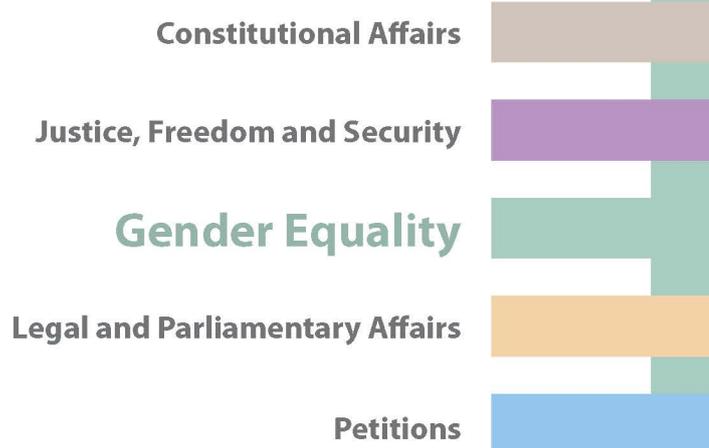


DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR INTERNAL POLICIES

POLICY DEPARTMENT **C**
CITIZENS' RIGHTS AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS



The policy on gender equality in Lithuania

NOTE





DIRECTORATE GENERAL FOR INTERNAL POLICIES
POLICY DEPARTMENT C: CITIZENS' RIGHTS AND
CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

GENDER EQUALITY

The policy on gender equality in
Lithuania

NOTE

Abstract

The note reviews the most important legislation, institutional arrangements and policy programs with regard to gender equality in Lithuania and covers six key thematic areas including equal economic independence for women and men, the reconciliation of private and professional life, equal participation in decision making, the eradication of all forms of gender based violence, public attitudes towards gender and reproductive rights.

This document was requested by the European Parliament's Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality.

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CONTENTS

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	4
BACKGROUND	5
1. GENERAL DISPOSITIONS	5
1.1. Key legislation	5
1.2. National machinery for gender equality	6
1.3. Key government level policy documents	7
2. THEMATIC DISPOSITIONS	9
2.1. Equal economic independence for women and men	9
2.2. The reconciliation of private and professional life	10
2.3. Equal participation in decision making	12
2.4. The eradication of all forms of gender based violence	13
2.5. Bracing down gender stereotypes	16
2.6. Reproductive rights	17
3. CONCLUSIONS	17
REFERENCES	19

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

- CEDAW** Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
- GDP** Gross domestic product
- NGO** Non-government organization
- OEOO** Office of Equal Opportunities Ombudsperson
- SIDA** Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency

BACKGROUND

The changes in the socio-political regime in the early 1990s in Lithuania brought difficult consequences on the situation of women. During the socialism era gender equality meant full women's employment and full responsibility for family and domestic duties. The policies in the early 1990s were aimed at "reducing this double burden" by "privileging" women in private sphere. As a result many women dropped out of public life and jobs and economic hardships of transition strengthened gender inequalities. On the other hand, development of civil society influenced the movement of the first women's NGOs who with the support of international donors started raising the questions on legislation and policies in the field of women's rights and equal opportunities.

Accession process to EU from 2000 to 2004 was an important incentive for legal change on gender equality. Lithuania adopted the commitments to guarantee that national laws and administrative competences would be harmonized to the legal standards of the EU. However, some experts have critically assessed the state's negotiation process showing that the principle of gender equality was not an important issue in it. Emphasis was put on economic and social issues, distancing them from the targets of gender equality¹.

Since the 2004 accession of Lithuania to the EU, the conservative forces in society promote attitudes and norms on preservation of traditional family, nation and national state and openly express homophobic attitudes. It seems that they interpret gender equality as a danger for traditional family and national survival. Human rights organisations highlighted these changes and warned about deteriorating human rights situation in Lithuania².

1. GENERAL DISPOSITIONS

1.1. Key legislation

The main document governing gender equality legislation in Lithuania is the Constitution. Article 29 affirms that human rights cannot be restricted, nor can be granted any privileges on the grounds of gender, race, nationality, language, origin, social status, religion, beliefs, or opinions.

During the accession period the national laws were harmonized to the EU. The paragraphs prohibiting discrimination on the ground of gender were incorporated in the general legislation (the Civil Code, the Labour Code, Public Service Law, Education Law, Health Law and other) of which the Law on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men³ and The Law on Equal Treatment⁴ are the most important. Law on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men prohibits discrimination within employment, education and supply and access to goods and services. The Law on Equal Treatment expanded the list of protected grounds including

¹ Reingardienė, Jolanta. 2004. *Lyčių lygybės strategija ir užimtumo politika Europos Sąjungoje*. Kaunas. Vytauto Didžiojo universitetas. Davidavicius, Algis. 2006. Darbo ir šeimos suderinimo politikos kryptys bei galimybės ES ir Lietuvoje: vyraujančių viešosios politikos paradigmu kaitos analizė [Policies of reconciliation of work and family life: trends and possibilities in the EU and Lithuania]. (Ne)apmokamas darbas: šeimai palanki darbo aplinka ir lyčių lygybė Europoje, ed. Jolanta Reingardienė, 203-236. Vilnius: STI, Vytauto Didžiojo universitetas.

² *Žmogaus teisių įgyvendinimas Lietuvoje. 2009-2010 m. Apžvalga*. Žmogaus teisių stebėjimo Institutas. 2011. Vilnius. Available from: http://www.hrmi.lt/uploaded/PDF%20dokai/Apzvalgos/Apzvalga_2009-2010_su%20virseliu_FINAL.pdf

³ Law on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men [LR Moterų ir vyrų lygių galimybių įstatymas], order no.VIII-947, 1 December 1998, amendment order no. X-304, 5 July 2005. Available from: http://www3.lrs.lt/pls/inter2/dokpaieska.showdoc_l?p_id=276095

⁴ Law of the Republic Lithuania on Equal Treatment [Lietuvos Respublikos Lygių galimybių įstatymas] Order no.IX-1826, 18 November 2003. New edition of the Law Order no.X-1602, 17 June 2008. Available from: http://www3.lrs.lt/pls/inter3/dokpaieska.showdoc_l?p_id=323620

ethnicity / race, sexual orientation, age, disability and religion / belief and repeatedly established the protection on gender. Both laws created a system for investigating discrimination cases, which fall under the competence of the Office of Equal Opportunities Ombudsman.

Both laws established a legal obligation for education institutions and employers to apply principles of equal treatment in recruitment, promotion, work conditions, equal pay, and protection against harassment. The Article 3 of the Law on Equal Treatment obliges state institutions (this obligation does not apply to private institutions) within the scope of their competence to draw up and implement measures aimed at ensuring equal opportunities, i.e. to take an active role to prevent discrimination on different grounds.

