

Summary of the Analysis of the Compliance of Lithuanian legislation with the EU Directive on violence against women and domestic violence

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The EU Directive 2024/1385 requests the criminalization of specific forms of violence against women that are not yet recognized as criminal offenses in Lithuania. These include: female genital mutilation, forced marriage, non-consensual sharing of intimate or manipulated material, cyberstalking, cyber harassment, and cyber incitement to violence or hatred. The EU Directive 2024/1385 emphasizes the importance of using gender-sensitive approach in legislation and support services for survivors.

The investigation and prosecution of violence against women in Lithuania are not adequately regulated. Acts of violence against women are not specifically criminalized, and police and prosecutors lack specialized training in handling these cases. Reports of violence against women are generally treated as less urgent, and investigations typically begin only when a victim files a complaint, limiting the ability to address such crimes proactively.

In Lithuania, emergency barring orders for victims of domestic violence can be issued by the police, even without initiating a criminal investigation. Still, the violations of these orders do not effectively assess ongoing risks or provide additional support for survivors. The legal framework lacks specific measures to protect the private lives of survivors, and there are no clear guidelines for law enforcement regarding cases of violence against women.

The analysis outlines the need for improved support for survivors of sexual violence in Lithuania, emphasizing the lack of specialized services for those affected by sexual assault and workplace harassment. It recommends establishing rape or sexual assault crisis centers integrated into the healthcare system, providing free and accessible services nationwide, and ensuring that support systems are sensitive to the unique needs of women and vulnerable groups.

The analysis highlights the importance of enhanced training and awareness programs for professionals in Lithuania regarding sexual assault and violence against women. It recommends incorporating non-governmental organization representatives in training programs, regularly educating healthcare and legal professionals on the impacts of such violence and improving coordination among institutions.

Lithuania needs to strengthen its laws against cyber harassment and incitement to violence, ensuring all forms are clearly criminalized and adequately defined. The Analysis stresses the need to establish, and that domestic violence occurs whether or not the offender shares or has shared a household with the victim, that domestic violence is gender - based violence in Lithuania. It calls for the introduction of the principle of mutual consent into legislation, ensuring that every act of a sexual nature is based on explicit and voluntary consent. The analysis points to the need to introduce a clearer legal definition of domestic violence and advocates for the inclusion of consent in legal frameworks, aiming to enhance the effectiveness of existing measures.

There is a need to establish effective, proportionate, and dissuasive sanctions for domestic violence while avoiding sanctions such as fines, which contribute to secondary victimization and run counter to the principles of restorative justice.

Additionally, expanding legal aid for survivors and improving reporting mechanisms are crucial for better support and protection.

Last but not least, it is important to organize ongoing public education campaigns to raise awareness about consent and prevent sexual violence, while promoting the development of targeted resources for marginalized communities. Policies should be informed by regular data collection and analysis to better understand the prevalence of violence and to strengthen protections for survivors.

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