

## Candidature of the Republic of Lithuania to the UN Human Rights Council 2022-2024

### **Voluntary pledges and commitments pursuant to General Assembly resolution 60/251**

Lithuania's aspiration for membership of the Human Rights Council rests on **experience of reforms based on respect for human rights, the human rights policy of the European Union**, following the **foreign policy** based on the principles of freedom, democracy, human rights, the rule of law and multilateral decision-making and a close dialogue with civil society. The agenda of freedom and democracy is one of the basic principles of the Lithuania's foreign policy. Lithuania, as a member of the Human Rights Council, will follow the principle of universality and indivisibility of human rights and continue to promote and protect **human rights and fundamental freedoms**.

Lithuania will pay particular attention to the international human rights agreements and the implementation of the commitments arising from them, actively support and urge other states to **cooperate with the United Nations human rights institutions and mechanisms**, including Special Procedures of the Human Rights Council, and seek to **strengthen them** in the future.

**Lithuania will make use of its experience of membership of the United Nations bodies**, first and foremost, of the United Nations Security Council, the Executive Board of UNESCO, and the Executive Board of the UN Women. It will also draw on the knowledge and experience of Lithuanian experts gained in the United Nations Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of the Discrimination against Women, in the International Humanitarian Fact-finding Commission and other institutions. By the **active engagement in the United Nations system** Lithuania will contribute to strengthening the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms, the rule of law as a necessary precondition for ensuring human rights and for managing crises that pose a threat to them.

**Lithuania will continue to promote multilateralism** and effective cooperation in addressing essential issues related to **climate change** and **global health emergencies**, the arising challenges related to human rights, in resolving tasks related to the human rights dimension of the global **cyber security and conflict prevention**. Lithuania will be guided by principles of multilateralism and the rules-based international order.

Lithuania actively contributes toward the aims the **2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**, which are directly related to the protection of human rights on the **national and international levels**. Lithuania is convinced that only the sustainable stability of societies and states, as well as democratic involvement of citizens themselves that can ensure the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

Lithuania is active in the international development cooperation and together with other partner states endeavours for democracy promotion, strong civil society, respect for human rights, good governance and rule of law. Lithuania emphasises that development cooperation undoubtedly contributes to upholding of the protection of human rights. One of the core principles of the **Lithuanian development cooperation policy** is a partnership with recipient states, with the international donor community, international organisations, financial institutions, local and regional public authorities

and civil society, including non-governmental organisations and private business in the country and abroad.

Lithuania pledges to pay special attention to fighting corruption as a violation of human rights and the principle of the rule of law. Lithuania pledges to encourage the United Nations institutions and programmes to share good practices seeking to harmonise, and achieve synergy between, the activities carried out by the United Nations in all its pillars: human rights, peace and security, and development cooperation.

The **COVID-19** pandemic exacerbated the already existing inequalities and produced new ones. Social and economic consequences of the pandemic exert a negative impact on all human rights, democracy and the rule of law, deepen the existing disparities and increase pressure on the people in vulnerable situations. The COVID-19 pandemic has changed working methods of all international institutions. At present, it is necessary to monitor and ensure that **actions of the governments do not infringe human rights during the pandemic or violate international rules and principles of democracy**. Human rights and fundamental freedoms as well as rule of law should form the basis for our response and strategies of the global build back. Lithuania will seek to ensure that economic difficulties arising from the pandemic should not cause a human rights crisis.

### **Thematic priorities of candidacy to and membership of the Human Rights Council:**

In formulating the thematic priorities of its membership of the Human Rights Council, Lithuania follows the principle: *No one should be left behind, and no human right ignored*".

Taking into consideration Lithuania's international expertise and experience in the field of human rights, the priorities of the foreign policy, the human rights policy of the European Union, global developments in the protection of human rights and the provisions of the Programme of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania, Lithuania as a candidate in the elections to the Human Rights Council will attach particular importance to the **protection of human rights defenders, the rights of the child, the rights of persons with disabilities and human rights in conflict areas**.

