

**Joint ECE/UNDP Workshop on  
Gender Statistics for Policy Monitoring and Benchmarking  
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**LITHUANIA**

**REPORT ON LITHUANIAN SITUATION IN GENDER STATISTICS - USERS**

Paper submitted by Lithuania<sup>1</sup>

**Introduction**

Women continue to be disadvantaged and discriminated in Lithuania society. The areas within the public domain, in which these problems are acute for women continue to be in the labour market, political representation and participation in decision-making at all levels in society. On a more positive note, the number of women's organisations grew significantly, becoming more influential and exhibiting strength in tackling gender discrimination. However, there is a lack of co-ordination and direction of their activities.

On November 8, 1996 the Government of the Republic of Lithuania approved the Action Plan for the Advancement of Women of Lithuania (resolution No. 1299). Ministries and other state institutions were instructed to take account of the provisions of the Action Plan for the Advancement of Women of Lithuania in their activities. This programme was prepared by joint efforts of governmental and non-governmental organisations. The 1996-1997 Action Plan for the Implementation of the Action Plan for the Advancement of Women of Lithuania was also approved and a Commission for women's issues was formed.

The Action Plan for the Advancement of Women covers the following spheres: protection of women's human rights, socio-economic position of women, women and environmental protection, women's health, family planning, women and education, women in politics and administration, abuse and violence against women and girls, women and the mass media, the statistical system and gender differences. The lines of activities and the main measures of its implementation have been

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set out in the programme in detail. In order to implement the Action Plan for the Advancement of Women, a national mechanism for the establishment of equal opportunities of men and women has been envisaged.

By Resolution No. 208 of March 8, 1997 the Government of the Republic of Lithuania formed a working group to prepare the 1998-2000 Action Plan for the Implementation of the Action Plan for the Advancement of Women and the report on compliance with the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women.

By Resolution No. 77 of January 21, 1998 the Government of the Republic of Lithuania approved the 1998-2000 Action Plan for the implementation of the Lithuanian Women's Progress Programme and instructed the Ministry of Social Protection and Labour to form an inter-institutional commission to monitor the execution of the Lithuanian Women's Progress Programme. On the issues of statistics system and gender differences the following measures have been planned: creation of a database, establishment of a division on gender statistics in the Statistics Department, annual publication of gender statistics, publishing of gender statistics in the press, organising of seminars on gender statistics for employers.

There have been a number of positive changes in the status of women and in the sphere of equal opportunities in Lithuanian society last year. The appointment of the Equal Opportunities Ombudsman was much celebrated by Women's NGOs and those concerned with equality issues. According to the Law in Lithuania, the EO Ombudsman has more extensive power than the existing Controllers of the Seimas do. For example, the EO Ombudsman does not need a formal complaint to investigate breaches of this legislation and can act independently. The Women's Issues Information Centre played a key role in promoting the work of this office, by publishing the actual legislation on Equal Opportunities and the remit of the Equal Opportunities Ombudsman.

The Women's Issues Information Centre remains the national information service in Lithuania on the position of women and it is the main Centre for national and international exchange of information. The Centre has an extensive network of contacts with women's organisations, women's NGOs within Lithuania, its Baltic's neighbours, some Eastern European countries and international women's organisation. The WIIC continues to collaborate with the Department of Statistics towards building a data bank, with a particular emphasis on gender and social research. So far, much of the statistical information has been 'invisible' on profiles of women in various demographic trends such as unemployment, women entrepreneurs, education, marriage and divorce patterns, single parents and childbearing trends.

One of the priorities in the activities of the Women's Issues Information Centre is to prepare and conduct socially orientated sociological surveys targeting areas that women are discriminated against and/or would promote the cause of women's equality. The results and analysis of such research would facilitate the process towards highlighting changes needed in social policies and concrete ways to address women's problems.

In 1998, the Women's Issues Information Centre implemented a project called, "Women and Men in Lithuania: Facts and Data" financed by the PHARE Democracy Programme. Subsequently, the WIIC, together with the Department of Statistics issued the statistical publication 1997" (in Lithuanian and English). The work that the WIIC and the Department of Statistics undertook together proceeded further. In 1999, the Department of Statistics issued a new publication "Women and Men in Lithuania" and agreed to issue an updated version annually. However, as the statistical information of the Department of Statistics is largely aimed at the academic society and its circulation does not reach a wider audience interested in women's issues. Hence, the WIIC has prepared and issued the pocketbook, "Women and Men in Lithuania" (in Lithuanian and English). It is planned to place this publication on the Internet, thus enhancing the circulation of the users on gender statistics. This project would be cost effective in the long term as the funds required to update this information would be small.