1.2. National machinery for gender equality⁵

1.2.1. Parliamentary bodies.

The **Parliamentary Commission for Family and Child Affairs** established in 1996 participates in the decision-making procedure on the rights of women and child and family policy.

In 1996 in the Parliament the **Group of Women Members of Parliament** was constituted. The aim of this informal group was to promote women's and gender equality issues in parliamentary activities and further in the society. In 2006 the women's parliamentary group was dissolved due to disagreement over reproduction rights issues⁶. The group was re-established in 2012⁷.

The **Parliamentary Human Rights Committee** has been officially appointed to work on gender equality legislation in the process of its drafting and parliamentary hearing. In 2002 it proposed amendments to the Law on Equal Opportunities which was voted by the Parliament. Since 2006 the Human Rights Committee was particularly active on issues related to protection of women against domestic violence⁸. In 2010-2011 the Committee was initiated the revision of the draft law on the Protection against Domestic Violence, as discussed below.

1.2.2. The Office of the Equal Opportunities Ombudsperson (OEOO)

The OEOO was established in 1999 as an institution to implement the Law on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men, and since 2005 the Law on Equal Treatment⁹. It is an independent state institution accountable to the Parliament. The Ombudsperson investigates individual complaints on gender discrimination; submits recommendations and proposals to the Parliament and governmental institutions on the priorities of gender equality policy, including recommendations on amendments to relevant legislation. The

⁵ This section prepared mainly from: Mackevičiūtė, Indrė. 2005. *Equal opportunities for women and men. Monitoring law and practice in Lithuania. OSI/Women's Network Program*. Available from: www.lygus.lt.

Taljūnaitė, Meilutė and Bandzevičienė, Rita. 2004. *Lithuania: Analysis of Policy Context and Policies. Gender-sensitive and women-friendly public policies: a comparative analysis of their progress and impact* (Equapol). Available from: www.equapol.gr/Pubs/Lithuania%20DL4.pdf

⁶ Ieva, Urbonaitė. 2006. The Women's Parliamentary group dissolved. March www.delfi.lt

⁷ Lietuvos Respublikos Seimas [Lithuanian Parliament]

Available from: http://www3.lrs.lt/pls/inter/w5_show?p_r=8801&p_k=1&p_a=7&p_seim_n_gr_id=50&p_kade_id=7 from:

⁸ Lydeka, Arminas. *Smurtas šeimoje – nusikaltimas visuomenei*. Seimo Liberalų ir centro sąjungos frakcijos sekretoriatas. Available from: http://www3.lrs.lt/pls/inter/w5_show?p_r=3347&p_d=61469&p_k=1

⁹ Law of the Republic Lithuania on Equal Treatment [Lietuvos Respublikos Lygių galimybių įstatymas] Order no.IX-1826, 18 November 2003. New edition of the Law Order no.X-1602, 17 June 2008.

Available from: http://www3.lrs.lt/pls/inter3/dokpaieska.showdoc_l?p_id=323620

Ombudsperson also supervises mass media in order to protect against discriminatory advertisements.

1.2.3. Governmental bodies

In 2001, the **Minister of Social Security and Labour** was commissioned to coordinate gender mainstreaming in all areas of policy implementation. This Minister could therefore be considered as acting as the Minister of Gender Equality. Additionally a Women and Men Equality Division operates within the Ministry.

Since 2009 the gender-equality institutional structure in Lithuania has been weakened since financial allocations were significantly reduced for those institutions still operating in the field of equality and human rights¹⁰. Moreover, between 2009 and 2012 the Women and Men Equality Division of the Ministry of Social Security and Labour was cut, it has been re-established since then¹¹.

In 2000 under the Decree of the Government of Lithuania an **Inter-Ministerial Commission on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men** was established. It consists of representatives of all ministries, the Department of Statistics and three representatives of NGOs who are delegated by NGOs' coalitions¹². This Commission coordinated by the Ministry of Social Security and Labour is the main body responsible for gender mainstreaming policies. It coordinates the implementation of the National Program on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men as well as other gender-related measures on the ministerial level. However, the work of the Commission lacks visibility and sufficient expertise, since equal opportunities of women and men is not the primary responsibility of the Commission members within their respective ministries.

Since 1997 the **Department of Statistics** of the Government has been responsible for collection and publication of gender statistics¹³, in the volume *Women and Men in Lithuania*. In 2004, the Department started to prepare a list of statistical indexes that reflect the problematic gender areas in Lithuania.

1.2.4. The local level

The gender equality policies and instruments at **municipal level** are underdeveloped. In 2005-2007 the OEEO implemented projects to build institutional capacities of gender mainstreaming on local level¹⁴. The projects were carried out in cooperation with women's NGOs and supported by Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) and European Commission Programme related to the Community Framework Strategy on Gender Equality (2001-2005).

Key government level policy documents

A number of National Programs and Strategies addressing gender inequality or issues related to gender equality have been developed. These include the National Program on Implementation of Lisbon Strategy (2005-2008¹⁵), the Strategy of women and men equal

¹⁰ Report of Office of Equal Opportunities Ombudsperson (2010). Available from: <http://lygybe.lt/?pageid=7>

¹¹ Ministry of Social Security and Labour. Available from: <http://www.socmin.lt/index.php?-1862884946>

¹² Order of the Minister of Social Security and Labour on Personal Composition of Equal Opportunity's Commission (LR Socialinės apsaugos ir darbo ministrės įsakymas "Dėl personalinės lygių galimybių komisijos sudarymo"). Order No. A1-131, 2007-05-24, Available from: www.socmin.lt

¹³ Gender statistics covers topics of public administration, demographic characteristics, child care, education and science, use of information technologies, labour market, morbidity, social protection, at-risk-of-poverty rate, crime and criminal justice

¹⁴ Mackevičiūtė, Indrė. 2005. *Lyčių lygybės apsektas savivaldybių darbe*. Vilnius: LGKT.

¹⁵ Decision on National Programme for Implementation of Lisbon Strategy approval (Nutarimas dėl nacionalinės Lisabonos strategijos įgyvendinimo programos), Order no. 1270, 22 November 2005.

Available from: http://www3.lrs.lt/pls/inter3/dokpaieska.showdoc_l?p_id=305385&p_query=&p_tr2=

opportunities in science¹⁶, National Programs of Equal Opportunities for Women and Men (2003-2004, 2005-2009¹⁷ and 2010-2014¹⁸) and the Action Plan of the program for 2010-2014¹⁹, the National Antidiscrimination Action Program (2009-2011²⁰), the Program for prevention and control of trafficking in human beings (2002-2004, 2005-2008²¹, 2009-2012²²), the National Strategy for Elimination of Violence against Women and the Plan on implementing measures (2007-2009²³ and 2010-2012²⁴).

