

COMMITTEE ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD
Forty-sixth session

**CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS SUBMITTED BY STATES PARTIES UNDER
ARTICLE 8 OF THE OPTIONAL PROTOCOL TO THE CONVENTION ON
THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD ON THE INVOLVEMENT OF
CHILDREN IN ARMED CONFLICT**

Concluding observations: Lithuania

1. The Committee considered the initial report of Lithuania (CRC/C/OPAC/LTU/1) at its 1259th meeting (see CRC/C/SR.1259) held on 18 September 2007, and at its 1284th meeting (see CRC/C/SR.1284) on 5 October 2007 adopted the following concluding observations.

A. Introduction

2. The Committee welcomes the submission of the State party's initial report under the Optional Protocol, which gives substantive information on the legislative, administrative, judicial and other measures applicable in Lithuania in respect of the rights guaranteed by the Protocol. The Committee further welcomes the written replies to the list of issues (CRC/C/OPAC/LTU/Q/1).
3. The Committee reminds the State party that these concluding observations should be read in conjunction with its previous concluding observations adopted on 27 January 2006 in respect of the State Party's second periodic report under the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC/C/LTU/CO/2).

B. Positive aspects

4. The Committee notes with appreciation:
 - (a) The State party's declaration made upon the ratification of the Optional Protocol that under Lithuanian law citizens under the age of 18 years may not serve in the national armed forces; that the minimum age for voluntary recruitment into the active military service is 18 years and for enlisting into the mandatory military service 19 years;
 - (b) The inclusion in the State party's Criminal Code of concrete provisions criminalizing the recruitment of children or their use in hostilities and imposing severe penalties in this regard;

- (c) The inclusion in the State party's Criminal Code criminal liability for conscripting or enlisting children under the age of 18 into armed forces as crimes subject to extraterritorial jurisdiction.
5. Furthermore, the Committee reiterates its appreciation for the ratification of or accession to a number of international human rights instruments, in particular:
- (a) The Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography, on 5 August 2004;
 - (b) The United Nations Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children, on 23 June 2003; and
 - (c) ILO Convention No. 182 concerning the Prohibition and Immediate Action for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour, on 29 September 2003.

C. Main areas of concern and recommendations

C.1. General measures of implementation

Legislation

- 6. The Committee notes that no compulsory active military service is required before the age of 19 but that registration of Lithuanian male citizens to enter military service starts at the age of 16, and that children between the ages of 12 and 18 can receive military training through the Riflemen's Union. The Committee is thus concerned about the fact that the State party could engage children under 18 in military activities.
- 7. The Committee requests more information and clarification, to be submitted in conjunction with the next State party report, on the purpose of the registration of male citizens from the age of 16, and on the military training provided to children between the ages of 12 and 18 within the Riflemen's Union and their possible use in armed conflicts.**

Dissemination and training

- 8. The Committee notes that some information with respect to dissemination of information and training related to the issues covered by the Optional Protocol is provided in the State party report and in the written replies to the list of issues.
- 9. However, and in light of article 6, paragraph 2, the Committee recommends that the State party ensure that the principles and provisions of the Protocol are widely disseminated to the general public and State officials by appropriate means, including through the media. The Committee further recommends that the State party develop systematic awareness-raising, education and training programmes on the provisions of the Optional Protocol addressed to all relevant groups working with children, notably professionals working with asylum-seeking, refugee and migrant children entering**

Lithuania from countries affected by armed conflict, such as medical professionals, social workers, police officers, teachers, media representatives, lawyers and judges.

Peace education

9. The Committee notes the information on human rights education in the educational system provided during the dialogue with the State party, but regrets that, in particular peace education is not yet an element of the curricula of schools on all levels.
- 10. The Committee reiterates its recommendations made during the consideration of State party's report under the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC/C/LTU/CO/2 para. 57) that the State party, inter alia, establish adequate programmes and activities with a view of creating an environment of tolerance, peace and understanding, and the Committee further encourages the State party to strengthen its efforts to introduce human rights education and, in particular, peace education in the curricula of all schools and to train teachers with respect to including these themes in children's education.**

C.2. Measures adopted with regard to physical and psychological recovery and social reintegration

11. The Committee takes note of the information provided with respect to the numbers of unaccompanied children arriving from countries affected by armed conflict, and the programmes and services available to these children. **The Committee encourages the State party to further strengthen its efforts, in particular to:**
 - (a) Identify at the earliest possible stage refugee, asylum-seeking and migrant children entering Lithuania who may have been recruited or used in hostilities abroad;**
 - (b) Carefully assess the situation of these children and provide them with immediate, culturally sensitive and multidisciplinary assistance for their physical and psychological recovery and their social reintegration in accordance with article 6 (3) of the Protocol;**
 - (c) Undertake periodic evaluations of the existing physical and psychological recovery and social reintegration programmes and services;**
 - (d) Take all necessary measures to ensure that the return of a child to the country of origin shall only be arranged when it is in the best interests of the child;**
 - (e) Take into consideration the Committee's General Comment No. 6 (CRC/GC/2005/6) on treatment of unaccompanied and separated children outside their country of origin.**

C.3. Follow-up and dissemination

- 12. The Committee recommends that the State party take all appropriate measures to ensure full implementation of the present recommendations, *inter alia*, by transmitting them to the Seimas and the Government offices concerned, in particular in the Ministry of National Defence, for appropriate consideration and further action.**
- 13. The Committee recommends that the initial report submitted by the State Party and the concluding observations adopted by the Committee be made widely available to the public at large in order to generate debate and awareness of the Optional Protocol, its implementation and monitoring.**

C.4. Next report

- 14. In accordance with article 8, paragraph 2, the Committee requests the State party to include further information on the implementation of the Optional Protocol in its next periodic report under the Convention on the Rights of the Child, in accordance with article 44 of the Convention.**
