



**Convention on the Elimination  
of All Forms of Discrimination  
against Women**

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**Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination  
against Women**  
**Forty-first session**

**Summary record of the 834th meeting**

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Wednesday, 2 July 2008, at 10 a.m.

*Chairperson:* Ms. Šimonović

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*The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.*

**Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 18 of the Convention (continued)**

*Third and fourth periodic reports of Lithuania (CEDAW/C/LTU/3, CEDAW/C/LTU/4 and CEDAW/C/LTU/Q/4 and Add.1).*

1. *At the invitation of the Chairperson, the members of the delegation of Lithuania took places at the Committee table.*

2. **Ms. Murauskaitė** (Lithuania), introducing the third and fourth periodic reports of Lithuania (CEDAW/C/LTU/3 and CEDAW/C/LTU/4), said that since the submission of its initial report (CEDAW/C/LTU/1) in 2000 there had been a number of developments in gender equality, based on the recommendations of the Committee. The developments were concentrated in the areas of legislation on gender mainstreaming, institutional measures on implementation of gender equality, employment, creating a balance between work and family life, violence against women and trafficking in women, politics and decision-making, education and science, and gender stereotypes and awareness-raising.

3. The Law on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men had been adopted in 1998, and its implementation was monitored by the Equal Opportunities Ombudsman. Significant amendments had been passed, including one defining indirect discrimination and specifying the obligation of State institutions to implement gender equality measures in all areas (2002); another shifting the burden of proof from the victim to the person or institution against whom the complaint had been filed and granting the victim the right to claim financial damages against the perpetrator (2004); and a number of amendments prohibiting gender harassment, in addition to sexual harassment, gender discrimination in respect of membership in professional and trade organizations, and other discrimination against women and men in all aspects of social security plans (2005, 2007 and 2008). The amendments also granted non-governmental organizations (NGOs) the right to represent victims throughout the complaint process. Finally, the accession of Lithuania to the European Union in 2004 had facilitated the inclusion of improved legislation on gender equality in its main legal bodies.

4. The National Programme on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men had begun in 2003 as a means of systematically and consistently implementing gender equality in all areas. The Programme oversaw implementation of all measures in respect of gender mainstreaming by all ministries in cooperation with women's organizations, gender studies centres and labour market institutions. It was funded by the State budget with additional support of European Union (EU) Structural Funds grants, and coordinated by the Commission on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men, which submitted annual reports to the Government. On the basis of the recommendations of the Commission, a number of gender mainstreaming programmes had been established since 2000.

5. Lithuania had also established measures to ensure the effective functioning of institutional mechanisms for ensuring gender equality in practice. To that end, since 2000 one to two people had been appointed as persons responsible for gender issues in every ministry. Also in 2000, the inter-institutional Commission on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men had been established with representatives from State institutions and women's organizations. The Minister of Social Security and Labour had been appointed as the Gender Equality Minister in 2001 to coordinate the implementation of gender equality measures, and in 2007 the Gender Equality Division of the Ministry of Social Security and Labour had been established. Finally, more than 130 NGOs for women's issues were active in the country. Women's councils and centres had been established in the largest trade unions to facilitate tripartite social dialogue in favour of women, and gender studies centres had been established at major universities to ensure gender expertise, research and competence.

6. The unemployment rate had been declining considerably in Lithuania. Furthermore, data from the Department of Statistics demonstrated that, since 2000, women had been more active in the labour market than men. The employment rate for women in 2008 actually exceeded the 2010 target established for EU member States as part of the Lisbon Strategy for Jobs and Growth. According to the EU Report on Equality between Women and Men 2008, Lithuania excelled in a number of areas, ranking seventh among EU countries in the employment of older women and third in the employment rate gap between women and men. The World Economic Forum Global Gender Gap Index

2007 Rankings placed Lithuania fourteenth among 128 countries. However, despite considerable progress made, there remained much to be done. The Government was committed to furthering equal opportunity for women and men in the labour market.

