kodeksas*), No. VIII-1864, 18 July 2000, last amendment No. XIV-1435, 29 September 2022

⁶⁴⁰ Lithuania, Seimas (2000), Civil Code (*Lietuvos Respublikos Civilinis kodeksas*), No. VIII-1864, 18 July 2000, last amendment No. XIV-1435, 29 September 2022

a conclusion on the readiness of future adopters to adopt. Then the future adoptive parents undergo the training for future adoptive parents, which is organised by the Foster Care Centres.⁶⁴¹

Whether the adoptive parents have suitable conditions and are properly prepared for adoption is decided by the court examining the application for adoption. For prospective adoptive parents intending to adopt a child abroad, the conclusion of whether there are no statutory obstacles to adoption and whether the prospective adoptive parents are properly prepared for adoption is confirmed by a ruling by the Vilnius District Court.⁶⁴²

The selection of adoptive parents for a particular child is made by the Adoption Commission, which selects the person who is best suited to the interests and needs of the child to be adopted.⁶⁴³ The Commission is composed of 7 members, 4 of whom are delegated by the State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service, 2 - by the Ministry of Social Security and Labour and one - by the National Association of Foster Parents, Adoptive Parents Training and Counselling Specialists.

Article 3.218 states that the State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service provides the court with data on the origin, development, state of health and family of the adopted child. Before submitting the application for adoption to the court, the State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service must provide data on potential adoptable children to all persons registered in the queue of those wishing to adopt⁶⁴⁴.

Article 3.219 empowers the State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service with handling the accounting of persons who want to adopt children and children who can be adopted, according to the procedure established by the Government⁶⁴⁵.

The examination of the adoption case is stipulated in Article 3.221. The court examines the adoption case in a closed court session. Without the consent of the adoptive parents, until the child reaches

⁶⁴¹ Lithuania, Government (2002), On the approval of the Provisions on the organisation of adoption and the description of the procedure for keeping records of persons wishing to adopt children and children available for adoption in the Republic of Lithuania (*Dėl įvaikinimo organizavimo nuostatų ir Asmenų, norinčių įvaikinti vaikus, ir galimų įvaikinti vaikų apskaitos Lietuvos Respublikoje tvarkos aprašo patvirtinimo*). No. 1422, 10 September 2002, last amendment No. 689, 29 June 2022, Art. 19; Lithuania, State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service (2018) Regarding the approval of the training and counselling programme for guardians (curators), on-duty guardians, adoptive parents, community childcare home employees (*Dėl Globėjų (rūpintojų), budinčių globotojų, įtėvių, bendruomeninių vaikų globos namų darbuotojų mokymo ir konsultavimo programos patvirtinimo*), No. BV-66, 1 June 2018..

⁶⁴² Lithuania, Seimas (2000), Civil Code (*Lietuvos Respublikos Civilinis kodeksas*), No. VIII-1864, 18 July 2000, last amendment No. XIV-1435, 29 September 2022

⁶⁴³ Lithuania, Government (2002), On the approval of the Provisions on the organisation of adoption and the description of the procedure for keeping records of persons wishing to adopt children and children available for adoption in the Republic of Lithuania (*Dėl įvaikinimo organizavimo nuostatų ir Asmenų, norinčių įvaikinti vaikus, ir galimų įvaikinti vaikų apskaitos Lietuvos Respublikoje tvarkos aprašo patvirtinimo*). No. 1422, 10 September 2002, last amendment No. 689, 29 June 2022, Art. 25.

⁶⁴⁴ Lithuania, Seimas (2000), Civil Code (*Lietuvos Respublikos Civilinis kodeksas*), No. VIII-1864, 18 July 2000, last amendment No. XIV-1435, 29 September 2022.

⁶⁴⁵ Lithuania, Seimas (2000), Civil Code (*Lietuvos Respublikos Civilinis kodeksas*), No. VIII-1864, 18 July 2000, last amendment No. XIV-1435, 29 September 2022.

the age of majority, data about the adoption cannot be disclosed. A child over the age of fourteen, as well as the child's former close relatives by descent or other persons, may be given information about adoption with the permission of the court that examined the adoption case, if this information is necessary for the health of the child, his close relative or other persons or other important reasons⁶⁴⁶.

Article 3.223 sets out the priority in case several persons wish to adopt the same child, priority is given in the following order, taking into account the best interests of the child:

- 1) persons adopting their spouse's children and adopted children;
- 2) relatives;
- 3) persons adopting siblings together;
- 4) persons whose family has established permanent guardianship (curatorship) for a child who is to be adopted;
- 5) citizens of the Republic of Lithuania;
- 6) persons whose permanent (main) place of residence is in the Republic of Lithuania;
- 7) spouses⁶⁴⁷.

Speaking about adoption for foreigners who wish to adopt a child from Lithuania, Article 3.224 indicates that the same adoption rules apply to persons whose permanent residence is in a foreign country, citizens of a foreign state and stateless persons whose permanent residence is in the Republic of Lithuania adopting a child. The following conditions are additionally imposed, all of which must be fulfilled:

- 1) within six months from the entry of the child into the list of children available for adoption, there are no requests from citizens of the Republic of Lithuania, whose permanent residence is in the Republic of Lithuania, to adopt or foster a child;
- 2) the guardian (curator) of a child to whom a permanent guardian (curator) has been appointed and guardianship (curatorship) has been established in the foster family gives written consent to the adoption. Refusal to give consent to adoption must be motivated;
- 3) the reasons for refusing to give the written consent to adoption referred to in point 2 of this part are unfounded⁶⁴⁸.

The court has the right to adopt a decision in the best interests of the child without the consent of the guardian (curator).

When a child is adopted in another country, all necessary measures must be taken so that the placement of the child in another country does not allow the persons involved to receive unjustified material benefits. When deciding the issue of child adoption the heredity, ethnic origin, religious and

⁶⁴⁶ Lithuania, Seimas (2000), Civil Code (*Lietuvos Respublikos Civilinis kodeksas*), No. VIII-1864, 18 July 2000, last amendment No. XIV-1435, 29 September 2022

⁶⁴⁷ Lithuania, Seimas (2000), Civil Code (*Lietuvos Respublikos Civilinis kodeksas*), No. VIII-1864, 18 July 2000, last amendment No. XIV-1435, 29 September 2022

⁶⁴⁸ Lithuania, Seimas (2000), Civil Code (*Lietuvos Respublikos Civilinis kodeksas*), No. VIII-1864, 18 July 2000, last amendment No. XIV-1435, 29 September 2022

cultural affiliation and native language of the child's upbringing must be taken into account, as well as whether the law of the state to which the child is adopted complies with requirements of the Hague Convention on Protection of Children and Cooperation in Respect of Intercountry Adoption.

Article 3.225 states that adoption carried out abroad is recognized in accordance with the procedure and conditions established by international agreements and the norms of the Civil Code.. Article 3.226 foresees that children - citizens of a foreign state living in the Republic of Lithuania - are adopted according to the procedure established by this section, if no other procedure for their adoption is established in an international treaty or agreement with the relevant foreign state and the Republic of Lithuania⁶⁴⁹.

Private adoption is not allowed in Lithuania, but the parents' consent is required regarding adoption in general.

The Civil Code foresees that spouses have the right to adopt. In exceptional cases, an unmarried person or one of the spouses are allowed to adopt. Unmarried persons may not adopt the same child.⁶⁵⁰ Marriage in Lithuania may be only between the members of different sexes.⁶⁵¹ Thus, the adoption by heterosexual unmarried partners or homosexual couples is not allowed in Lithuania.

4.5.17. What are the main challenges encountered and gaps at the policy and legislative level in relation to alternative care? *Please consider available studies reports at national levels conducted by public or private institutions, child protection organisations, civil society, human rights institutions, academic community, and other sources such as concluding observations of the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child on country reports etc.*

Ca. 250 words

The Ministry of Social Security and Labour has indicated in Family Policy Strengthening Development Program that in Lithuania 2021-2030, the system of help for coping with crisis situations is fragmented and poorly accessible, there is an underdeveloped system of prevention, intervention and postvention of crisis consequences due to following factors:

- 1) lack of competences of specialists providing social services and lack of cooperation between public service providers in identifying the need for assistance;
- 2) undeveloped specialized individualized services provided in various crisis situations;
- 3) families and communities are not always able to identify the crises that arise for them and solve the challenges that arise;
- 4) municipalities give unequal priority to proactive response to crises;

⁶⁴⁹ Lithuania, Seimas (2000), Civil Code (*Lietuvos Respublikos Civilinis kodeksas*), No. VIII-1864, 18 July 2000, last amendment No. XIV-1435, 29 September 2022

⁶⁵⁰ Lithuania, Seimas (2000), Civil Code (*Lietuvos Respublikos Civilinis kodeksas*), No. VIII-1864, 18 July 2000, last amendment No. XIV-1435, 29 September 2022, Art. 3.210.

⁶⁵¹ Lithuania, Seimas (2000), Civil Code (*Lietuvos Respublikos Civilinis kodeksas*), No. VIII-1864, 18 July 2000, last amendment No. XIV-1435, 29 September 2022. Art. 3.7.

5) inefficient data management process of the Social Support for the Family information system results in a limited analysis of the need for services.

The Ministry also notes that the public sector lacks qualified workers in the field of social services:

- 1) the salary of social workers is 11% lower than the national average salary;
- 2) unsafe working conditions in the provision of social services to non-self-sufficient or partially self-sufficient persons and/or persons experiencing social risk;
- 3) fragmentary improvement of the professional competence of employees in the field of social services.

The Ministry also emphasized that the allowance given to children under guardianship does not ensure their basic needs. The allowances have since been increased, and presently amount to 444,8 to 508,5 Eur a month.⁶⁵²

The measures of progress that solve these problems are foreseen in the Family Policy Strengthening Development Program 2021-2030: to improve the quality and accessibility of social services, to increase the effectiveness of social support in crisis situations in the family; to increase the support provided to children in guardianship (curatorship) in order to ensure the most necessary needs (nutrition, health care, education).⁶⁵³

The Ministry of Social Security and Labour also highlights the underdeveloped services for guardians (curators) and guardians on-duty (professional foster families). According to data from 2022, a total of 66 foster care centres operate in Lithuania, the task of which is to train guardians (curators), adoptive parents, guardians on-duty (professional foster families) and assess their readiness to raise a child, provide support in case of difficulties, advise, strengthen family support, organize training, mutual support groups. However, foster care centres lack professional specialists who could provide services to the child's foster families, adoptive families and the child itself. In the case of insufficiently competent assistance, it becomes difficult to find families willing to be guardians or adoptive parents, and often even existing ones experience burnout syndrome and end guardianship or curatorship. The guardian may be removed from his duties if he does not properly fulfil his duties or refuses to be a guardian himself because the responsibility of taking care of the child is too difficult for him. Most often, the duty of guardians is abandoned when they cannot accept the child's behaviour, set too high expectations for both the child and themselves, and do not receive quality help in time.

Guardians on-duty (professional foster families) are one of the stages of the implementation of the transformation of institutional childcare, which must be improved. Guardians on-duty (professional foster families) usually accept children up to 5-6 years old into their families. For older children, the opportunity to enter the family is very small, because they have more negative experiences, such children have behavioural and emotional disorders, it is more difficult to establish relationships with

⁶⁵² Lithuania, Ministry of Social Security and Labour (2022) Benefits for children without parental care ([Išmokos tėvų globos netekusiems vaikams](#)), 30 December 2022.

⁶⁵³ Lithuania, Government (2021), Resolution on the Approval of the Development programme for family policy strengthening, governed by the Ministry of Social Security and Labour, which is the Manager of the Development Programme for 2021-2030 (*Dėl 2021–2030 metų Plėtros programos valdytojos Lietuvos Respublikos socialinės apsaugos ir darbo ministerijos Šeimos politikos stiprinimo plėtros programos patvirtinimo*), No. 930, 10 November 2021.

older children and gain their trust. There is a lack of targeted work with guardians on-duty (professional foster families), which could give more knowledge, abilities and understanding of the various age stages of children, to ensure conditions for children of various ages to enter the family of guardians on-duty (professional foster families) in case of need. There are few people who want to become guardians/adoptive parents, because the publicity of the activities of the foster care centre in the fields of guardianship, adoption is insufficient.

It is important to expand and strengthen the services provided to the guardians/adoptive parents, since guardians/adoptive parents do not receive necessary quality services on time, often they no longer have the opportunity to properly take care of their emotional state and do not have adequate knowledge on how to react to the child's negative behaviour, how to correct it, or strengthen the relationship with child, and in this way they do not get the necessary results, emotional satisfaction from helping the child grow, face constant challenges, and then can become blocked as a guardian/adoptive parent or burn out. In this case the guardian/adoptive parent no longer has the opportunities/resources to respond to the needs of the fostered/adopted child, no longer creates a secure connection with the child, sometimes out of desperation, violates the child's rights and often refuses guardianship/adoption as a difficult challenge that he/she is unable to cope with or is even removed from the duties of a guardian (for adoptive parents - parental authority is limited) because he begins to inadequately ensure the rights of the child. In such a situation, a number of guardianship/adoption cases in Lithuania (especially during the child's adolescence) "break", that is, children are returned to children's institutional care or a new foster family is found for them, thus retraumatizing the child who has already experienced a loss and the child again experiences the feeling of insecurity that the situation is constantly changing in his life.⁶⁵⁴

The National Audit Office of Lithuania has conducted an audit of child guardianship (curatorship) and adoption system for the period of 2019-2021.

Regarding the care in family – type settings (foster family, social family (Foster Care-Based household), in a family of guardians on-duty) and institutional settings (community-based children care homes and foster childcare institutions), the Audit Office noted that the aim of having only 10 percent of children in institutional care had not been reached in 2021, as there were 22,6 percent of children still in institutional care (in community-based children care homes and foster childcare institutions). In two municipalities even 56 percent of children were in temporary guardianship (curatorship) in institutions.⁶⁵⁵

Furthermore, it was noted that 27% (222 out of 937) of children were placed in temporary guardianship (curatorship) for more than 12 months, mostly due to protracted court proceedings, while 15% (281 out of 1 915) were placed in temporary guardianship (curatorship) for 2 or more times in 2011-2021. This is detrimental to the best interests of the child, as repeated removal from the

⁶⁵⁴ Lithuania, Government (2021), Resolution on the Approval of the Development programme for family policy strengthening, governed by the Ministry of Social Security and Labour, which is the Manager of the Development Programme for 2021-2030 (*Dél 2021–2030 metų Plėtros programos valdytojos Lietuvos Respublikos socialinės apsaugos ir darbo ministerijos Šeimos politikos stiprinimo plėtros programos patvirtinimo*), No. 930, 10 November 2021.

