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Building the Evidence Base for Effective Antislavery  
Governance

# Lithuania Country Profile

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# About this report

This report was prepared by Dr Ana Valverde-Cano (Rights Lab Research Fellow in Antislavery Law and Policy), Dr Katarina Schwarz (Rights Lab Associate Director), and Dr Daniel Ogunniyi (Rights Lab Research Fellow).

The report is based primarily on research conducted from 2020-2021 and may not therefore consider more recent emerging evidence. Updates to the report to reflect new and emerging evidence are ongoing.

The authors welcome enquiries on the report and the project more broadly, which may be directed to Katarina Schwarz at [Katarina.Schwarz@nottingham.ac.uk](mailto:Katarina.Schwarz@nottingham.ac.uk)

# About the project

The report was produced to support the research project 'Building the Evidence Base for Effective Antislavery Governance in the UK and the Top 20 UK Source Countries', funded by the Modern Slavery and Human Rights Policy and Evidence Centre. The research team consisted of Dr Katarina Schwarz (Rights Lab, University of Nottingham), Dr Ana Valverde-Cano (Rights Lab), Dr Daniel Ogunniyi (Rights Lab), Alexandra Williams-Woods (CSIS, University of Liverpool), and Prof Jean Allain (Wilberforce Institute, University of Hull).

The **Rights Lab** is a University of Nottingham "Beacon of Excellence" and home to the world's largest and leading group of modern slavery researchers. Through its five research programmes, impact team, and INSPIRE project, the Rights Lab is underpinning antislavery with an advanced research agenda, collaborating with civil society, business, and government, and elevating survivor-informed research as a key part of knowledge production to help end slavery.

The **Wilberforce Institute** at the University of Hull aims to advance fundamental knowledge of slavery and emancipation, informing policy, business practice and public debate at local, national and international levels. The Wilberforce Institute brings together experts in humanities, law and social sciences to help tackle this global problem head on.

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# 1. Overview of antislavery and anti-trafficking governance in Lithuania

## 1.1. The Walk Free Foundation’s Global Slavery Index<sup>1</sup>

	Vulnerability		Prevalence			Government response	
	Ranking <sup>2</sup>	Score <sup>3</sup>	Ranking <sup>4</sup>	Absolute <sup>5</sup>	/ 1000 <sup>6</sup>	Ranking <sup>7</sup>	Rating <sup>8</sup>
<b>2013</b>	132	31.27	128	2,800	0.9	-	-
<b>2014</b>	129	35.2	82	10,600	3.6	44	B
<b>2016</b>	139	26.68	109	11,800	4.04	-	BB
<b>2018</b>	132	26.16	59	17,000	5.8	-	BB

Although the nature of modern slavery makes measuring the phenomenon an inherently difficult task, the Walk Free Foundation’s Global Slavery Index (GSI) aims to provide the ‘best available data and information about the scale and regional distribution of modern slavery’.<sup>9</sup> This includes **national prevalence estimates** of the number of people experiencing modern slavery in each country, calculated on the basis of a predictive model that accounts for individual and country-level risk factors.

National prevalence estimates are analysed in the context of results of Walk Free’s **Vulnerability Model**. This model uses ‘statistical testing and processes to identify the factors that explain or predict the prevalence of modern slavery’.<sup>10</sup> The 2018 Vulnerability Model features five factors, made up of 23 distinct variables: governance issues, lack of basic needs, inequality, disenfranchised groups, and effects of conflict.

Walk Free also tracks **government responses** to modern slavery, tracking government efforts across five milestones: (1) survivors of slavery are identified and supported to exit and remain out of slavery; (2) criminal justice mechanisms function effectively to prevent modern slavery; (3) coordination occurs at the national and regional level, and governments are held to account for their response; (4) risk factors such as attitudes, social systems, and institutions that enable modern slavery are addressed; and (5) government and business stop sourcing goods and services produced by forced labour.<sup>11</sup>

It should be noted that the scope, methodology, and sources underpinning GSI findings has changed over the years. This means that data between different reporting years is not directly comparable.

<sup>1</sup> Walk Free Foundation, ‘The Global Slavery Index 2013’ (2013), available [here](#); ‘The Global Slavery Index 2014’ (2014), available [here](#); ‘The Global Slavery Index 2016’ (2016), available [here](#); ‘The Global Slavery Index 2018’ (2018), available [here](#) accessed 04 November 2020

<sup>2</sup> Note: a higher ranking (closer to 1) indicates high vulnerability relative to other countries.

<sup>3</sup> Note: a higher score indicates increased vulnerability to modern slavery, with a median country score of 47.28 in 2018.

<sup>4</sup> Note: a higher ranking (closer to 1) indicates a high number of people experiencing modern slavery per 1000 in the overall population relative to other countries.

<sup>5</sup> Note: absolute prevalence measures the estimated number of people experiencing modern slavery in the country.

<sup>6</sup> Note: prevalence /1000 measures the number of people estimated to experience modern slavery per 1000 people in the overall population.

<sup>7</sup> Note: a higher ranking (closer to 1) indicates better government responses to modern slavery relative to other countries.

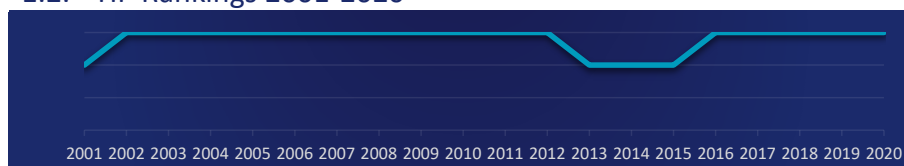
<sup>8</sup> Note: government response ratings are broken into scoring bands, with an A rating representing the strongest government response to modern slavery (with a score of 70-79.9), followed by BBB (60-69.9), BB (50-59.9), B (40-49.9), CCC (30-39.9), CC (20-29.9), C (10-19.9), and D (<0-9.9).

<sup>9</sup> Walk Free Foundation, ‘Global Findings’ (2018), available [here](#).

<sup>10</sup> Walk Free Foundation, ‘Methodology: Vulnerability’ (2018), available [here](#).

<sup>11</sup> Walk Free Foundation, ‘Methodology: Government Response’ (2018), available [here](#).

## 1.2. TIP Rankings 2001-2020<sup>12</sup>



The Trafficking in Persons report ranks countries into one of four tiers, as mandated by the Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act 2000 (TVPA). A country's ranking is based on an assessment of the government's efforts to address trafficking in persons, rather than on the extent of trafficking within the country, and considers government action against the TVPA's minimum standards.<sup>13</sup>

**Tier 1:** Countries whose governments fully meet the TVPA's minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking. To maintain a Tier 1 ranking, the country must continue to make progress in its anti-trafficking efforts each year.

**Tier 2:** countries whose governments do not fully meet the TVPA's minimum standards but are making significant efforts to bring themselves into compliance with those standards.

**Tier 2 Watch List:** Countries whose governments do not fully meet the TVPA's minimum standards but are making significant efforts to bring themselves into compliance with those standards, and for which:

- (a) the absolute number of victims of severe forms of trafficking is very significant or is significantly increasing;
- (b) there is a failure to provide evidence of increasing efforts to combat severe forms of trafficking in persons from the previous year, including increased investigations, prosecution, and convictions of trafficking crimes, increased assistance to victims, and decreasing evidence of complicity in severe forms of trafficking by government officials; or
- (c) the determination that a country is making significant efforts to bring itself into compliance with minimum standards was based on commitments by the country to take additional steps over the next year.

**Tier 3:** Countries whose governments do not fully meet the TVPA's minimum standards and are not making significant efforts to do so. Countries ranked as Tier 3 may be subjected to restrictions on non-humanitarian, non-trade foreign assistance from the US. Impositions of such restrictions are determined by the President.<sup>14</sup>

## 1.3. Quantitative measures on anti-trafficking governance<sup>15</sup>

Measure	Year	Qty
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<sup>12</sup> US Department of State, '2020 Trafficking in Persons Report' (2020), available [here](#); (2019) available [here](#); (2018), available [here](#); (2017), available [here](#); (2016), available [here](#); (2015), available [here](#); (2014), available [here](#); (2013), available [here](#); (2012), available [here](#); (2011), available [here](#); (2010), available [here](#); (2009), available [here](#); (2008), available [here](#); (2007), available [here](#); (2006), available [here](#); (2005), available [here](#); (2004), available [here](#); (2003), available [here](#); (2002), available [here](#); (2001), available [here](#)

<sup>13</sup> Minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking are found in section 108, Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act 2000 (United States), available [here](#).

<sup>14</sup> US Department of State (2020), above n 12, 40-41.

<sup>15</sup> Sources:

[1] US Department of State (2020), above n 12.

[2] GRETA (Council of Europe), 'Report concerning the implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings by Lithuania. Second Evaluation Round' (GRETA(2019)08, 21 June 2019), available [here](#).

[3] Walk Free Foundation, 'Country Data: Lithuania' (United Nation 2018), available [here](#).

[4] US Department of State (2019), above n 12.

Trafficking investigations	2019	13 <sup>16</sup>	[1]
Trafficking convictions	2019	12 <sup>17</sup>	[1]
Identified victims	2019	36	[1]
Allocated funding for assistance to victims of trafficking provided by NGOs	2019	€165,000	[1]
Allocated funds to implement the 2017-2019 Action Plan Against THB	2019	€183,000	[1]
Specialised prosecutors trained	2019	30	[1]
Judges trained	2019	27	[1]
Border officials trained	2019	53	[1]
Trafficking investigations	2018	11	[1]
Trafficker convictions	2018	44	[1]
Police officers trained	2018	30	[4]
Judges trained	2018	72	[4]
Specialised prosecutors trained	2018	33	[4]
Estimated number of people living in modern slavery	2018	17,000	[3]
Referral reported by the State Labour Inspectorate for pre-trial investigation for labour exploitation	2018	1	[2]
Trafficking victims identified	2018	58	[1]
Allocated funding for assistance to victims of trafficking provided by NGOs	2018	€165,000	[1]
Trafficking victims identified	2017	60	[1]
Trafficking investigations	2017	35	[1]
Trafficking convictions	2017	20	[1]
Child victims of trafficking identified	2017	8 <sup>18</sup>	[2]
Labour inspections	2017	6,500	[2]
Referral reported by the State Labour Inspectorate for pre-trial investigation	2017	4	[2]
Allocated funding for assistance to victims of trafficking provided by NGOs	2017	€115,000	[2]
Victims identified	2014-2017	213 <sup>19</sup>	[2]

[5] CEDAW, 'Sixth periodic report submitted by Lithuania under article 18 of the Convention, due in 2018' (CEDAW/C/LTU/6, 23 October 2018).

<sup>16</sup> Of these, 6 were sex trafficking cases and seven labour trafficking cases, including forced criminality, against 24 suspected traffickers.

<sup>17</sup> Nearly all traffickers received prison sentences with terms ranging from three to eight years and four months.

<sup>18</sup> All children were Lithuanian nationals, trafficked mostly for the purpose of sexual exploitation (12 girls) and forced criminality (10 boys and two girls). Most of the children were trafficked within Lithuania (19), followed by Germany (4), Finland (3), Denmark (1), Netherlands (1) and Norway (1).

<sup>19</sup> The majority of the victims were men (99). There were 82 women and 32 children (19 girls and 13 boys) amongst the identified victims. Most of the identified victims were Lithuanian nationals exploited abroad, the main countries of destination being the United Kingdom and Germany. Other countries of destination included Austria, Colombia, Denmark, Finland, France, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Spain and the United Arab Emirates. Further, 31 of the identified Lithuanian victims were trafficked within Lithuania. As regard foreign

Fund allocated in all THB Action Plans	2002–2017	€ 1 million	[5]
Allocated funding for assistance to victims of trafficking provided by NGOs	2016	€80,000	[2]
Trafficking investigations	2016	29	[1]
Trafficking convictions	2016	23	[1]
Child victims of trafficking identified	2016	4	[2]
Labour inspections	2016	7,012 <sup>20</sup>	[2]
Referral reported by the State Labour Inspectorate for pre-trial investigation	2016	2	[2]
Labour inspections	2015	7,091 <sup>21</sup>	[2]
Child victims of trafficking identified	2015	17	[2]

victims of THB, the authorities have identified 20 men trafficked to Lithuania for labour exploitation (18 Nepalese and two Ukrainians) as well as two women (one from Colombia and one from the Russian Federation).

<sup>20</sup> During which 1,129 irregular workers were found and 778 administrative law violations reports made; 65 reports were forwarded for further examination of possible trafficking.

<sup>21</sup> Covering 6,654 economic entities, as a result of which 1 254 irregularly employed workers were discovered and 805 administrative law violations reports were made.