7. On the issue of balancing work and family life, the National Programme on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men included a broad range of actions on childcare facilities, childcare leave, flexible work arrangements and gender equality training for social partners. The EU Report on Equality between Women and Men 2008 had placed Lithuania second among EU countries in the employment rate for women raising children under 12 years of age. Furthermore, the Labour Code provided flexible childcare leave options. The Law on Sickness and Maternity Social Insurance had introduced one-month fully paid paternity leave in 2006, and approximately 30 per cent of fathers had used it. While legal conditions for flexible work arrangements had been established in 2003, the Government was working to raise awareness of parents and employers through initiatives such as the Family Friendly Enterprises. Šiauliai University was the first to implement the programme for flexible childcare, working arrangements and gender equality planning at the workplace, and other employers and trade unions were being encouraged to follow its lead as from September 2008. The initiative was funded by the State budget and the European Social Fund. Lithuania also used the EU initiative Equal and the European Social Fund for other programmes to balance work and family life.

8. In 2006, the National Strategy for Combating Violence Against Women and the Plan of Implementing Measures had been adopted to oversee all aspects of eliminating violence against women. Lithuania's strategic goal was to establish adequate women's crisis centres, which were managed by NGOs and funded by the State budget and EU Structural Funds, at the municipal level. Men's crisis centres had also been established, beginning in 2001, to work with the perpetrators of violence; methodology for the work was to be completed by the end of 2008. The Government and women's organizations had worked extensively on improving legislation on violence against women, and on 3 June 2008 Parliament had passed amendments to the Civil Code requiring offenders to leave the family home. With regard to trafficking in women, in 2002 Lithuania had adopted a

Programme for the Control and Prevention of Trafficking in Human Beings and Prostitution. Lithuania continued to be active in prosecuting persons engaged in organized crime and providing support for victims of human trafficking at the international and regional levels.

9. On the issue of women's participation in politics and decision-making, the percentage of women in the Parliament had doubled in 2004 as compared to 2000. Furthermore, 38 per cent of candidates from Lithuania elected to the European Parliament were women. Women occupied 28 per cent of decision-making posts. According to the EU Report on Equality between Women and Men 2008, 40 per cent of all managerial positions in Lithuania were held by women, the best result in the EU. Notwithstanding, achieving gender balance in political life remained challenging, and the Government was working to implement the National Programme on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men to achieve greater balance among men and women in political and economic decision-making.

10. In the field of education, women comprised more than 60 per cent of all students in all types of educational institutions. They participated more than men in all sectors of higher education except in the technical, agricultural and military spheres. The first group of women had graduated from the Military Academy in 2004, and high percentages of women were post-graduate students, doctors of science or holders of doctor habilitus degrees. The Strategy on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men in Science had been approved on 2 June 2008 by the Minister of Education and Science to ensure and promote gender equality in all areas of science.

11. The Government had made efforts to eliminate negative stereotyping of women through the National Programme on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men, a number of ministries and women's organizations. The Gender Studies Centre of Vilnius University and the Kaunas Women's Employment Information Centre had established the most successful project on combating gender stereotyping, as described in the fourth periodic report. Furthermore, the Ministry of Culture had supported projects aimed at combating negative stereotyping of women since 2003. Discriminatory advertisements had been criminalized and were carefully monitored by the Equal Opportunities Ombudsperson. Combating gender

stereotypes required sustained effort, and the Government continued to work towards visible results.

12. She was happy to report that Lithuania had signed and ratified without reservation the Optional Protocol to the Convention in 2000, and the amendment to article 20, paragraph 1, of the Convention in 2004, and had ratified the Protocol to Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children in 2003, as well as a number of international instruments related to gender equality and the advancement of women. Lithuania had been positively influenced by Beijing +5 and Beijing +10, and had actively shared its experience at the regional and EU level. The first EU gender equality institution, the European Institute for Gender Equality, was to be established in Vilnius. Yet, while there had been many successes, there remained many challenges, such as the opposition to the State Family Policy Concept adopted by Parliament on 3 June 2008. Therefore, Lithuania remained committed to continued progress on all issues related to gender issues at the local and international levels.

#### *Articles 1 to 6*

13. **Ms. Patten** said that she would welcome more information on the responsibility of the Ombudsman in collecting data on and monitoring the impact of compounded discrimination against marginal groups of women including the disabled, the elderly and other vulnerable groups of women who had submitted complaints. The delegation could provide the data in its next report, in addition to information on the situation of rural as compared to urban women. It was unclear whether there were landmark court cases that had invoked the Convention. It would be helpful to know to what extent it had been used. She wondered whether the working group had identified such cases, as it was an indicator of whether further training of the judiciary and legal profession was needed. Finally, it was not clear whether the Equal Opportunities Ombudsman referred to the Convention, which was cause for concern because the high number of warnings and lack of sanctions issued could have a negative impact on the effectiveness of the institution.