The main objective of the National Programs of Equal Opportunities for Women and Men (2005-2009 and 2010-2014) which followed the Program on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men (2003-2004) is the implementation of gender mainstreaming. Its tasks are related to implement measures for reconciliation of family and professional life, improve employment conditions for women, especially long-term unemployed women, develop social dialogue and gender equality in labour market, mainstream gender in education, health system, environment, statistics, facilitating women's career to top positions, political and business leadership. The current National Program of Equal Opportunities for Women and Men (2010-2014) covers the areas of employment, education and science, health security, environmental protection, national defence, EU and international cooperation and decision making processes.

The National Strategies for Elimination of Violence against Women and the Plans on implementing measures (2007-2009 and 2010-2012) aim at reducing domestic violence against women in a consistent and systematic manner. The priorities encompass improvement of the legal framework; analysis of the current situation concerning domestic violence against women; implementation of preventive measures; assistance for the victims and sanction against the perpetrators; strength of the institutional capacities.

The Programmes for Prevention and Control of Trafficking in Human Beings (2002-2004, 2005-2008 and 2009-2012) are aimed at creating and establishing a purposeful, consistent

¹⁶ Order on the Strategy of women and men equal opportunities in science approval (Įsakymas dėl moterų ir vyrų lygių galimybių užtikrinimo moksle strategijos patvirtinimo), Minister of Education and Science order no. ISAK-1600, 2 June 2008. Available from : http://www3.lrs.lt/pls/inter3/dokpaieska.showdoc_l?p_id=322040&p_query=&p_tr2=2

¹⁷ Decision on National Programme for Equal Opportunities of Women and Men 2005-2009 approval (Nutarimas dėl valstybinės moterų ir vyrų lygių galimybių 2005-2009 metų programos patvirtinimo), Order no. 116-4202, 29 September 2005. Available from: http://www3.lrs.lt/pls/inter2/dokpaieska.showdoc_l?p_id=262423&p_query=&p_tr2=

¹⁸ Decision on National Programme for Equal Opportunities of Women and Men 2010-2014 approval (Nutarimas dėl valstybinės moterų ir vyrų lygių galimybių 2010-2014 metų programos patvirtinimo), Order no 530, 04 May 2010. Available from: <http://www.lsc.su.lt/downloads/LR%20Vyriausybes%20nutarimas%20del%20valstybines%20moteru%20ir%20vyr%20lygiu%20galimybiu%202010-2014%20metu%20programos%20patvirtinimo.pdf>

¹⁹ Decision on Action plan of National Programme of Equal Opportunities for Women and Men for 2010-2014 implementation (Valstybinės moterų ir vyrų lygių galimybių 2010-2014 metų programos įgyvendinimo priemonių plano patvirtinimo), Lithuania, Minister of Social Security and Labor, order no. A1-323, 7 July 2010. Available from: <http://tar.tic.lt/Default.aspx?id=2&item=results&aktoid=145B7E8D-80CB-435E-98F1-B5C755E6F1B9>

²⁰ Note on Approval of National Antidiscrimination Action Program. Order no. 9-153, 30 March 2009. Available from: http://www.lrvk.lt/Posed_medz/2009/090415/27.pdf

²¹ Decision on Programme for prevention and control of trafficking in human beings 2005-2008 approval (Nutarimas dėl Prekybos žmonėmis prevencijos bei kontrolės 2005-2008 metų programos patvirtinimo), order no. 558, 19 May 2005. Available from: http://www3.lrs.lt/pls/inter3/dokpaieska.showdoc_l?p_id=295512

²² Decision on Programme for prevention and control of trafficking in human beings 2009-2012 approval (Nutarimas dėl Prekybos žmonėmis prevencijos ir kontrolės 2009-2012 metų programos patvirtinimo) No. 1104, 9 September 2009. Available from: http://www3.lrs.lt/pls/inter3/dokpaieska.showdoc_l?p_id=352840&p_query=&p_tr2=

²³ Decision on National Strategy for elimination of violence against women and Plan on implementing measures 2007-2009 approval (Nutarimas dėl Valstybinės smurto prieš moteris mažinimo strategijos ir jos įgyvendinimo priemonių 2007-2009 metų plano patvirtinimo), order no. 1330, 22 December 2006. Available from: http://www3.lrs.lt/pls/inter3/dokpaieska.showdoc_l?p_id=289640&p_query=&p_tr2=

²⁴ Decision on Programme for prevention and control of trafficking in human beings 2009-2012 approval (Nutarimas dėl Prekybos žmonėmis prevencijos ir kontrolės 2009-2012 metų programos patvirtinimo) No. 1104, 9 September 2009. Available from: http://www3.lrs.lt/pls/inter3/dokpaieska.showdoc_l?p_id=352840&p_query=&p_tr2=

and complex system of control and prevention of trafficking in human beings. The aim of the Programme is to solve consistently and systematically the issues of trafficking in human beings and introduce measures for prevention of prostitution at national level. Their implementation is based on non-discrimination principle on gender basis, race, nationality, language, origin, social status, religion and beliefs, age, sexual orientation, disability and ethnicity.

Public administration in Lithuania must ensure the implementation of the principle of equality and non-discriminatory provisions in all draft laws, legal acts, programmes and other measures to ensure equal opportunities. Gender mainstreaming requires the pre-conditions of political will, the competence of politicians and civil servants as well as awareness on the importance of gender mainstreaming and efficient state funding to achieve these goals. However, the recent monitoring report of the OOEO²⁵ indicates that this duty is implemented by state institutions in a passive and irregular way.

The monitoring report has identified that state institutions do not follow the equal opportunity implementation strategy within their area of competence, do not analyse the possible positive and negative impact of the drafted legal acts, programmes and applied measures to different social groups. The majority of line ministries do not include gender principles into their work / action plans; do not carry out gender situation analysis and assessments of equal opportunities²⁶.

2. THEMATIC DISPOSITIONS

2.1. Equal economic independence for women and men

Traditionally, Lithuanian labour market could be characterized by high level of women's participation. Before the 1990s up to 81% of working-age women were employed. However, during the transition period the situation considerably deteriorated and started to recover only in 2002.

2.1.1. Access to paid work

In 2007 women's employment rate reached 62.2%. However, in 2009 the situation started worsening: the GDP shrank by 14.7% and the unemployment was one of the highest in the EU²⁷. Statistics reveal that in 2008-2010 women's unemployment rose from 5.6 to 14.4%, whereas men's unemployment rate increased from 6.1 to 21.2%²⁸. In 2008-2010 the economic crisis narrowed the gender employment gap since men's participation in the labour market was severely affected. However, quick economic changes hardly could be evaluated as a steady progress in gender equality. Women's conditions in labour market were highly affected by reduced funding for social programs, insecurity at their jobs and psychological stress. Employers still consider women as primary caregivers responsible for family issues; therefore, they often prefer to recruit men²⁹.

