



## WOMEN AGAINST VIOLENCE EUROPE

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### LITHUANIA

#### Basic Information

Population: 2,943,472

Female Population: 1,587,477

Member of Council of Europe: 1993

Member of European Union: 2004

CEDAW ratified: 1995

CEDAW Optional protocol ratified: 2004

Istanbul Convention – signed: yes (2013); ratified: No

Violence prevalence data: <http://fra.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/data-and-maps/survey-data-explorer-violence-against-women-survey>

Gender Equality Index: 40.2, for further information see: <http://eige.europa.eu/gender-statistics/gender-equality-index/2012>

UN Women Global Database Global Database on Violence against Women: <http://www.evaw-global-database.unwomen.org/en/countries/europe/lithuania>

#### CEDAW Concluding Comments 2014:

Violence against women, including domestic violence

**22.** While welcoming the signature of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence in June 2013, the Committee expresses concern at the prevalence of violence against women in the State party and regrets that the State party has not adopted a comprehensive strategy aimed at eliminating sex- and gender-based violence against women in all its forms in public and private life. The Committee is also concerned about the insufficient information on the evaluation of the implementation of the National Strategy for Combating Violence against Women 2010-2012, which indicates inadequate monitoring of the implementation of policies and measures and evaluation of results achieved. The Committee is further concerned about the insufficient data on acts of violence against women that have been reported, investigated and prosecuted and the inadequate assistance and number of shelters available to women who are victims of violence.

**23.** Recalling its general recommendation No. 19 on violence against women, the Committee urges the State party:

(a) To expedite the harmonization of legislation in accordance with the Convention and the ratification of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence and the harmonization;

(b) To adopt a comprehensive strategy, which would complement the National Programme for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Provision of Assistance to Victims for 2014-2020, aimed at eliminating sex- and gender-based violence against women in all its forms in public and private life, and set up an adequate coordinating and monitoring mechanism, or mandate an existing mechanism, to effectively prevent and eliminate all forms of violence against women;

(c) To regularly collect, analyse and publish data on cases of all forms of violence against women and girls that have been reported, investigated and prosecuted;

(d) To provide crisis and walk-in centres that offer protection and assistance to all women who are victims of violence;

(e) To ensure an adequate geographical distribution and number of shelters and the provision of a range of services for victims.

**24.** The Committee notes with appreciation the adoption of the law on protection against domestic violence, which addresses sex- and gender-based violence against women in intimate partnerships. The Committee also notes the adoption of the National Programme for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Provision of Assistance to Victims for 2014-2020, the fact that an action plan for the period 2014-2016 is currently being prepared and the establishment of an inter-institutional working group to coordinate protection against domestic violence. It is, however, concerned at the gender neutrality of the legislation and relevant policies, which has an impact on their effective implementation, the inadequate provision of services, the limited monitoring and enforcement of protection orders imposed on perpetrators and the low number of prosecutions and sentences in domestic violence cases. The Committee is also concerned at the excessive use of reconciliatory mediation for victims of domestic violence and the possibility that a reconciliatory institute may be developed in the criminal process. The Committee is further concerned that marital rape has not been explicitly criminalized.

**25.** The Committee urges the State party:

(a) To ensure that the law on protection against domestic violence and relevant policies are implemented in a gender-sensitive manner;

(b) To effectively enforce and monitor compliance with protection orders imposed on perpetrators of domestic violence;

(c) To effectively prosecute and punish perpetrators of domestic violence;

(d) To end the use of reconciliatory mediation for victims of domestic violence and refrain from adopting reconciliatory mediation in the criminal process, given that such procedures may increase the vulnerability of women who are victims of violence;

(e) To amend the Criminal Code with a view to explicitly criminalizing marital rape.

## Introduction

The following information has been compiled from the research carried out in 2015 for the WAVE Report ([http://files.wave-network.org/researchreports/WAVE\\_Report\\_2015.pdf](http://files.wave-network.org/researchreports/WAVE_Report_2015.pdf)) with national experts working in the field of violence against women.<sup>1</sup> The research methodology involved an extensive questionnaire and a follow-up skype interview. The profile includes information on women's networks, shelters, centres, helplines, policy and funding. However, it was not possible to gather information on prevention, awareness-raising, campaigning and training.

## Women's Helplines

### National women's helplines

There is no national women's helpline, according to the WAVE definition in that it is gender-specific and provides specialized support.

### Other helplines for victims

There is one national helpline in Lithuania called "Women's Line" (8800 66 366), run by a women's NGO called "Association of Kaunas Women's Line". It does not operate 24/7, and is only open 5 days a week from 9am-6pm, and not open on holidays. The helpline does operate free of charge and provides multi-lingual support.

## Women's Shelters

There are no women's shelters in Lithuania, according to the WAVE definition of women's shelters, municipal multi-functional social service centres provide room for 'families in crisis', which is understood as part of help for the 'disadvantaged social groups'.

The only places where a gender-specific approach and women's empowerment is practiced are in the specialized help/intervention centres, which started according to the Protection from Violence Law and run by women's NGOs. Even so, this is not applied to all of them. For only by strengthening women's NGOs in Lithuania, we can achieve comprehensive gender-specific and empowering support to women and their children.