14. **Ms. Schöpp-Schilling** said that much of the information in the reports did not indicate the existence of indirect discrimination as it was not specific to women and therefore not relevant to the Convention. It was unclear whether the Government fully understood

the Convention. Information from the Committee on the Rights of the Child and the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights should have been included in the reports. She recommended further training for Government personnel in policy-setting and report-writing. In respect of article 2 of the Convention, she wondered whether the Government would continue to rely on EU funds for programmes aimed at ensuring gender equality in practice, or whether there were plans to integrate gender budgeting into the national budget. She also welcomed further information on consistent funding of NGOs that were currently funded through competitions, and whether salaries and overhead costs were covered by such funding. Turning to temporary special measures, she wondered what constitutional barriers to them existed and whether the Government intended to amend the constitution. It would be interesting to know what temporary special measures would be taken if it were possible to implement them immediately.

15. **Ms. Hayashi** said that the delegation's response to issue 28 on the list of issues and questions (CEDAW/C/LTU/Q/4/Add.1) was very general. She requested more information on how the Government recognized the special needs of Roma women and on any temporary special measures taken to help Roma women achieve the goals contained in the Programme for Roma Integration into Lithuanian Society for 2008-2010. Specifically, she wondered how the Government encouraged women to preserve their national identity, whether there was conflict between Roma and non-Roma populations, how the Government worked to eradicate intolerance and how it evaluated the role of women in the reconciliation process.

16. **Ms. Dairiam** noted that it was the obligation of the Government to ensure that women enjoyed their rights as defined by the Convention and encouraged the Government to establish a classification system for verifying the implementation of the Convention. In reference to article 2 (e) of the Convention, she noted that, while Lithuania had achieved great success in dealing with vertical and horizontal job segregation and the pay gap in the private sector, the Law on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men might not be adequate to address the structural discrimination that persisted. The Committee would welcome information on obligations that the Government had placed on the public and private sectors to reduce occupational and vertical segregation and the pay gap, and wished to

learn to whom progress on the issue was reported. Finally, she would be grateful for information on complaints by and support and awareness education for rural women.

17. **The Chairperson**, speaking as a member of the Committee, said that article 4, paragraph 1, of the Convention on temporary special measures, should be directly applicable and wondered whether the Convention was considered part of the national legal system, and what position it held in relation to the Constitution and national legislation. The preparation of the periodic reports should be useful for the Government in assessing the implementation of the Convention on the national level and promoting gender equality. It would be interesting to learn whether the Human Rights Committee had been consulted for the reports.

18. **Ms. Juršėnienė** (Lithuania) said that in 2005 the functions of the Office of the Equal Opportunities Ombudsman had expanded to include not only issues related to women and men, but also issues related to all forms of discrimination. The Ombudsman could take a broad range of decisions as provided under article 24 of the Law on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men, including the deferral of any matter for investigation; the dismissal of a complaint if it lacked corroboration, if no objective information was found, or if the complaint was withdrawn or a solution was reached; and the imposition of administrative sanctions. The Ombudsman was accountable to Parliament. He also heard complaints related to awareness-raising and lack of understanding. In such cases, warnings and subsequent education were considered more effective than sanctions. Finally, she would provide data on complaints of compounded discrimination by marginalized women when the Committee reconvened.

19. **Ms. Mılašiūtė** (Lithuania), turning to temporary special measures, said that the doubts of some constitutional law experts regarding their applicability may have been related to the constitutional prohibition of privileges and the possibility that such measures might become permanent privileges. No amendment of the Constitution was needed since constitutional court case law had clarified that equality under the Constitution was not limited to formal equality. The Law on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men provided for temporary special measures, confirming

that they were in line with the Constitution. Otherwise the law could not have been passed.

20. **Ms. Juršėnienė** (Lithuania) said that special measures were sometimes applied in areas such as promotion of women's businesses or promotion of women's participation in politics without any specific amendment of the law being required. Such measures were included not only in the National Programme for Equal Opportunities for Women and Men 2005-2009, but also in several other programmes. European Union Structural Funds assistance was available only for programmes that were also funded from the State budget. In some cases, 50 per cent of funding was from the State budget and 50 per cent from the European Union. Women's organizations received support for their activities from both the State budget and European Union funding to cover salaries, administrative expenses and other costs.