⁶⁵⁵ Lithuania, National Audit Office (2022). Safeguarding the rights and interests of the child in guardianship and adoption. VAE-8, 22 September 2022, p. 6.

foster family by changing guardians is psychologically traumatic for the child. Prolonged or repeated temporary guardianship (curatorship) does not resolve the child's legal situation for long. If the biological family does not cooperate, decisions on the child's guardianship (curatorship) should be made more quickly so that adoption or guardianship (curatorship) is not delayed if the child cannot grow up in the biological family, as the older the child is, the less likely he/she is to be placed in a foster family.⁶⁵⁶

The situation of provision of services to the guardians (curators) and adoptive parents was also problematic in 2019-2021. Most of the municipalities did not evaluate the need for the help for guardians (curators) and adoptive parents, some of the municipalities and Foster Care centres did not provide the services for guardians (curators) and adoptive parents, even though the services were needed. Most of the municipalities did not have the list of services for guardians (curators) and adoptive parents. The effectiveness of services provided was not measured.⁶⁵⁷

18% of all municipalities rate the level of attraction of guardians (curators) and adoptive parents as either satisfactory or negative (too few social advertisements, too few and episodic initiatives to publicise guardianship, lack of a single national strategy to publicise guardianship). 45% of municipalities did not foresee any measures in their action plans for 2019-2021 focusing on finding guardians and/or adoptive parents. Failure to ensure that attraction measures are properly implemented does not reach potential guardians or adoptive parents.⁶⁵⁸

4.6. Developments in the past years: achievements, gaps, and challenges

Based on the output of the 2014 mapping exercise, please briefly describe the development of the child protection care system in the past 8 years, incl. achievements and (persisting) gaps and challenges

Ca. 300 words

The cardinal turn in the child rights protection system was the 2018 reform of the system that led to its' centralization of . Firstly, in order to ensure a uniform system of protection of child rights the functions of protection of child rights were transferred from the municipalities child rights protection departments to State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service (further – Service) from 1 July 2018. The Service became the central institution of the Republic of Lithuania, implementing the child rights protection policy, and received the authority to ensure the coordination of actions related to children's rights in all sectors at the national, municipal and local levels. The reorganization of child rights protection was aimed at forming a coherent and coordinated system of child rights protection institutions, ensuring proper protection and representation of children's rights and their legitimate interests, defining the specific tasks, functions, and place of child rights of ministries and other state

⁶⁵⁶ Lithuania, National Audit Office (2022). Safeguarding the rights and interests of the child in guardianship and adoption. VAE-8, 22 September 2022, p. 6.

⁶⁵⁷ Lithuania, National Audit Office (2022). Safeguarding the rights and interests of the child in guardianship and adoption. VAE-8, 22 September 2022, p. 8.

⁶⁵⁸ Lithuania, National Audit Office (2022). Safeguarding the rights and interests of the child in guardianship and adoption. VAE-8, 22 September 2022, p. 9.

institutions related to the protection of children's rights, determine the limits of responsibility, special qualification requirements for child rights protection specialists, strengthen the management and control functions of the child rights protection system, centralizing the management and coordination of the system, develop and improve the system of complex services for the child and his family.

From January 1, 2020, several more changes in the child rights protection system came into force, aimed at further improving the protection of children's rights, focusing more on stronger, higher-quality assistance to the family, on the use of all possible means to help the family in cases where violations of the child's rights are detected. The main aspects of the changes that came into force on January 1, 2020:

- The determination of threat levels for children, according to which possible violations of the child's rights were previously assessed (which were established in the reform of 2018), was replaced by the assessment of the child's situation, which focuses not only on the risks in the family, but also on the strengths of the family and the child, a more detailed assessment of the situation;

- The institute of temporary supervision of the child has been foreseen. Even when major violations of the child's rights are detected, when it is necessary to ensure the child's safety, if the cases are not critical, the support of grandparents, relatives, godparents or other persons close to the child is primarily relied on, if necessary, the child is with both or one of the non-violent parents can also be accommodated in a crisis centre. During this period of temporary supervision of the child, the mobile team specialists work with the parents, who aim to motivate the parents to change their behaviour with the child, give up addictions, and resolve internal conflicts. Parents' rights and duties towards the child are not limited during temporary supervision.

- From 1 January 2020 on, case management can be assigned not only to those families in which violations of the child's rights have been identified, but also in cases where the family itself or the organizations, institutions working with it believe that the family and/or the child needs complex assistance.

However, certain problems were noted by the Ministry of Social Security and Labour in the system of guardianship.

A very important component of assistance is the cooperation of specialists from various fields and a systematic approach. In addition to the social worker, other specialists play equally important roles in providing the help and services needed by families - workers in the field of social services (individual care workers, personal assistants, sign language interpreters, etc.), psychologists, psychotherapists and other health system specialists, inter-institutional cooperation coordinators, youth workers, case managers, social pedagogues, pedagogues and other representatives of the education system, police officers and other representatives of the law enforcement system, representatives of other institutions. In order to ensure appropriate help and services that meet the individual needs of the person (family), a complex approach to the situation of the person (family) is necessary, in order to achieve the common goal of helping the person (family). The currently prevailing lack of a complex approach to the situation of a person (family) and the cooperation of specialists is caused by several reasons - insufficient, not properly coordinated regulation (often the provisions of legal acts of law enforcement, education, health and social field systems contradict each other or duplicate the functions of specialists, there are no clear division of functions and a single help and service algorithm common to all systems). When evaluating

the insights presented in the analysis of the availability of services for families, it should be noted that inter-agency barriers exist. There is no clear model of interagency cooperation and focus on the welfare of Lithuanian families.⁶⁵⁹

Further problem is related to professional qualifications of the specialists working in the child rights protection system. Due to constant changes that occurred in a short period of time (the child rights protection system was centralized on 1 July 2018, but in 2019, a series of changes took place again, which came into force from 1 January 2020), therefore there remains a need to strengthen the professional competences of child rights protection specialists, to further develop a unified practice of child rights protection, to train child rights protection specialists to properly apply measures for the examination of possible violations of children's rights, etc. There is a growing need to review existing processes in the area of the child rights protection system, to computerize them, to transfer them to the information space, in order to facilitate the work of child rights protection specialists, especially related to filling out documentation. Accordingly, there is a need to ensure adequate protection of collected data. In addition, the work of child rights protection specialists is complicated by the fact that the public's negative attitude towards the child rights protection system remains. All this creates a need to strengthen the protection of children's rights, not only by developing the necessary services for children and families, early intervention mechanisms, but also by strengthening the competences of child rights protection specialists themselves and by educating the public about children's rights.

There is a lack of clear regulation of what specific knowledge and abilities are necessary for child rights protection specialists and a consistent system that would develop these competencies. When examining the functions of child rights protection specialists, it is not enough to have only a social or legal education, certain specific knowledge and competences are necessary, such as listening to the child's opinion, communicating with children with special needs or children with disabilities, recognizing violence, practical implementation of the best interests of the child, and so on. Currently, there is a lack of a clear portfolio of child rights protection specialists and their competences, as well as lack of clear and consistent training based on this type of portfolio, a clear and consistent model for acquiring the competences of child rights protection specialists.⁶⁶⁰

4.7. Promising practices

Please list and briefly describe any promising practice in the child protection care system that you come across. (if available please include references to documents or URLs in case of online tools/mechanisms)

⁶⁵⁹ Lithuania, Ministry of Social Security and Labour (2021). [Justification of the Programme on the Strengthening and Development of Family Policy of the Ministry of Social Security and Labour as the manager of the 2021 – 2030 development programme \(2021–2030 metų plėtros programos valdytojo Lietuvos Respublikos socialinės apsaugos ir darbo ministerijos šeimos politikos stiprinimo plėtros programos pagrindimas\)](#).

⁶⁶⁰ Lithuania, Ministry of Social Security and Labour (2021). [Justification of the Programme on the Strengthening and Development of Family Policy of the Ministry of Social Security and Labour as the manager of the 2021 – 2030 development programme \(2021–2030 metų plėtros programos valdytojo Lietuvos Respublikos socialinės apsaugos ir darbo ministerijos šeimos politikos stiprinimo plėtros programos pagrindimas\)](#).

Ca. 250 words

One of the main promising practices is the transfer from the institutional to family- and community-based care of children left without parental care. In 2022, 1,347 children (including 836 children in community-based orphanages) (560 girls and 787 boys) were placed in a childcare institution (community-based children care homes and foster childcare institutions), which accounted for 20 % of the total number of fostered children in Lithuania, which indicates a steady decline in number of children in institutional care.⁶⁶¹

The other aspect that can be listed as promising practice is that a lot of effort is given to keep the child in the family, one example is the temporary supervision measure, where the child is placed with persons with emotional ties to the child, i.e., persons with whom the child would feel calm and safe. There is also an option of placing the child together with his/her parents in social care institution as well. If it is not possible to temporarily accommodate the child's relatives or other persons with emotional ties to the child, child rights protection specialists, , choose the best place for ensuring the child's safe environment, taking into account the opportunities available at that time.⁶⁶²

The recent changes of the child protection system also provide for longer work of mobile teams with the families (from 14 days to 30 days). This allows for more consistent help for families. From 2020, help for the family and case management process may be started also by the request of the family, in the absence of the report about the violations of child rights. This indicates that the system is geared not as much to intervention and punishment, and more to the needs of family and the child.

The activity of the Foster Care Centres could also be mentioned. Foster Care centres were established from 2018. There are 66 foster care centres in Lithuania, which help children find guardians or adoptive parents and provide professional support and psychological counselling to those considering guardianship, to people already guardians, and to children growing up in care. Foster care centres also ensure 24/7 service to children left without parental care – they have agreements with guardians on-duty (professional foster families) who are ready to accept children at any time.

The changes to the Civil Code have been introduced which provided that children under the age of 3 may be placed in institutional childcare only in exceptional circumstances.

⁶⁶¹ Lithuania, State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service (2023). [Annual Report of 2022](#) (2022 m. veiklos ataskaita). No. 5-1, 31 March 2023.

⁶⁶² Lithuania, the Ombudsperson of Child's Rights (2021) [Annual Report of 2021](#) (2021 metų veiklos ataskaita). No. 4-3, 31 March 2022.

5. Accountability, data collection, and monitoring mechanisms

5.1. Accountability mechanisms

5.1.1. Are there accountability mechanisms in place regarding the functioning of the child protection system? Is there any independent monitoring or reporting mechanisms on the performance of the child protection system? What is the role of child's ombudspersons, child commissioners or other independent national human rights institutions in monitoring child protection?

Ca. 300 words

The main goals and tasks of each institution are included in the policy documents - strategies, programmes and action plans. The policy documents' implementation is monitored and supervised by ministries. In the field of child protection, five ministries share responsibilities - the Ministry of Social Security and Labour, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Justice, and the Ministry of Interior⁶⁶³. Each ministry has an obligation to prepare annual reports to the government and society about the results of the ministry and its subordinate institutions achieved by pursuing goals and performing tasks specified in the national programmes, strategy plans and action plans.⁶⁶⁴

The Seimas (Lithuania Parliament) exercises parliamentary control over every ministry and the Government. The Seimas expresses its approval of the Government's report. If the ministry does not properly perform its functions, the Seimas can summon any minister to explain himself during "the Government hour" in the Seimas. The Seimas can issue an interpellation to the minister.⁶⁶⁵

Each ministry supervises the activities of its subordinate institutions. For example, The Ministry of Social Security and Labor supervises and monitors activities of the State Child Protection and Adoption Service.⁶⁶⁶ The Ministry approves the annual plan of the subordinate institution. Subordinate institutions prepare and submit annual reports to the ministry to which they are subordinate. The head of each institution reports to the minister on the achievement of set personal goals and annual results. Any natural or legal person can submit a complaint to the ministry about the improper

⁶⁶³ Lithuania, Seimas (1996). Law on Fundamentals of Protection of the Rights of the Child (*Lietuvos Respublikos Vaiko teisių apsaugos pagrindų įstatymas*), No. I-1234, 14 March 1996, last amendments No. XIV-1512, 10 November 2022, Art. 48-49.

⁶⁶⁴ Reports are available in Lithuanian at <https://socmin.lrv.lt/lt/administracine-informacija/planavimo-dokumentai/veiklos-ataskaitos>

⁶⁶⁵ Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania, adopted by citizens of the Republic of Lithuania in the referendum of 25 October 1992, available in English at: <https://e-seimas.lrs.lt/portal/legalAct/lt/TAD/TAIS.21892>, Art. 67(9); Lithuania, Seimas (1994). Law on the Government (*Lietuvos Respublikos vyriausybės įstatymas*), No. I-464, 19 May 1994, last amendment No. XIV-2003, 25 May 2023, Art. 5.

⁶⁶⁶ Lithuania, Government (2005), Resolution on approval of the statute of State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service under the Ministry of Social Security and labour (*Nutarimas dėl Valstybės vaiko teisių apsaugos ir įvaikinimo tarnybos prie Socialinės apsaugos ir darbo ministerijos nuostatų patvirtinimo*), No. 1114, 20 October 2005, last amendment No. 293, 28 March 2018.

performance of the functions of a subordinate institution or its employees. The Ministry can take active steps to improve the performance of the subordinate institution.⁶⁶⁷

Each municipal administration supervises and monitors the institutions subordinate to it. The municipal council approves the activity plans, which are implemented by the administration of the municipality and the subordinate institutions of the relevant area.⁶⁶⁸ Institutions that provide services to the residents of the municipality acting in accordance with the contracts concluded with the municipality report to the administration of the municipality according to the procedure established in the contract (most of the social services are provided under contract). Any person who is not satisfied with the services received may submit a complaint to the municipal administration about improperly provided services by a subordinate institution or an institution working under a contract with the municipality. The municipal administration can issue binding instructions to institutions working under its authority or terminate contracts. The municipal council approves the municipality's annual activity reports.⁶⁶⁹

According to the Law on public administration, the decisions taken by each institution, their action or inaction, can be appealed to the court.⁶⁷⁰ Some decisions or actions require going through an out-of-court dispute resolution procedure before going to court. For example, before appealing the decision of the territorial unit of the State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service to the court, the complainant must first submit the complaint to the State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service; or before appealing the decision of the State-Guaranteed Legal Aid Service (legal aid for children) to the court, the complainant must first submit a complaint to the Administrative Disputes Commission.⁶⁷¹ The procedure on how to appeal the decision or any other written document is indicated in the document itself.

Each person who is dissatisfied with the work or decisions made by an employee or civil servant of the institution may complain to the head of the institution. The head of the institution, after conducting an inspection and finding that the actions of the civil servant or employee do not meet the requirements of legal acts, may punish him/her in a disciplinary manner.

⁶⁶⁷ Lithuania, Seimas (1994), Law on the Government (*Lietuvos Respublikos vyriausybės įstatymas*), No. I-464, 19 May 1994, last amendment No. XIV-2003, 25 May 2023, Art. 5.

⁶⁶⁸ Lithuania, Seimas (1994), Law on Self-Government (*Lietuvos vietos savivaldos įstatymas*), No. I-533, 7 July 1994, last amendment No. XIV-2109, 29 June 2023, Art. 55.

⁶⁶⁹ Lithuania, Seimas (1994), Law on Self-Government (*Lietuvos vietos savivaldos įstatymas*), No. I-533, 7 July 1994, last amendment No. XIV-2109, 29 June 2023, Art. 55.

⁶⁷⁰ Lithuania, Seimas (1999), Law on Public Administration (*Lietuvos Respublikos viešojo administravimo įstatymas*), No. VIII-1234, 17 June 1999, last amendment No. XIV-2007, 25 May 2023.

⁶⁷¹ Lithuania, Seimas (1999), Law on Pre-Trial Administrative Dispute Procedure of the Republic of Lithuania (*Lietuvos Respublikos ikiteisminio administracinių ginčų nagrinėjimo tvarkos įstatymas*), No. VIII-1031, 14 January 1999, last amendment No. XIV-1994, 25 May 2023.

A general accountability mechanism for state institutions was established in the Law on the National Audit regulating the activity of the National Audit Office.⁶⁷² Audits carried out by the Office encompass financial and performance supervision.

The Ombudsperson of Child's Rights carry out the monitoring and supervision of child rights protection in Lithuania, investigates individual complaints regarding child rights violations (including when institutions do not ensure child protection), and carries out independent evaluations on its own initiative.⁶⁷³ The decisions of the Ombudsperson of Child's Rights regarding individual complaints are binding on the subjects, but the conclusions from the situation analysis in general or recommendations regarding draft laws or policies are non-binding in nature.⁶⁷⁴ Formally, all children can submit complaints to the Ombudsperson for children. In 2021 and in 2020, 1 per cent of the claimants were children.⁶⁷⁵

Seimas Ombudspersons handle complaints in all fields except those are under the responsibility of the Ombudsperson of Child's Rights. The Seimas Ombudspersons are responsible for the monitoring of closed institutions and the investigation of complaints received regarding the violation of rights in closed institutions (detention and correction facilities, reformatories and psychiatric wards),⁶⁷⁶ including Kaunas Juvenile Remand Prison–Correction House. The investigation of complaints regarding Kaunas Juvenile Remand Prison also falls under the competence of the Ombudsperson of Child's Rights.