²⁵ Lygių galimybių kontrolieriaus tarnyba. 2011. *Lygių galimybių intergavimas: teoriniai ir praktiniai aspektai* [Equality mainstreaming: theoretical and practical aspects]. Vilnius.

²⁶Ibid.

²⁷ Kanopienė, Vida. 2011. *Women's Employment in Lithuania: Trends, structure and opportunities*. European Science Foundation, Social Sciences research network TransEurope, Working Paper No.35, p. 3-25. Faculty of Social and Economic Sciences, Otto-Friedrich-University Bamberg, Germany.

²⁸ Department of Statistics in Lithuania. Available from: <http://www.stat.gov.lt/lt/pages/view/?id=1302>

²⁹ Sidlauskienė, Virginija. 2010. "Ką atskleidžia moterų ir vyrų lygybės įmonėje vertinimas? Kaip priimti lyčių lygybės iššūkius darbovietėje?" [What does assessment of gender equality in the enterprises show? How to accept challenges of gender equality at the workplace?] *Lyčių studijos ir tyrimai* [Gender Studies and Research], 8(8):32-49. Šiaulių universitetas, Lyčių studijų centras.

Economic hardships and widespread gender stereotypes make an unfavourable impact on state social policies by limiting support for public services for families. Only 10% of children under the age of 3 attend formal child care facilities – three times less than indicated by Barcelona goals. 55% of children between the age of 3 and the minimum compulsory school age attend formal child care facilities (more than 1.6 times lower than the one indicated by the Barcelona goals). As a result almost every second economically inactive woman of child-bearing age (25-49 years old) is excluded from the labour market because of care responsibilities³⁰. Therefore National Programs of Equal Opportunities for Women and Men address women after the child-care as the main target groups for accession to labour market.

During the period 2002-2007 the Government of Lithuania adopted a number of national programs, strategies and action plans addressing the problems of access to labour market of elderly people, disabled and youth³¹. However, those policies do not include the holistic approach and target the specific groups of population in gender neutral terms.

2.1.2. Pay gap and labour segregation

Formally equal treatment and equal pay for the same work exist in the legal system of Lithuania. This occurred as the result of the transposition of the EU legislation. The Law on Equality for Women and Men prohibit unequal treatment of women and men in terms of remuneration for the same work. The Labour Code includes the provisions that wage cannot be reduced according to employees' gender³². However, national statistics show that vertical and horizontal gender segregation in the labour market prevails and women employees in 2012 continued to earn up to 14% less than men³³. The largest pay gap accounted for 16.3% in 2010 was among young employees (the age group 25-34) and the lowest – 10.4% – among 65 years and older³⁴.

The above described situation has its further negative implications on women. In 2010, the average retirement pension received by women was one-sixth lower than that received by men. The at-risk-of-poverty rate of men and women of retirement age differed significantly and made up 13% and 31% respectively in 2009. A significant share of women of retirement age lived alone. Statistics show that single persons carry a higher risk of poverty than couples³⁵. Though men more frequently than women experienced negative consequences of economic crisis 2009-2012³⁶, the structural reasons for women's discrimination in labour market have not been removed.

2.2. The reconciliation of private and professional life

In the beginning of 1990s the well-developed child care system was almost ruined due to the transition pressures, lack of state resources and policies encouraging familiarization of care work. As a result, women's unpaid care work has increased. Research on care and

³⁰ *Report: Review of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action: Women and the Economy*. EIGE publication, 2011. Available from: <http://www.eige.europa.eu/content/document/report-review-of-the-implementation-of-the-bpfa-in-the-area-f-women-economy-reconciliation>

³¹ The National programs, strategies and actions plans adopted by the Government of Lithuania are place on the web page of the Ministry of Social Security and Labor. www.socmin.lt/index.php?1740116512

³² Labor Code, Ar. 7, part 2.

³³ Lithuanian Department of Statistics. Available from: <http://www.stat.gov.lt/lt/pages/view/?id=1304&PHPSESSID=d36e8c4e520910b27db0e7176ea7804f>

³⁴ Lithuania, Department of Statistics. Available from: <http://www.stat.gov.lt/lt/news/view/?id=10171>

³⁵ *Moterys ir vyrai Lietuvoje 2010* [Women and Men in Lithuania 2010]. 2011. Lithuania, Department of Statistics. Available from: http://www.stat.gov.lt/lt/catalog/list/?cat_y=2&cat_id=3

³⁶ Gender aspects of the effects of the economic downturn and financial crisis on welfare systems, European Parliament, 2012 available at: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/committees/en/femm/studiesdownload.html?languageDocument=EN&file=90730>

gender identities in Lithuania has shown that population highly values the women's involvement in care work and strongly believes that mother should devote to child care in the first years³⁷. As a result, working mothers experience higher stress and conflicts than fathers in reconciling family and work³⁸.

Introduction of reconciliation of family and work started under the National Program on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men (2003-2004) and was developed in policy goals under EQUAL community initiative program for Lithuania 2004-2006³⁹. The National Program of Equal Opportunities for Women and Men (2005-2009) emphasized the importance of the involvement of men in terms of parental leave which became a clear landmark for official policy discourse on reconciliation of family and work⁴⁰. The similar provision has been articulated by the Ministry of Social Security and Labour in the National Demographic Policy Strategy on improving family's welfare in order to develop the favourable conditions for working parents to reconcile family and work.

By implementing the National Programme of Equal Opportunities for Women and Men 2010–2014, the government has raised the necessity to increase childcare facilities. However, no concrete targets are set, and the Action Plan indicates only awareness raising measures. For 2012 the Action Plan indicated seminars for social partners to encourage creation of family-friendly environment at job, awareness raising on positive fatherhood and drafting and implementing the training on women and men's cooperation in any field of public activities⁴¹. Experts criticize the state's social policies and argue that a flexible work environment and childcare services are poorly developed in Lithuania. The quality and quantity of pre-school services does not anticipate the needs of families. This limits opportunities for mothers to better integrate into labour market after childcare leave⁴².

On 2 July 2010, the amendments to the Law on Sickness and Maternity (Paternity) Social Insurance were adopted and came into force on 1 July 2011⁴³. These amendments introduced a new type of insurance for maternity / paternity leave. If a mother / father decide to take parental leave for two years, the State will pay 70% of their salary in the first year and 40% in the second year. This scheme allows additional employment for a parent on leave. If a parent takes one year parental leave, then the State will pay 100% of their salary. The insurance for parental leave cannot exceed a parent's average salary of the previous four years.

³⁷ Maslauskaitė, Aušra. 2004. Lytis, globa ir kultūriniai gerovės kapitalizmo barjerai Lietuvoje [Gender, care and opportunities in welfare capitalism in Lithuania]. *Sociologija.Mintis ir veiksmai*. 2004/3

³⁸ *Moterys ir vyrai Lietuvos visuomenėje – 2009: Moterų ir vyrų padėties pokyčių visos srityse išplėstinis tyrimas ir vertinimas. Tyrimo ataskaita [Women and Men in Lithuanian society- 2009: complex research and evaluation of women and men's situation and its changes. Research report]* Moterų informacijos centras. 2009.

