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Exchange of good practices on gender equality

Implementation of gender mainstreaming

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Gender mainstreaming in Lithuania

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1. Introduction

The main preconditions of successful implementation of gender mainstreaming are following:

- political will expressed in legislation;
- programmes with the goal to implement gender equality into practice;
- relevant structures in places;
- sufficient human and financial resources;
- gender awareness (training);
- easily applicable tools of gender mainstreaming;
- good governance.

The first attempt of implementation of gender mainstreaming in Lithuania was *Lithuanian Women's Advancement Programme* approved by the Government in 1996. The Programme was established in line with the critical areas of Beijing Platform for Action. In 1998 the Parliament of Lithuania passed the *Law on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men*, the first of such kind in the entire region of Central and Eastern Europe. The Law established legal preconditions for gender mainstreaming. It introduced obligation for all state institutions and municipalities to ensure, that all legislation in the area of their competence should not break the principle of gender equality. Furthermore, the Law obliged all state institutions and municipalities to initiate and implement gender equality programmes, measures and projects in the areas of their competences as well as support activities of non governmental women's organizations. The Law also implied preconditions for temporary special measures regarding gender mainstreaming. Today the Law prohibits discrimination on the grounds of sex and ensures *de jure* equal opportunities for women and men in the areas of employment, education and science, consumers' protection, and social security. On this basis gender issues are integrated into the laws regulating employment and labour matters, social policy issues, number of laws (i.e., Law on education, on public administration, on self governance, on civil service etc). The Law contains the provisions requiring ensuring equality between women and men.

Since 1995 gender issues are among the goals of the Government. One of the aims of the Programme of the Government for 2008-2012 is to consequently implement equal opportunities policies to develop and further implement legal, administrative and other measures to ensure, that nobody is discriminated against on the grounds of sex, race, nationality, beliefs or other grounds.

Following provision of the Law on the basis of Governmental Programmes, *National Programme on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men* was adopted by the Government in 2003. The next such programme was adopted for the period 2005-2009.

The first two National Programmes *on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men* were fully implemented and their impact was assessed by external experts. In 2010 the Third *Programme on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men* and its action plan were adopted by the Government for 2010-2014.

The *Third Programme on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men* are focused on gender mainstreaming and contain activities in all areas of gender equality. The Programme covers the wide set of integrated and special measures regarding gender equality and gender mainstreaming, indicate responsible institutions and set deadlines, and foresee financial resources for implementation of actions. Separate part of the Programme aims at improvement of tools, methods and their effective implementation, including expected results and qualitative and quantitative indicators. All ministries are responsible for implementation of relevant measures. Gender Studies centres, non-governmental organizations, and social partners are involved into the Programme. Many actions of the Programme also involves cooperation with Municipalities and Equal opportunities ombudsmen's office.

Coordination of activities and monitoring of the results is ensured by *Inter-institutional Commission on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men*, established by the Government in 2000. It involves representatives of all Ministries and representatives of women's organizations. Equal opportunities ombudsmen, gender studies centres, social partners are invited to participate in the activities of this Commission as observers.

The gender equality institutional mechanism today covers several interrelated levels. The Parliamentary level - Human rights Committee of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania. Independent Ombudsperson for Equal Opportunities is accountable to the Parliament. The Governmental level (the Ministry of Social Security and Labour is responsible for the implementation of equal opportunities for women and men in the fields of social security and labour and to coordinate implementation of the gender equality policy in all areas. Every ministry has 1 or 2 persons in charge of gender equality. Inter-institutional Commission on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men is a primarily structure for gender mainstreaming. Since 1997 Statistics Department under the Government compiles, analyses and publishes statistics of a number of fields, segregated by sex. The Municipal level starts with implementation of projects aimed to work on gender equality and to promote gender mainstreaming. The Academic level (Gender Studies Centres are based at the biggest Lithuanian Universities). The Public sector (there are more than 120 non-governmental Women's Organizations, actively working in every region of Lithuania). Social partners – three largest trade unions have Women's centres or Women's committees.

Lithuania experiences an economic crisis like other countries, yet has fewer measures in place to protect its at-risk citizens. However, the economic crisis in Lithuania has had an uneven impact on men compared to women. In some areas, according to statistics, women have suffered less. For example, 61.8% of women were employed in 2008, and in 2009 this figure dropped by only 1.1%. Employment among women was greater than among men, which was 59.5% in 2009. In addition, unemployment levels for women in 2009 were lower than among men: unemployment among men was 17% and grew 2.8 times in the following year, while unemployment among women was 10.4% and grew only 1.9 times in the same period. However cuts of salaries as a consequence of

economic recession mostly touched upon female dominated sectors, therefore pay gap tends to increase.

