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RAP/RCha/LTU/20(2023)

EUROPEAN SOCIAL CHARTER

Response by the Government of Lithuania to comments submitted by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees concerning the 20th National Report on the implementation of the European Social Charter

Response registered by the Secretariat
on 02 October 2023

CYCLE 2023

The Government of LITHUANIA Reply
to Comments by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
to the European Committee of Social Rights
Examination of the 20th National Report on the implementation
of the European Social Charter
submitted by the Government of LITHUANIA
Articles 7, 8, 16, 17,19, 27 and 31
for the period 01/01/2018 – 31/12/2021
RAP/Cha/LTU/20(2023)1

Article 7. Protection of children, including migrant, refugees, and displaced children, from sexual exploitation and abuse

The Government of Lithuania is making efforts to change the practice of **medical examinations of unaccompanied or separated children** without identity documents to determine their age. The European Asylum Support Office (EUAA) is planning a seminar on the procedure for determining the age of unaccompanied minors on November 28, 2023. EUAA experts will share their insights and experiences with representatives from interested Lithuanian institutions. A seminar is planned to discuss and suggest proposals regarding amendments to legal acts regulating the procedures for the reception of unaccompanied minors. This is in light of the ongoing consideration of the draft of the amendment of the Law on the Legal Status of Aliens of the Republic of Lithuania by the Parliament, which aims to consolidate conditions for the reception of asylum seekers and implement the reorganization of accommodation.

Article 17. Reduction of statelessness and facilitation of birth registration, particularly for vulnerable groups, including asylum-seekers and children in an irregular situation)

According to the Citizenship Law of the Republic of Lithuania, stateless children can obtain Lithuanian citizenship either by birth or through naturalization. Children born in Lithuania automatically become Lithuanian citizens, regardless of their birthplace, and their citizenship is recorded in their birth certificate. Children born outside of Lithuania can acquire Lithuanian citizenship through naturalization if they have lived in Lithuania for 5 years and have not acquired any other citizenship. The current provisions of the Citizenship Law regarding stateless children's acquisition of Lithuanian citizenship are not planned to be changed.

Article 31 - adequate housing for vulnerable groups, including refugees and asylum-seekers

In 2021, an influx of illegal migrants created a crisis in Lithuania's reception system. Reception conditions deteriorated, and non-compliance with EU standards was identified. Therefore, at the end of 2021, the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Social Security and Labour assessed the costs incurred during the crisis and the alternatives for creating reception conditions.

On May 25, 2022, during the meeting of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania, a protocol decision was adopted, which approved the concept of the reorganization of the migrant reception and accommodation system. The plan involves transferring some functions of the State Border Guard Service to the Refugee Reception Centre. A working group was created to prepare the necessary legal drafts, which will be discussed by the Parliament this fall. Both the State Border Guard Service and the Refugee Reception Centre have expanded their infrastructure to provide more accommodation places and the condition of currently available accommodation is being improved.