Particular areas

Complaints in foster childcare institutions. The Description of Social Care Norms, approved by the Ministry of Social Security and Labor, requires that every foster care institution must benevolently and constructively respond to complaints and requests of children, their parents, guardians, or curators.⁶⁷⁷ The child, considering his age and maturity, his parents (guardians, curators), close relatives, and staff of the foster care home have to be given the opportunity to contact the administration of the foster care institution regarding any issues and receive a prompt, supportive

⁶⁷² Lithuania, Seimas (1995), Law on national audit office (*Lietuvos Respublikos valstybės kontrolės įstatymas*), No. I-907, 30 May 1995, last amendment No. XII-446, 2 July 2013, available in English at: www3.lrs.lt/pls/inter3/dokpaieska.showdoc_l?p_id=455230.

⁶⁷³ Lithuania, Seimas (2000), Law on the ombudsperson for children (*Lietuvos Respublikos vaiko teisių apsaugos kontrolieriaus įstatymas*), No. VIII-1708, 25 May 2000, last amendment No. XIV-1998, 25 May 2023.

⁶⁷⁴ Lithuania, Institution of the Ombudsperson for Children Rights of Republic of Lithuania (*LR Vaiko teisių apsaugos kontrolieriaus įstaiga*) (2012), Activities report of the year 2012 (*2012 metų veiklos ataskaita*), No. 4-1, 29 March 2013.

⁶⁷⁵ Lithuania, the Ombudsperson of Child's Rights (2021) *Annual Report of 2021 (2021 metų veiklos ataskaita)*. No. 4-3, 31 March 2022.

⁶⁷⁶ Lithuania, Seimas (1998), Law on parliamentary ombudspersons (*Lietuvos Respublikos Seimo kontrolierių įstatymas*), No. VIII-950, 3 December 1998, last amendment No. XIV-1997, 25 May 2023.

⁶⁷⁷ Lithuania, Ministry of Social Security and Labour (2007). Regarding the approval of the description of the social care norms (*Dėl Socialinės globos normų aprašo patvirtinimo*). No. A1-46, 20 February 2007, last amendment No. A1-536, 18 August 2022.

and constructive response to it as well as a sincere solution to the problem. Each foster care institution has an obligation to register every suggestion and complaint of every child and his/her parents (guardians, curators), and provide the answer in due time defined in the legal acts and in accordance with the administrative procedure established by the foster care institution.⁶⁷⁸

Complaints **about social services** provided to the family. The Law on Social Services indicates that a person (family member) or his guardian, curator, or other interested persons may complain to the mayor of the municipality against the social services institution regarding the inappropriate provision of general social services and social care. Having identified violations in the provision of general social services and social care, the director of the municipal administration must demand that the deficiencies be eliminated within the set deadline. If the offender does not eliminate the shortcomings, the mayor has the right to initiate the social services institution to suspend or terminate the provision of general social services and social care.⁶⁷⁹ Furthermore, a person (one of the adult family members) or his guardian, curator, or other interested persons may complain to the Department of the Supervision of Social Services about a social care institution providing inadequate social care. Having identified violations of the provision of social care, the Social Services Supervision Department has the right to suspend or revoke the license issued to the social care institution in accordance with the procedure established by the Law on Social Services.⁶⁸⁰

5.1.2. How is the implementation of national action plans and strategies or other policy actions on child protection monitored? Briefly describe the established procedures and mention the actors involved and their roles.

Ca. 200 words

Each specific strategy or action plan establishes individual monitoring mechanisms.

According to the general procedure for the implementation of programs or action plans in Lithuania, the implementation of the strategy or action plan is controlled by the institution that approved the specific document, unless otherwise stated in the document itself. According to this rule, the Seimas of Lithuania controls the implementation of the Lithuanian Progress Strategy "Lithuania 2030"⁶⁸¹ and

⁶⁷⁸ Lithuania, Ministry of Social Security and Labour (2007). Regarding the approval of the description of the social care norms (*Dėl Socialinės globos normų aprašo patvirtinimo*). No. A1-46, 20 February 2007, last amendment No. A1-536, 18 August 2022, annex 1, Art. 21.

⁶⁷⁹ Lithuania, Seimas (2006), Law on Social Services (*Lietuvos Respublikos socialinių paslaugų įstatymas*), No. X-493, last amendment No. XIV-952, 17 March 2022, Art. 35.

⁶⁸⁰ Lithuania, Seimas (2006), Law on Social Services (*Lietuvos Respublikos socialinių paslaugų įstatymas*), No. X-493, last amendment No. XIV-952, 17 March 2022, Art. 35.

⁶⁸¹ Lithuania, Seimas (2012), Decision on the Approval of the State Progress Strategy 'Lithuanian Progress Strategy 'Lithuania 2030' (*Dėl Valstybės pažangos strategijos "Lietuvos pažangos strategija "Lietuva 2030" patvirtinimo*), No. XI-2015, 15 May 2012.

the Programme of the 18th Government of the Republic of Lithuania,⁶⁸² the Government controls the implementation of the **2021-2030 National Progress Plan**,⁶⁸³ the Development programme for family policy strengthening,⁶⁸⁴ the Social Effort development program,⁶⁸⁵ the Programme on the Development of the Reduction of Inequality of Income,⁶⁸⁶ Development programme on ensuring a suitable environment for the disabled in all areas of life,⁶⁸⁷ Justice system development program,⁶⁸⁸

⁶⁸² Lithuania, Seimas (2020), Decision on the Programme of the 18th Government of the Republic of Lithuania (*Nutarimas dėl Aštuonioliktos Lietuvos Respublikos Vyriausybės programos*), No. XIV-72, 11 December 2020.

⁶⁸³ Lithuania, Government (2020), Resolution on the Approval of the 2021-2030 National Progress Plan (*Nutarimas Dėl 2021–2030 metų Nacionalinio pažangos plano patvirtinimo*), No. 998, 9 September 2020, last amendment No. 797, 29 September 2021.

⁶⁸⁴ Lithuania, Government (2021), Resolution on the Approval of the Development programme for family policy strengthening, governed by the Ministry of Social Security and Labour, which is the Manager of the Development Programme for 2021-2030 (*Dėl 2021–2030 metų Plėtros programos valdytojos Lietuvos Respublikos socialinės apsaugos ir darbo ministerijos Šeimos politikos stiprinimo plėtros programos patvirtinimo*), No. 930, 10 November 2021.

⁶⁸⁵ Lithuania, Government (2021), Resolution on the Approval of the Programme of Social effort development for 2022 – 2030, governed by the Ministry of Social Security and Labour (*Dėl 2021–2030 metų Plėtros programos valdytojos Lietuvos Respublikos Socialinės apsaugos ir darbo ministerijos socialinės sutelkties plėtros programos patvirtinimo*), No. 931, 10 November 2021.

⁶⁸⁶ Lithuania, Government (2021), Resolution on the Approval of the Programme on the Development of the reduction of inequality of income for 2021 – 2030, governed by the Ministry of Social Security and Labour (*Dėl 2021–2030 metų plėtros programos valdytojos Lietuvos Respublikos Socialinės apsaugos ir darbo ministerijos Pajamų nelygybės mažinimo plėtros programos patvirtinimo*), No. 932, 10 November 2021.

⁶⁸⁷ Lithuania, Government (2021), Resolution on the Approval of the Development programme on ensuring a suitable environment for the disabled in all areas of life for 2021 – 2030, governed by the Ministry of Social Security and Labour (*Dėl 2021–2030 metų plėtros programos valdytojos Lietuvos Respublikos Socialinės apsaugos ir darbo ministerijos Neįgaliesiems tinkamos aplinkos visose gyvenimo srityse plėtros programos patvirtinimo*), No. 933, 10 November 2021.

⁶⁸⁸ Lithuania, Government (2021), Resolution on the Approval of the Justice System Development Program, governed by the Ministry of Justice, which is the Manager of the Development Programme for 2021-2030 (*Dėl 2021–2030 metų Plėtros programos valdytojos Lietuvos Respublikos teisingumo ministerijos Teisingumo sistemos plėtros programos patvirtinimo*), No. 861, 20 October 2021.

Regional development program,⁶⁸⁹ Programme on the Development of Education,⁶⁹⁰ and Programme on the Development of Health Preservation and Strengthening⁶⁹¹

Point 10 of the **Action Plan for Child Welfare 2022-2026**,⁶⁹² approved by the Ministry of Social Security and Labor states that the Ministry monitors the implementation of the action plan and evaluates the progress achieved.

Point 12 of the **2022-2023 Action plan for the prevention of domestic violence and the provision of assistance to victims**⁶⁹³ approved by the Ministry of Social Security and Labor, states that the implementation of the action plan is coordinated by the Ministry of Social Security and Labor of the Republic of Lithuania. Point 3 of the order approving the plan states that the control of the execution of this order is assigned to the vice minister according to the field of responsibility.

Point 10 of the **2021-2023 Action plan for social integration of disabled persons**⁶⁹⁴ approved by the Ministry of Social Security and Labor states that the implementation of the action plan is coordinated by the Ministry of Social Security and Labour, and the Department of Disability Affairs carries out monitoring under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour. After the end of the calendar year, by February 1, the responsible executors of the action plan measures submit reports on the implementation of the action plan measures to the Department of Disability Affairs under the Ministry

⁶⁸⁹ Lithuania, Government (2022), Resolution on the Approval of the Regional development programme for 2022 - 2030 (*Dėl 2022 - 2030 metų regionų plėtros programos patvirtinimo*), No. 713, 29 June 2022.

⁶⁹⁰ Lithuania, Government (2021), Resolution on the Approval of the Programme on the Development of Education for 2022 – 2030, governed by the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport (*Dėl 2021–2030 m. Plėtros programos valdytojos Lietuvos Respublikos Švietimo, mokslo ir sporto ministerijos Švietimo plėtros programos patvirtinimo*), No. 1016, 1 December 2021.

⁶⁹¹ Lithuania, Government (2022), Resolution on the Approval of the Programme on the Development of Health Preservation and Strengthening for 2022 – 2030, governed by the Ministry of Health (*Dėl 2022–2030 m. plėtros programos valdytojos Lietuvos Respublikos Sveikatos apsaugos ministerijos Sveikatos išsaugojimo ir stiprinimo plėtros programos patvirtinimo*), No. 66, 26 January 2022.

⁶⁹² Lithuania, Ministry of Social Security and Labour of the Republic of Lithuania (2022), Order on the Approval of the Action Plan for Child Welfare 2022-2026 (*Lietuvos Respublikos Socialinės apsaugos ir darbo ministro įsakymas 'Dėl vaiko gerovės 2022-2026 metų veiksmų plano patvirtinimo'*), No. A1-52, 24 January 2022, last amendment No A1-409, 19 June 2023.

⁶⁹³ Lithuania, Ministry of Social Security and Labour (2022). On the approval of the 2022-2023 Action plan for the prevention of domestic violence and the provision of assistance to victims (*Dėl smurto artimoje aplinkoje prevencijos ir pagalbos teikimo nukentėjusiems asmenims 2022–2023 metų veiksmų plano patvirtinimo*), No. A1-264, 11 April 2022, last amendment No. A1-111, 2 February 2023.

⁶⁹⁴ Lithuania, Ministry of Social Security and Labour (2022), On the approval of the 2021-2023 action plan for social integration of disabled persons (*Dėl Neįgaliųjų socialinės integracijos 2021–2023 metų veiksmų plano patvirtinimo*), No. A1-817, 8 September 2020, last amendment No. A1-892, 28 December 2022.

of Social Security and Labor. Point 3 of the order approving the plan states that the control of the execution of this order is assigned to the vice minister according to the field of responsibility.

Point 18 of the **2014-2023 Action plan for the transition from institutional care to family and community-based services for children with disabilities and children left without parental care**⁶⁹⁵ states that the Ministry of Social Security and Labour coordinates the implementation of the Plan. The Ministry of Education and Science, the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of Health, the State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service, the Department of Disability Affairs, the Association of Local Authorities in Lithuania, the Department of Social Services Supervision, non-governmental organisations and municipalities participate in the implementation of the Plan. Point 19 establishes that the organisation of the implementation of the measures of the Plan, with the exception of the measures provided for in clauses 1.4, 1.5, 1.9, 1.12, 1.14, 1.15, 2.3, 2.4, 2.8, 2.10, 2.13 and 3.1, 3.3, 3.6 of Annex 1 of the Plan, is the responsibility of the State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service and/or the Department of Disability Affairs. Point 21 indicated that the monitoring of the plan is carried out by the inter-institutional monitoring group established by the Minister of Social Security and Labour. Point 3 of the order approving the plan states that the control of the execution of this order is assigned to the vice minister according to the field of responsibility.

The 2021-2024 action plan for assistance to persons diagnosed with multiple developmental disabilities⁶⁹⁶ indicates in the document which institutions are responsible for the implementation of certain actions. The indicated institutions are the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Social Security and Labour, Ministry of Education, Science and Sports, Education Support Services; Pedagogical Psychological Services, Study Quality Assessment Centre, Institute of Hygiene, Vilnius University Hospital Santaros Klinikos, Lithuanian University of Health Sciences Hospital Kaunas Klinikos, Department of Disability Affairs under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour, Centre for Special Pedagogy and Psychology, National Education Agency of Lithuania, Education Centre for the Blind and Visually Impaired, Association of Local Authorities in Lithuania, State Sickness Fund under the Ministry of Health, non-governmental organisations.

Agreement on the Policy on Lithuanian Education (2021-2030)⁶⁹⁷ foresees that during the period of validity of this agreement, the Government of the Republic of Lithuania, together with the delegated

⁶⁹⁵ Lithuania, Ministry of Social Security and Labour (2022), On the approval of the 2014-2023 action plan for the transition from institutional care to family and community-based services for disabled children and children left without parental care (*Dėl Perėjimo nuo institucinės globos prie šeimoje ir bendruomenėje teikiamų paslaugų neįgaliesiems ir likusiems be tėvų globos vaikams 2014–2023 metų veiksmų plano patvirtinimo*), No. A1-83, 14 February 2014, last amendment No. A1-1211, 7 December 2020.

⁶⁹⁶ Lithuania, Minister of Health, Minister of Education, Science, and Sport, and Minister of Social Security and Labour (2020), On the approval of the 2021-2024 action plan for assistance to persons diagnosed with multiple developmental disabilities (*Įsakymas dėl pagalbos asmenims, kuriems diagnozuotas įvairiapusis raidos sutrikimas, 2021–2024 metų veiksmų plano patvirtinimo*), No. V-2875/V1946/A1-1254, 10 December 2020.

⁶⁹⁷ Lithuania (2021), [Agreement of leaders of parliamentary political parties on the Policy of Lithuanian education \(2021-2030\)](#) (*Politinių partijų lyderių susitarimas dėl Lietuvos švietimo politikos (2021-2030)*), 1 September 2021.

representatives of the parties that have signed this agreement, evaluates the progress of the implementation of this agreement every year, before approving the national budget.

