

Viceministrės J. Jakštienės pasisakymas konferencijos „A Sustainable World For All Ages“
apskritojo stalo diskusijoje „Mainstreaming ageing to advance a society for all ages“
2022 m. birželio 17 d., Roma 15.00-16.30 (skirta 3-5 minutės)

Dear Experts, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Thank You for the opportunity to participate in this discussion on a society for all ages. Preparing for ageing is both an individual and a societal theme of our time, which is possible to develop when all UN and UNECE members are reaching for peace and not starting the war.

I want use this opportunity express once again Lithuania's solidarity and support to Ukraine and to its people, who are showing resilience and courage in the face of an unjustified Russian aggression – war, **grossly violating international law and any human rights**. Today we are discussing about rights of older people, but in Ukraine older and disabled people are dying every day, killed by armed Russian soldiers. Older and disabled Ukrainians are not mobile and can not leave they bombarded homes and run away from the aggression. They can not reach EU or other safe neighbourhood country border, and get any humanitarian help.

Lithuania is making all effort to support the Ukrainian people fleeing the war. More than 55,000 Ukrainians have arrived in Lithuania so far (majority woman and children, disabled, older Ukrainians). They are provided with housing, food, medical care, psychological support, social services, and access to labour market. At present, more than 30% of working age Ukrainians are employed.

Lithuanians opened the doors of their own homes to accommodate refugees from Ukraine and are volunteering in provision of services and donating the financial support. We feel a huge consolidation, the spirit of empathy, readiness to support by all means like never before within our society. Lithuania and Ukraine both know the price of independence.

In Lithuania, as in many European Union countries, the population is aging. The number of older persons in Lithuania increased by approximately 2.15 percent in the last decade and now reaching almost 20 proc of the population. Well, I would like to state, that **elders are a powerful resource for society**. Elders play important social, cultural and economic roles in their families and communities. These include caregiving, childrearing, domestic work, volunteering, financial and housing support, and much more.

First of all, we need to address **ageing as an equality issue**, aiming to uphold human rights equally at all ages and to address all those barriers that keep us from living fairly and freely as equals when we are older.

A strategic approach is fundamental in creating favourable conditions and opportunities for older people.

First, **the Programme of the Government** of the Republic of Lithuania provides commitment to prepare the tools for labour and civil activeness of older persons, healthy ageing, tourism, entrepreneurship, and learning, to engage higher education institutions and private sector, to expand social innovations, and to endeavour at providing the opportunity to older persons to work and earn until their can, to make work conditions more flexible and responsive to individual needs.

Second, **the Programme of Development of Social Solidarity** aims to solve the problems related to poverty and social isolation of older persons, to increase their opportunities to stay in the labour market and to participate actively in social life, by developing the integrated social services in compliance with their needs and reinforcing financial safety of older persons.

Lithuania is making every effort to **ensure the financial security** of older people. The pensions of social insurance have been increased consistently. We attempt to improve the situation of older people

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in the labour market by implementing employment policy, which targets to promote employment for all those who are able and willing to work.

Besides, we have been developing **services** for older persons by **improving their quality and accessibility**.

In the area of **education**, the best international practice was used to develop the activities of **universities of the third age**, thus seeking to ensure that every willing older person could participate in the activities of universities of the third age, develop their competences and take part in public life. A special programme targeted at **improving health** of older people was approved in the area of health protection. This programme focuses on health education of older persons.

Together with the **OECD experts**, we are implementing **the project supported by the European Commission “To create a model of favourable conditions for integration of older persons into social, political, cultural life and their occupation”**. The model will be prepared containing the tools and methods to create favourable opportunities and conditions for integration of older persons into political, social and cultural life and their participation in the labour market.

Building a **society friendly to all age groups** is a commitment between generations. Recently Lithuania offered free digital literacy courses in libraries across the country. More than 42 per cent of participants were aged over 50.

Let me conclude by saying that it is essential to involve **older persons in making decisions at national and local levels**, when socioeconomic policy is formed, as well as their participation in the life of society and community.

Thank You very much.