



Economic and Social Council

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Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

Information received from Lithuania on follow-up to the concluding observations on its third periodic report*

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* The present document is being issued without formal editing.



1. On 3 March 2023, the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights ('Committee') adopted Concluding Observations on the third periodic report of the Republic of Lithuania (Lithuania) on the implementation of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights ('Concluding observations') (E/C.12/LTU/CO/3). This document contains follow-up information in response to the Committee's recommendations as requested in paragraph 67 of the Concluding observations, specifically recommendations nos. 9 (national minorities), 17 (climate change) and 51 (right to adequate housing).

Follow-up information on the concluding observations (E/C.12/LTU/CO/3)

Information relating to paragraph 9

2. The Committee expressed its concerns about the steady decline in the population of national minorities, notably the Polish, Russian and Belarussian minorities, reports of discrimination against and unequal treatment of national minorities and the lack of a legal framework for the protection of the rights of national minorities and recommended Lithuania to "take urgent measures, in a time-bound manner, to address these concerns, expedite the process for adopting a new Law on National Minorities and that, in the interim, it take effective measures to fully protect the rights of all national minorities, including in relation to their language, religion, culture and identity".

3. The overall population of Lithuania has been declining over the years. According to the State Data Agency, since 2013, the resident population declined by 114.6 thousand, or 3.9 per cent.¹ It is important to consider that these trends are influenced by various factors, including migration and natural demographic changes. At the beginning of 2023, the citizens of the Republic of Lithuania accounted for 96.6 per cent of the country's resident population, those of Ukraine – 1.8 per cent, Belarus – 0.9 per cent, Russia – 0.4 per cent (at the beginning of 2013, for 99.2, 0.1, 0.1, and 0.3 per cent respectively). Most residents of the country (2 million 625.5 thousand, or 91.9 per cent) were born in Lithuania, 231.8 thousand (8.1 per cent) – abroad. Concerning resident population by ethnicity, at the beginning of 2023, Lithuanians made up 83.6, Poles – 6.4, Russians – 5.1, Belarusians – 1.7 and Ukrainians – 1.6 per cent of the country's resident population.

4. Lithuania has taken significant steps to protect the rights of national minorities. The Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania guarantees these rights, and various laws on citizenship, education, state language, children's rights and other include provisions to safeguard them. The Department of National Minorities to the Government of Lithuania coordinates the implementation of state policies, supporting cultural projects and initiatives that promote the cultural, linguistic, and religious uniqueness of national minorities.

5. On 7 November 2024, the Seimas (Parliament) of the Republic of Lithuania adopted the Law on National Minorities, which came into force on 1 January 2025.² This law re-establishes a legal framework for national minorities after a 15-year gap, defining what constitutes a national minority and ensuring their rights in areas such as education and cultural preservation.

6. The law³ establishes the fundamental rights and freedoms of national minorities and ensures the protection of these rights, promoting equality and preventing discrimination. This law is based on several key principles. The principle of indivisibility of rights ensures that the cultural, civil, political, social, and economic rights granted to national minorities are equally respected, important, and closely related. The promotion of cultural diversity guarantees respect for the cultural and linguistic uniqueness of national minorities, encouraging intercultural cooperation and providing opportunities for individuals to preserve

¹ <https://osp.stat.gov.lt/en/lietuvos-gyventojai-2023/salies-gyventojai/gyventoju-skaicius-ir-sudetis>.

² <https://www.lrt.lt/en/news-in-english/19/2407819/lithuania-passes-national-minorities-law-after-15-year-break>.

³ <https://e-seimas.lrs.lt/portal/legalAct/lt/TAD/34b38e809d4d11ef955ff95815eb5ce5>.

and develop their national identity. Coordination and cooperation involve consulting with organizations representing national minorities and other relevant bodies when adopting or amending legal acts or making decisions related to minority rights, ensuring compliance with international treaties. The principle of equal opportunities ensures that persons belonging to national minorities have the right to protection against discrimination, regardless of their gender, race, nationality, citizenship, language, origin, social status, religion, beliefs, age, sexual orientation, disability, or ethnic affiliation.

7. The law establishes the status and functions of the Council of National Minorities, a collegial advisory body operating on a public basis. This council will provide advice on matters related to national minorities, enhancing their representation and participation in decision-making processes. Overall, the Law on National Minorities is crucial for fostering an inclusive, respectful, and diverse society in Lithuania.