Chapter III of **State programme for 2018-2028 on control and prevention of drugs, tobacco, and alcohol**⁶⁹⁸ provides a detailed implementation and monitoring mechanism of the Programme. The Seimas carry out the parliamentary control of the implementation of the program. The Government coordinates the implementation of the program. The Department of Narcotics, Tobacco and Alcohol Control is responsible for monitoring and analysing the implementation of the criteria specified in the Programme, organising the Programme evaluation, and submitting Programme evaluation reports to the Government. In order to implement the Programme, inter-institutional activity plans for the implementation of the Program are prepared and approved by the Government. During the implementation period of the program, studies related to drug use are periodically conducted. Monitoring is carried out by analysing factual, objective, reliable and comparable information about psychoactive substances, drug addiction, alcoholism and the consequences of use, allowing decisions based on science or factual data on the supply of psychoactive substances, demand and harm reduction measures. When planning measures on the use of psychoactive substances, and measuring their effectiveness, direct and indirect costs related to the implementation of drug, tobacco and alcohol control policies are periodically assessed. The progress of the implementation of the Programme is evaluated during the interim and final evaluations of the Programme. Programme evaluation reports are published publicly on the website of the Department of Drug, Tobacco and Alcohol Control.

The Description of the procedure for the implementation of the Early Intervention Programme⁶⁹⁹ foresees in Article 20 that After the sessions of each group, the specialists leading the program collect the survey forms of the Program participants filled out by each person and fill out the Program execution report form. The Public Health Office annually summarises the current year results of all Program participant survey forms and Program implementation reports and submits them to the Drug, Tobacco and Alcohol Control Department by January 15 of the following calendar year. The Department summarises the Program execution reports received from the Offices, keeps records of their results and submits a summary report to the Ministry of Health Protection of the Republic of Lithuania and the Ministry of Education, Science and Sports of the Republic of Lithuania by February 15 of the current year.

⁶⁹⁸ Lithuania, Seimas (2018), Resolution on the approval of the State programme for 2018-2028 on control and prevention of drugs, tobacco, and alcohol (*Nutarimas Dėl Valstybinės narkotikų, tabako ir alkoholio kontrolės ir vartojimo prevencijos 2018–2028 metų programos patvirtinimo*), No. XIII-1765, 13 December 2018.

⁶⁹⁹ Lithuania, Ministry of Health and Ministry of Education (2018), On the approval of the description of the procedure for the implementation of the Early Intervention Programme (*Dėl Ankstyvosios intervencijos programos vykdymo tvarkos aprašo patvirtinimo*), No. V-60/V-39, 18 January 2018, last amendment No. A1-1211, 30 April 2018.

Articles 55-57 of the **Public Security Development Programme for 2015-2025**⁷⁰⁰ indicate that the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Social Security and Labor, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Finance, the Department of State Security, law enforcement institutions and other state and municipal institutions and bodies implement the programme. The Government approves an inter-institutional plan of measures to implement the goals and objectives of the programme. The Minister of the Interior organises the preparation of this plan. Other planning documents can implement the provisions of the programme. The Ministry of Internal Affairs carries out monitoring of the implementation and effectiveness of the programme.

Inter-institutional activity plan for the implementation of the Public Security Development 2015-2025 programme,⁷⁰¹ point 3 indicates that the Ministry of the Interior coordinates the implementation of the plan.

Question	YES	NO	Comments
5.1.3. Is there a child rights assessment existing or foreseen? Please note that child rights' assessment stands for the measurement of the impact of proposed or adopted legislation on children as a group. It is usually done at the parliamentary or ministerial level.	x		Article 7 of the Legislative Framework Law states that in adopting laws, public consultations are held in order to ensure the openness and transparency of legislation, to obtain the public's opinion on the problems of legal regulation and the ways of solving them, to give the public the opportunity to influence the content of the draft legislation, to better assess the positive and negative consequences of the envisaged and existing legal regulation and the costs of its implementation, to make suggestions on the legislative initiatives and draft legislative acts published in the Legislative Acts Information System and on the existing legal regulation, the ex-post assessment of the impact of which shall be conducted. The public must be consulted in a timely manner and on substantive issues (effectiveness of consultation) and to the extent necessary (proportionality of consultation). ⁷⁰²

⁷⁰⁰ Lithuania, Seimas (2015), Resolution On the approval of the public security development programme for 2015-2025 (*Nutarimas Dėl Viešojo saugumo plėtros 2015–2025 metų programos patvirtinimo*), No. XII-1682, 7 May 2015.

⁷⁰¹ Lithuania, Government (2016), Resolution on the approval of the inter-institutional activity plan for the implementation of the Public Security Development programme for 2015-2025 (*Dėl Viešojo saugumo plėtros 2015–2025 metų programos įgyvendinimo tarpinstitucinio veiklos plano patvirtinimo*), No. 370, 13 April 2016, last amendment No. A1-1136, 13 November 2019.

⁷⁰² Lithuania, Seimas (2012), Legislative Framework Law (*Lietuvos Respublikos teisėkūros pagrindų įstatymas*), No. XI-2220, 18 September 2012, last amendment No. XIV-1630, 8 December 2022.

		<p>Article 15 of the Legislative Framework Law ⁷⁰³ stipulates that when preparing a draft of a legal act, which is intended to regulate previously unregulated relationships, as well as which essentially changes the legal regulation, an assessment of the impact of the expected legal regulation must be carried out. The drafter of the legal act takes the decision on the assessment of the expected impact of the legal regulation. When carrying out the assessment of the expected legal regulation, possible positive and negative effects on the area of that legal regulation, persons or their groups, to whom the expected legal regulation will be applied, are determined. The results of the assessment of the legal regulatory impact of the draft law or other legislative act of the Seimas are presented in an explanatory letter or a separate document. When preparing drafts of other legal acts, the results of the assessment of the expected impact of legal regulation have to be submitted in accordance with the procedure established by the Government or its authorized institution, the municipal council, or its authorized institution.</p> <p>Methodology for assessing the expected impact of legal regulation approved by the Government ⁷⁰⁴ determines the procedure for assessing the impact of a proposed legal act.</p> <p>Child rights assessment is ensured by assessing the impact of a new legal act on the relevant area (assessing the impact on the area of child rights regulation) and assessing the impact on a particular social environment (assessing the possible impact on children and social relations related to them).</p> <p>When carrying out the impact assessment of the legal act, the drafter of the legal act is recommended to answer the indicative questions, the list of which is provided in the methodology. The purpose of the questionnaire is to help project developers to pay attention to all possible aspects of the expected impact of legal regulation and to determine the potential impact of the project. The questionnaire is</p>
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⁷⁰³ Lithuania, Seimas (2012), Legislative Framework Law (*Lietuvos Respublikos teisėkūros pagrindų įstatymas*), No. XI-2220, 18 September 2012, last amendment No. XIV-1630, 8 December 2022.

⁷⁰⁴ Lithuania, Government (2003), Regarding the approval of the methodology for the assessment of the anticipated impact of legal regulation (*Dėl Numatomo teisinio reguliavimo poveikio vertinimo metodikos patvirtinimo*), No. 276, 26 February 2003, last amendment No. 521, 11 June 2014.

of a recommendatory nature, and its questions are indicative, therefore the organizers are required to evaluate the impact of the projects on the expected legal regulation in all other aspects of the impact relevant to the specific project, not discussed in the questionnaire.

When assessing the impact on the relevant area, the following questions must be answered: 1. Will the intended legal regulation regulate a fundamentally new area of legal relations? 2. Are the intended legal regulations planned to make significant changes in the relevant area? If so, justify the importance and significance of these changes to the relevant field. 3. Specify what results are expected from the implementation of the expected legal regulation. 4. Evaluate the effect of the expected impact of legal regulation (short-term or long-term, strong or weak, etc.). 5. Evaluate and specify the possible direct and indirect consequences of the implementation of this anticipated legal regulation. 6. Evaluate and specify all possible entities that will be affected by the implementation of the proposed legal regulation and what positive and negative consequences they will experience. 7. Assess and indicate all resources and measures (administrative, financial, organizational, and other) that will be needed to implement the intended legal regulation and achieve the intended result. 8. Assess whether there is an important time dimension to the proposed legal regulation. Is it important to adopt the proposed legal regulation and implement it as soon as possible? If so, estimate the impact of such a prompt determination on the expected results. 9. Assess the impact of a "zero action" or "no action" scenario (what would happen if the intended legal regulation were not established) for the area concerned.

When assessing the impact on the social environment, the following questions must be answered:

1. Will the implementation of the project affect individual social groups, such as socially vulnerable persons, youth, children, families, especially young people or raising 3 or more children, the elderly and other persons? If so, it is necessary to evaluate and indicate: 1.1. which social groups will be affected by the implementation of the project; 1.2. what possible positive impact the implementation of the project will have on individual social

			<p>groups; 1.3. what possible negative impact the implementation of the project will have on individual social groups; 1.4. what measures are planned to be taken in order to reduce the identified negative impact on individual social groups.7. Will the implementation of the project affect the level of poverty? If so, how will the implementation of the project affect the social support system? 8. Will the implementation of the project affect social exclusion and social differentiation? If so, 8.1. how the implementation of the project will affect social exclusion and social differentiation; 8.2. what measures are planned to be taken in order to reduce social exclusion and social differentiation if the implementation of the project will have a negative impact on social exclusion and differentiation?</p>
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5.1.4, Are there quality standards for child protection services set in the legislation (including prevention programmes)? (e.g. number of cases per case worker, requirements regarding infrastructures of residential care and number of personnel, performance, and fiscal accountability mechanisms) Please describe.

Ca. 250 words

The standard of conduct of the civil servants and persons under employment of the State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service is approved by the Order of the Director of the Service No. BV-117 dated 2 April 2019⁷⁰⁵, and Code of Ethics for civil servants and employees working under employment contracts of the State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service, approved by the Order of the Director No. BV-118 dated 2 April 2019.⁷⁰⁶

The detailed requirements of social care institutions are set out in the Decree establishing The Social Care Norms. The social care norm applied to childcare institutions states that “The satisfaction of the

⁷⁰⁵ Lithuania, State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service (2019). Regarding the standard of conduct of the civil servants and persons under employment of the State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour (*Dėl Valstybės vaiko teisių apsaugos ir įvaikinimo tarnybos prie Socialinės apsaugos ir darbo ministerijos valstybės tarnautojų ir darbuotojų, dirbančių pagal darbo sutartis, elgesio standarto patvirtinimo*). No. BV-117, 2 April 2019.

⁷⁰⁶ Lithuania, State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service (2019). Regarding the code of ethics for civil servants and employees working under employment contracts of the State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour (*Dėl Valstybės vaiko teisių apsaugos ir įvaikinimo tarnybos prie Socialinės apsaugos ir darbo ministerijos valstybės tarnautojų ir darbuotojų, dirbančių pagal darbo sutartis, etikos kodekso patvirtinimo*). No. BV-118, 2 April 2019.

child's needs is ensured by a qualified team of specialists, which includes personnel with the appropriate personal qualities to work with children.”⁷⁰⁷

It is ensured by the following provisions detailing this social care norm:

1. The suitability of the head of the social care institution to perform his duties is assessed in accordance with the procedure established by legal acts, he/she has a higher education (since 2015) and knowledge of pedagogy, psychology, nursing and social work.
2. The social care institution employs personnel who have the necessary professional education defined in legal acts and who have completed training and obtained licenses and attestation certificates in accordance with the procedure established by legal acts. Employees of community children's care homes who work directly with children (social workers, individual care staff, employment specialists, etc.) have attended training in accordance with the training and counselling programme for guardians (curators), on-call guardians, adoptive parents, community children's care home employees, approved by order of the Director of the State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour. Employees must attend these trainings within 6 months from the start of work in community children's care homes.
3. The child and parents (guardians, curators) are assured that the staff follows the norms of human ethics and the ethical codes of the respective professions in their work. The child is satisfied and speaks well of the staff's human qualities.
4. The social care institution has a description of the procedure for the admission of volunteers to the social care institution approved by the administration of the social care institution, as well as other documents regulating the performance of voluntary work in accordance with the procedure established by legal acts (if volunteers work in the institution). The child and parents (guardians, curators) are assured that the services provided by the volunteers are of high quality. The activities of volunteers are collegially supervised by the specialists of the social care institution and this is recorded in the documents of the social care institution.
5. The child and parents (guardians, curators) are assured that, when accepting employees or mobilising volunteers to help, the administration of the social care institution is convinced of their suitability to work with children (e.g., the requirements for employees are defined in the rules of conduct for employees or the code of conduct approved by the social care institution). The social care institution has written obligations of volunteers regarding the proper treatment of children and the confidentiality of data about children.
6. The teamwork of the staff is ensured in the social care institution to solve the child's problems in a complex manner. The child and parents (guardian, carer) know that the social care institution cooperates with Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service, education, health care, law enforcement, employment and other institutions. Employees working with children in a social care institution have knowledge about the organisation of teamwork and constantly deepen it, can describe the principles of teamwork applied in the institution, as well as the principles of inter-institutional cooperation used in making decisions related to the satisfaction of the best interest of the child.

⁷⁰⁷ Lithuania, Ministry of Social Security and Labour (2007). Regarding the approval of the description of the social care norms (*Dėl Socialinės globos normų aprašo patvirtinimo*). No. A1-46, 20 February 2007, last amendment No. A1-536, 18 August 2022, annex 1, Art. 18.

7. The child and parents (guardians, curators) are guaranteed professional actions of the staff, and it is also ensured that in cases where the child's actions endanger himself and others, the measures used in the interest of his safety do not violate the child's rights and his legitimate interests. Staff are given the opportunity to acquire and deepen psychological knowledge on how to deal with children during and after unfortunate events, crises and similar cases.

8. The relationship between the staff and the child, parents (guardians, curators) is based on the principles of mutual respect, mutual understanding and agreement. Communication between the child and the staff shows a respectful and warm relationship.

9. The social care institution guarantees that the staff will ensure the confidentiality of information about the child, his parents, guardian (carer) or close relatives.

10. The administration of the social care institution ensures the application of measures related to creating safe and healthy working conditions for the staff, and this is recorded in the documents of the social care institution.⁷⁰⁸

The maximum workload of specialists working with the family is established in legal acts. The Description of case management indicates that case managers should have a maximum of 25 to 30 cases, a social worker should work with no more than 10 families to which a help need, or child protection need was established, and the total of families (including other families) should not exceed 15.⁷⁰⁹

Question	YES	NO	Comments
<p>5.1.5 Is consultation with children and families foreseen and/or taking place in the process of the evaluation of services and measures and in the development of child protection policies and legislation?</p> <p><u>If yes</u>, at what level is this done? Please provide indicative examples.</p>	x		<p>The Law on Fundamentals of Legislation foresees consultation with the public in the preparation of a legal act in Lithuania. This process requires that the institution preparing the legal act provides it for the public for consultations. The aim of the consultations is to ensure the openness and transparency of the legislation, to find out the public's opinion on the problems of legal regulation and their solution, to give the public the opportunity to influence the content of the draft law, to better assess the positive and negative consequences of the expected and valid legal regulation, the costs of its implementation, to make proposals to the legal act.⁷¹⁰ Institutions</p>

⁷⁰⁸ Lithuania, Ministry of Social Security and Labour (2007). Regarding the approval of the description of the social care norms (*Dėl Socialinės globos normų aprašo patvirtinimo*). No. A1-46, 20 February 2007, last amendment No. A1-536, 18 August 2022, annex 1, Art. 18.

⁷⁰⁹ Lithuania, Ministry of Social Security and Labour (2018). Regarding the approval of the description of the case management procedure (*Dėl Atvejo vadybos tvarkos aprašo patvirtinimo*). No. A1-141, 29 March 2018, last amendment No. A1-802, 30 December 2019. Art. 79-80.

⁷¹⁰ Lithuania, Seimas (2012). Law on Fundamentals of Legislation (*Lietuvos Respublikos Teisėkūros pagrindų įstatymas*), No. XI-2220, 18 September 2012, last amendment No. XIV-1662, 13 December 2022, Art. 7.