Available from: http://www.bukstipri.lt/uploads/MV_padeties_pokyciai_2009.pdf

³⁹ EQUAL program guidelines. Available from: <http://esf.socmin.lt/index.php?592301507>

⁴⁰ Valstybinė moterų ir vyrų lygių galimybių 2005-2009 m. programa [National Program on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men] 2005-2009.

⁴¹ Decision on Action plan of National Programme of Equal Opportunities for Women and Men for 2010-2014 implementation (Valstybinės moterų ir vyrų lygių galimybių 2010-2014 metų programos įgyvendinimo priemonių plano patvirtinimo), Lithuania, Minister of Social Security and Labor, order no. A1-323, 7 July 2010.

Available from : <http://tar.tic.lt/Default.aspx?id=2&item=results&aktoid=145B7E8D-80CB-435E-98F1-B5C755E6F1B9>

⁴² Laučius, Viktoras. 2012. 'V. Stankūnienė: amžiaus pabaigoje lietuvių gali likti tik 1,4 mln. [V. Stankūniene: only 1.4 mln. Lithuanians Might Live by the End of the Century]', *DELFI.lt*, 6 September 2012 ; Bučaitė-Vilkė Jurga, Giedrė Purvaneckienė, Raimundas Vaitkevičius, Artūras Tereškinas.2012. Lyčių politika ir gimstamumo ateitis [Gender Equality and Future of fertility], Kaunas: Vytauto Didžiojo Universitetas. P. 37.

Available from: www.delfi.lt/news/daily/lithuania/vstankuniene-amziaus-pabaiqoje-lietuviu-gali-likti-tik-14-mln.d?id=59443119 , accessed on 20 September 2012.

⁴³ Lithuania, Law on Sickness and Maternity Social Insurance [Ligos ir motinystės socialinio draudimo įstatymas], order no.IX-110, 21 December 2000, new edition order no.XI-982, 2 July 2010.

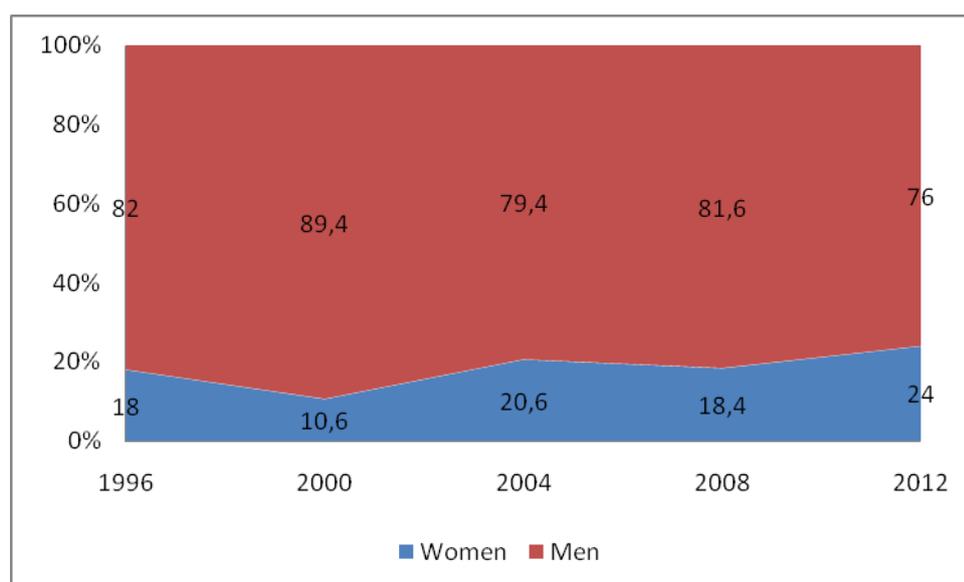
Available from : http://www3.lrs.lt/pls/inter3/dokpaieska.showdoc_l?p_id=378844

Statistics demonstrate that allocations of parental leave between women and men remain very uneven. It comprises respectively 93 and 7%⁴⁴. 2006 amendment on Law on Sickness and Maternity leave (Article 18(1)) provides opportunities for father to take one month paternal leave from child's birth till one month age. During this one month period of leave the father can stay together with the mother and take care together of their child and receive 100% of compensated wage. However, in 2010 only about one-third of fathers (12 300) to whom a child was born in 2010, exercised this possibility⁴⁵. Employers' negative attitudes towards fathers on paternity leave also contribute to men's reluctance to take parental leave.

Equal participation in decision making

Gender statistics in Lithuania show that women are underrepresented in decision-making. In the European Parliament women comprise 25% of the Lithuanian delegation. Women's political representation in the Lithuanian Parliament (LR Seimas) is slowly increasing with permanent fluctuation up and down as shown in the Table 1.

Table 1. Gender composition in the Parliament of Lithuania, 1996-2012⁴⁶



Source: Lithuanian Department of Statistics

In 2012 parliamentary elections 33 women (24%) and 107 men (76%) were elected to the Parliament of the Republic of Lithuania⁴⁷. Four out of 15 parliamentary committee (26.7%) and two out of 11 parliamentary commissions (18.2%) are chaired by women. In the Government of Lithuania women comprise 30% of ministers, vice-ministers and advisors to ministers. Two out of 14 ministers are women (14.3%). In the municipal elections in 2011,

⁴⁴ Report: Review of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action: Women and the Economy. EIGE publication, 2011. <http://www.eige.europa.eu/content/document/report-review-of-the-implementation-of-the-bpfa-in-the-area-f-women-economy-reconciliation>

⁴⁵ *Moterys ir vyrai Lietuvoje 2010* [Women and Men in Lithuania 2010]. 2011. Lithuanian Department of Statistics. Available from: http://www.stat.gov.lt/lt/catalog/list/?cat_y=2&cat_id=3

⁴⁶ Lithuanian Department of Statistics. Available from: <http://www.stat.gov.lt/lt/pages/view/?id=1306&PHPSESSID=a0cafc2737767578d31177b70d32629f>

⁴⁷ The Central Electoral Commission of the Republic of Lithuania [Lietuvos Respublikos vyriausioji rinkimų komisija]. Available from: http://www.vrk.lt/lt/2012_seimo_rinkimai/statistika.html

345 women (22%) and 1,184 men were elected to the municipal councils. Women make up 10% mayors (6 from 60)⁴⁸.

Statistics in 2010 indicate that 30% of women were headed of small and medium enterprises. In business sector women accounted for 30.6% among scientific researchers with the biggest number in 25-34 years age group (32.5%).