21. The Ministry had a budget line for the National Programme for Equal Opportunities for Women and Men. Gender budgeting issues were also included in several separate pilot initiatives, mostly at the local level. The results of an assessment of the impact on women and men of the use of European Union Structural Funds grants would be available at the end of the year. Almost 80 per cent of the measures included in the National Programme for Equal Opportunities for Women and Men were implemented in cooperation with women's NGOs. All NGO projects received support on a competitive or contractual basis.

22. **Ms. Purvaneckienė** (Lithuania) said that European Union Structural Funds support comprised part of the strategically planned State budget and did not come to an end when a project was completed. A Government commission had recently prepared a development strategy for NGOs that included institutional funding and was currently under consideration by the Government.

23. **Ms. Mılašiūtė** (Lithuania) said that in Lithuania international law was normally incorporated into domestic law which contained more specific and detailed provisions, and judges therefore tended to apply domestic law. In the exceptional cases when they did have recourse to international law, they tended to cite international conventions in their decisions rather than indicating which specific provisions had been used. A new classification system and new indicators would help to identify cases where the Convention had

been applied. She had not found any landmark cases where application of the Convention had changed the course of case law. The Ministry of Justice had a training centre for the judiciary, and the curriculum for judges included international human rights law and anti-discrimination issues. University curriculums also included international human rights law, and it was therefore impossible to get a lawyer's diploma without training in the Convention.

24. **Ms. Juršėnienė** (Lithuania) said that the Law on Equal Opportunities of Women and Men was applied in the private sector but there was still some vertical and especially horizontal segregation. Women accounted for 26 per cent of owners of small or medium-sized businesses, while the total number of women managers was over 40 per cent and a few women headed large businesses. Measures were being taken to combat horizontal segregation in the labour market, which led to a gender pay gap. A tripartite council consisting of representatives of trade unions, employers and the State had considered awareness-raising measures to encourage employers to apply equality principles. There was also a programme on corporate social responsibility and a draft law on social initiatives that included provisions for gender equality, flexible working arrangements and the establishment of family-friendly enterprises.

25. The Office of the Equal Opportunities Ombudsman did not have branches in all municipalities, but rural women could submit complaints and receive free consultations in person or by telephone, mail or e-mail. The Commission for Equal Opportunities for Women and Men was a coordinating entity, and all relevant bodies were invited to send representatives to its meetings. The Commission had reviewed the third and fourth reports of Lithuania, and women's NGOs, women's equality experts, equal opportunities ombudsmen, representatives of the group of women parliamentarians and representatives of all parliamentary committees, in particular the human rights committee, had been able to participate in the reporting process.

26. **Ms. Tavares da Silva** asked about the situation of non-Lithuanian minority women such as Russians, Poles, and Belarusians. She also requested more specific information about Roma women. Some measures for vulnerable groups had been included in the National Action Plan for Combating Poverty and

Social Exclusion for 2004-2006. She wondered whether those measures had been continued and asked whether the provisions for vulnerable groups established in the context of European Union programmes would be continued in regular programmes when those funds came to an end.

27. **Ms. Neubauer** asked whether the two persons appointed in every ministry in Lithuania to deal with gender issues were working on those issues exclusively or in addition to other tasks. She also asked about progress in establishing gender equality units or appointing experts at the municipality level. It seemed there might be some overlapping of mandates between the Gender Equality Division and the Commission for Equal Opportunities for Women and Men. The Committee wished to know which body was responsible for coordinating implementation of the national programme and which was responsible for coordinating the implementation of gender mainstreaming throughout the Government. She also wondered what kind of discrimination women had experienced in relation to access to and the supply of goods and services.

28. **Ms. Chutikul** asked whether the funding provided by the European Union consisted of matching funds and what percentage of current expenditure on women's affairs (including the national programme) came from the European Union Structural Funds. She also enquired if there was a plan for the State budget to absorb those expenditures when European Union funding came to an end. It was impressive that four persons in the Gender Equality Division could carry out so many mandates. She asked whether targets were set for the national programme and what kinds of indicators were used and also requested information on the monitoring system, if one existed. It would be interesting to hear if the Division had any local branches or what linkages it had at the local level throughout the country and with the Office of the Ombudsman.