		<p>publish legislative initiatives in the Legal Acts Information System (TAIS), indicating the main principles and motives of the proposed establishment of new or amended existing legal regulation, the preliminary title of the draft legal act, the reasons and purpose of drafting the legal act, and may also indicate the start and end dates of drafting the legal act, drafter of the legal act.⁷¹¹ An example of this is the consultation that is declared presently for the National Action Plan for the Implementation of the Child Guarantee in Lithuania for 2023-2030.⁷¹²</p> <p>The opinions of non-governmental organisations and families may be provided during the discussion of the laws in parliament for the main committee discussing the law. Seimas Statute foresees that the main committee must, in accordance with the procedure established by the Seimas Board, publish information on the Seimas website, until when proposals and comments from interested persons are expected in the committee and how the text of the draft law can be consulted. The main committee has to send the project to the interested state institutions and, if necessary, to public organizations, municipalities, and political parties, so that they can send their evaluations. The board of the Seimas or the Council of Elders may determine to which institutions or persons the project must be sent or may exempt the main committee from the obligations of the main committee specified in this part.⁷¹³ There is also a possibility to organise hearing of the legal act where all the opinions of various parties may be provided. In practice, when discussing questions regarding child rights, NGOs and representatives of parents are invited to the hearings and to the meetings of committees.</p> <p>The quality of social services is evaluated by the municipality, which sets the criteria for such</p>
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⁷¹¹ Lithuania, Seimas (2012). Law on Fundamentals of Legislation (*Lietuvos Respublikos Teisėkūros pagrindų įstatymas*), No. XI-2220, 18 September 2012, last amendment No. XIV-1662, 13 December 2022. Art. 8.

⁷¹² Available at the register of Seimas <https://e-seimas.lrs.lt/portal/legalAct/lt/TAP/13f80e90c48d11ed924fd817f8fa798e?positi>

⁷¹³ Lithuania, Seimas (1994). Seimas Statute (*Seimo statutas*). No. I-399, 17 February 1994, last amendment XIV-1806, 16 March 2023.

		<p>evaluation in municipal legal acts.⁷¹⁴ For example, Kėdainiai municipality foresees that the internal quality control may be carried out by questions to the family.⁷¹⁵</p> <p>Two main bodies should be mentioned when discussing about consultation with society.</p> <p>The Law on Strengthening of the Family foresees that municipalities should form municipal family councils. The Municipal Family Council contributes to the implementation of the municipality's family-strengthening functions and strengthens cooperation between municipal institutions or bodies and family organisations and organisations working with families. According to the law, the Municipal Family Council analyses, monitors and evaluates the drafting and implementation of municipal legislation affecting the situation of families in the municipality, makes proposals to the Municipality Council on the identification of municipal priorities for strengthening families in the municipality and on issues of concern to families, and makes suggestions to municipal institutions and bodies on improving the implementation of actions to strengthen families in the municipality.⁷¹⁶ Therefore, the Municipal Family Council can act as a forum for voicing the opinions of the parents and children regarding child protection policy in the municipality, but in reality, it all depends on the attitude of elected members of the Municipality Council. Not all municipalities form the municipal family councils and if they do, their impact depends on the willingness to cooperate between the Municipal Family Council and Municipality Council.</p> <p>The National Family Council is an advisory body accountable to the Seimas for the development and evaluation of family policy. The Council is a budgetary</p>
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⁷¹⁴ Lithuania, Seimas (2006), Law on Social Services (*Lietuvos Respublikos socialinių paslaugų įstatymas*), No. X-493, last amendment No. XIV-952, 17 March 2022. Art. 13(6).

⁷¹⁵ Lithuania, Head of administration of Kėdainiai district municipality (2021). Regarding the approval of the description of the procedure for assessing the quality of general social services and social care (*Dėl Bendrųjų socialinių paslaugų ir socialinės priežiūros kokybės vertinimo tvarkos aprašo patvirtinimo*), No. AD-1-642, 24 May 2021, Art. 25(1).

⁷¹⁶ Lithuania, Seimas (2017). Law on the Strengthening of the Family (*Lietuvos Respublikos šeimos stiprinimo įstatymas*), No. XIII-700, 19 October 2017, last amendment XIII-2597, 3 December 2019.

		<p>institution supported by the state budget. The main tasks of the Council are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) to promote cooperation between state and municipal institutions involved in family policy-making, to maintain contacts with Lithuanian families, family organisations and organisations working with families, to analyse their expectations; 2) to participate in defining the family policy and family policy strategy and priorities for family strengthening.⁷¹⁷ <p>However, it should be mentioned that the National Family Council has only three working employees, and all the other members of the Council are working voluntarily; therefore, it has limited ability to gather information.</p>
<p>5.1.6. Is the responsibility for data collection on child protection determined in the legislative framework?</p>	<p>x</p>	<p>The obligation to collect information relating to the child rights protection is foreseen in the Law on Fundamentals of Protection of the Rights of the Child. The law foresees that</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) the Ministry of Social Security and Labour, while coordinating the implementation of the child rights protection policy, analyses the information provided by state and municipal institutions and bodies on child rights protection issues, and assesses the state of child rights protection in the country⁷¹⁸. 2) The Ministry of Health of the Republic of Lithuania formulates a policy for the protection of children's rights in the field of health care and for that purpose collects, systematizes and analyses information on children's health issues.⁷¹⁹ 3) The Ministry of the Interior participates in the formation of the child rights protection policy

⁷¹⁷ Lithuania, Seimas (2017). Law on the Strengthening of the Family (*Lietuvos Respublikos šeimos stiprinimo įstatymas*), No. XIII-700, 19 October 2017, last amendment XIII-2597, 3 December 2019, Art. 9.

⁷¹⁸ Lithuania, Seimas (1996). Law on Fundamentals of Protection of the Rights of the Child (*Lietuvos Respublikos Vaiko teisių apsaugos pagrindų įstatymas*), No. I-1234, 14 March 1996, last amendments 10 November 2022. Art. 48(2).

⁷¹⁹ Lithuania, Seimas (1996). Law on Fundamentals of Protection of the Rights of the Child (*Lietuvos Respublikos Vaiko teisių apsaugos pagrindų įstatymas*), No. I-1234, 14 March 1996, last amendments 10 November 2022. Art. 49(4).

		<p>in the regulatory area of the ministry, collects, systematizes and analyses information about children and crimes committed against them, misdemeanours, and other issues of child rights protection assigned to the competence of the ministry.⁷²⁰</p> <p>4) The State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service, implementing the child rights protection policy in municipal territories and participating in the formation of the state policy in the field of child rights protection, manages and disposes of information on the state of child rights protection by itself or through structural units; organizes and ensures the accounting of children who need and apply child rights protection measures, through their structural units - territorial units organize the determination of child custody (care) in municipalities; collects information on the state of child rights protection in municipalities and provides methodological assistance and suggestions to municipal administrations on improving the implementation of child rights protection.⁷²¹</p> <p>The List of Indicators of Statistical Information about Children, approved by the Government,⁷²² shows what data on child protection. Responsible authorities collect data on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • number of children at the beginning of the year (total; 0–3, 4–6, 7–9, 10–14, 15–17 years old; by gender; in the city, in the countryside; by municipalities; by nationality; as a percentage compared to the total population); • the number of births and children born (total; multiples, twins, triplets; total number of
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⁷²⁰ Lithuania, Seimas (1996). Law on Fundamentals of Protection of the Rights of the Child (*Lietuvos Respublikos Vaiko teisių apsaugos pagrindų įstatymas*), No. I-1234, 14 March 1996, last amendments 10 November 2022, Art. 48(5).

⁷²¹ Lithuania, Seimas (1996). Law on Fundamentals of Protection of the Rights of the Child (*Lietuvos Respublikos Vaiko teisių apsaugos pagrindų įstatymas*), No. I-1234, 14 March 1996, last amendments 10 November 2022. Art. 50(1).

⁷²² Lithuania, Government (2002). Regarding the approval of the list of indicators of statistical information about children (*Nutarimas Dėl statistinės informacijos apie vaikus rodiklių sąrašo patvirtinimo*). No. 695, 8 June 2004, last amendments No. 467, 21 June 2023.

		<p>births; by gender; in the city, in the village; according to birth order);</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the number of first-time mothers (by age: up to 15 years; 15, 16, 17 years; the percentage out of total number; in the city, in the village); • the number of children born out of wedlock (in total; in the city, in the village; by mother's age; by father's age; according to the basis of registration); • number of marriages under the age of 18 (in total; by gender; under 16 years, 16-17 years; in the city, in the village; reasons for reducing the marriageable age; percentage from the total number); • number of divorced couples with children (in total, in the city, in the village); • number of dead children (in total; by gender; by age groups: 0–3, 4–6, 7–9, 10–14, 15–17 years; in the city, in the village; by municipalities; according to reasons; percentage out of the total population; number per 100 thousand population); • infant mortality (up to 1 year in total; 1 thousand live newborns; according to reasons; by gender; in the city, in the village; 0-6 days, neonatal); • perinatal mortality (total; stillbirths, infants who died before 1 day and 1–6 days); • the number of children who died from intentional injuries (suicides) (total; by gender; by age groups: 0-9, 10-14, 15-17 years; in city, in village; 100,000 inhabitants); • number of children who died from external causes (unfortunate events) (total; by age groups: 0-3, 4-6, 7-9, 10-14, 15-17 years; by gender; in city, in village; by causes, 100 thousand inhabitants); • the number of children killed in fires (total; by gender; by age; in city, in village); • disposable income of households with children (total; by type of income; total of households with children under 18; one child, two children, three children or more; one parent; two parents; other households; no children) • consumption expenditure of households with children (total; by type of income; total of households with children under 18; one child, two children, three children or more; one parent; two parents; other households; no children)
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • housing amenities of households with children (in percent; total households with dependent children; with one child, two children, three or more children; total households without dependent children; according to the amenities of the living space; one adult with dependent children; two adults with dependent children; other households with children); • indicators of poverty (total households with children; with one child, two children, three or more children, one adult with children; two adults with children; other households with children; households without children); • poverty rate in households with children (in per cent; total households with dependent children; with one child, two children, three or more children; one adult with dependent children; two adults with dependent children; other households with children; households without dependent children); • the number of induced abortions (by age groups: under 15 years; 15-17 years; structure of the number of induced abortions among young women; urban, rural); • the number of breastfed babies (breastfed up to 3, 6 months, in absolute numbers; from the total number of babies, as a percentage); • number of pediatric doctors and specialists (total of pediatric doctors and specialists; 10,000 children); • health indicators of newborns (total newborns; according to the morbidity rates of newborns; prematures weighing up to 2,500 grams, in absolute numbers, from all births, as a percentage); • vaccinations of children (in the city, in the village; according to diseases, percentage); • results of preventive examinations of children (number of children with hearing, vision, posture disorders, speech disorders, scoliosis; 1 thousand children examined; by gender; by age groups: 0–3, 4–6, 7–9, 10–14, 15 - 17 years old; in the city, in the village); • children with malignant tumors, mental and behavioral disorders, infectious diseases, tuberculosis (total number of first-time cases; 100,000 sick children; sick at the end of the year; by gender; by age groups: 0–3, 4–6, 7–9, 10–14, 15–17 years old; city, village; other);
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • number of children diagnosed with a disability first time and repeatedly (total; 0-3, 4-6, 7-9, 10-14, 15-17 years; by gender; urban, rural; by groups of diseases; by disability severity and other); • the number of children abusing alcohol, narcotics, toxic substances (total; by gender; by age groups: under 15 years; 15-17 years; urban, rural; by type of abused substance); • the number of children educated in kindergartens, pre-school classes, schools, in the family (total; by gender; by age; in the city, village; by municipalities; children with special educational needs (by level, group)); • number of children not attending school (total up to 16 years old; by age; in town, village; by municipality; by reason; by gender); • the number of students left to repeat the course of the general education program (in total; by gender; by age; in the city, village; by municipalities; students with special educational needs (by level, group)); • number of students who completed the basic education program and received basic education, students who received basic education and continued their education in the same year, students who completed the secondary education program and received secondary education, students who received secondary education and continued their education in the same year (total ; by age; by gender; in the city, in the countryside; by students with special educational needs (by level, group)); • Number of vocational training institutions and students who study according to initial vocational education programs in institutions (total institutions; total students, by gender; by age; students with special educational needs (by level, group), other); • number of students with special needs in general education classes (total; by age; by gender; in town, village; by special needs, other); • number of students with special needs studying in boarding schools (total schools; in the city, in the village; by municipalities; total number of children in them; by gender; by age; according to special educational needs (by level, groups));
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the number of students participating in non-formal education, the number of students with special educational needs, excluding the gifted, participating in non-formal education (total; by gender; by age; in the city, village; by municipalities; by the direction of non-formal education of children); • the number of students who participated in summer camps (total; those receiving social support, those with special educational needs; the amount of funds from the state and municipal budgets allocated for students' participation in summer camps); • the number of children in minimal care, number of children in medium care (various criteria); • number of working children (total; by gender; by age: 14, 15, 16, 17 years old; by municipalities; by category of person covered by the specified types (one or a combination) of state social insurance (category of the insured)); • number of illegally employed children (total; by gender of minor; by age; in city, village); • the number of families receiving social care; the number of children growing up in families receiving social care (various criteria); • the number of cases of guardianship (curatorship) established for children; the number of children under the guardianship (curatorship) in the family; the number of cases of guardianship (curatorship) established for children according to the grounds for establishing guardianship (curatorship); data on families whose children were placed in guardianship (curatorship) (various criteria); • number of children of foreign citizens who have been placed under guardianship (curatorship) (various criteria); • change of guardians (caregivers) of a child during the year (total number of children who have changed guardians (curators); by gender; by age groups: 0–3, 4–6, 7–9, 10–14, 15–17 years; by municipalities; the number of children whose guardian (curator) died, refused to foster care the child, dismissed from the duties of guardian (curator) in accordance with the law, released from the duties of the guardian (curator) in accordance with the law; according to the reasons for release from the duties of the
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		<p>guardian (curator) (due to one's illness or that of a loved one, due to the deterioration of the financial situation, due to other important reasons); according to the reasons for dismissal from the duties of a guardian (curator) (improperly performed his duties, did not ensure the protection of the interests of the child under the guardianship (curatorship), used his rights for selfish purposes);</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the reasons for the termination of the child's temporary guardianship (curatorship), the number of child foster care institutions, places and children in them (various criteria) • the number of children available for adoption; the number of adoptable children meeting special criteria; • number of adopted children; number of adopted children with special criteria; the number of citizens of the Republic of Lithuania who wish to adopt, whose permanent residence is in the Republic of Lithuania; the number of persons wishing to adopt persons whose permanent residence is in a foreign country, citizens of a foreign state and stateless persons whose permanent residence is in the Republic of Lithuania; (various criteria); • number of applications under the Convention on the 1980 Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction (total; by country of institution of the person making the application; for abduction, access to the child); • the number of students receiving free meals; the number of child benefit recipients; the number of children who received social services at home; children who received social services in day care centres (various criteria); • the number of reports on possible violations of children's rights; organized assistance of the mobile team for the family and/or the child, after determining the need for child protection; the number of reports on possible violence against children received at the Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service; the number of children who may have experienced violence; the number of children for whom an assessment of the child's situation was carried out due to the violation of rights; the number of children
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		<p>who have been placed in guardianship (curatorship); the number of temporarily accommodated children; the number of families subject to case management and number of children in them (various criteria);</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • activities of care centres (various criteria); • the number of children whose guardian (curator) was changed (since 1 January 2025) • the number of children who are suspected (accused) of having committed a criminal act; the number of children arrested; the number of convicted children; the number of children convicted in the courts of the Republic of Lithuania; the number of children who have been assigned measures of educational impact; The number of children citizens of the Republic of Lithuania convicted in the courts of the member states of the European Union (various criteria); • number of children victims of crime various criteria); • the number of children whose search has been published; number of cases when a search for a missing child was announced (various criteria); • number of children who became victims of human trafficking (total; by gender; by age groups: 0–3, 4–6, 7–9, 10–14, 15–17 years; by form of human (child) trafficking; by nationality); • the number of children growing up with their mothers in prisons; (various criteria); • number of children whose parents are serving a prison sentence (various criteria); (since 1 January 2024) • the number of children (over the age of 16) who have committed administrative offenses; the number of children under the age of 16 who have committed an act with signs of an administrative offense; the number of civil cases involving children; (various criteria); • number of emigrant and immigrant children; number of children granted refugee status; the number of children granted additional protection; the number of children who arrived together with their parents or other legal representatives and were granted asylum in the Republic of Lithuania; the number of unaccompanied foreign children granted asylum in the Republic of Lithuania; the number of identified unaccompanied
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			foreign children who are not asylum seekers; the number of children who have been issued a temporary residence permit in the Republic of Lithuania, a temporary residence permit card of a family member of a Union citizen or a certificate of the right to temporary or permanent residence in the Republic of Lithuania (various criteria).
<p>5.1.7. Is there a single authority responsible for monitoring data collection and centralised coordination and data sharing at national level?</p> <p>If <u>yes</u>, Is there a national database (a joint database for monitoring and tracking children) for collecting data in the child protection area at the national, regional, or local level?</p>	x		<p>The State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service registers all events of potential child rights violations and the actions taken on such reports. The Service has internal registries (document management system, which includes the registry on received documents, the registry on the child situation evaluation, the registry on the reports on the child right infringements). The operational actions are coordinated through internal system "Fleet". Furthermore, information about the received Report, examination of the Report, (un)detected violations of the child's rights, assessment of the child's situation, etc., is entered by representatives of the Service into the SPIS system as soon as possible, but no later than within 5 working days of receiving or determining the information.</p> <p>Family Social Support Information System (hereinafter referred to as SPIS) is an information system operating under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour. The ministry, municipalities and municipal institutions manage data in the system. The purpose of SPIS is to uniformly register and collect information on social support provided in municipalities (social benefits and compensations, social support for students, social services, activities carried out in the field of child rights protection, etc.), to analyse this information according to municipalities, types of support and recipients of support, as well as prevent the receipt of support in several municipalities at the same time.⁷²³</p>
5.1.8. Are there common indicators in place to monitor		X	In the list of indicators of accumulated statistical information about children , approved by