The Ministry of Social Security and Labour has aimed at raising public awareness of the temporary positive actions in decision-making for 2012 in the National Programme of Equal Opportunities for Women and Men 2010–2014.⁴⁹ However, in September 2012, the Minister of Social Security and Labour and eight EU countries have joined forces to combat EU moves to set a 40 % quota for women's representation on the boards of listed companies. In a letter sent to EU Commission President Jose Manuel Barroso and his deputy Viviane Reding, they expressed the disapproval of legally binding provisions for women on company boards at the European level⁵⁰.

Women who are employed in higher education and government sectors mainly have an academic degree or academic titles in the humanities and social sciences – 59% and natural sciences – 58%; men in the technology – 75% and physical sciences – 68%⁵¹. Though the growth in number of women in the science was noticeable in previous decade, it is still men who are in leading positions of the educational and scientific structures. In 2012 Women account for 19 percent of all professors. Only one university of the 23 and 10 colleges of the 24 were headed by women.

2.3. The eradication of all forms of gender based violence

Issue of gender based violence has not been a top issue in Lithuania's policy for almost all period since 1990s. Under the efforts of feminist-academic circles and NGOs to advocate for combating domestic violence, trafficking in human beings, prostitution and other forms of gender-based violence, the legal reform to address and provide solutions for its eradication has been recently introduced.

2.3.1. Domestic violence

The issue was hardly considered at state level till 2006. Women's NGOs have been the most active in the field of domestic violence, providing the shelters for victims, social and psychological support and advocating for the adoption of the national action plans to reduce domestic violence. The Government of Lithuania by implementing the National Program of Equal Opportunities for Women and Men (2005-2009) was responsible to draft the National Strategy for Elimination of Violence against Women Strategy in 2005. However, it was postponed until was approved in the end of 2006⁵². As discussed above, the Strategy

⁴⁸ Lithuania, Ministry of Social Security and Labour (*Socialinės apsaugos ir darbo ministerija*) (2012) 'Moterų ir vyrų lygybės statistika'. Available from: www.socmin.lt/index.php?2044783319, accessed on 20 September 2012.

⁴⁹ Lithuania, Government of the Republic of Lithuania (*Lietuvos respublikos vyriausybė*) (2010) Nutarimas dėl Valstybinės moterų ir vyrų lygių galimybių 2010–2014 metų programos patvirtinimo, No. 530, 4 May 2010.

⁵⁰ Baltic News Service (2012) 'Lietuva ir dar 8 ES šalys - prieš kvotas moterims valdybose (Lithuania and Eight EU Countries are against Women's Quotas in Boards)', DELFI.lt, 17 September 2012. Available from: www.verslas.delfi.lt/business/lietuva-ir-dar-8-es-salys-pries-kvotas-moterims-valdybose.d?id=59529629#ixzz26u99bv3m, accessed on 20 September 2012.

⁵¹ Lithuanian Department of Statistics. Available from: <http://www.stat.gov.lt/lt/news/view/?id=10171>

⁵² Lithuania, Government of the Republic of Lithuania (*Lietuvos Respublikos Vyriausybė*) (2006) Decision on National Strategy for elimination of violence against women and Plan on implementing measures 2007-2009 approval (Nutarimas dėl Valstybinės smurto prieš moteris mažinimo strategijos ir jos įgyvendinimo priemonių 2007-2009 metų plano patvirtinimo), order no.1330, 22 December 2006. Available from http://www3.lrs.lt/pls/inter3/dokpaieska.showdoc_l?p_id=289640&p_query=&p_tr2=

recognises violence against women as violation of human rights and defines all forms of violence: physical, psychological, sexual and economic. In general the Strategy is based on the 3P approach - prevention, protection and prosecution. The goals of the Strategy have been set for the period until 2015, and measures for its implementation developed in 2007-2009 and 2010-2012⁵³.

In 2006 the problems of combating domestic violence against women were discussed in the Parliament. On the one hand, these debates were influenced by the European Parliament campaign calling the national state parliamentarians to unite the forces to combat domestic violence. On the other hand, it was constant efforts by some women parliamentarians. As a result, the working group on drafting the concept and legal act on Prevention of Domestic Violence was formed in December of 2006. However, the drafted legal document was not debated in the parliament due to parliamentarians' opposition against the definition of domestic (family) violence.

New initiatives were undertaken in 2009 by the Ministry of Social Security and Labour when the bill on Protection against violence in private sphere was drafted. In 2010 the bill was significantly revised by the working group composed by the decision of the Human Rights Committee at the Parliament of Lithuania⁵⁴. In 2011 the Law on Protection against Domestic Violence was adopted⁵⁵. It entered into force on 15 December 2011 and is applied to protect any persons who are victims of domestic violence, including, women, men, children, former/divorced intimate partners, also the persons having a common domicile and a common household etc. Under the law domestic violence is "attributable to the acts of public importance" which means that victims do not have to submit a private complaint but public prosecutors must charge the offenders. The law defines violence as an intentional physical, mental, sexual, and economic or another influence exerted on a person by an act or omission as a result whereof the person suffers physical, property or non-pecuniary damage.

The law provides prompt intervention to the case of reported domestic violence, undertakes preventive measures, applies protective measures, and provides appropriate assistance. Specialised support centres were established to implement this law.

The importance of legislation confirms statistical data⁵⁶. From the day when the legislation became effective (15 December 2011) to 31 December 2011, 1942 reports about the possible cases of domestic violence were received. The pre-trial investigations have been initiated for 653 cases. Comparing with the previous year's statistics, only 614 pre-trial investigations have been initiated during whole year of 2010.

⁵³ Lithuania, Government of the Republic of Lithuania (Lietuvos Respublikos Vyriausybė) (2009) Decision on Plan on implementing measures 2010-2012 of National Strategy for elimination of violence against women approval (Nutarimas dėl Valstybinės smurto prieš moteris mažinimo strategijos įgyvendinimo priemonių 2010-2012 metų plano patvirtinimo), order no.853, 19 August 2009.

Available from: <http://www.lsc.su.lt/downloads/valstybins%20smurto%20prie%20moteris%20mainimo%20strategijos%20gyvendinimo%20priemoniu%202010-2012.doc>

⁵⁴ Press release of the Human Rights Committee at the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania, 13 October, 2010. Available from: http://www3.lrs.lt/pls/inter/w5_show?p_r=6275&p_k=1&p_d=103156

⁵⁵ Lithuania, Law on Protection Against Domestic Violence [Lietuvos Respublikos apsaugos nuo smurto artimoje aplinkoje įstatymas], order no.XI-1425, 26 May 2011.