## 2. Treaty commitments<sup>22</sup>

Instrument	Ratification date
1926 Slavery Convention	N/A
1953 Protocol to the Slavery Convention	N/A
1930 Forced Labour Convention	26 September 1994
2014 Protocol to the Forced Labour Convention	5 March 2020 <sup>23</sup>
1956 Supplementary Convention on the Abolition of Slavery, the Slave Trade, and Institutions and Practices Similar to Slavery	N/A
1957 Abolition of Forced Labour Convention	26 September 1994
1966 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)	20 November 1991
1966 Optional Protocol to the ICCPR	20 November 1991
2005 Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings	26 July 2012
1990 Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families	N/A
1998 Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court	12 May 2003
1999 Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention	29 September 2003
2000 Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children	23 June 2003
2000 Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography	5 August 2004
2000 Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict	20 February 2003
2011 Domestic Workers Convention	N/A
<b>Regional and bilateral instruments</b>	
1950 European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms	20 June 1995
2005 Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings	24 July 2012
2007 Council of Europe Convention on Laundering, Search, Seizure and Confiscation of the Proceeds from Crime and on the Financing of Terrorism	28 April 2020

<sup>22</sup> UN Treaty ratification info sourced from UN Treaty Collection available [here](#); ILO Convention ratifications available [here](#); Rome Statute ratification status available [here](#). Membership data on the 2017 Call to Action is found at Delta8.7, 'Call to Action' available [here](#), accessed 04 November 2020

<sup>23</sup> The Protocol will enter into force for Lithuania on 05 March 2021.



2015 Council of Europe Convention against Trafficking in Human Organs	N/A
<b>Key International Commitments</b>	
1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights	
1985 Declaration of Basic Principles of Justice for Victims of Crime and Abuse of Power	
2005 UN Basic Principles and Guidelines on the Right to a Remedy and Reparation for Victims of Gross Violations of International Human Rights Law and Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law	
2015 UN Sustainable Development Goals (5.3, 8.7)	
2017 Call to Action to End Forced Labour, Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking	

## 3. General country context

### 3.1. Constitutional structure<sup>24</sup>

The Republic of Lithuania operates a constitutional, multiparty, parliamentary democracy. The unicameral Parliament (*Seimas*) is vested with legislative authority, and the executive branch is conformed by the Prime Minister and the President. The latter, which is directly elected for a five-year term and a maximum of two terms, appoints the Prime Minister and the rest of the cabinet. While the principal powers of the President under the 1992 Constitution lie in the sphere of foreign affairs and national defence, the Prime Minister oversees the country's day-to-day affairs and is typically the leader of the Seimas's majority party.<sup>25</sup> Courts and tribunals exercise the judicial power, headed by a Supreme Court which oversees an uniform application of the law. As is the case in almost all the new democracies of Central and Eastern Europe, the 1992 Lithuanian Constitution established a strong Constitutional Court which is not part of the judicial system and serves as the final arbiter of the Constitution.<sup>26</sup> Administratively, Lithuania is divided into 10 counties (*apskritis*) which are themselves subdivided into 60 districts (*rajonas*). While the governor of each county is appointed by the national government, the districts are self-governing units which elect their local councils.<sup>27</sup>

The Lithuanian constitutional system contains elements of both the monist and dualist models: according to Article 138 of the Constitution, only international treaties or agreements that have been ratified by the parliament become a part of the Lithuanian legal system. However, once they have been ratified take precedence over ordinary and organic legislation, pursuant the Law 'On international treaties'.<sup>28</sup> Military service is mandatory for men and women ages 19 to 45 for one year and voluntary at age 18.<sup>29</sup>

### 3.2. Political context

After the Seimas election in 2016, the Lithuanian Farmers and Greens Union (LFGU) won the majority in the Seimas. The government of Prime Minister Saulius Skvernelis, supported by the LFGU, the Social Democratic Labour Party of Lithuania, and the Electoral Action of Poles.<sup>30</sup> On 2019, Gitanas Nausėda was sworn-in as Lithuania's new President. Observers evaluated both the 2014 presidential elections and the 2016 parliamentary elections as generally free and fair.<sup>31</sup> The new President (independent) invited the acting Prime Minister from LFGU to form a new government, with the following political priorities: 'curb social inequality, boost sluggish growth, limit emigration to Western Europe, and boost defence spending in the face of a resurgent Russia'.<sup>32</sup> This political maneuvering caused a reshuffling of the Cabinet with three new ministers appointed. However, it has proved to be insufficient to stabilize the political situation.<sup>33</sup> Unlike its neighbours' countries, Lithuanian nationalism has not become a significant independent force on the national political scene. This might be explained resorting to Lithuania's homogeneity and

<sup>24</sup> See unofficial translation of Lithuania's Constitution [here](#).

<sup>25</sup> Encyclopaedia Britannica, 'Lithuania' (2 November 2020), available [here](#).

<sup>26</sup> Vaidotas A. Vaičaitis, 'The Republic of Lithuania' in *Constitutional Law of EU Member States* (Kluwer, 2016) 1062, available [here](#); Dainius Žalimas, 'The Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania as the jurisprudential constitution', in Dainius Žalimas (ed.), *Lithuanian Constitutionalism: The past and the present* (Vilnius, 2017) 294, available [here](#).

<sup>27</sup> See Egidijus Jarašiūnas, 'The Constitutional Model of the Lithuanian State Structure' (2009) 3 *Socialinių mokslų studijos* 7, 7–24

<sup>28</sup> Vaidotas A. Vaičaitis above, above n 26, 1032

<sup>29</sup> Article 48 of the Lithuanian Constitution

<sup>30</sup> Eurydice, 'Lithuania' (2019), available [here](#).

<sup>31</sup> US Department of State, '2019 Country Reports on human rights practices: Lithuania' (2019), available [here](#).

<sup>32</sup> BBC, 'Lithuania Country profile' (9 August 2019), available [here](#).

<sup>33</sup> China CEE-Institute, 'Lithuania political briefing: The start of the new presidency occasions the reshuffling of the governing majority in the parliament' (11 October 2019), available [here](#).

because 'some nationalist contentions were taken up quite early by 'moderate' right-wing parties and ceased to be the distinguishing feature of right-wing radicals'.<sup>34</sup>

### 3.3. Migration profile

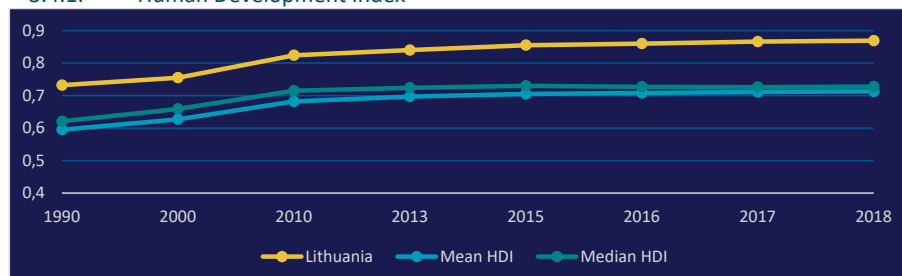
Emigration continues to be a dominant migration pattern in Lithuania. At mid-2019, the country's emigrant population was estimated to be 610,200, while the number of international migrants residing in the country estimated at 117,200 (4.2% of the total population).<sup>35</sup> Since the restoration of independence in 1990 and Lithuania's accession to the EU, outward flows have grown, peaking in 2010 when Lithuania registered the largest emigration per capita in the EU.<sup>36</sup> Emigration flows particularly towards Western Europe, and is strongly motivated by economic factors, especially the large wage differences among European States.<sup>37</sup> The main destination for Lithuanian migrants is the United Kingdom, followed by Germany, Norway, Ireland, the Netherlands, and Sweden.<sup>38</sup>

Regarding immigration flows, the majority of immigrants were returning Lithuanian citizens (57%). The rest were EU nationals (3%) and non-EU citizens (15%). Most foreign immigrants were citizens from Ukraine and Belarus (31% of total immigrants). The majority of immigrants from EU countries originated in Latvia, Italy or Germany.<sup>39</sup> Regarding irregular migrants, the vast majority were Vietnamese citizens, followed by nationals from Sri Lanka, Belarus, Tajikistan and Russia.<sup>40</sup> In 2018, there were 423 applications for asylum. Most applications were received from citizens of Tajikistan (28%), the Russian Federation (14%), Iraq (9%), and the Syrian Arab Republic (8%).<sup>41</sup> The country's restrictive asylum legislation, which provides for the detention of asylum seekers, has received criticism from several UN human rights bodies.<sup>42</sup> In general, the country refuses entry to increasing numbers of people. In the past five years refusals have nearly doubled, from 2,865 in 2013 to 5,180 in 2017.<sup>43</sup>

Commented [KS1]: This said Irak

### 3.4. Development profile

#### 3.4.1. Human Development Index<sup>44</sup>



<sup>34</sup> Małgorzata Kulbaczevska-Figat, 'The extreme right in the Baltic States: Lithuania' *Transform Europe* (09 June 2020), available [here](#).

<sup>35</sup> Migration Data Portal (2019), available [here](#).

<sup>36</sup> Karolis Žibas and Indrė Urbonavičiūtė (Diversity Development Group), 'Emigration from Lithuania: migrant labour exploitation and obstacles for victim identification' (2016) 3, available [here](#).

<sup>37</sup> Research suggests that it is also motivated by 'the lack of social security, mistrust towards the state, employers' demanding attitudes towards employees, the resulting stressful work environments [...] the perception that better work opportunities exist abroad': *ibid*, 3.

<sup>38</sup> EMN, 'Migration in numbers' (2019), available [here](#).

<sup>39</sup> Renkuosi lietuva, 'Emigracijos-immigracijos statistika' (2018), available [here](#).

<sup>40</sup> EMN, *ibid* n 38.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid*.

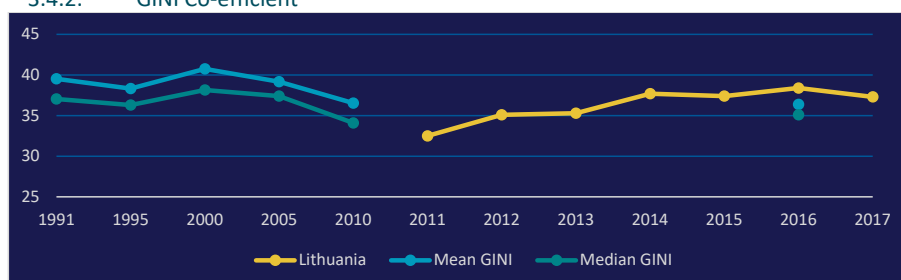
<sup>42</sup> See Human Rights Council, 'Compilation prepared by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in accordance with paragraph 15 (b) of the annex to Human Rights Council resolution 5/1 and paragraph 5 of the annex to Council resolution- Lithuania' (16/21A/HRC/WG.6/26/LTU/2, 22 August 2016), available [here](#).

<sup>43</sup> Global Detention Project, 'Lithuania Immigration Detention Profile' (2019), available [here](#).

<sup>44</sup> UNDP, 'Human Development Indicators - Lithuania' (2019), available [here](#).

The Human Development Index (HDI) measures average life expectancy, level of education and income for each country in the world. Each country is given a score between 0 and 1 - the closer a country gets to 1, the more developed it is.<sup>45</sup> Lithuania's scores place it in the 'Very High Human Development' grouping

### 3.4.2. GINI Co-efficient<sup>46</sup>



Gini index measures the extent to which income distribution or consumption expenditure among individuals or households within an economy deviates from a perfectly equal distribution. A Gini index of 0 represents perfect equality, while an index of 100 implies perfect inequality.<sup>47</sup>

### 3.4.3. Lithuania Sustainable Development Goals<sup>48</sup>

Year	Rank	Score
2020	36	74,95
2019	32	75,1
2018	36	72,9
2017	36	73,6
2016	31	72,1

The Sustainable Development Reports assess implementation of, and progress towards, the 2015 UN Sustainable Development Goals. The SDG Index and Dashboards summarise countries' current performance and trends across the 17 SDGs. All SDGs are weighted equally in the index. Changing indicators, data, and methodology used to determine rankings and scores mean that SDG index results are not comparable over time.<sup>49</sup>

### 3.4.4. GDP Rates

#### GDP Growth Rate

Lithuania GDP Growth Rate - Historical Data			
Year	GDP Growth (%)	Annual Change	
2018	3.49%	-0.65%	
2017	4.14%	1.79%	
2016	2.35%	0.33%	
2015	2.02%	-1.52%	
2014	3.54%	0.04%	

<sup>45</sup> UNDP, 'Human Development Reports', available [here](#).

<sup>46</sup> World Bank, 'GINI index (World Bank estimate) - Lithuania' <<https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SI.POV.GINI?locations=LT>> accessed 20 August 2020.

<sup>47</sup> World Bank, 'Metadata Glossary', available [here](#).

<sup>48</sup> Sustainable Development Report (2020), available [here](#). See also Government of Lithuania, 'Voluntary National Review on the implementation of the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Lithuania' (2018), available [here](#).

<sup>49</sup> Bertelsmann Stiftung and Sustainable Development Solutions Network, 'Sustainable Development Report 2019' (June 2019) 19.