⁷²³ Lithuania, Ministry of Social Security and Labour (2008). Regarding the approval of the regulations on the Family Social Support Information system and the regulations of data security of Family Social Support Information System (*Dėl Socialinės paramos šeimai informacinės sistemos nuostatų ir Socialinės paramos šeimai informacinės sistemos duomenų saugos nuostatų patvirtinimo*). No. A1-172, 29 May 2008, last amendment No. A1-116, 23 February 2023.

the performance of the child protection system?		Government Resolution no. 695 Regarding approval of the list of indicators of statistical information on children ⁷²⁴ indicates what data is collected in Lithuania about children. It should be noted that on 21 June 2023, the list of indicators was significantly supplemented with new indicators. Part of the data will be collected immediately after the updated list approval, and part of the data will start to be collected from 1 January 2024 or 1 January 2025 (the number of children whose guardian (curator) was changed). ⁷²⁵
5.1.9. Are there data protection protocols in place and adhered to?	x	<p>The decree regulating the Family Social Support Information System has detailed data protection provisions.⁷²⁶</p> <p>State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service adheres to the requirements of General Data Protection Regulation, and has an appointed Data Protection Officer. The main rules governing the processing of personal data at the Service are set out in the Personal Data Processing Procedures.⁷²⁷</p>
5.1.10. Are there any gaps in the data collection system related to child protection in the country, which have been identified by relevant child protection authorities/institutions, civil society organisations or other institutions active in the child protection field? Is there a systematic and consistent collection of data related to child protection at national, regional, or local level? Please mention if efforts are made to address these gaps.		
Ca. 250 words		

⁷²⁴ Lithuania, Government (2002), Resolution Regarding the approval of the list of indicators of statistical information about children (*Nutarimas Dėl statistinės informacijos apie vaikus rodiklių sąrašo patvirtinimo*). No. 695, 8 June 2004, last amendments No 467, 21 June 2023.

⁷²⁵ Lithuania Government (2023), Resolution Regarding the amendment of Resolution No. 695 of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania of June 8, 2004 "On the Approval of the List of Indicators of Statistical Information on Children" (*Dėl Lietuvos Respublikos Vyriausybės 2004 m. birželio 8 d. nutarimo Nr. 695 „Dėl Statistinės informacijos apie vaikus rodiklių sąrašo patvirtinimo“ pakeitimo*), No 467, 21 June 2023.

⁷²⁶ Lithuania, Ministry of Social Security and Labour (2008). Regarding the approval of the regulations on the Family Social Support Information system and the regulations of data security of Family Social Support Information System (*Dėl Socialinės paramos šeimai informacinės sistemos nuostatų ir Socialinės paramos šeimai informacinės sistemos duomenų saugos nuostatų patvirtinimo*). No. A1-172, 29 May 2008, last amendment No. A1-116, 23 February 2023.

⁷²⁷ Lithuania, State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service (2022). [Data protection](#) (Asmens duomenų apsauga). 13 September 2022.

The State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service gathers data in the field of child rights protection, which then is extensively presented in its monthly and annual reports of the activity of the Service. The reports contain data regarding reports on possible violations of child rights and all the data regarding the investigation of such reports, evaluation of the child's situation, ensuring of a safe environment for the child, regarding the activity of mobile teams working with families, representation of children interests at court proceedings, all the information regarding the guardianship (curatorship) of children, information about children who may be adopted and about adults who may become adoptive parents etc. The information is broken down into many aspects.

The Ombudsperson for Child's Rights, in her 2021 annual report⁷²⁸ proposed to include a considerable number of indicators in the list of collected data.⁷²⁹ Her suggestions have been considered. The list of indicators has been updated in 2023.⁷³⁰

National Audit office has underlined in its 2022 report on Ensuring child rights and interests in guardianship and adoption of children that 75 percent (45 out of 60) of municipalities do not analyse information about the need for development of services for families in need of child protection or family and child support. 28 percent (16 out of 60) of municipalities do not have data on families living in their territory where at least one parent has a disability.⁷³¹

5.2. Developments in the past years: achievements, gaps, and challenges

Based on the output of the 2014 mapping exercise, please briefly describe the development of child protection accountability in the past 8 years, incl. achievements and (persisting) gaps and challenges.

Ca. 300 word

In 2022 Lithuania has ratified Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on a Communications Procedure, which will allow to further ensure accountability of Lithuanian institutions

⁷²⁸ Lithuania, the Ombudsperson of Child's Rights (2021) Annual Report of 2021 (2021 metų veiklos ataskaita). No. 4-3, 31 March 2022.

⁷²⁹ The document has not yet been changed. The original document foreseeing the indicators that should be collected as statistical information about children: Lithuania, Government (2004). Regarding the approval of the list of indicators of statistical information about children (*Dėl statistinės informacijos apie vaikus rodiklių sąrašo patvirtinimo*). No. 695, 8 June 2004, last amendment No. 136, 7 February 2005.

⁷³⁰ Lithuania Government (2023), Resolution Regarding the amendment of Resolution No. 695 of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania of June 8, 2004 "On the Approval of the List of Indicators of Statistical Information on Children" (*Dėl Lietuvos Respublikos Vyriausybės 2004 m. birželio 8 d. nutarimo Nr. 695 „Dėl Statistinės informacijos apie vaikus rodiklių sąrašo patvirtinimo“ pakeitimo*), No 467, 21 June 2023.

⁷³¹ Lithuania, National Audit Office (*Valstybės kontrolė*) (2022), National audit report. Ensuring child rights and interests in guardianship and adoption of children (Valstybinio audito ataskaita. Vaiko teisių ir interesų užtikrinimas globojant ir įvaikinant vaikus), No. VAE-8, 22 September 2022.

in the field of child protection.⁷³² This Protocol enables children from Lithuania and their parents or other legal representatives to submit complaints to the UN the Committee on the Rights of the Child, if they claim to be victims of a violation by Lithuania of their rights according to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The accountability in child rights protection has been developing. The social care norms now include the responsibility of the managers of react to the remarks of the children and their parents in most constructive manner.

The ability of the parents to challenge in court the actions taken regarding the evaluation of child situation, regarding the decisions on case management plan and all other decisions taken in the process of investigation of report of child rights infringement is a very important development, because it gives accountability and ability to have outside review of the actions taken in the process.

The ability of children to apply to the Ombudsperson for Child's Rights should be enhanced, as only very few children use that opportunity to defend their rights.

The standards of behaviour of the employees of State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service have been codified. The standard of conduct of the civil servants and persons under employment of the State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service is approved by the Order of the Director of the Service No. BV-117 dated 2 April 2019⁷³³, and Code of Ethics for civil servants and employees working under employment contracts of the State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service, approved by the Order of the Director No. BV-118 dated 2 April 2019.⁷³⁴

In the list of indicators of accumulated statistical information about children, approved by Government Resolution no. 695 Regarding approval of the list of indicators of statistical information on children⁷³⁵ indicates what data is collected in Lithuania about children. It should be noted that on 21 June 2023, the list of indicators was significantly supplemented with new indicators. Part of the data will be collected

⁷³² Lithuania, Seimas (2022). Law of the Republic of Lithuania on the ratification of the Optional Protocol to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child on a Communication procedure (*Lietuvos Respublikos įstatymas dėl Jungtinių Tautų vaiko teisių konvencijos fakultatyvaus protokolo dėl pranešimų procedūros ratifikavimo*), No. XIV-1375, 30 June 2022.

⁷³³ Lithuania, State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service (2019). Regarding the standard of conduct of the civil servants and persons under employment of the State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour (*Dėl Valstybės vaiko teisių apsaugos ir įvaikinimo tarnybos prie Socialinės apsaugos ir darbo ministerijos valstybės tarnautojų ir darbuotojų, dirbančių pagal darbo sutartis, elgesio standarto patvirtinimo*). No. BV-117, 2 April 2019.

⁷³⁴ Lithuania, State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service (2019). Regarding the code of ethics for civil servants and employees working under employment contracts of the State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour (*Dėl Valstybės vaiko teisių apsaugos ir įvaikinimo tarnybos prie Socialinės apsaugos ir darbo ministerijos valstybės tarnautojų ir darbuotojų, dirbančių pagal darbo sutartis, etikos kodekso patvirtinimo*). No. BV-118, 2 April 2019.

⁷³⁵ Lithuania, Government (2002), Resolution Regarding the approval of the list of indicators of statistical information about children (*Nutarimas Dėl statistinės informacijos apie vaikus rodiklių sąrašo patvirtinimo*). No. 695, 8 June 2004, last amendments No 467, 21 June 2023.

immediately after the updated list approval, and part of the data will start to be collected from 1 January 2024 or 1 January 2025 (the number of children whose guardian (curator) was changed).⁷³⁶

5.3. Promising practices

Please list and briefly describe any promising practice in child protection accountability that you come across. (if available, please include references to documents or URLs in case of online tools/mechanisms)

The detailed monthly and annual reports of the State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service allow us to have a comprehensive view of the child rights situation in Lithuania.⁷³⁷ Monthly reports include information about the reports about possible violations of child rights and the outcomes of the procedure. Yearly reports include information on reports about possible violations of child rights; on children possibly experiencing domestic violence; activity of mobile teams; representation of children in courts and application of administrative responsibility; guardianship (curatorship) of children, and the activity of the Service in the field of social care institutions; the activity of persons licenced by the Service and the activities of care centres; organisation of adoption; international protection of child rights; activity of the Helpline for children; activity of Call line for child rights; project activities of the Service; improvement of qualification organised by the Service; and internal matters. It has detailed statistical and analytical information about the aspects mentioned.

There are various options for the recipients of the social services for children to complain in order to improve the situation. The legal acts establishing the social care norms oblige the social care institutions to react benevolently and constructively to complaints and requests of children, their parents, guardians, or curators. The receptors of social services may complain to the head of municipal administration if they are not satisfied with the services. Children may complain to the Ombudsperson for Child's Rights or the State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service. The age for addressing the court for the violation of child rights is reduced from the generally applied 18 years to 14 years.

The tendencies to regulate the behaviour of the State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service (standard of conduct and code of ethics were adopted in 2019) allow the development of Service specialists' service improvement. Child rights protection specialists work in a very sensitive field and intervene in families' everyday lives. Thus, they must be ethical and professional. The adopted standards will facilitate this.

⁷³⁶ Lithuania Government (2023), Resolution Regarding the amendment of Resolution No. 695 of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania of June 8, 2004 "On the Approval of the List of Indicators of Statistical Information on Children" (*Dėl Lietuvos Respublikos Vyriausybės 2004 m. birželio 8 d. nutarimo Nr. 695 „Dėl Statistinės informacijos apie vaikus rodiklių sąrašo patvirtinimo“ pakeitimo*), No 467, 21 June 2023.

⁷³⁷ The annual reports of the service are available at <https://vaikoteises.lrv.lt/lt/administracine-informacija/ataskaitos/metines-veiklos-ataskaitos>, and monthly reports here <https://vaikoteises.lrv.lt/lt/administracine-informacija/ataskaitos/menesio-veiklos-ataskaitos>

6. General education, promotion, and awareness raising

6.1 Education on child rights

6.1.1. Does education on child rights form part of the (national) formal school curricula? If yes, please provide details such as in which types of school and targeting which grade(s) (age group), as part of which school subject and for how many periods in a pupil's school career.

Ca. 200 words

There is no training at the school level, it is not formally included in school curricula.

6.1.2. Please provide an overview of the most important national and/or sub-national implemented programmes and activities aiming at educating children, parents, teachers, and/or society at large about child rights and/or child protection at national or sub-national level. By which actors were those commissioned, funded, and implemented?

Ca. 200 words

Unfortunately, we have to point out that in Lithuania there is fragmented information and education of children, families and society on the issues of children's rights. Currently, despite positive changes, fragmented public knowledge about children's rights and, in general, human rights is still noticeable. So far, only isolated, fragmented initiatives/activities have been implemented in Lithuania to inform society, including children, about children's rights, and to raise public awareness in this area. Therefore, there remains a need for more active, higher-quality actions in this area and in Lithuania.⁷³⁸

6.2 Promotion and awareness raising

6.2.1. Please provide information on awareness raising and/or promotion campaigns or relevant activities on child rights (possibly including on the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights) and/or protection issues targeting the general public or children in general at national or sub-national level. Please provide information on the most recent and representative awareness raising campaigns, including information on the target groups, the thematic areas covered, the actors involved, funding, the method of dissemination chosen and the impact of the campaign, if assessed.

Ca. 250 words

The main organiser of the activities is the State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service. The main activities of the State Child Rights Protection and Adoption service in the field of public education in 2021:

1) In January and February, a publicizing campaign of social advertisements about different types of violence against children was carried out - advertisements were shown on 8 different television channels. The aim of this campaign was to raise public awareness of the types of violence against children, intolerance of any kind of violence and to inform where and what kind of help is available.

⁷³⁸ Explanatory document to the Family policy strengthening development programme: Lithuania, Government (2021). Regarding the approval of the development programme for strengthening the family policy of the Ministry of Social Security and Labor of the Republic of Lithuania, the manager of the 2021-2030 development programme (*Dėl 2021–2030 metų plėtros programos valdytojos Lietuvos Respublikos socialinės apsaugos ir darbo ministerijos šeimoms politikos stiprinimo plėtros programos patvirtinimo*) No. 930, 10 November 2021.