2. Transferability issues

The term *gender mainstreaming*, used in the Comment Paper is based on the definition suggested by the Council of Europe in 1998: "Gender mainstreaming is the (re) organisation, improvement and evaluation of policy processes, so that a gender equality perspective is incorporated in all policies at all levels and at all stages, by the actors normally involved in policy-making." In other words, gender mainstreaming means gender perspective in all policy fields in order to achieve the results as neutral as possible in respect of gender equality. All policy areas are adequate and need gender mainstreaming, for directly or indirectly all of them make influence to the lives of men and women. Accordingly, the good practices of gender mainstreaming usually involves interdepartmental coordination.

Recent governmental documents explicitly refer to gender mainstreaming either as an objective or as a principle governing gender policy. The governance more manifests preferences for the integrationist approach to gender mainstreaming in Lithuania. By and large, it functions as policy practices such as positive action measures, national plans involving different departments of the administration and equal treatment legislation. It should be stressed that gender mainstreaming in Lithuania has not yet fully replaced previous approaches to gender equality – notably legislation and positive action. Accordingly, gender mainstreaming in Lithuania consists of the integration of an equality perspective into public institutions and activities, including policy making, service provision, spreading responsibility for gender across units and ministries.

Similar approach to gender mainstreaming can be found in Nathalie Wuiame's discussion paper on the Belgian federal law on gender mainstreaming. She brings an example (p.5) of the interdepartmental coordination group (CIG), which was established in 2010. The group is composed of representatives of ministers, civil servants from each administration and representatives from the Gender Institute.

Inter-Ministerial Commission on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men established in 2000 can be a good example of the transferability of the good Belgian practice on gender mainstreaming. One of the main goals of the Commission is to coordinate implementation of the aforementioned *National Programme on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men for 2010-2014* (further – Programme)

The *Programme* covers gender mainstreaming in all policy areas: Employment, Education and Science, Politics and decision making, National defence, EU and international affairs, Environment protection, Health protection, Development of institutional mechanisms and methods. Every Ministry participates in the implementation of the *Programme* and implements concrete measures aimed at gender equality in the relevant policy field.

Non-governmental organizations are encouraged to participate in implementation of different measures of the *Programme* in particular by implementation of joint projects, where part of the project funding is provided from the state budget of the Republic of Lithuania and part from international foundations, including EU structural funds.

Evaluation criteria of the effectiveness of the *Programme* are established in the Programme. It contains few quantitative and qualitative indicators which might be described as following: changes in men's and women's situations in different areas

(determined by statistics and the results of surveys and researches), changes in public opinion on different gender issues, determined by conducting sociological surveys; number of persons trained and trainings, seminars, information and awareness campaigns held, effectiveness of cooperation among state and local authorities and institutions and NGOs. Indicators of Beijing Platform for Action in several areas already agreed on EU level are also used but no specific national indicators are developed yet.

The Swedish Comments paper presents the SALAR project (Sustainable Gender equality Project) which has been encouraged by the Government during 2007-2010. The main aim of the SALAR was to develop gender mainstreaming in the country's municipalities and county councils.

Due to different policies of public administration and finance possibilities in Lithuania and Sweden there is no chance for transferring the whole SALAR project in Lithuania. Therefore, the implementation of gender equality at the level of local municipalities is an important not yet well developed area in Lithuania. However, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Republic of Lithuania has initiated cross-ministerial courses on awareness rising among civil servants of Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Defence and Ministry of Interior Affairs in 2011. The project will start next year and will be carried out by the Gender Studies Centre at Vilnius University. The main aim of the project is following:

- To improve knowledge on gender equality including gender mainstreaming among staff and authorities of the ministries;
- To stress understanding concerning gender perspective in problem solving;
- To educate gender experts in the ministries.

3. Policy debate

A debate on taking into account the gender perspective in conflict resolution and post-conflict reconstruction has started in Lithuania recently. During the debate women's role and significant contribution of women to the maintenance of peace and security has been stressed. Ministry of Foreign Affairs took responsibility to draft the National action plan (2011) in order to ensure inclusion of the gender perspective in conflict resolution. The *National action plan* involves Lithuanian Women's NGO, gender experts from academy and representatives from the Ministry of Social Security and Labour, Ministry of Defence and Ministry of Interior. The main goal of the *National action plan* is following:

- To promote women's rights in post-conflict zones and Lithuanian missions;
- To ensure of the implementation of gender dimension in peace-building plans;
- To promote women's leadership in conflict resolution and peace-making processes.