

**NON.
NO.
NEIN.**

Say No!
Stop
violence
against
women

Violence against women is rooted in women's unequal status in society and that status reflects the unbalanced distribution of social, political and economic power among women and men in society. It is one of the most pervasive human rights violations of our time and a form of discrimination that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual, psychological or economic harm or suffering to women ⁽¹⁾. Violence against women undermines women's dignity and integrity and imposes serious harm on families, communities and societies. In the EU, estimates suggest that 1 in 3 women (or 61 million out of 185 million) have experienced physical or sexual violence, or both, since the age of 15 ⁽²⁾.

The full extent of violence against women is difficult to estimate. Violence against women continues to be under-reported and stigmatised, meaning that what actually gets reported is only a fraction of the reality. In Lithuania, 69 % of the population tend to trust the police, which is close to the figure in the EU overall (71 %) ⁽³⁾.

In EIGE's Gender Equality Index 2015 it was found that where people tend to have more trust in justice institutions, levels of disclosed violence are higher ⁽⁴⁾. It is estimated that in Lithuania, 31 % of women have experienced violence, which is roughly the same as in the EU overall ⁽⁵⁾.

The European Institute for Gender Equality has estimated that the cost of intimate partner violence against women in Lithuania could amount to EUR 600 million per year. This figure was calculated according to the methodology used in EIGE's 2014 study ⁽⁶⁾, which Member States can replicate, as done by Estonia in 2016 ⁽⁷⁾.



What are the facts?

The 2014 European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights survey data results showed that since the age of 15:

- 31 % of women in Lithuania have experienced physical and/or sexual violence;
- 8 % of women in Lithuania have been stalked;
- 35 % of women in Lithuania have experienced sexual harassment (8).

According to Eurostat, from 2010 to 2012, an estimated 0.6 per 100 000 people in Lithuania were registered as victims of human trafficking (9).



When trust in police is low, victims are less likely to report violence.



Is violence against women a crime in Lithuania?

In Lithuania, rape and sexual assault are criminalised under Articles 149—151 of the criminal code. Rape law in Lithuania still requires ‘force or threat’ and does not cover consent. Marital rape in Lithuania is not criminalised (10).

Sexual harassment is defined under the Law on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men (LR Moterų ir vyrų lygių galimybių įstatymas) (11) and is reflected in the Lithuanian penal code. The law also covers sexual harassment at work (12).

In 2011, Lithuania created the Law on Protection against Domestic Violence (13).

Female genital mutilation is not criminalised in Lithuanian law, although it could potentially be prosecuted under other statutes (14).

What is being done to eliminate violence against women in Lithuania?

In 2012, the Lithuanian government launched its interinstitutional action plan on implementation of the national programme on crime prevention and control (Nacionalinė nusikaltimų prevencijos ir kontrolės programos įgyvendinimo taprinstitucinis veiklos planas), which prioritises the prevention of human trafficking (15).

Good practices show the way

Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) have been actively providing assistance to victims of violence. The Network of Specialised Assistance Centres (SAC), administered by NGOs, has been functioning in Lithuania since 2012.

This network of centres implements the Law on Protection against Domestic Violence, by creating a special programme financed by the state budget (20). The aim of SAC is to guarantee provision of specialised integrated assistance to victims of violence.

These centres support victims of violence, inform victims of the types (and locations) of assistance they can receive, mediate and represent them in other institutions, provide psychological and legal assistance, and assist in restoring interpersonal relationships with family members.

In 2013, the Lithuanian police launched a programme to support the implementation of the new domestic violence law and to improve police response and data collection ⁽¹⁶⁾.

Lithuania signed the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention) on 7 June 2013 but has not yet ratified it ⁽¹⁷⁾. The Istanbul Convention is the most far-reaching international treaty to tackle this serious violation of human rights.

There is a national programme for the prevention of domestic violence and provision of assistance to victims 2014—2020 ⁽¹⁸⁾ and an action plan for the years 2014—2016, which are currently being implemented.

How are women and girls protected?

In Lithuania, protection orders can be found in civil, administrative (emergency barring order) and criminal law. Civil and criminal protection orders are regulated in generic laws and emergency barring orders are available for victims of domestic violence only. Within civil law, protection orders can be issued as provisional measures pending the outcome of proceedings such as divorce and marriage dissolution. The criminal justice system provides protection orders at the pre-trial and post-trial stage ⁽¹⁹⁾.

What help is available in Lithuania?

Specialised support centres provide proactive assistance to women who have called the police due to domestic violence. Lithuania has 17 of these centres and in 2015 over 8 000 women were supported through this service ⁽²¹⁾.

Victims of domestic violence are entitled to social services. Social services are provided to all residents in need by ensuring a safe and healthy environment, assistance respecting human dignity, education to help compensate for lost independence and help to maintain social relationships with the family and society. Victims of domestic violence can get more specialised help at crisis centres and temporary accommodation centres for mothers and children. According to the government there are 29 crisis centres and 5 temporary accommodation centres for mothers and children.

Lithuania has no rape crisis centres ⁽²²⁾.

The national women's helpline operates 24/7 and provides emotional assistance for victims of domestic violence.



Lithuania has 17 specialised support centres which provide proactive assistance to women who have called the police due to domestic violence.



Lithuania has a general helpline called The Women's Line (8800 66 366), which is free of charge ⁽²³⁾.

Endnotes

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- (¹³) http://www3.lrs.lt/pls/inter3/dokpaieska.showdoc_l?p_id=410975
- (¹⁴) http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/files/exchange_of_good_practice_uk/lt_final_comments_paper_uk_2016_en.pdf
- (¹⁵) Government of Lithuania (2012). *Nutarimas dėl Nacionalinės nusikaltimų prevencijos ir kontrolės programos įgyvendinimo taprinstitucinis veiklos planas (Resolution of the government of Lithuania on approval of the interinstitutional action plan on implementation of the national programme on crime prevention and control)*, No 1381, 14 November 2012. *Official gazette*, No 135-6897.
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European Institute for Gender Equality

The European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) is the EU knowledge centre on gender equality. EIGE supports policymakers and all relevant institutions in their efforts to make equality between women and men a reality for all Europeans by providing them with specific expertise and comparable and reliable data on gender equality in Europe.



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