2) A press conference of the Service was organized, during which an overview of 2020 was presented on the Lithuanian scale: violations of children's rights, relevant analysis of violence against children in various sections, adoption, foster care and other statistics, observations, conclusions about the Service's activities. This year's directions, highlights and main tasks were also presented during the conference.

3) An overview of the first half of the Service's activities was prepared in the middle of the year, and the public was introduced to it through the media.

4) In April, in the Lithuanian National Library of Martynas Mažvydas, on the occasion of International Children's Book Day, a remote conversation - discussion, "Adolescent rights in literature and to literature" was organised. The teenagers of the country discussed with the teenage writers Ilona Ežerinyte and Vytautas Varanis about the literature of teenagers and the diversity of its topics, the problems raised there.

5) On 1 June, on the country's big outdoor screens, children were congratulated on the occasion of International Children's Day - a congratulatory clip from the Service was shown.

6) In the third quarter of the year, the Science and Knowledge Day campaign was carried out - "A Child's Constitution for every first grader in the country". The purpose of the campaign is to give every first-class pupil in the country (almost 30,000 children) a Children's Constitution - a booklet that specifies the child's basic rights and the responsibilities arising from them. With such a gift, children are encouraged to take the first steps towards civic education and become familiar with their basic rights. The booklet is written in child-friendly language, and is available in the Lithuanian language.

7) The conference "Emotions in the Context of Divorce: how to help adults, help children?" was organised in the fourth quarter of the year in cooperation with VšĮ "Mamadu". The conference discussed the emotional challenges that children face during the divorce process, and parents and other interested parties were given knowledge on how to understand and respond to the child's emotional state during the divorce process and after it. The conference was broadcast via YouTube. In cooperation with VšĮ "Mamadu", a series of remote seminars was organised in the fourth quarter of the year, aimed at people participating or who have participated in the divorce process, focused on practical advice on how to ensure children's rights and needs. 3 seminars were organised on the topic of divorce: "How to cooperate with your ex-spouse during and after divorce", "Emotional consequences of divorce for children: what do we need to know?", "Holidays after divorce: how and where will children celebrate Christmas?".

8) In the fourth quarter of the year, a publicising campaign for the project "Multidimensional family therapy" implemented by the Service was carried out - updated information on the website of the Service, created infographics, video presentation of the project, initiated conversation on national radio and other means of mass information. Project publicity video information, three video clips have been prepared: "Invitation to participate and cooperate", "Providing help in the form of therapy", and "We will accompany you on the way to important changes for you".

Besides the activity of State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service, there are various activities organised in the field of child rights protection, but they are more separate projects or private initiatives.

The representatives of preschools in Kaunas have developed and are executing a project about child rights in preschool education. NordPlus project participants from Lithuania, Estonia, Sweden, Greenland, and Iceland, during the preparatory seminar held in Reykjavik discussed the rights of the children in their countries, and the extent to which children are included in the decision-making process in educational institutions. Representatives of Lithuanian kindergartens prepared a project

during which teachers' ability to listen and hear children will be strengthened. Kindergartens in Sweden, Lithuania, Estonia, Iceland and Greenland will learn to include children in decision-making processes according to the child's age and capabilities.⁷³⁹

UNICEF initiatives:

While implementing the project "Development of the initiative of child-friendly cities of the Nordic and Baltic Countries", UNICEF organised a remote conference "Child-friendly Cities - visions of the future", during which information was shared about the decisions of Lithuanian cities in order to achieve the UNICEF Child-friendly city status, the good practices of the Nordic countries in the development of Child-friendly cities initiative, opportunities for cities and communities to cooperate in implementing child-friendly governance, improving the implementation and protection of children's rights. The conference was held on October 28, 2022.⁷⁴⁰

In December 2022, Vilnius was announced as a candidate to become a UNICEF Child-friendly city. The action plan for the next 3 years was drawn up. Once all the requirements are met, the city will be declared child-friendly and awarded the "UNICEF Child-Friendly City" label.⁷⁴¹

2022 World Children's Day in Lithuania was celebrated by UNICEF at Vilnius Pilaitė Gymnasium, where children talked with decision-makers about the future of education, about their expectations, about dialogue with adults in improving the content of education and helping children fully prepare for independent life. The event was also broadcast online.⁷⁴²

Every year UNICEF organises the UNICEF Runs to increase awareness about child rights. In 2019 it took place in 6 cities and towns in Lithuania. An important goal of UNICEF children's runs is to develop community spirit among young members of society. Every year, UNICEF children's runs are actively supported by the media and well-known people in society. The UNICEF Kids' Run is a 500-1km fun run for children aged 2-14 to help children suffering from malnutrition and deadly diseases in disaster-stricken countries. It is an event that unites children around the world and gives them the opportunity to help UNICEF save the lives of the world's children.⁷⁴³

⁷³⁹ Varanavičienė, J. (2023) ' Išgirskime vaiką! „NordPlus“ projektas apie vaiko teises darželyje' ('Let's hear the child! "NordPlus" project about child rights in kindergarten') 1 February 2023. *Švietimo naujienos*. Available at <https://www.svietimonaujienos.lt/isgirskime-vaika-nordplus-projektas-apie-vaiko-teises-darzelyje/>

⁷⁴⁰ UNICEF (2022). Conference "Child-friendly cities - visions of the future". Available at <https://unicef.lt/konferencija-vaikams-draugiski-miestai-ateities-vizijos-2/>

⁷⁴¹ UNICEF (2022). 'Vilnius tapo Vaikams draugišku miestu – kandidatų' (*Vilnius has become a candidate for child-friendly city title*). Available at <https://unicef.lt/vilnius-tapo-vaikams-draugisku-miestu-kandidatu-2/>

⁷⁴² UNICEF (2022). 'Pasaulinę vaikų dieną vaikai kalbėjosi apie švietimo ateitį' (*On International Children's Day, children talked about the future of education*). Available at <https://unicef.lt/pasauline-vaiku-diena-vaikai-kalbejo-apie-svietimo-ateiti/>

⁷⁴³ 15min.lt (2019) 'Vyks UNICEF vaikų bėgimas, skirtas JT vaiko teisių konvencijos 30-mečiui'. (The UNICEF Children's Run will take place to mark the 30th anniversary of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child) 24 May 2019. Available at <https://www.15min.lt/gyvenimas/naujiena/seima/vyks-unicef-vaiku-begimas-skirtas-it-vaiko-teisiu-konvencijos-30-meciui-1026-1149772>.

On 1 June 2022, on the occasion of International Children's Day, the non-governmental organisation "Paramos vaikams centras" launched the social campaign "Parents' Words are Written in the Heart". It aims to draw the attention of adults, especially parents/guardians, to how a casual phrase or repeated words can affect children.⁷⁴⁴

No awareness-raising campaigns about the role of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights in the protection of children.

6.2.2. Are there any awareness raising activities regarding complaint mechanisms at national or sub-national level, e.g. for the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights on a communications procedure⁷⁴⁵? Please briefly describe.

Ca. 200 words

The entry into force of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights on a communications procedure for Lithuania was announced in the internet sites of Ombudsperson for Child Rights and of the Ministry of Social Security and Labour.⁷⁴⁶

6.2.3. Are there any awareness raising or training activities at national or sub-national level on digital literacy, privacy and online safety for children, parents, teachers, and other relevant professionals?

"Safer Internet Centre Lithuania: draugiskasinternetas.lt" is a recent action under the "Connecting Europe Facility" (CEF Telecom) programme whilst implementing Safer Internet Centre's (SIC) generic services. The information is available in Lithuanian and English.

For the past 10 years, Lithuania has implemented the EK Safer Internet programme that was started in Lithuania in 2005. Since July 2012 Safer Internet consortium in Lithuania has increased its activities, and there are four official partners: the National Agency for Education (Agency) as coordinator; the Communications Regulatory Authority of the Republic of Lithuania (RRT); "Vaikų linija" (Child Line); and Association "Langas į ateitį" (LIA).

The agency is responsible for implementing awareness-raising events, creating relevant tools, and developing the national SIC platform using the website www.draugiskasinternetas.lt.

⁷⁴⁴ Lrytas.lt (2022) 'Tėvų žodžiai įsirašo širdy: kampanija primena, kad vaikai prisimena viską' (*Parents' words are written in the heart: the campaign reminds that children remember everything*) 31 May 2022. Available at <https://www.lrytas.lt/tevams/tevyste/2022/05/31/news/tevu-zodziai-isirasosirdy-kampanija-primena-kad-vaikai-prisimena-viska-23526838>.

⁷⁴⁵ URL: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/optional-protocol-convention-rights-child-communications> [12/12/2022]

⁷⁴⁶ The Office of the Ombudsperson of Child's Rights (2022). 'Vaikai galės kreiptis į Jungtines Tautas dėl jų teisių ir interesų pažeidimų Lietuvoje' (*Children will be able to apply to the United Nations for violations of their rights and interests in Lithuania*). 17 May 2022. Available at <http://vtaki.lt/lt/naujienos/vaikai-gales-kreiptis-i-jungtines-tautas-del-ju-teisiu-ir-interesu-pazeidimu-lietuvoje>; Lithuania, Ministry of Social Security and Labour (2022) 'Vaikai galės kreiptis į Jungtines Tautas dėl jų teisių ir interesų pažeidimų Lietuvoje' (*Children will be able to apply to the United Nations for violations of their rights and interests in Lithuania*). 11 May 2022. Available at <https://socmin.lrv.lt/lt/naujienos/vaikai-gales-kreiptis-i-jungtines-tautas-del-ju-teisiu-ir-interesu-pazeidimu-lietuvoje>

Together with consortium partners Agency organises Safer Internet Day events, traditional annual conferences and seminars for target groups and maintains a Youth Panel where children and youth can express their views and exchange knowledge and experiences. The agency prepares a Certification programme based on the best European practice for Safer Internet Ambassadors in Lithuania.

An awareness Centre teach children, parents, and teachers about better and safer use of the Internet and makes awareness toolkits and services adapted to children. LIA implements safer internet training, awareness-raising activities, and awareness-raising materials. For example, the app “Are you safe on the Internet?” of the European eSafety label program; online training for 1000 educators and school librarians; series of webinars for parents broadcasted to public libraries. The information is provided in age-adapted language, there are different materials for different age groups.⁷⁴⁷

6.3. Promising practices

Please list and briefly describe any challenges and promising practice regarding child rights and/or child protection outreach activities/measure targeting relevant groups of society or society at large that you come across. (if available please include references to documents or URLs in case of online tools/mechanisms)

The State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service has carried out a number of child rights awareness raising activities in 2021. On the other hand, the awareness about guardianship (curatorship) and help for children left without parental care should be increased, as well as about the child rights in general.

UNICEF is vocal in promoting child rights through its campaigns “Child-friendly Cities”, “World Children's Day”, UNICEF Runs.

“Safer Internet Centre Lithuania: draugiskasinternetas.lt” could also be mentioned as promising practice. It is a recent action under the “Connecting Europe Facility” (CEF Telecom) programme whilst implementing Safer Internet Centre’s (SIC) generic services. The agency is responsible for implementing awareness-raising events, creating relevant tools, and developing the national SIC platform using the website www.draugiskasinternetas.lt.

Unfortunately, we have to point out that in Lithuania, there is fragmented information and education of children, families and society on the issues of children's rights. Currently, despite positive changes, fragmented public knowledge about children's rights and, in general, human rights is still noticeable. So far, only isolated, fragmented initiatives/activities have been implemented in Lithuania to inform society, including children, about children's rights and to raise public awareness of child rights questions.

Particular attention should be drawn the fact that children do not know the role of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights in the protection of children. Most of them have never even heard about the Charter. Therefore, there remains a need for more active, higher-quality actions in this area in Lithuania.

⁷⁴⁷ About “Safer internet”. Available at <https://www.draugiskasinternetas.lt/en/about-safer-internet/>

7. Child participation and community engagement

7.1. Complaint procedures

Question	YES	NO	Comments
7.1.1. Are there independent child complaints procedures (e.g. an ombuds institution) that are fully compliant with the Paris Principles ⁷⁴⁸ in place, with an ability to hear, review and enforce individual complaints from children?	x		<p>The right to complain about child rights' violations in general is established in the Law on Fundamentals of Protection of the Rights of the Child which states that a child may independently apply to the Ombudsman on the Protection of the Rights of Child, the State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service or its territorial department, the police or an educational, health care or other institution, and upon reaching the age of 14, - to the court for violation of his rights.⁷⁴⁹</p> <p>The Ombudsperson on Child Rights has the power to investigate the complaints submitted by children. Article 17 of the Law on the Ombudsperson of Child Rights indicates that a child can apply to the child rights protection supervisor independently. The formal application requirements do not apply for children.⁷⁵⁰</p>
7.1.2. Are there specialised Courts and compliant procedures with international standards in place for children in contact with the law and for children to access justice and seek redress and remedies for violations of the child protection rights?		x	<p>There are no specialised children and (ro) families courts in Lithuania.</p> <p>In order to ensure protection of child's rights the following instruments are applied in the civil procedure, which are elaborated in the Code of Civil procedure:⁷⁵¹</p>

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URL:

[https://ganhri.org/paris-principles/#:~:text=The%20Paris%20Principles%20\(%27Principles%20Relating,are%20pluralism%2C%20independence%20and%20effectiveness](https://ganhri.org/paris-principles/#:~:text=The%20Paris%20Principles%20(%27Principles%20Relating,are%20pluralism%2C%20independence%20and%20effectiveness) [12/12/2022]

⁷⁴⁹ Lithuania, Seimas (1996). Law on Fundamentals of Protection of the Rights of the Child (*Lietuvos Respublikos Vaiko teisių apsaugos pagrindų įstatymas*), No. I-1234, 14 March 1996, last amendment No. XIV-1512 10 November 2022.

⁷⁵⁰ Lithuania, Seimas (2000). Law on the Ombudsperson of Child Rights (*Lietuvos Respublikos vaiko teisių apsaugos kontrolieriaus įstatymas*). No. VIII-1708, 25 May 2000, last amendment XIV-423, 17 June 2021.

⁷⁵¹ Lithuania, Seimas (2002), Civil procedure code of the Republic of Lithuania (*Lietuvos Respublikos Civilinio proceso kodeksas*), No. IX-743, 28 February 2002, last amendment No. XIV-1748, 22 December 2022.