8. The Department of National Minorities to the Government of the Republic of Lithuania is responsible for implementing the national minorities' policy. Through the program "Integration of National Minorities into Lithuanian Society while Preserving their Identity," cultural projects of national minorities and the activities of National Minorities Cultural and Integration Centres have been financed each year. In 2023, 100 projects were funded aimed to promote the activities of national minority non-governmental organizations (96 in 2024); 8 projects for the sociocultural integration of the Roma (7 in 2024); 44 projects for civic education, intercultural dialogue, and commemoration in the Southeastern Lithuania region (44 in 2024); 22 projects for informal education of children and youth from national minorities (23 in 2024); and 11 projects aimed at increasing the information literacy and resilience to propaganda of national minority media and non-governmental organizations (11 in 2024).

9. The National Minorities Cultural and Integration Centres in Lithuania support national minorities by addressing their social and cultural needs. They promote cultural, linguistic, and religious uniqueness, fostering dialogue and cooperation. The Centres ensure the protection of rights, promote integration, and provide opportunities for learning the state language and participating in various activities. They work to maintain harmony in interethnic relations, support social integration, and offer informal education. Additionally, they organize events, promote intercultural dialogue, and implement anti-discrimination measures. In 2023, 23 projects were funded with 410,000 Euros, and in 2024, 21 projects were funded with 400,000 Euros.

Information relating to paragraph 17

10. In recommendation no. 17, the Committee recommends that "the State party enhance its efforts to mitigate the adverse impacts of climate change on economic, social and cultural rights, including by taking measures to achieve its nationally determined contributions under the Paris Agreement and for the implementation of its transition to a net zero greenhouse gas emissions economy by 2050. The Committee refers the State party to its statement on climate change and the Covenant, adopted in 2018".

11. Lithuania's national climate change mitigation goal by 2030 is to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 30% compared to 2005 levels, including the absorption from the land use, land-use change, and forestry (LULUCF) sector, by transitioning to innovative, low-emission, and environmentally friendly technologies and the use of renewable energy sources in economic sectors. In the sectors participating in the European Union Emissions Trading System (EU ETS), where Lithuanian operators participate alongside operators from other EU member states, GHG emissions must be reduced by 62% compared to 2005 levels. Sectors not participating in the EU ETS (transport, industry, agriculture, waste, and small energy sectors) must not exceed the annual GHG emission reduction limits set for Lithuania (in t CO₂ eq.) and achieve at least a 21% reduction in GHG emissions by 2030 compared to 2005 levels. To achieve the goals of the Paris Agreement and maintain the EU's leadership in international climate action, Lithuania, along with other EU member states, has increased its ambitions for the next decade and set long-term climate and energy policy goals.

12. The Ministry of Energy of the Republic of Lithuania, in implementing Article 14 of the European Parliament and Council Regulation (EU) No. 2018/1999 on the Governance of the Energy Union and Climate Action, together with the Ministry of Environment, initiated the update of the National Energy and Climate Action Plan for 2021–2030 (NECAP) in 2021. This document sets out the measures to achieve the European Union’s energy and climate policy goals and objectives by 2030.

13. On 2 October 2024, the Government of the Republic of Lithuania, by protocol decision No. 30, approved the final updated NECAP. The list of measures in this NECAP is sufficient to achieve Lithuania’s set goals and will help reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 21% by 2030 compared to 2005 levels, increase the share of renewable energy in final electricity consumption to 100%, and exceed the cumulative energy savings target of 39.3 TWh in the field of energy efficiency.

14. The NECAP addresses more ambitious climate and energy goals for 2030 and includes measures to achieve them, covering sectors such as transport, agriculture, and others. Among the most effective measures are the implementation of advanced technologies, the use of renewable energy sources, and the improvement and expansion of infrastructure. Significant attention is also given to increasing the availability of financing for businesses and promoting changes in public behaviour. The planned measures will not only contribute to climate change mitigation goals but also strengthen the country’s economic competitiveness and society’s ability to adapt to climate change challenges. The NECAP includes investment measures for the implementation of energy and climate policies, which will reduce dependence on fossil fuels, promote the production and use of renewable energy, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) across all economic sectors. It will also help increase energy efficiency and energy security, promote the internal energy market, research, innovation, and competitiveness.