- Lithuania will pursue to achieve that **human rights defenders** and all those who defend freedoms and rights could carry out their activities unimpeded. Lithuania pledges to encourage governments to fulfil their international commitments to protect and promote human rights and to defend victims of human rights violations and abuses.
- Lithuania pledges to encourage a better implementation of the provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and its protocols seeking to achieve that **the rights of the child should be comprehensively protected and children should be safe in all circumstances of their life and** should not experience violence, bullying or abuse.
- Lithuania will pursue to achieve that **the persons with disabilities** could fully enjoy all human rights and freedoms, to ensure respect for their inherent dignity and to create conditions enabling their full social integration.
- **Human rights are most severely violated during the time of armed conflicts**, therefore Lithuania will seek to not only address the existing violations of human rights in a timely

manner, but also support prevention of such conflicts in close cooperation with human rights defenders.

Lithuania pledges to continue its activities in defending **the rights of women and girls, freedom of expression, including safety of journalists, freedom of peaceful assembly and association, and freedom of religion and belief.**

Being a non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council in 2014 and in 2015, Lithuania paid a particular emphasis on women's contribution to maintaining peace and security, protection of children, spoke firmly in favour of providing protection to civilians in armed conflicts, protection of journalists and fight against impunity for the crimes committed against journalists. This was reflected in UNSC Resolution No. 2222(2015) on the protection of civilians and journalists in armed conflicts initiated by Lithuania and adopted by consensus. These objectives will remain a priority during Lithuania's membership of the Human Rights Council.

Lithuania will actively respond to new threats arising to human rights in the areas of digitalisation, data protection, artificial intelligence, climate change, global health emergencies, migration and others. We will engage with other states in looking for joint solutions to overcome these challenges.

**Lithuania also undertakes to further improvement of the human rights situation in the country.**

In 2018, a National Human Rights Institution was accredited in Lithuania. The Programme of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania for 2021-2024 foresees measures for ensuring political, economic, social, civil and cultural rights based on the principle *No One Left Behind*. We will continue to cherish the values of human rights and dignity taking into consideration the expectations of every individual and making appropriate decisions. A lot of attention will be given to progress on the implementation of the recommendations addressed to Lithuania during the universal periodic review and other United Nations human rights protection mechanisms. Another assessment of the human rights situation in Lithuania under the universal periodic review is planned for 2022.

**Commitments with regard to the working methods in the Human Rights Council:**

- Lithuania will pursue for mainstreaming and deeper integration of human rights into all areas of work of the United Nations, will actively promote and **defend the rules based international order**, including the protection of human rights. We will contribute to strengthening the **efficiency of the Human Rights Council** underlining that **coherence of actions** in Geneva and New York is the responsibility of the Member States of the United Nations.
- **Making use of the existing instruments to respond to human rights crises** we will strive for a more effective and efficient response of the Human Rights Council to the emerging threats to human rights and fundamental freedoms in the world, the deteriorating security situation, the worsening situation of the media, the restrictions on the civil society space and activities of the human rights defenders all over the world.
- Lithuania pledges to support the activities and mandate of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and her Office. Lithuania will cooperate with, and seek to strengthen, the UN human rights Special Procedures and other mechanisms of the Human Rights Council, respecting their independence and will encourage all Member States to cooperate with them closely and ensure the adequate funding.

- Lithuania will pursue to strengthen the contribution of the Human Rights Council to the prevention of human rights violations as an indispensable element in avoiding violations of human rights and international conflicts.
- **Lithuania pledges to cooperate with non-governmental organisations actively** on the issues of human rights; encourage a **regular dialogue** of governments and the Human Rights Council **with civil society** and human rights defenders providing them with the possibility to become engaged more actively in its activities.
- Lithuania pledges to **cooperate** in an open and transparent manner **with all Members of the Human Rights Council**. Seeking fully implement the mandate of the Human Rights Council, Lithuania will encourage cooperation of states from all regions on the issues related to human rights.