		<p>The hearings of matters are public in all courts. However, the court may pass a motivated ruling to hear a case on camera: to protect private or family life of a person. (Articles 9 (1), 502 (1))</p> <p>In court, hearing case on camera, substantive provisions of a court judgement are announced publicly except for cases on adoption and cases concerning guardianship. (Article 9 (3))</p> <p>In cases, where underaged persons from 14 to 18 years of age are represented in court by their parents, foster-parents or guardians the court involves underage person to participate in hearings together with the representatives. (Article 38 (3))</p> <p>When deciding any question related with a child, a child who can formulate his own views must be questioned directly and if that is impossible, through a representative. (Article 380 (1))</p> <p>In passing a judgment, the child’s opinion must be considered if that does not conflict with the interests of the child himself. (Article 380 (1)).</p> <p>Disputes concerning an adoption (Article 484), guardianship or care (Article 502 (3)) the contesting of paternity (maternity) (Article 398) must be heard with the necessary attendance of the representative of the state institution for the protection of the child’s rights.</p> <p>An examination of child witnesses must be performed according to the special rules foreseen in Article 194 of the Code.</p> <p>At the discretion of the court, any party to the proceeding may be removed from the courtroom by a court ruling for the period while the child’s opinion is being heard. (Articles 485(5), 503 (3)).</p> <p>In all court disputes, the court must undertake measures to protect the rights and interests of a child (Articles 376 (2), 384 (3), 491 (2))</p> <p>Arrest as a court’s penalty cannot be ordered for children as well as for persons who are raising a child under the age of 12 (Article 108 (1)).</p> <p>The court, until a judgment is passed, taking into consideration the interests of the child, may employ the temporary protection measures</p>
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		<p>referred to in Article 3.65 of the Civil Code (Articles 384 (5), 404 (3)) and provisional safeguards referred to in Article 145 of the Code (prohibition for the defendant to remove the child from the place of permanent residence without permission of the court (Article 145(8)).</p> <p>Other issues are not regulated in legal acts. The protection of the child's rights is left to the discretion of the judge hearing the case. Special court chambers are not provided for in legal acts, but in practice, children's cases are heard by judges who have experience in hearing such cases. Courts have child-friendly interview rooms where children are interviewed if needed.</p> <p>To ensure the protection of child rights, the following instruments are applied in the criminal procedure, which is elaborated in the Criminal Procedure Code:⁷⁵²</p> <p>The court is allowed to hear cases on camera regarding criminal acts in which children are accused or recognised as victims (Article 9 (3))</p> <p>A defence attorney must participate in cases where the suspect, accused, or convicted is a child (Article (Article 51 (1) (1)). This right is guaranteed to them immediately from the moment of detention or the first questioning (Article 10 (1)).</p> <p>A child suspect or accused, among other rights, also has the right to be accompanied by a legal representative during court hearings and other procedural stages, as well as the right to privacy (Articles 21 (4), 22(3)).</p> <p>In order to reduce the traumatic effect, a special procedure for interviewing child witnesses and victims has been established. (Article 186)</p> <p>According to Article 186 (2) of the Code of Criminal Procedure, a child witness or a child victim is interviewed during the pre-trial investigation in premises adapted for the interviewing children, usually no more than once. In cases where repeated questioning of a child witness or a child victim is necessary during the</p>
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⁷⁵² Lithuania, Seimas (2002), Criminal procedure code (*Lietuvos Respublikos Baudžiamojo proceso kodeksas*), No. IX-785, 14 March 2002, amendment [XIV-785](#), 16 December 2021.

pre-trial investigation, they are usually interviewed by the same person. Their interview must be video and audio recorded. A child witness and a child victim are summoned to a court hearing only in exceptional cases.

According to Article 186 (3) of the Code of Criminal Procedure, in the questioning of a witness under 14 years old or a victim under 14 years old at all times, as well as in the questioning of a child witness or a child victim regarding crimes against human life, health, freedom, freedom of sexual decision and inviolability, child and family, for profiting from child prostitution or involvement of a child in prostitution or in other cases, when requested by the participants in the process or at the initiative of the pre-trial investigation officer, prosecutor or pre-trial investigation judge, a psychologist must be invited to help interview the child, taking into account interviewee's social and psychological maturity, as well as a representative of the state child rights protection institution must be invited, who observes from another room, whether the rights of a child witness or a child victim are not violated during the questioning. The representative of the State Institution for the Protection of Child Rights can ask the person being interviewed questions and make requests for the interview. The representative of a child witness or a child victim has the right to participate in the questioning of the witness and the victim only after assessing whether the representative will not influence the child.

According to Article 186 (4) of the Code of Criminal Procedure, the suspect and other participants in the process, except for the psychologist and the representative of the child witness or the child victim, are not allowed to be in the room where the questioning is conducted. In such a case, an audio and video recording must be made, and the suspect and other participants in the process must be given the opportunity to observe and hear the questioning from another room and to ask questions through the judge of the pre-trial investigation. If it is impossible to create conditions for the suspect and other participants in the process to observe and hear the interview from another room, the interview is conducted without the suspect and other participants in the process. The audio and video

recording made during such questioning is shown immediately after the questioning to the suspect and other participants in the process, who have the right to ask questions of the person being questioned through the judge of the pre-trial investigation.

A psychologist assists while questioning a child suspect, if necessary. The specialist of the State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service monitors whether the rights of a child suspect are not violated during the questioning (Articles 188 (5), 272 (4), 280, 283).

An audio and video recording of the interview may take place. If an arrested or detained child is questioned, an audio and video recording is always done. (Article 188 (5)).

Article 239 (1)(2) specifies that after the transfer of the case to the court, when it is necessary to question a child victim or child witness additionally, but it is not planned to summon them to the trial, by order of the judge preparing the case for trial, the judge of the pre-trial investigation questions the child witness or the child victim.

Article 275 (5) specifies that child victims and child witnesses may be asked questions at the court hearing only through the chairperson of the court hearing and, if necessary, through a representative.

Article 280 (1) of the Code of Criminal Procedure stipulates that in exceptional court cases, while questioning a witness under 14 years old at all times, as well as in the questioning of a child witness or a child victim regarding crimes against human life, health, freedom, freedom of sexual decision and inviolability, child and family, for profiting from child prostitution or involvement of a child in prostitution or in other cases, when requested by the participants in the process or at the initiative of the court, a psychologist must be invited to help interview the child, taking into account child's social and psychological maturity, as well as a representative of the State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service must be invited, who observes from another room,

whether the rights of a child witness or a child victim are not violated during the questioning. The representative of the State Institution for the Protection of Child Rights can ask the person being interviewed questions and make requests for the interview. The representative of a child witness has the right to participate in the interview of the witness only after assessing whether he will not influence the child.

According to the Article 280 (2) of the Code of Criminal Procedure, the accused and other participants in the process, except for the psychologist and the representative of the child witness are not allowed to be in the room where the interview is conducted. In such a case, an audio and video recording must be made, and the accused and other participants in the process must be given the opportunity to observe and hear the questioning from another room and to ask questions of the person being questioned through the judge.

Article 283 (3) of the Code of Criminal Procedure stipulates that in exceptional court cases in the questioning of a victim under 14 years old at all times, as well as in the questioning of a child victim or a child victim regarding crimes against human life, health, freedom, freedom of sexual decision and inviolability, child and family, for profiting from child prostitution or involvement of a child in prostitution or in other cases, when requested by the participants in the process or at the initiative of the court, a psychologist must be invited to help interview the child, taking into account child's social and psychological maturity, as well as a representative of the State Child Rights Protection Institution must be invited, who observes from another room, whether the rights of a child witness or a child victim are not violated during the questioning. The representative of the State Institution for the Protection of Child Rights can ask the person being interviewed questions and make requests for the questioning. The accused and other participants in the process, except for the psychologist and the representative of the child witness are not allowed to be in the room where the questioning is conducted. In such a case, an audio and video

		<p>recording must be made, and the accused and other participants in the process must be given the opportunity to observe and hear the interview from another room and to ask questions of the person being questioned through the judge. The representative of a child victim has the right to participate in the interrogation of the witness only after assessing whether he will not influence the child.</p> <p>Other issues are not regulated in legal acts. The protection of other rights of the child is left to the discretion of the judge hearing the case. Special court chambers are not provided for in legal acts, but in practice, children's cases are heard by judges who have experience in hearing such cases. Courts have child-friendly interview rooms where children are interviewed if needed.</p>
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7.2. Feedback mechanisms

Question	YES	NO	Comments
7.2.1. Are there government support fora such as children's groups established at local/community level, and is a formal mechanism in place through which national/sub-national/local government receive and respond to the feedback and ideas from children and children's groups who have received child protection services?	x		<p>The inclusion of students in the adoption of decisions related to the conditions of education in schools is enshrined in The Law on Education, No I-1489⁷⁵³</p> <p>Article 46 (1) (9) of the Law notes that every student has the right to participate in school self-government.</p> <p>Article 43 (13) notes that student and youth organisations can operate in the school, which increases students' moral, national and civic awareness, and patriotism, fosters cultural and social maturity, and helps meet their self-development and self-expression needs.</p>

⁷⁵³ Lithuania, Seimas (1991), Law on education (*Lietuvos Respublikos švietimo įstatymas*), No. I-1489, 25 June 1991, last amendment No. XIV-1263, 30 June 2022.

		<p>According to Article 43 (14), favourable operating conditions must be created for student and youth organisations operating in the school. The state, state and municipal schools or other natural and legal persons <u>can</u> finance these organisations and promote their activities.</p> <p>School student representatives are also members of school councils. The school council is the highest self-governing institution of the school. (Article 60 (3)). Every year, the school council evaluates the school director's annual report and expresses its opinion about it (Article 60 (5)).</p> <p>School students can also participate in educational management and join student interest associations, organisations, and unions that carry out educational and cultural tasks set by their members and functions provided for in their operating statutes (Article 63 (1)).</p> <p>Educational institutions must provide these organisations and associations with informational and methodological assistance, as well as advise them, and may invite them to act as consultants or experts. (Article 63 (3)).</p> <p>The Law on Youth Policy of the Republic of Lithuania, IX-1871,⁷⁵⁴ provides the basis for the participation of children from the age of 14 in the management of youth affairs.</p> <p>According to Article 5, each municipality has a Municipal Youth Affairs Council. Its members have delegated representatives of the council of municipal youth organisations operating in the territory of the municipality. If the municipal council of youth organisations does not exist or it has not delegated representatives, youth representatives are elected at a public general meeting of youth organisations and organisations working with youth, students, and/or student</p>
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⁷⁵⁴ Lithuania, Seimas (2003), Law on Youth Policy of the Republic of Lithuania (*Lietuvos Respublikos jaunimo politikos pagrindų įstatymas*), No. IX-1871, 4 December 2003, last amendment No. XIII-3204, 29 July 2020.

		<p>self-government representatives operating in the territory of the municipality. The municipality's youth affairs coordinator is responsible for organising this meeting.</p> <p>The municipal youth affairs council examines issues related to youth policy in the municipality and submits proposals to municipal institutions regarding youth policy, its implementation, and funding priorities for youth policy implementation measures in the municipality as well as it submits proposals for draft legislation related to the implementation of youth policy in the municipality.</p> <p>According to Article 4, Delegated representatives of the Council of Lithuanian Youth Organizations are members of the Council of Youth Affairs. The Council of Lithuanian Youth Organizations unites 72 largest youth organisations and organizations working with youth and councils of municipal youth organisations.⁷⁵⁵</p> <p>The Council of Youth Affairs is an advisory body of the Department of Youth Affairs under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour (DYA), which implements the youth policy in the Republic of Lithuania.</p> <p>Based on Article 4 (3), the Council of Youth Affairs performs the following functions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. submits proposals regarding the vision, mission, priorities, and strategic goals of DYA; 2. considers issues related to financing youth policy projects; 3. submits proposals to the Ministry of Social Security and Labour regarding the implementation of DYA strategic and annual plans; 4. participates in the formation of youth policy;
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⁷⁵⁵ The website of the Council of Lithuanian Youth Organizations (*Lietuvos jaunimo organizacijų taryba (LIJOT)*), <https://lijot.lt/>, the website was visited on 7 March 2023.

		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. examines issues related to youth policy and submits proposals to the Government, ministries, and other state and municipal institutions regarding the implementation of youth policy, funding priorities for youth policy measures, and also submits proposals for draft legal acts related to the implementation of youth policy; 6. submits proposals for the annual report of the head of DYA and makes recommendations to the Ministry of Social Security and Labour regarding the evaluation of the report; 7. participates in electing the head of DYA; 8. monitors the implementation of youth policy, initiates research in the field of youth policy, evaluates and submits conclusions to the Ministry of Social Security and Labour regarding the conducted research; 9. considers DYA budget projects and submits proposals to the Ministry of Social Security and Labour regarding budget allocations. <p>Article 51 (3) stipulates that the Interinstitutional Child Welfare Council is established to improve the coordination of activities of state and municipal institutions and bodies, their cooperation with non-governmental organisations and the implementation of legal acts in the field of child rights protection. The Council consists of 18 representatives. Of which 2 are student representatives, representatives of 4 national umbrella non-governmental organisations working in the field of child welfare in at least half of Lithuanian municipalities and 2 representatives of non-governmental organisations working in the field of child welfare.⁷⁵⁶</p>
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⁷⁵⁶ Lithuania, Government (2018), Decision on the establishment of the Interinstitutional Child Welfare Council under the Government of the Republic of Lithuania and the approval of its regulations (*Nutarimas dėl tarpžinybinės vaiko gerovės tarybos prie Lietuvos Respublikos vyriausybės sudarymo ir jos nuostatų patvirtinimo*), No 893, 4 September 2018, last amendment No 830, 7 August 2019.

		<p>The Council analyses the situation of the protection of children's rights and submits proposals to the Government, ministers, and local municipalities regarding the development of practice, the drafting of laws and other legal acts or the amendment of existing legal acts; analyses whether the laws and other legal acts related to the protection of the child's rights do not conflict with the child's rights and freedoms.</p> <p>The Council submits proposals to the state and/or municipal institutions regarding the cooperation of institutions in the field of child welfare, their cooperation with non-governmental organisations, the implementation of child rights protection measures and the following issues: children's welfare; improving children's health and access to healthcare services; children's formal and informal education, daytime employment; comprehensive assistance and coordinated educational assistance, social and healthcare services for children and their parents, guardians (carers); provision of legal education and state-guaranteed legal aid for children; prevention of child crime, violence against children, child trafficking and other violations of children's rights.</p> <p>It also initiates the organization of events (discussions, conferences, trainings, etc.) to discuss child rights protection policy, application of laws and other legal acts.</p>
<p>7.2.2. Are community-based mechanisms functional across the country where necessary and per applicability and per protocols and procedures? Is their effectiveness monitored by independent accountability mechanisms?</p>	<p>x</p>	<p>The Law on Youth Policy of the Republic of Lithuania, IX-1871,⁷⁵⁷ provides the basis for the participation of children from the age of 14 in the management of youth affairs.</p> <p>According to Article 5, each municipality has a Municipal Youth Affairs Council. Its members have delegated representatives of the council of</p>

⁷⁵⁷ Lithuania, Seimas (2003), Law on Youth Policy of the Republic of Lithuania (Lietuvos Respublikos jaunimo politikos pagrindų įstatymas), No. IX-1871, 4 December 2003, last amendment No. XIII-3204, 29 July 2020.

		<p>municipal youth organisations operating in the territory of the municipality. If the municipal council of youth organisations does not exist or it has not delegated representatives, youth representatives are elected at a public general meeting of youth organisations and organisations working with youth, students, and/or student self-government representatives operating in the territory of the municipality. The municipality's youth affairs coordinator is responsible for organising this meeting.</p> <p>The municipal youth affairs council examines issues related to youth policy in the municipality and submits proposals to municipal institutions regarding youth policy, its implementation, and funding priorities for youth policy implementation measures in the municipality as well as it submits proposals for draft legislation related to the implementation of youth policy in the municipality.</p> <p>According to Article 4, Delegated representatives of the Council of Lithuanian Youth Organizations are members of the Council of Youth Affairs. The Council of Lithuanian Youth Organizations unites the 72 largest youth organisations and organisations working with youth and councils of municipal youth organisations.⁷⁵⁸</p>
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7.3. Promising practices

Please list and briefly describe any challenges and promising practice regarding child participation and community engagement that you come across. (if available please include references to documents or URLs in case of online tools/mechanisms)

⁷⁵⁸ The website of the Council of Lithuanian Youth Organizations (*Lietuvos jaunimo organizacijų taryba (LIJOT)*), <https://lijot.lt/>, the website was visited on 7 March 2023.

The legal acts provide the conditions for child participation in decision-making, but children do not widely use these options. As mentioned, only a few children make formal complaints to the Ombudsperson for Child's Rights.

The Council of Youth Affairs at the national level and regional youth councils in each municipality should be mentioned as a promising practice. Through these bodies, children can be heard and their needs considered. Children's participation in school self-governance is also significant. Therefore, it is important to encourage the participation of children in these formations.