2013	3.50%	-0.33%
2012	3.83%	-2.22%
2011	6.04%	4.40%
2010	1.64%	16.45%
2009	-14.81%	-17.44%
2008	2.63%	-8.46%
2007	11.09%	3.68%
2006	7.41%	-0.32%
2005	7.73%	1.18%
2004	6.55%	-3.99%
2003	10.54%	3.78%
2002	6.76%	0.24%
2001	6.52%	2.69%
2000	3.83%	4.97%
1999	-1.13%	-8.60%
1998	7.47%	-0.83%
1997	8.29%	3.14%
1996	5.15%	3.14%

GDP per capita (current US\$).<sup>50</sup>

Year	GDP per capita
1995	2,168
2000	3,297
2010	11,957
2011	14,354
2012	14,339
2013	15,702
2014	16,548
2015	14,249
2016	14,999
2017	16,882
2018	19,080
2019	19,445

Other relevant indicators<sup>51</sup>

Indicator	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
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<sup>50</sup> World Bank, 'GDP per capita: Lithuania, Ukraine, Latvia, Estonia', available [here](#).

<sup>51</sup> Commission (EU), 'Country Report Lithuania 2020- 2020 European Semester: Assessment of progress on structural reforms, prevention and correction of macroeconomic imbalances, and results of in-depth reviews under Regulation (EU) No 1176/2011' (Communication) (2020) final 150, 61, available [here](#).

<b>Unemployment rate (15-74 years) (%)</b>	10.7	9.1	7.9	7.1	6.2	6.2
<b>Youth unemployment rate (% active population aged 15-24)</b>	19.3	16.3	14.5	13.3	11.1	10.6
<b>Children at risk of poverty or social exclusion (% of people aged 0-17)</b>	35.4	28.9	32.7	32.4	31.6	28.0
<b>At-risk-of-poverty rate (% of total population)</b>	20.6	19.1	22.2	21.9	22.9	22.9
<b>Severe material deprivation rate (% of total population)</b>	16.0	13.6	13.9	13.5	12.4	11.1

### 3.5. Lithuania's Human Rights Record

In Lithuania there are relatively high levels of poverty, income inequality and social exclusion in comparison with the EU average: in 2012 the income of 20% the richest and 20% of the poorest people in Lithuania varied 5 times. In 2016 this difference increased to 7 times. According to European Commission this is a result of limited progressivity of the tax system, high employment gaps between low-skilled and high-skilled workers and an inadequate benefit system.<sup>52</sup> Furthermore, significant human rights issues included **harsh and life-threatening prison conditions**,<sup>53</sup> Lithuanian authorities' alleged **complicity in the CIA's secret detention** programme,<sup>54</sup> **gender inequality**, **widespread discrimination** on several grounds, and growing incidents of racist **hate crimes** targeting individuals belonging to ethnic and national minorities, and migrants.<sup>55</sup>

While positive changes in the protection of the human rights of LGTBI people have been detected in decisions of national courts,<sup>56</sup> discrimination on the grounds of gender, sexual orientation, disability, age, origin and other grounds is regularly seen in the labour market, the service sector, and other areas.<sup>57</sup> As established in the 2020 ECtHR case *Beizaras and Levickas v. Lithuania*, there is no effective legal remedy in Lithuania to fight against homophobic hate speech.<sup>58</sup> Additionally, discrimination against disabled people remains a pervasive problem,<sup>59</sup> as well as widespread societal sexist and patriarchal attitudes towards

<sup>52</sup> EAPN Lithuania, 'Poverty and social exclusion in Lithuania 2018' (2018), available [here](#).

<sup>53</sup> US Department of State, above n 31.

<sup>54</sup> Amnesty International, 'Country Report- Lithuania 2019' (2019), available [here](#). In the ECtHR judgement *Abu Zubaydah v. Lithuania* (31 May 2018), the European Court found that Lithuania had hosted secret CIA prisons and that they knew the CIA was using their territory for renditions and secret detention and that 'the extremely harsh [CIA] detention regime' on their territory violated the prohibition of torture.

<sup>55</sup> Human Rights Council, above n 42, 6-7.

<sup>56</sup> Significantly, in 2019 the Constitutional Court held that protection against discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation or gender identity was envisaged within 1992 Constitution. Thus, the Court extended protection to same-sex couples, which are entitled to the protection of family life guaranteed by the basic law of the country. See Human Rights Monitoring Institute, 'Žmogaus teisės Lietuvoje 2018-2019' (2020), 14, available [here](#).

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>58</sup> ECtHR Judgement, *Beizaras and Levickas v. Lithuania* (14 May 2020), application no. 41288/15, para. 106 ff.

<sup>59</sup> Human Rights Monitoring Institute, above n 56, 15. The Committee on the Rights of the Child was concerned about the ill-treatment of children with mental disabilities in care institutions. It recommended investigating all allegations of abuse and ill-treatment of children with mental disabilities, prosecuting and punishing the perpetrators and providing assistance for the recovery and rehabilitation of victims. See Committee on the Rights

women and girls, which are reproduced through stereotypes, out-dated education policies, and the lack of broader awareness about the scale and negative impact of violence against women.<sup>60</sup> On this note, Lithuania failed to ratify the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention).<sup>61</sup>

### 3.6. Social support systems

The Lithuanian social protection system covers standard social risks, encompassing sickness insurance –including maternity benefits–, family benefits, old-age and survivors pensions, accident insurance for work-related injuries, wage-guarantee and unemployment insurance.<sup>62</sup> The social assistance framework also allows people in situation of material deprivation to receive cash benefits from the State, comprising both social benefit and compensation for living costs when certain requirements are fulfilled.<sup>63</sup> A universal child benefit is paid to one parent (including an adoptive parent) or guardian caring for a child younger than age 1 or 2.<sup>64</sup>

Regarding healthcare, public spending on healthcare in Lithuania remains among the lowest in the EU, along with its quality. In 2017, public health expenditures amounted to €843 per capita (5.7% of GDP), substantially lower than the EU average of €2,110 (7% of GDP). Considering compulsory insurance, voluntary schemes, and an estimate of out-of-pocket payments,<sup>65</sup> total expenditures in health amount to €1,605 per capita, still below the EU average of €2,884 per capita. Only two thirds of health expenditure are publicly financed.<sup>66</sup> Additionally, the above-mentioned high out-of-pocket payments prevent access to quality healthcare for vulnerable groups.<sup>67</sup>

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of the Child, 'Concluding observations on the combined third and fourth periodic reports of Lithuania, adopted by the Committee at its sixty-fourth session' (CRC/C/LTU/CO/3-4, 30 October 2013), paras. 37 and 38.

<sup>60</sup> Commissioner for Human Rights (Council of Europe), 'Report by Nils Miuznieks following his visit to Lithuania from 5 to 9 December 2016' (CommDH(2017)7, 17 April 2017), 1, available [here](#); Human Rights Monitoring Institute, above n 56, 15.

<sup>61</sup> Human Rights Council, above n 42, 7.

<sup>62</sup> See, in-depth: Commission (EU), 'Your social security rights in Lithuania' (2020) 31, available [here](#). See a critical view in: Aidukaite, Jolanta, 'Transformation of the Welfare State in Lithuania: Towards Globalization and Europeanization' (2014) 47 *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 59.

<sup>63</sup> Commission (EU), above n 62, 30

<sup>64</sup> The insured must have at least 12 months of contributions in the last 24 months before the first day of childcare. See OECD, 'The OECD tax-benefit model for Lithuania' (2018) 10, available [here](#).

<sup>65</sup> OECD, 'Health Statistics' (2020), available [here](#).

<sup>66</sup> Commission (EU), above n 51, 31, available [here](#).

<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

## 4. National modern slavery context

### 4.1. Modern slavery profile

While Lithuania continues to be primarily a source country of trafficked persons, it is also increasingly a country of destination. Most of the identified victims between 2014 and 2017<sup>68</sup> were Lithuanian nationals exploited abroad, the main countries of destination being the United Kingdom and Germany. Other countries of destination included Austria, Colombia, Denmark, Finland, France, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Spain and the United Arab Emirates.<sup>69</sup>

Human traffickers exploit both domestic and foreign victims in Lithuania,<sup>70</sup> and exploit victims from Lithuania abroad.<sup>71</sup> Law enforcement agencies reported the majority of trafficking cases involved Lithuanian trafficking networks targeting Lithuanian victims. The number of identified victims of trafficking for forced criminality –primarily shoplifting– has been on the rise since 2013, as has labour trafficking, which accounts for the increase in the number of male victims. Lithuanian women and children are exploited in commercial sex either in Western Europe and Scandinavia, or within the country. There has been an increase in the number of women recruited for brokered marriages abroad, which situate these women and girl into a situation of vulnerability to sexual exploitation, domestic servitude, and forced labour.<sup>72</sup>

Within the period 2014-2017, trafficking for the purpose of forced criminality was the predominant form of exploitation within Lithuania (65 victims), followed by labour exploitation (59 victims), sexual exploitation (49 victims), and forced or exploitative sham marriages (11 victims).<sup>73</sup> Regarding foreign victims of trafficking, Lithuanian authorities identified 20 men trafficked into Lithuania for labour exploitation (18 Nepalese and 2 Ukrainians) as well as two women (one from Colombia and one from the Russian Federation).<sup>74</sup> In general, reports indicate an increase in exploitation of foreign workers from Ukraine, Russia, and Belarus.<sup>75</sup> The 2020 TIP report found that the 1,953 children institutionalized in approximately 97 child care institutions are vulnerable to trafficking.<sup>76</sup>

Regarding modus operandi, a 2013 Report from the European Institute for Crime Prevention and Control (HEUNI) about exploitation of migrant workers in Finland, Sweden, Estonia and Lithuania, found that a common way of recruitment involved on-line advertisements (either Lithuanian or foreign websites) or the use of employment agencies and labour exchange services. Agencies and employers took advantage of workers and job seekers' vulnerable situation due to poor social-economic conditions, lack of (local) language skills and lack of awareness.<sup>77</sup> Research also showed that victims were recruited directly in Lithuania through deceive practices,<sup>78</sup> and identified part-time, hourly and temporary work as risk factors of labour exploitation.<sup>79</sup> It shows that economic sectors where workers are more prone to be subjected to severe forms of labour exploitation are construction, manufacturing of textiles, transportation and storage, accommodation and

<sup>68</sup> According to information provided by the authorities, 47 victims of THB were identified in 2014, 62 in 2015, 45 in 2016, and 58 in 2017. GRETA (Council of Europe), 'Report concerning the implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings by Lithuania. Second Evaluation Round' (GRETA(2019)08, 21 June 2019) 6, available [here](#).

<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

<sup>70</sup> 31 of the identified Lithuanian victims were trafficked within Lithuania. Ibid.

<sup>71</sup> US Department of State (2020), above n 12, 319.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

<sup>73</sup> Council of Europe (GRETA), above n 68, 6.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

<sup>75</sup> US Department of State (2020), above n 12, 319-320.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid, 320.

<sup>77</sup> Natalia Ollus, Anniina Jokinen and Matti Joutsen (HEUNI), 'Exploitation of migrant workers in Finland, Sweden, Estonia and Lithuania: Uncovering the links between recruitment, irregular employment practices and labour trafficking' (2013), 17, available [here](#).

<sup>78</sup> Ibid, 18.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid, 21.



food service activities. The most frequent occupations of exploited migrant workers are semi-skilled workers (particularly long-distance drivers, shipbuilders, construction workers, cooks and seamstresses) and skilled workers (particularly welders in the ship industry).<sup>80</sup>

#### 4.2. Causes and drivers of modern slavery and transnational trafficking

Causes or drivers of human trafficking and modern slavery are multiple and overlapping. As highlighted by the report of the University of Bedfordshire/IOM, there are different risk factors which increase vulnerability. These factors are structured into five levels (individual, household and family, community, structural and situational) interacting with each other, creating the conditions for exploitation and modern slavery to emerge.<sup>81</sup> Evidence from the literature shows that the majority of trafficking activities are induced by economic factors. However, there are other contributing elements, including poor knowledge of the local language, culture and restrictive migration policies.<sup>82</sup> On this note, the residence permit of a migrant worker is directly dependant on his or her work permit (issued for work at a specific company). Thus, if an employment contract is terminated, the migrant worker must depart from the Republic of Lithuania, creating a de facto situation of vulnerability and dependence from the contractor.<sup>83</sup>

By and large, there is lack of systematic approach by State institutions to the prevention of trafficking and victims' protection, particularly migrants. According to the HEUNI report, there is a lack of specialised police officers working in the trafficking field, coupled with a lack of awareness of labour trafficking among key authorities such as the police, judges and staff of the consulates, which hinder victims' identification and effective prosecution of trafficking and modern slavery-related crimes. Furthermore, cases that come to the attention of the police may be reclassified under other crime labels, as a result of which official police, prosecution and court statistics do not show cases of trafficking.<sup>84</sup> In fact, research revealed that the success of investigations of labour violations more often depend on the personal characteristics of an employee/victim (i.e. the level of education, knowledge of their rights and of support organisations, perseverance, financial resources, etc.), rather than on cooperation between investigative and monitoring institutions.<sup>85</sup>

#### 4.3. Particularly vulnerable groups

In Lithuania, **unaccompanied children** are particularly vulnerable to trafficking.<sup>86</sup> Notwithstanding the well-developed institutional and policy framework aimed at ensuring children rights' protection in Lithuania,<sup>87</sup> including establishing specific provisions for adequately identifying child victims of trafficking,<sup>88</sup> and providing training for child

<sup>80</sup> Giedrė Blažytė et al (FRANET), 'Severe forms of Labour Exploitation Supporting victims of severe forms of labour exploitation in having access to justice in EU Member States. Lithuania 2014' (Social Fieldwork Research, 2014) 64, available [here](#).

