

To President of the Republic of Lithuania  
To Speaker of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania  
To Prime Minister of the Republic of Lithuania  
To Minister of Social Security and Labour of the Republic of Lithuania  
To Minister of Health of the Republic of Lithuania  
To Minister of Justice of the Republic of Lithuania  
To Minister of the Interior of the Republic of Lithuania  
To Minister of Education, Science and Sport of the Republic of Lithuania  
To Committee on Human Rights of the Republic of Lithuania  
To Committee on Legal Affairs of the Republic of Lithuania  
To Office of the Equal Opportunities Ombudsperson of the Republic of Lithuania

## ON MEASURES FOR DEALING WITH SEXUAL VIOLENCE AND OTHER FORMS OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

### RESOLUTION

Vilnius, 12-14 November 2019

In 2018, there were 9,529 crimes of domestic violence, including 63 crimes of sexual violence, reported in Lithuania. Statistical data mainly reflect physical violence, whereas sexual domestic violence in family relations and outside of them remains one of the most invisible forms of violence against women.

There is a persistent lack of studies on sexual violence and sexual harassment in Lithuania. First, there is no sufficient knowledge among both specialists and society in general about manifestations of sexual violence. Many people are not able to identify what sexual violence is. Then, it is often the case that accusations fall upon victims of intimate partner violence themselves. According to the European survey (Special Eurobarometer 449: Gender-based violence), 42 percent of Lithuanian population think that women often make up and exaggerate claims of experienced violence or rape.

What appears from non-governmental organizations (NGOs), working with women who experienced violence, is that women often do not report about their experienced sexual violence since they are stigmatized, put to shame or their possible actions of avoiding sexual violence are analysed. Such negative reactions force women to keep silent and to refuse to report about the offences. Since such cases are not reflected in official statistics, the actual range of sexual violence is not apparent and considerate measures to prevent sexual violence and to help victims are not adequately considered.

It is to be noted that, without available support system to people who experienced sexual violence, inter-institutional collaboration practice is not well developed among institutions supporting the victims of violence.

Current legal regulation of sexual violence does not ensure the protection and support system to the people who experienced violence. Besides, Criminal Code 149.1<sup>1</sup> associates rape not only with the lack of voluntary

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.e-tar.lt/portal/lt/legalAct/TAR.2B866DFF7D43/asr>

consent but also (obligatorily) with physical violence and threat (i.e. as an additional valuation aspect) making it difficult for people to address and to prove their experienced violence.

The participants<sup>2</sup> at the International Conference *We Are Safe in Our City*, which took place in Vilnius on the 12-14 November 2019,

*Having regard* to the experience shared by experts from Lithuania as well as other countries,

*Having regard* to the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), adopted in 1979, and ratified in Lithuania in 1995,

*Noting* that violence against women is a criminal offense and gross violation of human rights,

#### Address to the Government of the Republic of Lithuania,

*Urging* to ratify the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (also known as the Istanbul Convention), adopted in 2011, which laid down minimum European standards for combating violence against women and domestic violence. The Convention obliges the member states to take actions in preventing violence against women and domestic violence, to guarantee the victim protection and prosecuting the perpetrators, as well as it envisages international monitoring mechanisms. The ratification of the Convention would become an extremely significant tool in combating all forms of violence against women;

*Urging* to adopt necessary measures to apply mediation in resolving all family dispute cases as envisaged in the amendments of the Law on Mediation of the Republic of Lithuania, which shall come into force on the 1<sup>st</sup> of January 2020. Pursuant to CEDAW, mediation in cases of domestic violence is not allowed. Moreover, it cannot be applied as an obligatory measure since this stands in contradiction to the fundamental principle of volunteering in mediation;

*Proposing* to foresee a legal liability for sexual harassment in public areas;

*Proposing* to make amendments to legal acts regulating liability for sexual violence so that liability is associated not with an active resistance of the victim but with a lack of voluntary consent from the part of the victim;

*Proposing* to delegate the provision of specialised support for the people who experienced violence to non-governmental organizations, for instance to the Network of Specialised Care Centres. For this purpose, adequate funds must be foreseen and provided to organise care provision, to publicise and to train specialists who work with the victims of sexual violence (workers of legal institutions, doctors, representatives of non-governmental organisations, representatives of institutions providing social services, representatives of education and other institutions).

On behalf of all participants at the Conference, the Resolution is signed by members of the Conference Organizing Committee:

Head of National Association of Women's Rights Jurgita Cinskienė

---

<sup>2</sup> There were 130 participants from various governmental and non-governmental organizations and institutions at the International Conference *We Are Safe in Our City* in Vilnius on the 12-14 November 2019.

Director of Women's Issues Information Centre Jūratė Šeduikienė

Director of Klaipėda Social and Psychological Services Centre Dalia Puidokienė