29. **Ms. Juršėnienė** (Lithuania) said that, since 2001, one or two persons in every ministry had been responsible for gender equality issues in addition to their existing functions. Unfortunately, progress had been slow in the municipalities and at present only a few had an official responsible for gender equality. As the Gender Equality Division served as a secretariat for the Commission on Equal Opportunities there was no overlapping of mandates. The Division implemented

the decisions of the Commission in addition to having other tasks. The four staff members of the Division had a clear separation of functions and obligations for each person and tried to make their work as effective as possible. Their responsibilities included the gender equality programme, the strategy against violence and international cooperation.

30. The National Programme for Equal Opportunities for Women and Men was an umbrella programme covering employment, education, political decision-making and a few other areas. Indicators for women's employment and unemployment rates, the gap with men's salaries, and employment rates for mothers of children under 12 and older women were used to monitor the programme. In 2009, the results of surveys carried out prior to the establishment of the Programme and five years later would be compared. At the European Union level, indicators were available for all areas covered by the Beijing Platform for Action and those indicators, including three indicators for the girl child developed during the recent Slovenian Presidency, were also used for assessing the situation in Lithuania.

31. The Division was the secretariat for the Commission for Equal Opportunities, which invited all actors in the gender equality field to participate in its activities. The Equal Opportunities Ombudsman was always invited to meetings of the Commission with observer status and could comment on all issues. Through that mechanism, the Commission had a direct relationship with the Ombudsman. At the local level, further efforts were needed to expand the network of gender equality consultants, but all the persons appointed were also invited to the Commission's quarterly meetings. A director had already been found for the European Institute for Gender Equality in Vilnius. The practical work of establishing the Institute and drawing up its work programme should begin no later than 2009.

32. **Ms. Arocha Domínguez** said that the programmes to eliminate discrimination against women, especially at work and in advertising, seemed to lack elements for impact assessment. The fourth report (para. 127) referred to two orders of the Ministry of Education and Science, of February 2006 and February 2007, on methodological recommendations for the development of family education programmes for children and youth and a Programme of Family and Sexual Education, respectively. Her concern was that

family, values and education formed a complex entity, and the Ministry of Education should not have sole responsibility for the content of family education. She asked whether the Ministry of Social Security and Labour, especially the Gender Equality Division, had a role in evaluating that content. She also enquired whether the Ministry of Education had any influence with regard to a draft measure considered by Parliament in 2007 relating to a conceptual framework for family education. She wondered what the outcome had been and if that had any relation to the educational programmes mentioned.

33. **Ms. Begum** asked about the implementation status of the law that had shifted the burden of truth from victims to offenders and whether it was enforced by law enforcement agencies and the courts. It would be interesting to know whether it had helped to reduce the rate of domestic violence. The Committee would like more information on the time frame and budget line of the National Strategy for Combating Violence against Women and wished to know whether the Strategy had been extended to rural areas. It would be interesting to hear about the time frame for the adoption of the law on domestic violence and other initiatives. She wondered whether a population-based survey had been conducted and, if so, wished to receive details of the findings and the public policy response.

34. The reporting State should indicate whether ethnic minority women, including Roma women, had access to the women's crisis centres for victims of violence and whether there were any shelters for victims of trafficking and also provide more information on the State family political concept bill and the bill on the protection of life in prenatal phase. Lastly, she wondered whether the enactment of those bills would have a negative impact on the lives and reproductive rights of single mothers, unmarried mothers, rape victims and other vulnerable women.

35. **Ms. Shin** welcomed the additional information provided on the amendment to the Civil Code which provided that the offender rather than the victim should leave the family home. She wished to know whether domestic violence was taken seriously as a crime or still seen more as a private issue. The perpetrator was apparently only criminally liable if the victim herself filed a complaint. Table 2 in the annex to the fourth report referred to "battery or minor health impairment", yet battery could result in hospitalization

or even death. She did not understand why the Criminal Code considered battery a minor issue. The Committee was also concerned that the name “men’s crisis centres” could send the wrong message to victims as it implied that men needed protection. Those centres should be given a different name, indicating that those men needed treatment and rehabilitation or imprisonment. She asked whether the crisis centres served as shelters for offenders who had had to leave their homes or whether they provided rehabilitation treatment.