<sup>81</sup> Patricia Hynes et al, "Vulnerability" to human trafficking: a study of Viet Nam, Albania and the UK' (IOM, University of Bedfordshire and IASR, 2018), 15, available [here](#).

<sup>82</sup> Ibid, 65

<sup>83</sup> Ibid, 24.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid, 23

<sup>85</sup> Giedrė Blažytė et al (FRANET), above n 80, 65.

<sup>86</sup> The approximately 2,800 children institutionalized in approximately 90 orphanages are especially vulnerable to trafficking. US Department of State (2020), above n 12, 319-320; US Department of State (2019), above n 12, 299.

<sup>87</sup> The basic law which shapes the children's regime was adopted on 2015 'Law on Fundamentals of Protection of the Rights of the Child', setting out the responsibilities of State and municipal institutions as regards the protection of children from negative social environment influences, promotion of a healthy lifestyle and education. The Law on Protection Against Domestic Violence 2011 is also relevant, and since 2003 several plans and policies have been developed. See Commissioner for Human Rights (Council of Europe), above n 60, 12-13. See also GRETA (Council of Europe), above n 68, 16.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid, 24-25.

protection specialists,<sup>89</sup> it has been reported a considerable gap between the stated policies and their implementation, and identified shortcomings in their assistance. Significantly, there had been reportedly cases of missing unaccompanied children from refugee reception centres.<sup>90</sup> Asylum seeking children should have priority in accessing to accommodation and assistance. However, children who do not apply for asylum do not benefit from some of these measures. GRETA was informed that there is an important margin of error in the age assessment procedures and as a result a number of children were placed in the Foreigners Registration Centre as irregular migrants.<sup>91</sup> When other intersections come into play (such as disabilities, mental disorder or ethnicity) concerns rise due to a lack of a mechanism for children to report cases of abuse and violence against them. On this note, the level of investigation, prosecution and punishment of perpetrators of sexual exploitation and abuse of children reportedly remain insufficient.<sup>92</sup>

**Migrant workers and asylum seekers** in Lithuania are also at-risk of trafficking and to be subjected to exploitative conditions, fostered by an overemphasis of the State Labour Inspectorate on detecting persons in irregular employment in detriment of adequate identification of victims of trafficking,<sup>93</sup> and a lack of specialised training on trafficking to staff of reception centres for refugees and asylum seekers, or irregular migrants.<sup>94</sup> The dependence of a residence permit on the work permit—a migrant must depart from the country immediately after the work permit ends and therefore has a limited possibility to defend his or her rights—has been identified as a major risk factor for vulnerability to labour exploitation.<sup>95</sup>

It is important to note that **Roma communities** continued face widespread discrimination, facing stereotypes, prejudice and intolerance, as well as difficulties in different of areas, such as education, access to the labour market, health care, and adequate and social housing. It was also concerned that despite efforts made by Lithuania, the illiteracy rate of Roma children remained high and they continued to face problems such as language barriers, early school dropout and absenteeism and limited access to secondary and higher education, and that the housing conditions for Roma were inadequate, particularly in the Kirtimai settlement in the Municipality of Vilnius, where dwellings were reportedly being demolished.<sup>96</sup>

While the majority of the victims of trafficking identified in 2012-2016 were young women (usually from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds, with mental disability or orphans) who were involved in exploitative sham marriages, using fraud or their social vulnerability, with third-country nationals residing in other EU countries,<sup>97</sup> the 2020 TIP Report indicates that the percentage of male victims vulnerable to forced labour and criminal activity increased and composed the largest group of identified trafficking victims during 2018.<sup>98</sup>

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<sup>89</sup> For instance, the State Child Protection and Adoption Service held training sessions for staff working in the field of child's welfare, covering the prevention of child trafficking, safeguarding the rights and interests of victims of commercial sexual exploitation, identification of child victims of THB, conduct of investigations, preventing and investigating cases of missing children, and work with juvenile offenders. Ibid, 10.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid, 16-17.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid, 25.

<sup>92</sup> See Human Rights Council, above n 42, 7, 8, 10.

<sup>93</sup> GRETA (Council of Europe), above n 68, 20.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid, 21.

<sup>95</sup> Giedrė Blažytė et al (FRANET), above n 80, 65.

<sup>96</sup> Human Rights Council, above n 42, 13-14.

<sup>97</sup> GRETA (Council of Europe), above n 68, 17.

<sup>98</sup> US Department of State (2020), above n 12, 319-320

## 5. Antislavery governance frameworks

### 5.1. Legislative measures

#### 5.1.1. Lithuania's Constitution 1992.<sup>99</sup>

The Constitution establishes the inviolability of human freedom in Article 20 and prohibits the use of forced labour in Article 48 with stipulated exceptions:

Article 20:

Each human being may freely choose a job or business, and shall have the right to have proper, safe and healthy conditions at work, to receive fair pay for work and social security in the event of unemployment.

The work of foreigners in the Republic of Lithuania shall be regulated by law.

Forced labour shall be prohibited.

Military service or alternative service, as well as labour which is executed during war, natural calamity, epidemic, or other urgent circumstances, shall not be deemed as forced labour. Labour which is performed by convicts in places of confinement and which is regulated by law shall not be deemed as forced labour either.

The Lithuanian Constitution also enshrines human dignity and its protection by law (Article 21) and indicates that marriage is based upon consent in Article 38 ('Marriage shall be concluded upon the free mutual consent of man and woman'). Pursuant to Article 73, it is established the Seimas Ombudsmen's Office of the Republic of Lithuania, which is responsible for monitoring actions of public authorities in relation to citizens, with a special focus on human rights and freedoms.<sup>100</sup>

#### 5.1.2. Criminal Code 2000 (CC)<sup>101</sup>

**Trafficking in human beings** is classified as a serious crime punishable by up to 10 years of imprisonment under Article 147 CC:

1. A person who sells, buys or otherwise transfers or acquires, recruits, transports or holds a person captive by physical violence or threats, or by otherwise depriving him of the possibility to resist or by using the victim's dependence or vulnerability, or by using deceit, or by taking or paying money, or by receiving or providing other benefits to a person who actually controls the victim, provided that the offender was aware or sought that the victim, whether he agreed or not, would be exploited under the conditions of slavery or under the conditions similar to slavery for prostitution, pornography or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced marriage or marriage of convenience, forced labour or services, including begging, commission of a criminal act or for other exploitation purposes, shall be punished by a custodial sentence for a term of two up to ten years.

2. A person who commits the act provided for in paragraph 1 of this Article against two or more victims or by endangering the victim's life, or by participating in an organised group, or being aware or seeking that the victim's organ, tissue or cells would be taken, or being a civil servant or a person performing the functions of public administration and exercising his mandate shall be punished by a custodial sentence for a term of four up to twelve years.

3. The victim of the act provided for in this Article may be released from criminal liability for the criminal act which he was directly forced to commit as a result of the act provided for in this Article and committed against him.

4. A legal entity shall also be held liable for an act provided for in paragraphs 1 and 2 of this Article.

<sup>99</sup> See unofficial translation of Lithuania's Constitution [here](#).

<sup>100</sup> ENNHRI, 'Seimas Ombudsmen's Office (Lithuania)', [here](#).

<sup>101</sup> Law No VIII-1968, 26 September 2000 as last amended on 21 November 2017 – No XIII-79. See unofficial translation [here](#).

**Trafficking in children** is criminalised under Article 157 of the CC (purchase or sale of a child), which reads as follows:

1. A person who proposes to purchase or otherwise acquire, sells, purchases, otherwise transfers, acquires, recruits, transports or holds captive a child, while being aware of or seeking that, regardless of the child's consent, he/she would be unlawfully adopted, exploited under the conditions of slavery or under conditions similar to slavery for prostitution, pornography, other forms of sexual exploitation, forced marriage or marriage of convenience, forced labour, including begging, commission of a criminal act or for other exploitative purposes, shall be punished by imprisonment for a term from three to 12 years.
2. A person who commits the act provided for in Paragraph 1 of this Article in respect of two or more children or against young children, or by endangering the victim's life, or by participating in an organised group, or by being aware of or seeking the acquisition of the victim's organ, tissue or cells, or while acting in his capacity as a civil servant or a person fulfilling public administration functions and performing his duties, shall be punished by imprisonment for a term from five to 15 years.
3. The victim of the criminal offence provided for in this Article may be released from criminal liability for the criminal offence which he/she has been directly forced to commit because of the criminal offence provided for in this Article committed against him/her.
4. A legal entity shall also be held liable for the acts provided for in Paragraphs 1 and 2 of this Article.

It is important to note that both Article 147, paragraph 3, and Article 157, paragraph 3, of the CC, envisage a **non-punishment clause** for a criminal offence when the victim was directly forced to commit as a result of being trafficked.

Article 147<sup>1</sup> of the CC criminalises the **exploitation for forced labour or services**:

1. A person who, through the use of physical violence, threats, deception or other means listed in Article 147 of this Code, unlawfully forces another person to perform certain work or to provide certain services, including begging, shall be punished by a fine or by restriction of liberty or by arrest or by a custodial sentence for a term of up to three years.
2. A person who commits the act indicated in paragraph 1 of this Article by forcing another person to perform work or to provide services under the conditions of slavery or under other inhuman conditions shall be punished by arrest or by a custodial sentence for a term of up to eight years.
3. A legal entity shall also be held liable for the acts provided for in this Article

Article 147<sup>2</sup> CC establishes as a criminal offence the **use of forced labour or services** in the following terms:

1. A person who uses another person's work or services, including prostitution, while being aware or being obliged and likely to be aware that the person performs this work or provides these services as a result of using against him, for exploitation purposes, physical violence, threats, deception or other means listed in Article 147 of the Code, shall be punished by a fine or by restriction of liberty or by arrest or by a custodial sentence for a term of up to two years.
2. A person who commits an act provided for in this Article shall be released from criminal liability if he, prior to his declaration as the suspect, voluntarily notifies thereof a law enforcement institution and actively cooperates in identifying the victim of trafficking in human beings (Article 147) or purchase or sale of a child (Article 157) and detecting any of these criminal acts.
3. A legal entity shall also be held liable for the acts provided for in this Article.

In light of the above, a legal person can be held criminally liable for the offence of trafficking (Articles 147(4) and 157(4) of the CC); for the exploitation for forced labour or services (Article 147<sup>1</sup>(3) of the CC) and for the use of forced labour or services (Article 147<sup>2</sup>(3) of

the CC). The conditions for criminal liability are envisaged in Article 20 of the CC.<sup>102</sup> As per Article 43 of the CC, the types of penalties which may be imposed on legal persons for their involvement in the commission of offences include a fine, restriction of operation of the legal person, and liquidation of the legal person. Further, pursuant to Article 67(5) of the CC, a confiscation or extended confiscation of property may be imposed by court upon legal persons.<sup>103</sup>

Article 307 of the Penal Code provides for criminal liability to **persons profiting from the prostitution of another person**, while **involving a person in prostitution** is criminalized under Article 308:

Article 307.

1. A person who gains profit from another person's prostitution or from procurement for prostitution shall be punished by a fine or by restriction of liberty or by arrest or by a custodial sentence for a term of up to four years.
2. A person who organises or controls prostitution or transports a person with his consent for prostitution to the Republic of Lithuania or from the Republic of Lithuania shall be punished by a custodial sentence for a term of up to six years.
3. A person who profits from the prostitution of a minor or organises or controls the prostitution of the minor or otherwise exploits the prostitution of the minor shall be punished by a custodial sentence for a term of three up to ten years.
4. A legal entity shall also be held liable for the acts provided for in this Article.

Article 308.

1. A person who involves a person in prostitution shall be punished by a fine or by restriction of liberty or by arrest or by a custodial sentence for a term of up to three years.
2. A person who involves in prostitution a person dependent on him financially, subordinate in office or otherwise or involves a person in prostitution by using physical or mental coercion or by deceit shall be punished by a custodial sentence for a term of two up to seven years.
3. A person who recruits, forces to engage in prostitution or, by any other means, involves in prostitution a minor shall be punished by a custodial sentence for a term of three up to ten years.
4. A legal entity shall also be held liable for the acts provided for in this Article.