At the end of 1998, the Women's Issues Information Centre analysed the status of rural women based on the surveys carried out by the Department of Statistics of Lithuania. This book contains data on the structure, employment and unemployment rate of the population, distribution of income, etc. presented according to two classifications: urban (rural) and men (women). This publication is one of the first steps towards analysing and comparing the status of rural and urban women, and would hopefully become the basis for further specialised research.

In spring 1999, the Women's Issues Information Centre commissioned a sociological survey "Gender Differences in Education". This survey's aims were to understand the views and attitudes of teachers and students around gender relationships in the education system.

In 1999, the Women's Issues Information Centre, with financial support from the Regional Bureau for Europe and the CIS, prepared and published the report "Women in Lithuania" for Beijing+5 review. In this publication, attempts were made to cover as many aspects as possible relating to women by employing the data of statistical and sociological surveys. Areas that were highlighted as problematic for women included participation of women in politics, the economy, unemployment and violence against women.

In 2000, the Government of the Lithuanian Republic and the Women's Issues Information Centre was organising a major conference for the Baltic States, on the "Beijing +5: achievements and perspectives". Representatives of non-governmental organisations and governmental officials from Baltic countries were discussed the achievements of their countries on gender mainstreaming, improvements of women's lives, lessons learned, and the process of implementing the Beijing Platform for Action and National Programmes of Action. The conference was provided a forum for dialogue between governmental institutions and non-governmental organisations. The conference was be a crucial space to share experiences, networking and establishing close contacts for future collaboration of projects, as well as on how gender issues have been integrated into legislation, policies and practices, the achievements and the difficulties. The conference prepared the proposals for the new National Action plan. On the issues of statistics system the following measures have been planned:

1. To create international standards corresponding to the statistical methodology and propagate it in Lithuania;
2. To issue the annual publication "Woman and Man in Lithuania";
3. To create and regularly update the databases;
4. To constantly inform the governmental institutions and the information network of Women's Organisations of the differences in the male and female situation;
5. To inform the society of the gender statistics;
6. In co-operation with the Women's Issues Information Center to prepare and regularly publish short information about the situation of women and men in Lithuania;
7. To regularly prepare information for the press.

In the end of this year the WIIC together with Statistics Lithuania and SIDA will organised the Baltic States Gender Statistics workshop. This workshop will be held principally for the users and producers of statistics in three Baltic countries. The workshop will then devote to discussions on gender issues. It will illustrate how gender stereotyping has led to gender prejudices and then to gender discrimination.

### **The National Machinery of Equal Opportunities**

In Lithuania the issues of gender equality were first addressed in 1994, when a post of a State Counsellor on Women's Issues was introduced in the Prime Minister's Office. In 1996, it was upgraded into office of Adviser to the Government on Women and Family Issues. From the end of 1996 these issues have been referred to as issues of equal opportunities. At the end of 1996 the Government adopted the Action Plan for the Advancement of Women of Lithuania.

The year 1997 was the year when the national machinery of equal opportunities was being created. The Plan up to the year 2000 for the implementation of the Action Plan was adopted. A structural subdivision was established within the Ministry of Social Security and Labour, a gender statistics section was set up in the Department of Statistics and a ministerial group was formed to supervise these issues. Concurrently similar parliamentary groups were formed: a group of Women Parliamentarians involving members of parliament from all political parties headed by a chairperson who is re-elected at the beginning of each parliamentary session, and a parliamentary Commission of Family and Child.

Upon the adoption of the Law on Equal Opportunities at the end of 1998 and the establishment of the Office of the Ombudsman of Equal Opportunities in 1999, which set to work immediately, the national machinery of equal opportunities has been further developed. The Office enjoys broad administrative powers, which accords it a special status even among similar offices in the Nordic countries.

We are convinced that this mechanism will enable women and men of Lithuania to see that all the citizens of the country have to and can make choices with regard to their career and personal life on the basis of equal opportunities.