36. She enquired whether the Government was still considering legislation for protection against domestic violence. Comprehensive legislation was needed that covered protection, prevention and punishment. It should also cover regular data collection and funding for shelters and for counselling centres. The Secretary-General’s 2006 in-depth study entitled “Ending violence against women: from words to action” provided useful examples from many countries.

37. **Ms. Chutikul** congratulated Lithuania on its classification in Tier 1 in a United States Department of State assessment of efforts to combat trafficking in human beings. She requested information on how the collection of information on victims was being improved and also asked whether the victims included children and whether special protection measures and recovery programmes had been established for them. The reporting delegation should indicate whether the men repatriated to Lithuania from consulates or embassies elsewhere had been involved in prostitution or were victims of forced labour and whether there were preventive measures that addressed the demand side of trafficking. Finally, she asked for an explanation of the reference in table 3 in the annex to the fourth report to offenders and victims that were “known to law enforcement”.

38. **The Chairperson**, speaking as a member of Committee, said that the new law on domestic violence should cover all the issues referred to in the Committee’s general recommendation No. 19 on violence against women. Information should be provided on how protection orders were issued and what time frame they covered. She requested more information about the number of shelters and 24-hour telephone lines available for victims of domestic violence and asked whether they were fully funded by the Government. The United Nations and the Council of Europe had conducted campaigns to combat

violence against women. The Committee wished to know whether Lithuania had conducted such a campaign and, if so, what results had been achieved and also requested information on data collection concerning violence against women. Lastly, she asked whether information was available on the number of women murdered by their partners or ex-husbands and whether there was an entity responsible for analysing such data.

39. **Ms. Juršėnienė** (Lithuania) said that the Law on Equal Opportunities did not contain provisions on the burden of proof in cases of domestic violence, which came within the competence of the criminal courts. The draft law on protection against domestic violence was still under parliamentary review, particularly its conceptual aspects, following approval by the Government in April 2008. The crisis centres were financed exclusively from the State budget; they provided support for victims of violence, with the help of NGOs. Support was also extended to victims of trafficking, but under another programme. The name of the men’s crisis centres was misleading and should perhaps be changed. They did not offer shelter to offenders but offered therapeutic treatment and guidance to men who wished to be helped to overcome any tendency towards violence. Lithuania had joined the campaign against violence led by the Council of Europe, notably through an awareness-raising initiative which would run until the end of 2009.

40. **Ms. Sirgedienė** (Lithuania), taking up the question of the Roma, said that the Government had recently approved a new programme for their integration into Lithuanian society, covering the period 2008-2010. They were thereby helped to enter the labour market and to participate in cultural programmes. The programme had been adopted on the occasion of the 2007 European Year of Equal Opportunities for All, whose aims it shared. The National Strategy for Combating Violence, adopted in 2006, covered most of the issues involved and benefited from a significant budget. It defined four types of domestic violence and was based on a study of the situation both in the country and in other countries, from which it had borrowed good practices.

41. In rural areas, the population was divided into groups of up to 8,000 people under the care of local police inspectors who, with the help of various institutions, helped families to address problems of domestic violence, in accordance with guidelines



established by a working group that had been set up by the Ministry of Justice in 2007. The working group had issued recommendations on how and where women victims of violence could apply for help. It had been at the origin of the decision to separate offenders from their victims, reflected in amendments to both the Civil Code and the Criminal Procedure Code. She cited statistics on the number of calls to households by police officers in response to requests and the very small proportion of them that had resulted in pre-trial investigations. In cases where women wished to press private charges, legal assistance could be applied for.

42. **The Chairperson**, speaking as a member of the Committee, requested more specific information, particularly on cases where legal action had been instituted. She also wished to know whether any data could be provided on cases of women murdered by their husbands.

43. **Ms. Sirgedienė** (Lithuania) said that the relevant statistics were broken down by city and rural area according to the type of violence committed.

44. **Ms. Juršėnienė** (Lithuania) said that statistics from the Office of the Equal Opportunities Ombudsman were classified according to ground of discrimination and related mainly to the provision of goods and services. Fuller data would be requested for communication to the Committee. As for the National Programme on Equal Opportunities, it was funded from the State budget and, in addition, because of its strategic gender-equality dimension, qualified for assistance from the European Union Structural Funds.