15. By the end of 2024, more than 10 billion euros of public investment were planned, which will attract more than 7 billion euros of private investment for the green transformation. The largest share of investments is planned for the renewable energy, transport, and industrial sectors, which will also attract the largest amount of private investment. Investments are planned from various funds and included in sectoral development programs.

16. In June 2024, the Seimas (Parliament) of the Republic of Lithuania approved a new version of the Climate Change Management Law, which transposes and implements the provisions of the newly adopted EU “Fit for 55” legislative package into national law. With the approval of the law, stricter EU ETS requirements have been established, extending the system’s application to maritime transport and, from 2027, to buildings, road transport, and additional sectors. Lithuania has been given the opportunity to use flexibility measures to meet GHG reduction targets in non-EU ETS sectors and the LULUCF sector’s carbon dioxide absorption targets. The law also regulates the use of fluorinated greenhouse gases (F-gases) in line with the tightened obligations of the newly approved F-gas Regulation, which imposes restrictions, control measures, and certification requirements for companies handling F-gases.

17. The amendments to the Climate Change Management Law will contribute to reducing GHG emissions and fossil fuel use, increasing energy independence, and implementing innovative technologies across all economic sectors, thereby modernizing and enhancing their competitiveness. Due to the expanded EU ETS for maritime transport and stricter requirements for stationary fuel combustion installations and aircraft operators, and the creation of the EU ETS II system for buildings and road transport, the Climate Change Program will receive at least 1.5 times more funds for sustainable investments across all economic sectors.

18. The majority of funds obtained from the new EU ETS allowances will be transferred to the Climate Change Program (approximately 660 million euros from 2028 to 2030) and used for the modernization of buildings and road transport, and the installation of renewable energy sources, prioritizing the least affluent households and road transport users. Lithuania will additionally receive 1.35 billion euros from the increased Modernization Fund. The funds of the EU-level Innovation Fund, which have been almost tripled, will be allocated for

the implementation of innovative technologies in all economic sectors by 2030 in all EU member states. During the 2026-2032 period, Lithuania will additionally receive 664 million euros from the Social Climate Fund. These funds are intended to finance additional measures to mitigate negative social impacts, with approximately 126 million euros allocated annually for these purposes.

19. On 18 November 2023, the Government of the Republic of Lithuania approved the updated 2022–2025 Climate Change Program investment plan and allocated 111.7 million euros to specific funding directions according to the measures planned in the NECAP. When selecting specific NECAP measures that can be financed with program funds, several criteria were considered. Priority is given to additional NECAP measures that do not have other approved funding sources and cannot use European Union investment funds or other programs for their implementation. Consideration was given to the funding period, with priority for measures that need to be financed by 2025 or whose calls for funding from approved sources have ended and will not be announced soon. The environmental effectiveness of the measure was assessed by calculating the planned GHG emission reduction. The implementation efficiency and simplicity of the measure were evaluated, with priority for measures that have prepared and administered funding procedures or descriptions, allowing for quicker implementation and calls for proposals to be announced this year.

20. The scale of the measure and its beneficiaries were also considered, with priority for measures that will reach a larger group of applicants and provide added value to more entities. The nature of the measure, whether regulatory, educational, scientific, or economic investment, was considered. It is proposed to finance economic-investment measures that contribute to the quantitative reduction of GHG emissions, aligning with the nature of the program's funding.

21. The funding allocations and achievements of various climate and energy projects in Lithuania for 2023 included the following calls for proposals:

- Renovation (modernization) of non-residential buildings for legal entities: funding was allocated to 13 projects by order of the director of the Environmental Project Management Agency;
- Use of renewable energy sources (solar) for the electricity needs of low-income individuals and/or replacement of fossil fuel heating equipment: funding was allocated to 96 projects. It is planned to install solar power plants with a capacity of 819.68 kW, producing an average of 799.19 MWh/year of electricity. The planned capacity of installed biofuel boilers is 364.2 kW;
- Promotion of solar power plant installation in apartment buildings: funding was allocated to 21 projects, with a planned installation of solar power plants with a capacity of 497 kW. The Environmental Project Management Agency is evaluating 22 more applications, with a total planned installation capacity of 1000 kW;
- Investment support for biomethane production and/or biogas purification: funding was allocated to 9 applications, with a planned annual production of 75,000 m³/year;
- Promotion of public transport and sustainable mobility (scooters, bicycles, sharing services, etc.): 10,260 polluting cars were destroyed and replaced with 490 public transport tickets, 685 e-wallet top-ups (sharing services); 6,606 electric bicycles; 12,425 bicycles or electric scooters;
- Promotion of less polluting mobility means for individuals: 1,955 polluting cars were destroyed and replaced with 1,955 less polluting cars. The newly acquired M1 class less polluting car must have a total CO₂ emission of no more than 130 g/km and be powered by gasoline, gas (natural or liquefied), ethanol, electricity, or a combination of gasoline and gas (natural or liquefied), ethanol, electricity (diesel is not an acceptable fuel type);
- Implementation of energy efficiency measures for private legal entities based on energy audit reports: 14 applications were received. Upon project implementation, it

is planned to save 3,755 MWh of electricity; 4,021 MWh of thermal energy; 2,782 MWh of natural gas;

- Reduction of fossil fuel use in companies: funding was approved for 1 application, and 2 applications are currently being evaluated;
- Financial incentives for NGO activities and/or actions in shaping climate policy and informing the public about climate change: a subsidy of 0.5 million euros was allocated to 7 NGO projects.

22. The measures funded in 2023 (69 million euros) saved approximately 25.97 kt CO₂ equivalent per year, which is about 0.13% of 2022 emissions. Over the lifetime of the measures, 311.65 kt CO₂ equivalent will be saved, which would account for about 1.61% of total 2022 emissions. It is estimated that, on average, 1 euro invested in the Climate Change Program saves 20.43 kg of CO₂.

Information relating to paragraph 51

23. In recommendation no. 51, the Committee recommends “that the State party: (a) Redouble its efforts to ensure that its national housing policy prioritizes the needs of marginalized and vulnerable groups who lack access to adequate housing and basic facilities and amenities, and to allocate sufficient resources for the effective implementation of the policy; (b) Increase the availability of adequate and affordable housing, in particular by expanding the supply of social housing and the provision of housing subsidies; (c) Address the root causes of homelessness and pursue long-term solutions for homeless individuals, taking into account the Committee’s general comment No. 4 (1991) on the right to adequate housing, general comment No. 15 (2002) on the right to water, and its statement on the right to sanitation”.

24. In 2023–2024, compared to 2021–2022, the number of individuals (families) renting social housing increased: in 2023, 12.161 individuals (families) rented social housing, and in 2024, 12.422 individuals (families) did so (in 2021, 11.419 individuals (families), and in 2022, 11.865 individuals (families)). During 2023–2024, nearly 1 000 social housing units were rented out of turn. Most of these were rented to persons with disabilities, persons (families) who lost their homes in the Republic of Lithuania due to fires or other circumstances beyond their control, and large families.

25. As an alternative to social housing rental, another form of housing support is the partial compensation of rent. In 2023, the number of recipients of rent compensation significantly increased: 12.244 individuals received compensation, with 15.2 million euros of state budget funds used for this purpose (in 2022, 6. 825 individuals received compensation, with 5.8 million euros of state budget funds used).

26. In the implementation plan of the 19th Government of the Republic of Lithuania (took office in the end of 2024), a measure is planned to improve conditions for housing support and to refine the provision of support. For this purpose, amendments to the Law on Housing Support will be prepared. The new regulation proposes updating income and asset norms for housing support eligibility, eliminating the need for asset and income declarations, and using register data for assessments. It aims to establish social housing standards, protect pensioners’ and people with disabilities housing rights with indefinite rental contracts, increase housing credit amounts for subsidies, and review subsidy amounts for initial housing credit contributions.

27. The Government of the Republic of Lithuania, by its resolution of 10 November 2021, approved the 2021–2030 Development Program managed by the Ministry of Social Security and Labour. This program includes a regionally implemented measure to reduce territorial disparities in the well-being of vulnerable social groups, one of which is the expansion of the social housing fund for persons with disabilities who require specially adapted housing and large families.