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<sup>102</sup> Article 20. Criminal Liability of a Legal Entity 1. A legal entity shall be held liable solely for the criminal acts the commission whereof is subject to liability of a legal entity as provided for in the Special Part of this Code. 2. A legal entity shall be held liable for the criminal acts committed by a natural person solely where a criminal act was committed for the benefit or in the interests of the legal entity by a natural person acting independently or on behalf of the legal entity, provided that he, while occupying an executive position in the legal entity, was entitled: 1) to represent the legal entity, or 2) to take decisions on behalf of the legal entity, or 3) to control activities of the legal entity. 3. A legal entity may be held liable for criminal acts also where they have been committed by an employee or authorised representative of the legal entity on the instruction or with the permission of or as a result of insufficient supervision or control by the person indicated in paragraph 2 of this Article. 4. A legal entity may be held liable for the criminal acts committed under the conditions indicated in paragraph 2 or 3 of this Article by another legal entity controlled by or representing it, where they have been committed for the benefit of the abovementioned legal entity on the instruction or with the permission of or as a result of insufficient supervision or control by a person holding a management position therein or a person authorised by him. 5. The criminal liability of a legal entity shall not release from criminal liability a natural person who has committed, organised, instigated or assisted in commission of a criminal act. The criminal liability of a legal entity for a criminal act committed, organised, instigated or assisted in by a natural person for the benefit or in the interests of the legal entity shall not be released by the criminal liability of the natural person, nor by the fact that the natural person is released from criminal liability for this act or is not held liable for other reasons. 6. The State, a municipality, a state and municipal institution and agency as well as an international public organisation shall not be held liable under this Code. The state and municipal enterprises, also the public establishments whose owner or stakeholder the State or a municipality, also the public limited liability companies and private limited liability companies whose shares, in whole or in part, belong by the right of ownership to the State or the municipality shall not be considered as state and municipal institutions and agencies and shall be held liable under this Code'.

<sup>103</sup> GRETA (Council of Europe), above n 68, 32.

It is important to note that Administrative Law Violations Code provides for the **non-imposition of administrative sanctions upon persons who are engaged in prostitution** (Article 182).<sup>104</sup>

Other relevant offences of the CC include Article: 146 (unlawful imprisonment)<sup>105</sup>; Article 148 (Restriction of Freedom of a Person's Actions)<sup>106</sup>; and Article 100 (treatment of persons prohibited under International Law)<sup>107</sup>; and Article 103 (causing bodily harm to, torture or other inhuman treatment of persons protected under International Humanitarian Law or violation of protection of their property)<sup>108</sup>.

### 5.1.3. Criminal Procedure Code (CPC)<sup>109</sup>

The CPC contains several relevant provisions, including the right of the victims to be informed of their procedural rights and ensure access to those rights (Articles 45-46 CPC); protection of personal life and confidentiality during criminal proceedings (Article 44, 177, 198-204 CPC)<sup>110</sup>; compensation (Articles 107 –voluntary compensation of damages– and 108 –return of objects and valuables– of the CPC);<sup>111</sup> and special measures aimed at safeguarding child victims' rights and avoid revictimization. For instance, only exceptionally children shall be heard in Court as witness or victims, since pre-trial declaration video and audio recorded shall be preferred with intervention of a psychologist (Article 186).<sup>112</sup> More generally, the CPC establishes a duty to evaluate whether victims of crime need special

<sup>104</sup> Additionally, paragraph 21 of the Recommendations on Victim Identification specifies that a victim of THB exploited for the commission of a criminal offence is released from criminal liability. However, in the course of the evaluation visit, GRETA received reports that persons involved in prostitution, who might be victims of THB, are imposed administrative fines and are not identified as victims of trafficking. Ibid, 33. See also European Crime Prevention Network, 'Prostitution and Trafficking for Sexual Exploitation: Lithuania' EUCPN, available [here](#).

<sup>105</sup> Article 146: 1. A person who unlawfully deprives a person of his liberty, in the absence of characteristics of hostage taking, shall be punished by a fine or by arrest or by a custodial sentence for a term of up to three years. 2. A person who commits the act provided for in paragraph 1 of this Article by using violence or posing a threat to the victim's life or health or by holding the victim in captivity for a period exceeding 48 hours shall be punished by arrest or by a custodial sentence for a term of up to four years. 3. A person who unlawfully deprives a person of his liberty by committing him to a psychiatric hospital for reasons other than an illness shall be punished by arrest or by a custodial sentence for a term of up to five years.

<sup>106</sup> Article 148: 1. A person who demands that another person carry out unlawful actions or refrain from performing lawful actions or otherwise behave according to instructions of the offender by using mental coercion in respect of the victim or persons close to him shall be punished by a fine or by restriction of liberty or by arrest or by a custodial sentence for a term of up to three years. 2. A person shall be held liable for the act provided for in paragraph 1 of this Article only under a complaint filed by the victim or a statement by the legal representative thereof or at a prosecutor's request or when a pre-trial investigation is opened upon establishing signs of domestic violence. 3. A legal entity shall also be held liable for an act provided for in this Article.

<sup>107</sup> Article 100: A person who intentionally, by carrying out or supporting the policy of the State or an organisation to attack civilians on a large scale or in a systematic way, [...] enslaves persons; [...] unlawfully imprisons or otherwise restricts the physical freedom of persons in violation of the norms of international law; tortures persons; rapes or sexually coerces persons, involves them in sexual slavery or forces them to engage in prostitution; [...] shall be punished by a custodial sentence for a term of five up to twenty years or by a life custodial sentence.

<sup>108</sup> Article 103: 1. A person who, in time of war or during an armed conflict or an aggression, occupation or annexation, orders, incites or organises inhuman treatment or subjects to inhuman treatment the persons protected under international humanitarian law: inflicts a serious bodily harm to or an illness upon or tortures them; conducts a biological or medical experiment with them, unlawfully takes their organ or tissue for transplanting purposes, unlawfully takes their blood or subjects them to other inhuman treatment; [...] rapes or sexually coerces persons, involves them in sexual slavery or forces them to engage in prostitution; [...] unlawfully restricts or deprives them of liberty; [...] shall be punished by a custodial sentence for a term of three up to twelve years.

<sup>109</sup> Law No. IX-785, 2002.

<sup>110</sup> Article 44 of the CPC states that each person has the right to respect for his or her private and family life, home and correspondence, while Article 177 prohibits disclosing data from criminal investigations concerning child victims or suspects. Articles 198–204 define the right of victims to request anonymity. See GRETA (Council of Europe), above n 68, 26

<sup>111</sup> If damages have been compensated voluntarily by the suspect, the accused or another person materially responsible for their actions, no civil action in a criminal case will take place. If it is not the case, the victim who has suffered harm due to an offence can file a civil claim, which allow the competent authorities to seize the property owned by the suspect or the accused. Where the person damaged by the offence is unable to defend his/her legal interests due to minor age, illness, dependence on the accused or other circumstances, the prosecutor must file a civil claim in court on his/her behalf.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid, 35.

protection to safeguard them from psychological trauma, criminal influence or other negative consequences.<sup>113</sup>

Apart from the Articles of CPC, it is important to note the adoption on 2016 of the Recommendations on evaluation of special needs of victims in criminal proceedings,<sup>114</sup> which provide for additional protection measures such as specialised same-sex officers to conduct the interviews.<sup>115</sup>

#### 5.1.4. Law on the Legal Status of the Aliens 2004 (Aliens Law)<sup>116</sup>

In Lithuania, foreign and EU nationals who are victims of trafficking are entitled to recovery and reflection period of up to 30 days in accordance with Article 130(4) of the Aliens Law. The reflection period entitles the person to access to accommodation, emergency medical treatment, psychological support, social services, and translation and interpretation services. During this period, expulsion is prohibited.

Article 49<sup>1</sup> provides for a temporary resident permit to the foreign victims of either human trafficking or severe labour exploitation who cooperate in the criminal proceedings.<sup>117</sup> The temporary residence permits entitle their holders to work and access to basic medical assistance and social services, provided their lack of sufficient means to pay for these services.<sup>118</sup>

In the context of the asylum procedure, pursuant to Article 18<sup>2</sup> of the Law, victims of trafficking are considered 'vulnerable persons' and are entitled to additional measures and procedural guarantees.<sup>119</sup>

#### 5.1.5. Law on Compensation of Damages Caused by Violent Crimes 2008<sup>120</sup>

This Law sets out the modalities of State compensation for material and non-material damage of victims of violent crimes when it is not possible to obtain compensation from the accused. The Law contains a list of violent crimes, which includes Articles 147 (trafficking in human beings) and 157 (purchase or sale of a child) of the CC. Victims of these crime whose material or non-material damage has been recognised in court can have access to State compensation once the criminal proceedings have concluded. Accordingly, Article 46(2) of the CPC provides for the right to be inform about compensation schemes if a person has been recognised as a victim and has suffered damages as a result of a violent crime.<sup>121</sup>

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<sup>113</sup> Ibid, 36

<sup>114</sup> Ibid.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid.

<sup>116</sup> Law No. IX-2206, 29 April 2004. See an unofficial translation [here](#).

<sup>117</sup> Article 49<sup>1</sup>. Issue of a Temporary Residence Permit to an Alien who Cooperates with a Pre-trial Investigation Body or the Court in Combating Trafficking in Human Beings or Crimes Related to Trafficking in Human Beings or Illegal Employment 1. A temporary residence permit may be issued to an alien who is or was a victim of trafficking in human beings or illegal employment and cooperates with a pre-trial investigation body or the court in combating trafficking in human beings or crimes related to trafficking in human beings or illegal employment, in the cases of particularly exploitative employment conditions or the employment of a minor, provided that the pre-trial investigation body or the court mediates in issuing the temporary residence permit to such an alien.

2. An alien for whom a pre-trial investigation body or the court mediates in issuing a temporary residence permit shall be issued the temporary residence permit for a period of six months.

3. The temporary residence permit indicated in paragraph 2 of this Article may be renewed to an alien if a pre-trial investigation body or the court mediates in issuing it.

4. After the alien specified in paragraph 1 of this Article has been issued a temporary residence permit, the alien shall, by a decision of the mediating pre-trial investigation body or the court, be permitted to reside at the place of his choice or the place specified by the said body.

5. An alien who has been issued a temporary residence permit on the grounds laid down in Article 40(1)(12) of this Law and who is not in possession of sufficient means of subsistence shall be entitled to receive basic medical aid and social services in accordance with the procedure laid down in legal acts of Republic of Lithuania.

6. An alien who has been issued a temporary residence permit on the grounds laid down in Article 40(1)(12) of this Law shall, having obtained a work permit, be entitled to take up employment during a period of validity of the temporary residence permit

<sup>118</sup> See further GRETA (Council of Europe), above n 68, 27.

<sup>119</sup> See further *ibid*, 21.

<sup>120</sup> Law No. X-1843, of 14 November 2008.

<sup>121</sup> See GRETA (Council of Europe), above n 68, 28.

#### 5.1.6. Law on Protection of Participants in Criminal Procedures and Criminal Intelligence, Officers of Justice and Law Enforcement Officials against Criminal Consequences 1996<sup>122</sup>

This protection programme is primarily designed for witnesses of organised crimes and can be applied upon request of the victim, an investigating officer, a penitentiary institution or a court.<sup>123</sup>

#### 5.1.7. Labour standards<sup>124</sup>

The Labour Code<sup>125</sup> prohibits all forms of forced or compulsory labour in Article 2(1)(7) and prohibits all of the worst forms of child labour.<sup>126</sup> Sanctions for employers who violate the regulations of labour laws are incorporated in the Code of Administrative Offences of the Republic of Lithuania. Article 41(3) imposes sanctions on employers who employ workers illegally; Article 41(4) for paying salaries in 'an envelope'; Article 41(5) for the fraud in recording working hours in an employees' schedule and Article 41(8) for the failure to maintain legal guarantees for posted workers as stipulated in work contracts.<sup>127</sup>

#### 5.1.8. Recommendations regarding the Identification of Victims of Trafficking, Criminal Investigations and Interagency Co-operation 2015 (Recommendations on Victim Identification).<sup>128</sup>

The Recommendations were jointly set out by the Prosecutor General, the Minister of the Interior and the Minister of Social Security and Labour, including indicators for identification with specific provisions targeting child trafficking victim, and a National Referral Mechanism (NRM) for victims of trafficking. They also defined responsibilities and roles of the relevant actors, including frontline and police officers, border guards, prosecutors, labour inspectors, consular officials, municipal staff on social protection and children's rights, specialised NGOs and the IOM Office in Vilnius.<sup>129</sup>

#### 5.1.9. Procedures for Granting and Withdrawal of Asylum in Lithuania 2016.<sup>130</sup>

These Procedures aim at facilitating the detection and assessment of vulnerabilities among asylum seekers for border guards and police officers. Special guarantees are ensured if the asylum seeker is considered a 'vulnerable' person and a potential victim of trafficking.<sup>131</sup>

## 5.2. Prosecution

According to the TIP Reports, in 2019, law enforcement authorities investigated 13 trafficking-related cases (Articles 147, 147<sup>1</sup>, 147<sup>2</sup> and 157 CC), compared with 11 in 2018, 35 in 2017, 29 in 2016,<sup>132</sup> 27 in 2015 and 24 in 2014.<sup>133</sup> The government initiated prosecutions against 24 suspected traffickers (31 in 2018, 54 in 2017, 64 in 2016,<sup>134</sup> 53 in 2015, and 40 in 2014<sup>135</sup>) and convicted 12 traffickers, a significant decrease from 44 in 2018 (20 in 2017, 23 in 2016). Among the perpetrators convicted in 2014-2016, 61 were

<sup>122</sup> Law No. I-1202, 13 February 1996. See further: FRANET, 'Victim Support Services in the EU: An overview and assessment of victims' rights in practice: Lithuania' (2014), 33, available [here](#).