In addition, there is a lack of Domestic Violence (DV) shelters in Lithuania. Temporary accommodation for women survivors of violence is provided through the social care system in Municipal Social Care Centres. Although these do not have a gender-specific approach against violence, they do generally offer accommodation for all persons deemed to be in a crisis situation, including the women and men in vulnerable groups, such as the homeless, ex-convicts and drug users, and to children and young people without appropriate family support. Finally, there are five<sup>2</sup> women's shelters for victims of trafficking. These NGOs work in the field of support for the victims of trafficking provide special shelters.

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<sup>1</sup> Data presented in this country profile has been compiled throughout an extensive data collection process, however the final country profile has not been approved by the corresponding WAVE delegate.

<sup>2</sup> CoE, Analytical Study of the results of the 4<sup>th</sup> round of monitoring the implementation of recommendation rec(2002)5 on the protection of women against violence in Council of Europe member states (2014) p. 68.

## Women's Centres

There are 16 women's centres in Lithuania, which are intervention centres, and are run by women's NGOs. They exist in all provinces/districts, and have served 8,000 women in 2014. The State provides partial funding for these intervention centres.

All of these centres provide information and advice, counselling and multi-lingual support. Most provide practical support, empowering support, risk assessment and safety planning, and legal advice. Some provide advocacy, specialist support for children, and legal accompaniment. None provide specialist support minority women and legal representation.

## Women's Networks

There is one national women's network in Lithuania, the NGO called "Women's Rights are Human Rights", coordinated by Vilniaus Moteru Namai/Vilnius Women's House<sup>3</sup>. This network has about 10 member organizations, a mix of intervention centres and women's centres. Established in 2006, after the IV Congress of Lithuanian Women for Women's Human Rights advocacy, this NGO is dedicated to lobbying for better legal protection of women victims of domestic violence, and promoting a friendly environment for women's NGOs providing services to them.

## Policy & Funding

There are two national strategies which address some forms of violence against women. The first appears under the title "National Plan for Prevention of Domestic Violence and Provision of Assistance to Victims" (2013-2020), while the second is called "National Strategy for combating violence against women and a plan of implementing measures" (2007-2009)<sup>4</sup> and (2010-2015)<sup>5</sup> "Nutarmias dėl valstybinės smurto prieš moteris mažinimo strategijos ir jos įgyvendinimo priemonių 2010-2012 metų plano patvirtinimo"<sup>6</sup>. The later was arbitrarily terminated in 2013 by the Ministry of social security and labour in spite of women's NGOs protest and demands to continue the only ever existing gender specific strategic document realizing the State obligations to stop violence against women. Policies and measures about specialist women support services are not specifically mentioned in the strategy, and there is no governmental coordinating body for implementing policies and measures to prevent violence against women. Consequently, women's NGOs are not involved in the coordinating body.

There is no national body/institution entrusted with the evaluation and monitoring of the national strategy/body. Women's NGOs do however conduct an evaluation of the strategy.

The members of the Coalition Women's Rights Are Human Rights and Association Vilnius Women's House are coordinators, active agents in the process of preparation and adoption of the Protection from Violence Law are actively monitoring the process of implementation of the Law by preparing and sending women's NGO recommendations concerning various issues, such as recommendations for better protection of the victims, protection from secondary and repeated victimization, human rights sensitization and victim friendly environment in the Law enforcement institutions, as well as issues concerning the quality and quantity of the State guaranteed services - specialized complex help for

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<sup>3</sup> [www.vmotnam.lt](http://www.vmotnam.lt)

<sup>4</sup> [http://www3.lrs.lt/pls/inter3/dokpaieska.showdoc\\_l?p\\_id=289640&p\\_tr2=](http://www3.lrs.lt/pls/inter3/dokpaieska.showdoc_l?p_id=289640&p_tr2=)

<sup>5</sup> [http://www3.lrs.lt/pls/inter3/dokpaieska.showdoc\\_l?p\\_id=351089&p\\_query=&p\\_tr2=](http://www3.lrs.lt/pls/inter3/dokpaieska.showdoc_l?p_id=351089&p_query=&p_tr2=)

<sup>6</sup> EIGE, Review of the Implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action in EU Member States Report (2012) p. 111.

the victims of DV/ IPV and Specialized Help Centers working conditions, quarterly and annual reports, etc. this is being regularly preparing the statements and recommendations addressed to Parliamentary Committees, Ministry of Social Security and Labor, the State Chancellery, the Presidents' Office and other relevant bodies. The members of the Coalition and Association Vilnius Women's House as its coordinator are acknowledged experts in the field so other Civil Society organizations often join in supporting our demands and recommendations for the policies' and practices' improvement.

There are specific government funds allocated for activities to combat violence against women on the national level. In 2014, NGOs received 920,000 LTL for NGO activities. The law does allow for State funding of women's NGOs for service provision, and this funding is mandated by law/regulation.

The most common forms of government funding for women's support services are: project funding, annual core funding, and 2-3 years core funding.