Available from: http://www3.lrs.lt/pls/inter3/dokpaieska.showdoc_e?p_id=410975&p_query=domestic%20violence&p_tr2=2

⁵⁶ Annual Report 2011. The Police Department of the Ministry of Internal Affairs [Policijos departamentas prie Vidaus reikalų ministerijos]. Available from: <http://www.policija.lt/index.php?id=2875>

2.3.2. Trafficking in human beings and prostitution

In 2002 Lithuania ratified the UN Convention on International Organized Crime and in 2003 its Protocol on Prevention of trafficking of women and children. In EU accession process, the Ministry of Interior was an active actor in drafting the first program of Control and Prevention of Trafficking and Prostitution (2002-2004) and later the continuation of the Program in 2005-2008 and 2009-2012. The program was important to recognize the trafficking and prostitution as human rights problem, at national level. As a result of the National Program (2002-2004) the special body at the Police Department to deal with trafficking was established that start working since 2006.

During the period of implementation of National programme 2005-2008, a total of 88 victims of human trafficking were identified and 64 persons were sentenced⁵⁷. As it is indicated in the Report of the Programme prepared by the Ministry of the Interior in 2009, the issue of human trafficking has being solved successfully in Lithuania⁵⁸. This is also confirmed by the Trafficking in Persons reports, which are prepared annually by the United States Department of State. Both in 2008 and 2009 Lithuania was clustered to the first tier and is among the countries that demonstrate appreciable progress in combating trafficking in human beings⁵⁹.

The Government of the Republic of Lithuania continues its effort in the field of control and prevention of trafficking in the Programme for 2009-2012⁶⁰. As a result the Annual Report 2011 of the Programme emphasized that most of the cases of human trafficking were revealed before the victim was exploited. According to Lithuanian Criminal Police Bureau data 20 victims of human trafficking were identified in 2009, 22 in 2010 and 29 in 2011. The Government supported NGOs' projects which provided social assistance for 128 persons in 2011⁶¹.

The discussions on prevention of prostitution on political level in Lithuania started in 2004. The Ministry of Interior drafted the amendment to the Code of Violation of Administrative Law on penalizing the consumers of prostitution⁶². Following the adoption of this amendments, in 2005 the Women's NGO supported by the European Women's Lobby and the Ministry of Social Security and Labour organized the awareness raising campaign with the task to change the discourse on accountability of prostitution consumers.

2.3.3. Sexual harassment, rape, forced marriage, honour crimes and harmful practices

Sexual harassment is defined in the law on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men, in the Criminal Code and Labour Code⁶³. The Criminal Code includes an article on sexual harassment, but highlights that only vulgar and rough behaviour is considered as a crime

⁵⁷ Lithuania, Decision of the Government of Lithuania (Lietuvos Respublikos Vyriausybės Nutarimas) (2009) On Approval of Program for Prevention and Control of Trafficking 2009-2012, No 1104 of 9 September 2009.

⁵⁸ Lithuania, Ministry of Interior [Lietuvos Respublikos Vidaus Reikalų Ministerija] (2009). Report 2009. Available from: <http://www.vrm.lt/go.php/lit/Prekybos-zmonemis-prevencijos-ir-kontroles-programa/246>

⁵⁹ US Department of State (2008) Trafficking in persons report 2008, June 2008; US Department of State (2009) Trafficking in persons report 2009, June 2009

⁶⁰ Lithuania, Decisions of the Government of Lithuania (Lietuvos Respublikos Vyriausybės Nutarimas) (2009) On Approval of Program for Prevention and Control of Trafficking 2009-2012, No 1104 of 9 September 2009

⁶¹ LR Vidaus Reikalų Ministerija Vykdomų programų ataskaitos 2009, 2010, 2011 [Ministry of Internal Affairs, reports on programs implementation 2009, 2010, 2011] Available from: <http://www.vrm.lt/go.php/lit/Prekybos-zmonemis-prevencijos-ir-kontroles-programa/246>

⁶² Lithuania, Art. 182 (1) of the Code of Administrative Offences 2005 [Lietuvos Respublikos administracinių teisių pažeidimo kodeksas]. Available from: http://www3.lrs.lt/pls/inter3/dokpaieska.showdoc_l?p_id=325275

⁶³ Sexual harassment shall mean any form of unwanted and insulting verbal, written or physical conduct of a sexual nature with a person with the purpose or effect of violating the dignity of a person, in particular when creating an intimidating, hostile, humiliating or offensive environment.

and will be punished if victim will be raped⁶⁴. Sexual harassment at work in general is not an actively debated topic among politicians, women's NGOs and society. It attracts the attention only in the resonant cases. However, it is extremely difficult to prove the cases and make the guilty party accountable⁶⁵.

Rape as a crime against person's will is defined in the Criminal Code but it did not define rape in marriage. The National Strategy on Reduction of Violence identified the invisibility of domestic / marital rape in Lithuania due to the still existing myth on women's duties in family and impossibility of family rape. There is no one case in the court and pre-trial investigation on domestic rape⁶⁶. Public debates and discussions on the issues of forced marriage, honour crimes and harmful practices hardly exist in Lithuania.

2.4. Bracing down gender stereotypes

In 2010, women were pursuing secondary and tertiary education more actively than men; 90% of women and 84% of men aged 20–24 received such education; 60% of female students were in higher education. However, the share of women graduates in natural, technical and applied sciences were much lower: women make up the majority in the social services (91%), psychology (84%), health care (79%), pedagogy and humanities (76%), journalism (76%) whereas men do so in engineering (92%), transport services (91%), and computing (86%)⁶⁷.

Data on the attitudes of secondary school students towards professional orientation shows that women are less motivated to choose technical and natural sciences as a career. They usually devalue their own abilities and consider themselves incapable of studying technical and natural sciences. They have limited access to information about career opportunities and experience discrimination. Gender stereotypes that persist in society, through the socialization process directly and indirectly influence women's (and men's) choices for their occupation. Women in natural and technological sciences have less favourable career opportunities also due to the lack of possibilities to reconcile family and research opportunities⁶⁸.

Representative survey on universities and colleges students' opinion about multiple discrimination showed that sexist attitudes are widespread in their educational institutions. 27.4% male and 17.2% female respondents reported frequent use of jokes and bullying against women. Respondents indicated that professors mostly make jokes at the expense of women (49.9%)⁶⁹. The survey showed that despite the fact that female constitute majority of universities students they still cannot enjoy fully safe academic environment.

⁶⁴ Dvilaitis, Vidmantas. 2004. "Sexual Harassment and Legal Liability of it" in *Jurisprudencija*, vol. 60 (52).

⁶⁵ Lithuania, Office of the Equal Opportunities Ombudsperson [Lygių galimybių kontrolieriaus tarnyba]. 2008. Annual report. Available from: <http://www.lygybe.lt/?pageid=7>

⁶⁶ Decision on National Strategy for elimination of violence against women and Plan on implementing measures 2007-2009 approval [Nutarimas dėl Valstybinės smurto prieš moteris mažinimo strategijos ir jos įgyvendinimo priemonių 2007-2009 metų plano patvirtinimo], order no.1330, 22 December 2006.