28. The regional development plans allocate approximately 120 million euros for the expansion of the social housing fund (funding sources include the European Union structural

funds, the state budget, and municipal budgets). It is planned that the newly acquired social housing (project completion is expected by 2029) will accommodate 2.747 individuals (the number of individuals may vary during project implementation).

29. Since 2015, individuals and families without ownership of a home or with unsuitable living conditions, who meet other requirements set out in the Law on Housing Support of the Republic of Lithuania (e.g., income and assets do not exceed the limits specified in the law), have been provided with housing support. This support is given in the form of subsidies covering 15–30% of the housing loan or the initial contribution.

30. In 2023–2024, the number of persons (families) receiving subsidies for housing support increased compared to 2021–2022. In 2023, 738 persons (families) received subsidies, and in 2024, 688 persons (families) received them (in 2021, 334 persons (families), and in 2022, 513 persons (families)). One of the most vulnerable groups – single mothers and fathers raising children – accounted for 57.7% of all persons (families) who received subsidies in 2024.

31. According to the Law on Housing Support of the Republic of Lithuania, municipal administrations are required to plan and organize social services for individuals and families waiting for social housing rental. This aims to promote the social and economic activity and independence of these individuals and families according to their needs and capabilities. Additionally, they must organize assistance to help them obtain partial compensation for rent payments if needed (these provisions came into effect on January 1, 2023). The provisions for organizing and planning social services also apply to individuals and families renting social housing. Implementing these provisions ensures timely assistance for those living in social housing and helps prevent homelessness. In the future, an evaluation of the effectiveness of this legal regulation, which came into effect on January 1, 2023, is planned in accordance with national legislation.

32. The OECD project “Creation of a System for Providing Individualized Services to Vulnerable Social Groups” has been completed. Models for assisting those at risk of homelessness, such as persons released from imprisonment and young people leaving care institutions, will be implemented using new ESF funds. The project highlights the need for personalized, comprehensive services to help vulnerable groups integrate into society and the labour market, reducing risks like poverty and homelessness. Assistance should include employment, housing, family support, legal aid, healthcare, and transportation, provided in a timely manner. The main challenges are a lack of human resources and insufficient cooperation between organizations. Effective coordination and cooperation among social workers and institutions are crucial.

33. The Order of the Minister of Social Security and Labour of the Republic of Lithuania No. A1-423, dated 26 June 2023, amended the description of the Progress Measure No. 09 003-02-02-09 “Develop Social Integration Measures for the Most Vulnerable Groups” under the Social Cohesion Development Program. This amendment facilitates investment in social inclusion activities for socially vulnerable persons, such as ex-prisoners and homeless persons, enhancing their opportunities to participate in the labour market.

34. Planned funded activities include: (a) Social integration: activities that restore and enhance social independence, employability, and professional competence, enabling labour market participation. Services include needs assessment, motivation, counselling, mediation, psychosocial support, cultural education, social skills development, career guidance, and employment assistance; (b) Accompanying services: interrelated services that help individuals adapt to the social environment, access support systems, restore relationships, solve problems, and develop work-related skills, facilitating comprehensive social integration; (c) Coordinated assistance for the homeless (including testing alternative accommodation options); (d) Shaping public, employer, and specialist opinions; (e) Strengthening the capabilities of service-providing and administering staff; (f) Networking initiatives for organizations working in the integration of ex-prisoners, the homeless, and other socially vulnerable groups experiencing social risk (exclusion); and (g) Monitoring, evaluations, and research.

35. To implement the measure “Expand Coordinated Intervention Assistance for the Homeless” for the period 2021–2027, nearly 5 million euros have been allocated. In Vilnius,

the following initiatives are planned: (a) The “Housing First” program, a social inclusion initiative aimed at reducing homelessness by providing stable housing, individualized comprehensive assistance, and social support to individuals experiencing homelessness; (b) Strengthening street work with individuals experiencing homelessness in Vilnius. This involves providing services at gathering places of homeless individuals every working day to identify and address their problems, mediate for other necessary assistance and services, and/or provide them. Street work is carried out by a social worker and/or an individual care worker; (d) Establishing a social integration centre for individuals experiencing homelessness. This centre will operate at least 10 hours a day, providing general social services, community work, sociocultural services, and information services. Services at the day centre will be provided by a social worker and/or an individual care worker.