<sup>123</sup> GRETA (Council of Europe), 'Report concerning the implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings by Lithuania First evaluation round' (GRETA(2015)12, 5 June 2015) 41, available [here](#).

<sup>124</sup> Law No. XIP-3383, 27 June 2011. For a general analysis of labour standards, see: OECD, 'OECD Reviews of Labour Market and Social Policies: Lithuania' (2018) 107, available [here](#).

<sup>125</sup> Law No. XII-2603, 14 September 2016. See further: Ministry of Social security and Labour (Lithuania), 'Presentation of the Labour Code' (2017), available [here](#).

<sup>126</sup> US Department of State, above n 31, 18.

<sup>127</sup> Giedrė Blažytė et al (FRANET), above n 80, 10.

<sup>128</sup> Ruling No. I-327/1V-1015/A1-758 on Approval of Recommendations regarding the Identification of Victims of Trafficking, Criminal Investigations and Interagency Co-operation

<sup>129</sup> See GRETA (Council of Europe), above n 68, 20

<sup>130</sup> Available (in Lithuanian) [here](#).

<sup>131</sup> GRETA (Council of Europe), above n 68, 21.

<sup>132</sup> US Department of State (2020), above n 12, 319.

<sup>133</sup> GRETA (Council of Europe), above n 68, 34

<sup>134</sup> US Department of State (2020), above n 12, 319. The GRETA Report registers 67 prosecutions in 2016 and 35 in 2018. See GRETA (Council of Europe), above n 68, 34.

<sup>135</sup> GRETA (Council of Europe), above n 68, 34.



male and 11 females, all being Lithuanian nationals. Nearly all traffickers received prison sentences with terms ranging from three to eight years and four months, while in the term 2014-2016 the penalties ranged from three to 12 years' imprisonment. Two judgments in 2014 and four in 2016 resulted in confiscation of criminal assets. In 2015-2017 there were seven cases of acquittals, confirmed on appeal.<sup>136</sup>

The government collaborated with foreign counterparts in 42 international trafficking investigations (32 in 2018), including a sex trafficking case, which involved 118 victims and resulted in the arrest of 13 Lithuanian suspects living in Spain.<sup>137</sup> Specifically, GRETA reported two Joint Investigation Teams (JIT) set up by Lithuanian and UK law enforcement authorities which ended up in successful prosecutions.<sup>138</sup> The general prosecutor's office received no extradition requests (one in 2018) and issued three European arrest orders in trafficking cases (two in 2018). The government did not report any investigations, prosecutions, or convictions of government employees complicit in trafficking offenses. As stated in the 2020 TIP Report, Government officials reported that collecting adequate evidence remained a problem in prosecuting trafficking cases that occurred outside of Lithuania.<sup>139</sup>

### 5.3. National policies and plans

#### 5.3.1. National Action Plan against Trafficking in Human Beings (2017-2019)

On 29 August 2016, the **National Action Plan against Trafficking in Human Beings (2017-2019)** was adopted. The government allocated approximately €183,000 (\$205,620) for its implementation and maintained an interagency commission for coordinating anti-trafficking efforts.<sup>140</sup> Its main objectives are strengthening the coordination of action against trafficking in human beings; improving prevention; strengthening support to victims and persons at risk of becoming victims of trafficking; and capacity building of front-line staff. The plan includes activities to be implemented both at national and local level and defines the responsible bodies, the timeframe and financial resources for each objective. In its second report, GRETA recommended that the Lithuanian authorities should introduce an independent evaluation of national action plans as a tool for assessing the impact of the activities and for planning future policies and measures to combat trafficking.<sup>141</sup> A new action plan is in development for 2020.<sup>142</sup>

#### 5.3.2. State Security Development Programme (2015–2025)

On 7 May 2015 it was adopted by the Seimas **The State Security Development for 2015–2025 Programme**, replacing the Crime Prevention and Control Programme. Among the specific targets of the Programme, it is envisaged the task of effectively combat human trafficking by different institutions in the Government.<sup>143</sup>

#### 5.3.3. Other relevant action plans

Other relevant Action Plans include the **Action Plan for Domestic Violence Prevention and Assistance to Victims for 2017-2020**;<sup>144</sup> the action plan for the implementation of the **National Programme on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men 2015-2021**, which aims to promote equal opportunities in occupation and employment;<sup>145</sup> **Action Plan for greater social inclusion for 2014-2020**;<sup>146</sup> and the **Action Plan for Roma**

<sup>136</sup> Ibid.

<sup>137</sup> US Department of State (2020), above n 12, 319

<sup>138</sup> GRETA (Council of Europe), above n 68, 34-35. Further, GRETA was informed of an on-going investigation into a case where people with vulnerabilities were recruited to work in cannabis farms in Ireland and Northern Ireland.

<sup>139</sup> US Department of State (2020), above n 12, 319.

<sup>140</sup> Ibid.

<sup>141</sup> GRETA (Council of Europe), above n 68, 9.

<sup>142</sup> US Department of State (2020), above n 12, 319

<sup>143</sup> Commission (EU), 'Together Against Trafficking in Human Beings- Lithuania', available [here](#).

<sup>144</sup> US Department of State (2019), above n 31, in which the Government allocated 1,173,075 euros.

<sup>145</sup> The programme sets three goals: reduce wage differences; reduce sectorial and professional segregation in the labour market; and increase opportunities for women, especially those living in rural areas, to launch and develop businesses. See Commissioner for Human Rights (Council of Europe), above n 60, 4.

<sup>146</sup> Human Rights Council, above n 42, 14.

**integration for 2015-2020**, which aims at reducing discrimination and social exclusion of the Roma; promoting the Roma participation in social and public life, enhancing awareness of the Roma community and raising social tolerance towards the Roma minority.<sup>147</sup>

#### 5.4. National institutions and inter-departmental coordination

- The Commission for Coordination of the Fight against Trafficking in Persons<sup>148</sup> consists of 23 representatives of State, municipal, civil society and religious bodies and organisations and it is tasked to coordinate all counter-trafficking efforts in the country. The Coordination Commission is assisted by a working group.
- The government has set up local anti-trafficking commissions in 19 municipalities in Lithuania, which are chaired by Deputy Heads of the respective municipalities. These commissions coordinate anti-trafficking on a local level and comprise representatives of local law enforcement bodies, prosecution authorities, social service agencies, child protection services, and education and health-care agencies.
- The National Rapporteur for Counter-trafficking Issues, which is appointed by the Ministry of Interior, is responsible for evaluating anti-trafficking efforts, collecting relevant data, and submitting recommendations to the Minister of the Interior and the Coordination Commission.<sup>149</sup>
- Specialised prosecutors and police units: there are seven prosecutors specialised in investigating trafficking cases, and the Criminal Police Bureau has a special division responsible for investigation of trafficking offences.<sup>150</sup>
- Anti-trafficking specialists have been designated within the State Border Guard Service; the 'Labour Exchange (under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour)'; the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; and the National Courts Administration.<sup>151</sup>

#### 5.5. Victim support and assistance frameworks

In 2019, Lithuanian authorities identified 36 victims –the lowest number of identified victims in five years–, while in 2018 there were 58, 60 in 2017,<sup>152</sup> 45 in 2016, 62 in 2015, and 47 in 2014.<sup>153</sup> On the other hand, government-funded NGOs supported 224 trafficking victims and at-risk persons (239 in 2018, 219 in 2017). As noted in the 2020 TIP Report, the government did not report the types of exploitation of victims, corroborating experts' concerns that the data collected across government agencies and civil society were inconsistent and did not provide a comprehensive picture of the trafficking situation.<sup>154</sup> Observers reported a decrease in rural areas of local officials' propensity to blame victims.<sup>155</sup>

Apart from the general assistance frameworks aimed at deprived people, such as those set up by the Law on Cash Social Assistance for Poor Residents, there are specific provisions covering different aspects of trafficking victims' protection:

- For improving identification, the Lithuanian authorities developed the **Recommendations on Victim Identification**, defining the roles of and co-

<sup>147</sup> Ibid. See UNESCO, 'National Strategy of Roma Integration to the Lithuanian Society' (2016), available [here](#). See further (In Lithuanian) Vita Kontvainė, 'Feasibility study on the cooperation between Roma communities and municipalities when implementing the action plan for the integration of Roma into Lithuanian society for 2015-2020' (2016), 3, available [here](#).

<sup>148</sup> Adopted by Resolution No. 785 on Coordination of the Fight against trafficking.

<sup>149</sup> In its Second Evaluation Report, GRETA considered 'that the Lithuanian authorities should examine the possibility of establishing an independent National Rapporteur or designating another mechanism as an independent organisational entity with a view to ensuring an effective monitoring of the antitrafficking activities of state institutions and making targeted recommendations': GRETA (Council of Europe), above n 68, 8.

<sup>150</sup> GRETA (Council of Europe), above n 123, 14.

<sup>151</sup> Ibid.

<sup>152</sup> US Department of State, above note 5, p. 319.

<sup>153</sup> Within the period 2014-2016, while majority of the victims were men (99), there were 82 women and 32 children (19 girls and 13 boys). See GRETA (Council of Europe), above note 58, p. 6.

<sup>154</sup> US Department of State, above note 5, p. 319

<sup>155</sup> US Department of State (2020), above n 12, 319

operation among different actors and indicators for identification, drawing special attention on the specific characteristics of child victims of THB.<sup>156</sup> Specifically concerning asylum-seekers, the Procedures for Granting and Withdrawal of Asylum in Lithuania, adopted in 2016, aim at facilitating the detection and assessment of vulnerabilities among asylum seekers.<sup>157</sup> According to the Recommendations on Victim Identification, the return of foreign nationals identified as victims of trafficking is carried out either through the Voluntary Assisted Return procedure, implemented by the IOM Office in Lithuania, or by the Foreigners' Registration Centre of the State Border Guard Service.<sup>158</sup>

- Legislation allowed foreign trafficking victims a 30-day reflection and recovery period to decide whether to cooperate with law enforcement.<sup>159</sup> The **provision of assistance is delegated to specialised NGOs** and is financed by the Ministry of Social Security and Labour. While the government allocated NGOs in 2019 and 2018 a total of €330,000 for victim assistance programs, local governments only allocated funding in 2018 and not in 2019 (€48,00).<sup>160</sup> The assistance provided by the NGOs includes psychological and legal support; access to health care; temporary accommodation –non-specific for victims of trafficking–; information, mediation and representation; food and clothing; transportation; and assistance for integration into the labour market (training, search for employment, assistance in work for those already employed). Importantly, identified victims have access to assistance irrespective of whether they co-operate with law enforcement authorities.<sup>161</sup> Foreign victims cooperating with law enforcement are entitled to receive temporary residency. According to the authorities, all foreign victims of trafficking identified in Lithuania had temporary residence permits.<sup>162</sup>
- Victims of trafficking have access to the State general compensation scheme and other modalities set up by the Law on Compensation of Damage Caused by Violent Crimes.<sup>163</sup>

Notwithstanding the above, several pitfalls concerning victims' safeguarding frameworks have been identified. While authorities implemented formal victim identification and referral mechanisms for victim assistance, observers reported authorities in some parts of the country underutilized both.<sup>164</sup> By means of example, in smaller municipalities local frontline actors do not have sufficient knowledge of the Recommendations on Victim Identification and the coordination commissions have limited experience,<sup>165</sup> which prevents them to carry out an adequate risk assessment.<sup>166</sup> Furthermore, an over focus on detecting persons in irregular employment persists in the State Labour Inspectorate, resulting in low number of foreign nationals identified in Lithuania as victims of trafficking:<sup>167</sup> amidst reports indicating an increase in the exploitation of foreign workers, authorities only identified six foreign victims in 2019 (none in 2018, 20 in 2017).<sup>168</sup>

<sup>156</sup> See further GRETA (Council of Europe), above n 68, 20.

<sup>157</sup> Ibid, 21

<sup>158</sup> Ibid, 30.

<sup>159</sup> Ibid, 26-27.

<sup>160</sup> US Department of State (2020), above n 12, 319.

<sup>161</sup> GRETA (Council of Europe), above n 68, 22.

<sup>162</sup> Ibid, 27.

<sup>163</sup> 'According to information provided by the authorities, seven victims of THB were awarded compensation in 2014, five in 2015 and 14 in 2016, with the amounts ranging from €200 to €7,240. In addition, the Ministry of Justice awarded compensation from the State budget to two victims of THB in 2017, in the amount of respectively €3,040 and €4,160, pursuant to Law on Compensation of Damages Caused by Violent Crimes': GRETA (Council of Europe), above n 68, 28.

<sup>164</sup> US Department of State (2020), above n 12, 319. On this note, see also GRETA (Council of Europe), above n 68, 20, which states that 'According to interlocutors, better implementation of the Recommendations would require a greater involvement of frontline officials from relevant sectors, such as labour inspectors, social workers, teachers, child protection specialists and health-care professionals who may come across victims of THB'.

<sup>165</sup> GRETA (Council of Europe), above note 58, p. 8.

<sup>166</sup> Ibid, p. 30.

<sup>167</sup> Ibid, 20.