Available from: http://www3.lrs.lt/pls/inter3/dokpaieska.showdoc_l?p_id=289640&p_query=&p_tr2=

⁶⁷ Lithuania, Department of Statistics (2011). Available from: http://www.stat.gov.lt/lt/catalog/list/?cat_y=2&cat_id=3

⁶⁸ Novelskaitė, Aurelija, Purvaneckienė Giedrė (eds.). 2011. *Moteris fiziniuose ir technologijos moksluose: mokinė, studentė, mokslininkė* [Women in natural and technology sciences: pupil, student, and scientist]. Vilnius: Vilniaus Universiteto leidykla.

⁶⁹ Jankauskaitė Margarita, Virginija Aleksejūnė, Vilana Pilinkaitė-Sotirovič, Vytautas Valentinavičius. 2011. *Įvairialypė diskriminacija aukštojo mokslo institucijose* [Multiple Discrimination in the Institutions of High Education]. Vilnius.

2.5. Reproductive rights

In Lithuania women's reproductive rights remain inefficiently protected.

2.5.1. The right to abortion

Abortion is legal in Lithuania since 1957. Its legality is provided by the Decree of the Minister of Health of 1994 which recovered the Soviet system allowing abortion till 12 weeks. Though Lithuania joined the international treaties on protection of reproduction health and undertook the commitments to implement requirements of Cairo Conference of 1994 the law on Reproductive rights is pending since late 1990s.

In 2005 Draft Law on Protection of Embryo in Prenatal Phase was initiated. According to it abortion could be allowed only in three circumstances when pregnancy is dangerous for mother's life and health, child's health and is the consequence of rape. The draft law was not included in the session of the parliament due to the critical opinion of the Legal department of the Parliament and resistance of Women's NGOs. However, initiatives to promote the law were not abandoned. In 2006 the Members of the Parliamentary Health committee initiated the draft law on Protection of Embryo and Genome which would shorten the availability to medical services of abortion from 12 to 8 weeks. The draft law was not registered⁷⁰. In 2007 the group of parliamentarians joined by the Minister of Justice initiated the passing of draft law on Protection of Embryo in Prenatal Phase. This time the law was stricter in terms of allowing only abortion in the case of danger to mother's life and health and if the pregnancy occurred in the case of rape. The initiators of the law referred to the low fertility in Lithuania and moral aspects which have to be above the material interests of individuals. The draft law was not passed to the parliamentary session as contradicting to the Constitution of Lithuania⁷¹. However, in 2013 MPs registered draft law on "Protection of Life in Prenatal Phase" for hearing in the Parliamentary session again⁷².

2.5.2. Artificial insemination

Artificial insemination in Lithuania has been regulated by the Decree of the Minister of Health (1999) which established the methods, condition and procedures of the artificial insemination⁷³. In 2004 two draft laws on artificial insemination were produced. In 2006 the Parliamentary Committee of Health Affairs discussed both draft laws and agreed upon the one drafted by the MPs of conservative party as corresponding to the needs of society. The Committee undertook the further procedure to improve the law, however there is no clear decision on this matter till present.

3. CONCLUSIONS

⁷⁰ Parliamentary Health Affairs Committee Sessions 2006 and 2007.

Available from: http://www3.lrs.lt/pls/inter/w5how?p_r=4434&p_d=521978&p_k=1 and http://www3.lrs.lt/pls/inter/w5how?p_r=5146&p_d=65161&p_k=1

⁷¹ Draft law on Protection of Embryo in Prenatal Phase, No. XP-432, 2005-04-20.

Available from: http://www3.lrs.lt/pls/inter3/dokpaieska.showdoc?p_id=2541&p_query=&p_tr2= ,
 No. XP-432 (2), 2005-07-07. Available from:
http://www3.lrs.lt/pls/inter3/dokpaieska.showdoc?p_id=259233&p_query=&p_tr2=
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http://www3.lrs.lt/pls/inter3/dokpaieska.showdoc?p_id=271639&p_query=&p_tr2=
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⁷² "LLRA jau prakalbo apie abortų draudimą" [Lithuanian Poles' Electoral Action has already started to talk about the abortion ban] www.DELFI.lt, 2013 m. kovo 5 d. 20:16

Lithuania, Parliament of Lithuania (2013), Bill on Protection of Life in Prenatal Phase. Available from http://www3.lrs.lt/pls/inter3/dokpaieska.showdoc?l?p_id=444122&p_query=&p_tr2=2

⁷³ Lithuania, Minister of Health Care [Sveikatos apsaugos ministras].1991. Decision on regulation of artificial insemination. Available from: http://sena.sam.lt/lt/main/teisine_informacija/ministro_isakymai?id=23727

Regardless the progress achieved during the accession process with regard to gender equality at the legislative and institutional levels in Lithuania, many challenges remain. The established institutional framework formally guarantees equal opportunities in all spheres of society life. The state has developed national programs and strategies and through national machinery endorsed their implementation. However, the analysis of research findings, NGOs' critical voices and statistics demonstrate that, the goals of gender mainstreaming are not efficiently implemented. Gender equality policies are not of high priority on both national and municipal levels. Public administration in Lithuania lacks sufficient knowledge, competences and motivation to incorporate gender and equal opportunity principles into their work plans and daily activities.

Political parties, except Lithuanian Social Democrat Party, are reluctant to introduce quotas and address gender equality issues in their political programs. Representation of women in all levels of decision making remains rather low. In pre- and post-accession periods number of elected women did not exceed 25%. Women in the position of chairs in the parliamentary committees and commissions, in the government and local authorities are very few which shows their disproportional representation and hinders sustainable development of democratic society.

Dominating gender stereotypes in Lithuanian culture and education make strong negative impact on women in labour market. Horizontal and vertical segregation and inefficient measures for reconciliation of work and private life remain the biggest obstacle for successful women's integration in labour market regardless their high achievements in education. Current gender equality policies in Lithuania lack systematic and complex measures to develop infrastructure of qualitative services for care of children. Men's engagement in gender equality work and active fatherhood is poorly developed at policy level and in public discourse. Structural gender inequalities result in persistent pay gap and bigger risk of women's poverty.

Violence against women is a very problematic issue in Lithuania which requires more efficient solutions. Regardless the progress in legislation on combating violence against women, the implementation of legal acts is the challenge. The measures of prevention, protection and prosecution are not carried out effectively because of limited resources, knowledge, competence and coordinated institutional response to combat violence against women.

Lithuanian women's reproductive rights are poorly protected. In that matter, there is a clear position of the Parliament: every newly elected Parliament re-introduces draft laws which aim at prohibiting abortion and initiatives to introduce legal regulation on artificial insemination are constantly blocked and postponed.

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