**Lithuania: Concluding observations on the fifth periodic report of Lithuania**

CEDAW/C/LTU/CO/5

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Issues raised:

**Legal and institutional reform:** The Committee welcomes the progress achieved since the consideration in 2008 of the State party’s third and fourth periodic reports (CEDAW/C/LTU/3 and CEDAW/C/LTU/4) in undertaking legislative reforms, in particular the adoption of:

The amendments to the Criminal Code and the Code of Criminal Procedure aimed at more effective investigation and sanctions of sexual abuse of children and violence against women and more immediate support to victims of those crimes, in 2013 and 2014 (para.4).

The Committee welcomes the State party’s efforts to improve its institutional and policy framework aimed at accelerating the elimination of discrimination against women and promoting gender equality, such as the adoption of:

The National Programme for the Prevention of Abuse of Children and Assistance for Children 2011-2015 (para.5).

National human rights institutions:

While noting that the State party has a Seimas Ombudsman, an Equal Opportunities Ombudsman and a Children’s Ombudsman, the Committee is concerned about the absence of a national human rights institution in compliance with the principles relating to the status of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights (the Paris Principles), annexed to General Assembly resolution 48/134 of 20 December 1993 (para.16).

The Committee recommends that the State party establish, within a clear time frame, an independent national human rights institution in compliance with the Paris Principles whose competencies should include issues related to the equality of women and men (para.17).

Trafficking in persons and sexual exploitation:

The Committee is concerned about the absence of comprehensive legislation and strategies against trafficking in persons, in particular women and children, and that the State party remains a source, transit and destination country for women and girls subjected to trafficking for purposes of sexual exploitation (para.26).

The Committee recommends that the State party:

Adopt comprehensive legislation and policies against trafficking in persons, in particular women and children, and ensure that victims are properly identified and provided with adequate protection and assistance; Address the root causes for trafficking and prostitution by increasing its efforts to provide educational and income generating opportunities for women and girls thereby minimizing their vulnerability to exploitation (para.27).

**Nationality:**

The Committee notes with concern that the national citizenship legislation adversely impacts women and girls as the Law on Citizenship does not grant automatic citizenship to children born in the State party’s territory to stateless parents who are not permanent residents in Lithuania. Furthermore, the Committee is concerned at the nationality status of Roma children (para.30).

The Committee encourages the State party to bring its national citizenship legislation in line with the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness, in particular by providing for the automatic granting of nationality to all children born in Lithuania, including Roma children, who would otherwise be stateless (para.31).

Education:

The Committee acknowledges the reforms of national curricula for basic compulsory education, which include measures to advance gender equality. The Committee remains concerned about the gender stereotypes and structural barriers negatively affecting girls’ enrolment in non-traditional educational and occupational fields; the gender stereotyping in textbooks; the absence of adequate education on sexual and reproductive health and rights in the curricula;The Committee is also concerned about the placement of Roma girls in special schools or classes, the high drop-out rates of Roma girls from primary education and their low school attendance (para.32).

The Committee recommends that the State party:

Eliminate gender stereotypes and structural barriers that potentially deter girls’ enrolment in non-traditional educational and occupational fields at all levels of education;Review all textbooks to eliminate gender stereotypes; Provide adequate, age appropriate education on sexual and reproductive health and rights to girls and boys, including about responsible sexual behaviour, with a view to prevent teenage pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases; Continue legal and policy reforms to allow all girls to enjoy the right to education, and to that end ensure the enrolment of Roma girls and boys in regular classes of primary schools instead of schools or classes for children with special needs; and reduce the high drop-out rates of Roma girls from primary education, take effective measures to keep Roma girls attending school and increase their attendance at the secondary level through measures such as the granting of scholarships and the free provision of textbooks (para.33).

Harmful Practices:

The Committee is concerned about the proposed amendment to the Constitution, which aims at restricting the definition of family only to married couples with at least one child. The Committee is also concerned about the amendment of the Civil Code adopted in June 2010 regarding the legal age of consent to marriage, providing that courts may reduce the legal age of consent by no more than two years at the request of a person intending to marry before the age of 18 years, and that courts may allow persons to marry before the age of 16 in cases of pregnancy (para.40).

The Committee encourages the State party to:

Refrain from adopting a restrictive definition of the family and effectively monitor the impact of the proposed amendment on different forms of families, as recognized in the General Recommendation no. 21 (1994) on Equality in Marriage and Family Relations; and repeal without delay the discriminatory provisions of the amendment to the Civil Code, which lowered the legal age of consent to marriage (para.41).