

Check against delivery



Statement by
Mr. Artūras Gailiūnas,
Chargé d'Affaires a.i. of the Republic of Lithuania at the UN Office and other International
Organizations in Geneva
at the consideration of the UPR outcome for Lithuania
at the 19th Session of the UN Human Rights Council

Geneva, March 16, 2012

Madam President of the Human Rights Council,
Distinguished ambassadors,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Lithuania wishes to express its appreciation of the Universal Periodic Review procedure and gratitude for very valuable comments, questions, and recommendations by numerous States during the consideration of Lithuania in the Universal Periodic Review Working Group of the Human Rights Council. Lithuania has received the total of 119 recommendations and accepted absolute majority of them.

The recommendations we received cover a very broad spectrum of issues. A number of recommendations addressed the need to strengthen the protection of persons belonging to vulnerable groups or persons in vulnerable situations. Notably, those were recommendations to strengthen the protection of persons belonging to groups defined by the criteria of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, age. A need for further legislative and policy measures was mentioned in this respect. Promotion of diversity, tolerance and harmony, while at the same time fighting intolerance, feature as the gist of these recommendations. Another group of recommendations covered the issue of the need to strengthen the domestic institutional system for the protection of human rights, *inter alia* ensuring even closer cooperation with civil society on human rights related

issues. Certain recommendations indicated the need for specific actions by such domestic institutions to ensure monitoring and continuing implementation of various specific governmental policies and strategies. Yet another group of recommendations encouraged Lithuania to assume further international obligations under human rights treaties, which would both enable further advance in further developing protection and promotion at a domestic level and add additional element to a constructive dialogue with the treaty monitoring bodies. We also want to mention recommendation to strengthen support for international human rights defenders and activists, which encourage strengthening our activities in this regard.

Lithuania took every effort to consider the recommendations received in an open-minded and constructive manner. Lithuania's position regarding majority of the recommendations was presented at the session of the UPR Working Group. Position regarding the remaining recommendations was presented in document A/HRC/19/15/Add.1. Regarding those recommendations which we are not able to support I would like to say that this was largely due to either limited resources or an on-going debate on the way in which certain rights should be implemented in a specific context, particularly where competing human rights-based claims are identified. Nevertheless, we see some of them as indications of possible ways of addressing certain human rights issues.

Let me assure you that the domestic discussion in connection with the preparation of Lithuania's report, consideration of the recommendations received and elaboration of related implementation plans has proved to be an effective trigger for development of further legislation, policies and practices which will help us advancing in protection and promotion of human rights.

We are certain that the initial cycle of the Universal Periodic Review is the start of the procedure which will be instrumental in consolidating the performance of all the States in the field of their human rights obligations. On the part of Lithuania I should stress that the Universal Periodic Review process has highlighted certain common issues which may arise in different States in different forms but essentially require the same solutions. Creation of effective National Human Rights Institutions in compliance with the Paris Principles is one such issue. Lithuania will certainly draw inspiration from the experience of other States, as expressed in their comments and recommendations, that these institutions are a valuable tool in the perpetual struggle for full respect, protection and implementation of everyone's human rights.

Madam President,

Lithuania highly values cooperation with the United Nations human rights bodies and procedures. We take the Universal Periodic Review, specifically, as an opportunity to learn from others and to reflect on ourselves. Let me reiterate our most favourable assessment of this form of cooperation within the United Nations and our readiness to both contribute to and benefit from this interaction among the United Nations Member States.

Last but not least, I should highly commend the members of the Troika, namely Congo, Norway and Qatar, charged with the task of managing the Universal Periodic Review of Lithuania, and also the Secretariat for their solid, competent and efficient performance.

I thank you for your kind attention.