<sup>168</sup> In the second GRETA report it was highlighted that, within the foreign victims of THB, the authorities identified 20 men trafficked to Lithuania for labour exploitation (18 Nepalese and two Ukrainians) as well as two women

Experts raised concerns about lack of funding which led to discontinuous ongoing assistance for victims; inadequate protection and assistance measures for child trafficking victims; inadequate accommodation arrangements for men victims or victims with serious trauma or health problems; difficulties in accessing to health care; unavailability of specialised shelters<sup>169</sup>; inadequate cooperation mechanisms among governmental and non-governmental organisations providing assistance;<sup>170</sup> and an overemphasis in obtaining victims' testimonies and cooperation in criminal proceedings in detriment to their referral to assistance facilities.<sup>171</sup> Further, no budget was allocated for legal assistance by specialised NGOs, and observers have reported attorneys had little experience with trafficking issues.<sup>172</sup>

## 5.6. Training and capacity-building for responders

The National Action Plan for 2017-2019 envisaged training at national and municipal level targeting to relevant actors, including police officers, consular staff, border guards, prosecutors, judges and assistants to judges, labour inspectors, labour exchange specialists, social workers, health-care specialists, child rights specialists, educational assistance specialists, teachers, journalists and church representatives.<sup>173</sup> As explained in the GRETA's second evaluation report, training on trafficking for police officers is provided at the Police School two to three times a year, focusing on prevention, investigation, and psychological and psychosocial aspects of trafficking.<sup>174</sup> Training sessions and seminars on trafficking were organised by the National Courts Administration aimed at judges and prosecutors;<sup>175</sup> and labour inspectors received training for the correct identification of victims of trafficking for the purpose of forced labour and the referral of victims to assistance.<sup>176</sup>

Despite these efforts, it has been repeatedly reported that labour inspectors' training was insufficient, in particular regarding the implementation of the Recommendations on Victim Identification.<sup>177</sup> Instead, the main focus of the State Labour Inspectorate is placed on detecting persons in irregular employment, which may hinder the appropriate identification of victims of trafficking.<sup>178</sup> More generally, it has been alleged the need to improve law enforcement capacities when it comes to victims' access to compensation.<sup>179</sup> Training of health-care professionals was considered insufficient, as well as specialised training on trafficking to lawyers,<sup>180</sup> and to staff of reception centres for refugees and asylum seekers, and detention centres for irregular migrants.<sup>181</sup>

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(one from Colombia and one from the Russian Federation). However, the report does not specify the period to which this data is referred. See GRETA (Council of Europe), above n 68, 6.

<sup>169</sup> According to representatives of specialised NGOs, due to the unavailability of specialised shelters, victims stay at their homes and are more easily influenced or threatened by perpetrators. Some victims are found by perpetrators while being placed in rented apartments. See GRETA (Council of Europe), above note 58, p. 36.

<sup>170</sup> Natalia Ollus, Anniina Jokinen and Matti Joutsen (HEUNI), above n 77, 22

<sup>171</sup> US Department of State (2020), above n 12, 319.

<sup>172</sup> Ibid. See also GRETA (Council of Europe), above n 68, 27.

<sup>173</sup> GRETA (Council of Europe), above n 68, 9.

<sup>174</sup> Ibid. The TIP Report for 2019 further indicates that, "The National Police organized training sessions on how to conduct trafficking-related criminal investigations for 30 police officers, 72 judges, and 33 specialized prosecutors who participated in conferences and trainings dedicated to combating trafficking". See US Department of State (2019), above n 12, 298.

<sup>175</sup> GRETA (Council of Europe), ), above n 68, 10. The general prosecutor's office organized four anti-trafficking training events for 30 specialized prosecutors, and the courts administration organized an anti-trafficking training for 27 judges.

<sup>176</sup> GRETA (Council of Europe), above n 68, 10.

<sup>177</sup> Ibid, 20. See also US Department of State (2020), above n 12, 319.

<sup>178</sup> GRETA (Council of Europe), above n 68, 20.

<sup>179</sup> Specifically, it is recommended to incorporate training on compensation into existing training programmes for law enforcement officials, prosecutors and the judiciary. See *ibid*, 30.

<sup>180</sup> US Department of State (2020), above n 12, 319.

<sup>181</sup> GRETA (Council of Europe), above n 68, 21.

## 5.7. Public awareness raising

The Lithuanian government has launched several public awareness campaigns aimed at both the population at large and vulnerable groups. By means of example, 'an awareness-raising campaign was organised in September-December 2017 under the STROM II project, focussing on municipalities where victims of THB have been identified. Video clips, posters and flyers on different forms of THB (for sexual exploitation, forced criminal activities, forced labour and forced marriages) were produced and widely distributed, including in the public transport, post offices, public stands, schools, universities and churches. The campaign was targeted at vulnerable groups, including children, unemployed persons and socially excluded persons. It is estimated that the activities organised as part of the campaign reached over one million persons'.<sup>182</sup> More specific campaigns were designed for discouraging demand of sexual services and for informing victims and vulnerable groups of their rights.<sup>183</sup> While most of the campaigns are launched at national level, there have been conducted international campaigns within Lithuanian communities abroad, such as in the United Kingdom and in Spain.<sup>184</sup>

Although in the past years Lithuania has strengthen efforts regarding awareness-raising measures, GRETA recommended that they should 'take into account the gender dimension of human trafficking, design future actions in the light of impact assessment of previous measures, and focus on the needs identified address emerging forms of trafficking, such as for forced criminality, labour exploitation, exploitative sham marriages and forced marriages, as well as trafficking of Lithuanian nationals within Lithuania'.<sup>185</sup>

## 5.8. Efforts to address vulnerabilities and drivers

For promoting gender equality and eliminating differences in the status of women and men, the **National Programme on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men for 2015-2021** was adopted by the Government on 4 February 2015.<sup>186</sup> Furthermore, the country had a 24/7 national hotline and 29 crisis centres for victims of domestic violence. In 2018 the Ministry of Social Security and Labour provided an additional 1,470,026 euros to transform 17 of those crisis centres into specialized assistance centres that provide additional services, such as health and legal specialists who meet with victims of domestic violence immediately after a conflict.<sup>187</sup>

While not comprehensively, the **action plan for greater social inclusion for 2014-2020** addresses housing issues of Roma communities, and the **action plan for Roma integration for 2015-2020** reinforce special measures to reduce the illiteracy rate and school dropout rate for improving the attendance of Roma children and their language skills.<sup>188</sup>

As above described, Lithuanian authorities have adopted **specific policies aimed at improving identification and assistance of child victims of trafficking**, including the incorporation of specific provisions into the Recommendations on Victim Identification;<sup>189</sup> the improvement of cooperation and exchange of information about violence against

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<sup>182</sup> Ibid, 12.

<sup>183</sup> Ibid, 19.

<sup>184</sup> In 2017, a campaign was conducted within Lithuanian communities in the United Kingdom, which has been the main country of destination for persons trafficked from Lithuania. It consisted in providing information on THB for different forms of exploitation, agencies for referral and assistance, and profiles of the potential traffickers and exploiters. Information was provided by means of video clips, flyers and social media. In 2018 this campaign was continued in the United Kingdom and was also carried out in Spain. The authorities are considering organising similar campaigns in other countries of destination". Ibid, 13.

<sup>185</sup> Ibid, 41.

<sup>186</sup> Ibid, 17.

<sup>187</sup> Department of State, above n 31.

<sup>188</sup> Human Rights Council, above n 42, 14.

<sup>189</sup> GRETA (Council of Europe), above n 68, 24.

children and other violations which may amount to a criminal offence, including trafficking;<sup>190</sup> and specific provisions for children's assistance.<sup>191</sup>

## 5.9. Frameworks for international coordination

Lithuania is involved in international cooperation against trafficking in the framework of the Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS), the Nordic Council of Ministers, as well EU, Europol, Interpol, Eurojust and Frontex.<sup>192</sup> Further, bilateral cooperation activities have taken place with specific countries such as the United Kingdom, as one of the countries where the most Lithuanian nationals are trafficked,<sup>193</sup> establishing Joint Investigation Teams (JTI) for improving cooperation on criminal matters.<sup>194</sup> As stated in the GRETA's second evaluation Report, Lithuania was in the process of negotiating bilateral mutual legal assistance treaties with Brazil, Mexico, Algeria, Egypt, the United Arab Emirates and Ecuador.<sup>195</sup>

Although no specific detail is given, the 2019 TIP Report indicates that, in 2018, the Lithuanian 'government collaborated with foreign counterparts in 32 international trafficking investigations, compared with 21 in 2017. The general prosecutor's office received one request for extradition (one in 2017) and issued two European arrest orders in trafficking cases (five in 2017)'.<sup>196</sup>

## 5.10. Key challenges to effective antislavery governance

### — Victims' misidentification

While Lithuania has displayed relevant efforts in improving identification of victims –for instance, through the adoption of the Recommendations on Victims Identification–profound gaps in its application have been identified. This may be due to a lack of training of relevant actors, such as lawyers, labour inspectors, and board guards; an approach of immigration control by the Police and labour inspectors; and a more general lack of effectiveness in monitoring labour exploitation of workers in general. Enforcement of labour law is relatively weak in Lithuania, with negative consequences for workers' protection and leading to an uneven playing field among employers.<sup>197</sup>

### — Lack of coordination between the relevant institutions

A FRA study on severe forms of exploitation conducted in 2014 highlighted that the lack of coordination and cooperation between state institutions and between governmental and non-governmental bodies hinders the development of an effective system to solve the problems of severe labour exploitation in Lithuania.<sup>198</sup>

### — Lack of adequate funding for assistance of victims of THB and labour exploitation.

<sup>190</sup> Local Prosecutor's Offices co-operate with the territorial Child Rights Protection Divisions under the municipality administration on the basis of a tripartite agreement signed on 27 January 2011 by the Prosecutor General's Office, the Ministry of Social Security and Labour, and the Office of the Ombudsman for the Rights of the Child. See *ibid*, 25.

<sup>191</sup> *Ibid*. As stated in the 2020 TIP Report, the minister of social affairs and labour signed a decree prohibiting the placement of new children into care at orphanages as of January 1, 2020. See US Department of State (2020), above n 12, 319.

<sup>192</sup> GRETA (Council of Europe), above n 68, 36.

<sup>193</sup> *Ibid*. For instance, in cooperation with the UK, the government developed migration policies to protect Lithuanian migrants; it also appointed a specialized trafficking police officer to serve as an attaché in the Lithuanian embassy in the UK. See US Department of State (2020), above n 12, 319.

<sup>194</sup> In cooperation with the United Kingdom (UK), the government developed migration policies to protect Lithuanian migrants; it also appointed a specialized trafficking police officer to serve as an attaché in the Lithuanian embassy in the UK. GRETA (Council of Europe), above n 68, 34.

<sup>195</sup> *Ibid*, 37.

<sup>196</sup> US Department of State (2019), above n 12, 298.

<sup>197</sup> OECD, above n 124, 114.

<sup>198</sup> Giedrė Blažytė et al (FRANET), above n 80, 66. Anna Lietonen and Natalia Ollus (HEUNI), 'The Costs of Assisting Victims of Trafficking in Human Beings: A Pilot Study of Services Provided in Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania' (2017) 29-30, available [here](#).

Lack of sufficient and consistent funding is repeatedly mentioned as a main shortcoming for adequately provide with assistance, outreach work, and prevention strategies.<sup>199</sup>

— Structural imbalances.

Gender abuse and social exclusion, especially among Roma communities, are also major contributors to vulnerability. Although there are governmental efforts to combat these structural imbalances, challenges remain especially regarding social attitudes.

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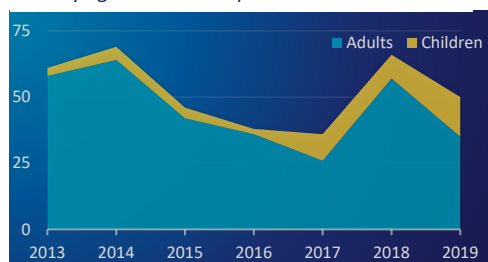
<sup>199</sup> Anna Lietonen and Natalia Ollus (HEUNI), above note 68, pp. 29-30. Also noted in the GRETA report: “on some occasions, lack of funding has led to discontinuing ongoing assistance for victims in stabilised condition, due to the arrival of new victims with a more urgent need for support”. See GRETA (Council of Europe), above n 68, 23.

## 6. Experiences of modern slavery of Lithuanian nationals in the UK

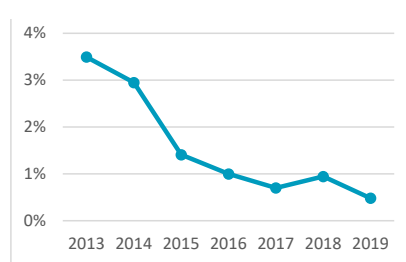
### 6.1. Lithuanian nationals in the UK National Referral Mechanism

Lithuanian nationals have consistently been in the top twenty nationalities represented in National Referral Mechanism referrals since 2013, although they have represented less than 5% of total referrals throughout this period. The number of Lithuanian nationals referred into the NRM has varied from 36 potential victims referred in 2017, up to 69 referrals in 2014. Adults have always made up the majority of Lithuanian nationals referred into the NRM, with between 2 (2016) and 15 (2019) Lithuanian nationals referred who were minors at the time of their exploitation from 2013-2019.<sup>200</sup> However, since 2013, the proportion of Lithuanian nationals referred, as a proportion of all referrals, has been steadily decreasing—reaching as low as 0.5% in 2019.