45. **Ms. Sirgedienė** (Lithuania) said that the Government had adopted a special programme to combat trafficking, the second of its kind, which included funding for NGO support for its activities. Information on the phenomenon was obtained from law enforcement services and from the Vilnius Bureau of the International Organization for Migration. The programme adopted to combat trafficking included a chapter on the protection of children, with special measures to prevent their exploitation through the Internet. Cases were also reported of forced labour, mostly affecting men. Proactive measures were called for and were being studied by an interdepartmental working group assisted by invited NGOs. In response to the question about the expression “known to law enforcement” in table 3 in the annex to the fourth periodic report, she said that the police collected

information not only on actual cases of trafficking but also on cases that were only potential in so far as they had not led to a pre-trial investigation.

#### *Articles 7 to 9*

46. **Ms. Zerdani** welcomed the increased representation of women in Parliament, but regretted that such was far from being the case in local elections. If women could be encouraged to participate at the local level, there would be an even greater chance of them having a say in national affairs. They were similarly very underrepresented in diplomatic service, according to table 5 in the annex to the fourth report. However, the percentage of women with higher qualifications was comparable to and in some cases higher than that of men. She requested information about the number of women in the judiciary and called for women to be given suitable opportunities to exercise their talents in professional life.

47. **Ms. Gaspard** also noted the imbalance between the large number of women graduates and their scant representation in decision-making posts. The Committee would be interested to know whether the European Charter for Equality of Women and Men in Local Life, with its emphasis on gender mainstreaming, was widely disseminated in the country.

48. **Ms. Neubauer** requested information on the gender dimension of the electoral law and the breakdown of statistics by urban and rural areas. It would also be helpful to know what the Government was doing for specific women’s groups, such as Roma women, and whether the increased participation of women in Parliament had any impact on its work, in particular through the development of a more gender-sensitive and women-oriented approach. Lastly, she regretted that the information provided about women’s participation in the diplomatic service was in absolute and not relative terms.

49. **Ms. Juršėnienė** (Lithuania) said that a number of measures had indeed been taken, particularly under the Equal Opportunities Programme, to encourage the participation of women in local public and political life. They had included seminars and awareness-raising activities, which needed to be enhanced. Research had been undertaken to identify the reasons for the lack of participation by women in decision-making, and two projects were also under way to strengthen gender

mainstreaming at local level; it was hoped that some progress would be seen in the elections in autumn 2008. In response to other questions raised, she said that the electoral law stipulated that in the electoral process there should be no discrimination on grounds of sex; that women were evenly represented throughout the legal profession, as they were in the diplomatic service; and that Parliament had indeed become sensitive to women's issues.

50. **Ms. Purvaneckienė** (Lithuania) said that, while every effort was being made to encourage proportional participation of women in local political life, particularly through awareness-raising under the Equal Opportunities Programme, rural women were diffident. In addition, problems arose at the conceptual level, since ideas commonly held about family life and equality were not always in line with those of the Committee.

*Article 10*

51. **Ms. Gaspard** said that she had noted a proposal to allow girls to practise badminton and similar activities in the interests of sports equality; she would have liked them to have also been offered football and boxing, in accordance with the principle of equal opportunity in sport. She wondered what the proportion of women would be in the Lithuanian team participating in the Olympic Games to be held in China, emphasizing the value of such indicators in measuring equality. The Committee would also welcome information about any action by the State to develop gender studies, for example at Vilnius University. Advancement of the cause of women depended not only on the work of activists, but also the support of properly trained specialists in women's issues.

52. **Ms. Zou Xiaqiao** said that, although women were well represented among university students, they tended to gravitate towards the teaching profession, while men opted for careers in such fields as engineering. She asked what the Government was doing to encourage women to study non-traditional subjects, and also to enable women to accede to academic positions since, despite a high rate of doctoral degrees, such positions appeared to lie beyond their reach. Information would likewise be appreciated about any educational strategy directed specifically towards rural areas and about the results of the project supported by the European Union to bring school

dropouts back into education. She hoped that in the next report statistics would be disaggregated according to age, gender and geographical area.

*The meeting rose at 1 p.m.*