Number of Lithuanian nationals referred into the NRM by age at time of exploitation



Proportion of potential victims referred into the NRM that are Lithuanian nationals



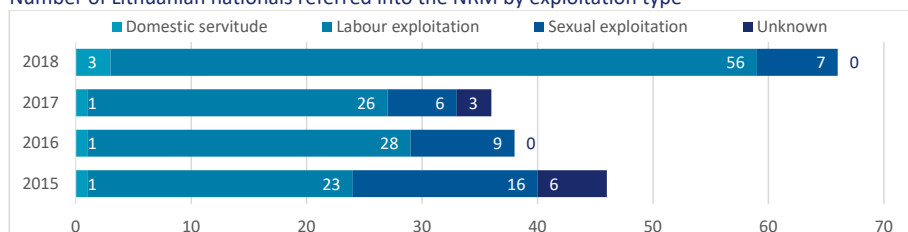
Lithuanian nationals referred into the NRM typically experience labour exploitation, with only a small proportion of Lithuanian potential victims recorded as having experienced domestic servitude, and none recorded as having experienced organ harvesting. Sexual exploitation has also typically made up a relatively small proportion of Lithuanian national referrals, although in 2015 sexual exploitation represented 35% of Lithuanian national referrals. While gender data was not disaggregated by nationality from 2015-2019, NRM reports included such data in the 2013 and 2014 reports. In these years, the majority of

<sup>200</sup> Home Office, 'National Referral Mechanism Statistics UK: End of Year Summary 2019: Data tables' 2<sup>nd</sup> edn available [here](#); National Crime Agency, 'National Referral Mechanism Statistics – End of Year Summary 2018' (2019) available [here](#); National Crime Agency, 'National Referral Mechanism Statistics – End of Year Summary 2017' (2018) available [here](#); National Crime Agency, 'National Referral Mechanism Statistics – End of Year Summary 2016' (2017) available [here](#); National Crime Agency, 'National Referral Mechanism Statistics – End of Year Summary 2015' (2016) available [here](#); National Crime Agency, 'National Referral Mechanism Statistics – End of Year Summary 2014' (2015) available [here](#); National Crime Agency, 'United Kingdom Human Trafficking Centre: National Referral Mechanism Statistics 2013' (2014) available [here](#).



Lithuanian nationals referred into the UK NRM were male (57% in 2013 and 65% in 2014)—consistent with the trend of victims of labour exploitation being majority male.

Number of Lithuanian nationals referred into the NRM by exploitation type<sup>201</sup>



## 6.2. Typical journeys from Lithuania to the UK for trafficking victims

Although literature on human trafficking in relation to Lithuania is not extensive, Janusauskiene’s qualitative research on Lithuanian migrants who were trafficked for labour exploitation provides some useful insights. The author argued that recurrent features included, for instance, the promise of high wages for a relatively simple job, free housing and transportation to the country in question and limited requirements of the candidates.<sup>202</sup> Online recruitment through jobs advertisement have been proved to play an important role facilitating trafficking.<sup>203</sup>

More specifically within the UK, a study on the Typology of Modern Slavery Offences in the UK conducted by the Home Office –including Lithuanian victims–, concluded that a key factor which influences the way of recruitment process or journeys from victims’ origin countries to the UK is the type of exploitation. While in labour exploitation recruitment tended to be in person either in the victim’s country of origin or in the UK –through offers of ‘good jobs’, and transport arranged by recruiters,<sup>204</sup> in criminal exploitation activities recruitment was almost always in the UK and victims were most commonly transported between locations by car.<sup>205</sup> Regarding sexual exploitation, either in fix or changing location, ‘recruitment was most commonly in person in the victim’s country of origin. The victims were most frequently deceived about the type of work, although some knew that they were going to be sex workers but were deceived about their earnings or working conditions. Victims were sometimes recruited online, either via an advert or less commonly through social media. There was anecdotal evidence of some victims of this type going on to recruit other victims’.<sup>206</sup>

## 6.3. Experiences of exploitation and working conditions

There is a lack of reliable data about the specific experiences of exploitation of Lithuanian nationals into the UK. We know that the majority of identified victims (75%) were women subjected to either labour or sexual exploitation,<sup>207</sup> and that there is a trend of increasing number of male victims especially in exploitation for shoplifting.<sup>208</sup> We also know that Lithuanian and UK law enforcement authorities have set up three Joint Investigation Teams, one of them ongoing. The second investigation revealed a ring wherein employees had to work for long hours in conditions qualified as similar to slavery. Victims were intimidated with dogs and had penalties applied arbitrarily. The pre-trial investigation was

<sup>201</sup> Ibid. Note that exploitation type data is not disaggregated by nationality in the 2013, 2014, or 2019 data and these years are therefore excluded.

<sup>202</sup> Natalia Ollus, Annina Jokinen and Matti Joutsen (HEUNI), above n 77, 305–359

<sup>203</sup> Ada Volodko, Ella Cockbain and Bennett Kleinberg, ‘Spotting the signs’ of trafficking recruitment online: exploring the characteristics of advertisements targeted at migrant job-seekers’ (2020) 23 *Trends in Organised Crime* 7, 7–35

<sup>204</sup> UK Home Office, ‘A Typology of Modern Slavery Offences in the UK’ (2017) 26, available [here](#).

<sup>205</sup> Ibid, 35.

<sup>206</sup> Ibid, 29.

<sup>207</sup> Ibid, 48.

<sup>208</sup> US Department of State (2020), above n 12, 319.

concluded on 16 March 2018, resulting in charges against two UK nationals and one Lithuanian national.<sup>209</sup> Other cases involved severe material deprivation, violence and threats in order to establish control over migrant workers, and fraudulent debts.<sup>210</sup> The lack of English speaking ability has been appointed as a clear risk factor in these cases.<sup>211</sup>

The UK study on the Typology of Modern Slavery Offences concluded that regarding labour exploitation, 'victims worked directly for the offenders, in businesses or sites the offenders owned or controlled. This tended to be unskilled or manual labour, in largely cash-based businesses mostly in urban areas. Labour sectors included construction, cleaning, factory work, agricultural work, restaurants, nail bars and car washes'.<sup>212</sup> More specifically referred to criminal exploitation –forced labour in illegal activities–, the only non-Vietnamese victim was a Lithuanian adult male. They 'were confined to a private house or flat and were told to look after cannabis plants. They would either be alone or with one or two other victims. They were not paid for their work, and in some cases were told that they owed money to the offenders for their transport to the UK. Methods of control, where known, included violence and threats of violence, surveillance and restriction of movement, and distrust of the authorities'.<sup>213</sup> Concerning sexual exploitation, wherein Lithuanian victims were also identified, 'victims were forced into sex work in flexible locations, which included hotels, nightclubs, clients' properties, vehicles, on street, and in short-term rented accommodation. They were often advertised online. Sometimes victims were kept in confinement; in other cases the offenders used threats and fear as methods of control. Victims either lived with offenders or in accommodation owned or rented by offenders. Victims were sometimes kept in debt bondage. In a few cases victims were subject to other forms of exploitation such as domestic servitude, criminal exploitation or sham marriage, or they were also raped by offenders'.<sup>214</sup>

#### 6.4. Consequent effects of trafficking on survivors

By and large, human trafficking exerts psychological effects on survivors that persist after intervention, and even after community reintegration. Effects include anxiety, depression, alienation, disorientation, aggression, suicidal ideation, attention deficit, and posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD). In this context, community support and coping mechanisms may mitigate these effects.<sup>215</sup>

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<sup>209</sup> GRETA (Council of Europe), above n 68, 34-35.

<sup>210</sup> Karolis Žibas and Indrė Urbonavičiūtė (Diversity Development Group), above n 36, 5-7

<sup>211</sup> UK Home Office, above n **Error! Bookmark not defined.**, 26.

<sup>212</sup> *Ibid*, 16

<sup>213</sup> *Ibid*, p. 38.

<sup>214</sup> *Ibid*, 31.

<sup>215</sup> See, generally David Okech et al, 'Social Support, Dysfunctional Coping, and Community Reintegration as Predictors of PTSD Among Human Trafficking Survivors', (2018) 44 *Behavioral Medicine* 209, 209-218, and Asefah Haileselassie Reda, 'An investigation into the experiences of female victims of trafficking in Ethiopia' (2018) 11 *African and Black Diaspora: An International Journal* 87.

## 7. The impact of COVID-19

### 7.1. The Government's response to COVID-19

On 26 February 2020, the Lithuanian Government declared the state of emergency as a preventive measure against the spread of COVID-19. Once COVID-19 cases started to emerge, on 16 March the Government adopted Resolution No 207 declaring a national quarantine and establishing various measures including closing borders, educational institutions, client-servicing businesses, bars, restaurants and shops, excluding groceries and pharmacies, and restrictions in other constitutional rights.<sup>216</sup> Regarding the University of Oxford's Government Stringency Index – a composite measure of the strictness of policy responses<sup>217</sup>–, Lithuania reached 87,04 out of 100 in the score during a short period of time (March–April), which has been dropping until August 2020, with a score of 19,44.<sup>218</sup> Measures in different areas have been adopted to mitigate the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, including economic stimulus, employment-related and tax-related measures.<sup>219</sup>

Lithuania has benefited from the European Commission State aid Temporary Framework, adopted on 19 March 2020, as amended on 3 April and 8 May 2020, which set up a fund with a target size of up to €1 billion that will invest through debt and equity instruments in medium-sized and large enterprises active in Lithuania affected by the coronavirus outbreak.<sup>220</sup>

A COVID-19 response strategy has been drawn up to contain, over the short term, the risk of the spread of the coronavirus and to equip for an effective response to a potential outbreak of the virus in the future. The implementation of the strategy will rest on the following five fundamental principles: 1) protection of vulnerable people; 2) proactive pinpointing of infection cases and immediate response; 3) prompt and objective public information; 4) evidence and facts-based decision-making; 5) international cooperation, particularly at the level of the European Union.<sup>221</sup>

### 7.2. The impact of COVID-19 on workers and modern slavery victims

As analysed in the FRA Report of fundamental rights implications of the COVID-19 outbreak in Lithuania, the lockdown measures may have disproportionate effects on vulnerable groups, including people with disabilities and the elderly.<sup>222</sup> For instance, quarantine measures such as kindergarden and school closures may have a negative effect on people in precarious work and essential workers, families with children, especially with disabilities, single mothers and fathers.<sup>223</sup> Furthermore, the entrance in Lithuania was prohibited for

<sup>216</sup> Eglė Dagilytė, Aušra Padskočimaitė, Aušra Vainorienė, 'Lithuania's Response to COVID-19: Quarantine Through the Prism of Human Rights and the Rule of Law' *Verfassungblog* (14 May 2020), available [here](#). The government-launched website for official information on COVID-19 and 24/7 hotline are also available in English [here](#).

<sup>217</sup> See in depth [here](#).

<sup>218</sup> Our World in data (2020), available [here](#).

<sup>219</sup> For a description, see KPMG, 'Lithuania Government and institution measures in response to COVID-19' (14 May 2020) [here](#). More detailed information related to the Economic Stimulus Plan is published and regularly updated on the website, available [here](#); China-CCC Institute, 'Lithuania economy briefing: Lithuania takes steps to overcome the middle-income trap by addressing the coronavirus crisis' (2 June 2020), available [here](#).

<sup>220</sup> Commission (EU), 'State aid: Commission approves Lithuanian fund to enable up to €1 billion of liquidity and capital support to medium-sized and large enterprises affected by the coronavirus outbreak' (Press Release, 26 May 2020), available [here](#); Commission (EU), 'Temporary Framework for State aid measures to support the economy in the current COVID-19 outbreak' C(2020) 1863 final (19 March 2020), available [here](#).

<sup>221</sup> See the Strategy in English [here](#).

<sup>222</sup> See Lithuania, 'President: People with disabilities may be hit hardest by this crisis', press release, published on 21 April 2020. See further [here](#).

<sup>223</sup> FRA, 'Coronavirus pandemic in the EU –Fundamental Rights Implications' (4 May 2020) 4, available [here](#).

all foreigners including asylum seekers and therefore no request for asylum during quarantine was accepted, increasing their vulnerability.<sup>224</sup>

Against this background, according to the latest update of the European Bank for Reconstructing and Development (ERBD) Report on Regional Economic Prospects, the region, which includes Lithuania, can expect a considerable fall in their economic output due to the coronavirus crisis (4.8% of GDP decline). Lithuania will face the biggest falls in the region, with their economies expected to contract by 7.0% in 2020.<sup>225</sup> Taking into account the already high existing levels of poverty and informal economy, the COVID-19 crisis will presumably and disproportionately affect to a large number of people which belongs to vulnerable groups. The economic restraints also limit the margins of action of the government of Lithuania.

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<sup>224</sup> Ibid, 6

<sup>225</sup> ERBD, 'Regional Economic Prospects – COVID-19: From shock to recovery' (2020), available [here](#).