

**Project 'STRATEGIC DOCUMENT ON THE INTEGRATION POLICY FOR FOREIGNERS  
GRANTED ASYLUM' (4 April 2016 to 30 September 2016) under the National Programme of  
the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund for 2014-2020**

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## I. GENERAL PROVISIONS

1. The purpose of the strategic document on the integration policy for foreigners granted asylum ('FGAs') ('the Document') is to set the goals, objectives and integration areas of the FGA integration policy in Lithuania, to define the principles and instruments for implementing the integration policy and to establish FGA integration (policy) indicators and evaluation criteria in accordance with the provision that the refugee integration policy is an integral (component) part of the immigration, asylum and foreigner integration policy and a cornerstone of the asylum policy making it possible to employ the existing economic and social asylum (policy and process) capacity. Given the links between the asylum policy and refugee integration processes, the Document associates those processes through specific integration indicators, e.g. the legal status, labour market participation, vulnerability, equal opportunities, naturalisation, etc.

### **The Document is drawn up on the following grounds:**

2. Legislation of the Republic of Lithuania: the Law of the Republic of Lithuania on the legal status of foreigners ('the Legal Status Law'); the Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania; the Law of the Republic of Lithuania on education; the Law of the Republic of Lithuania on education and studies; the Law of the Republic of Lithuania on health insurance; the Law of the Republic of Lithuania on social integration of the disabled; the Law of the Republic of Lithuania on support in the case of death; the Law of the Republic of Lithuania on child benefits; the Law of the Republic of Lithuania on parliamentary elections; the Law of the Republic of Lithuania on European parliamentary elections; the Law of the Republic of Lithuania on associations; the Law of the Republic of Lithuania on trade unions; the Law of the Republic of Lithuania on assemblies; the Law of the Republic of Lithuania on citizenship; the Law of the Republic of Lithuania on political parties; the Law of the Republic of Lithuania on equal opportunities for women and men; the Law of the Republic of Lithuania on equal opportunities; the Criminal Code of the Republic of Lithuania; the Law of the Republic of Lithuania on duties; the Law of the Republic of Lithuania on individual income tax; the Law of the Republic of Lithuania on support for employment; the Guidelines on the Lithuanian migration policy approved by Resolution No 79 of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania of 22 January 2014; the Action Plan for the implementation of the Foreigners Integration Policy for 2015-2017 approved by Order No A1-683 of the Minister for Social Security and Labour; the National Progress Strategy Lithuania 2030 approved by Resolution No XI-2015 of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania of 15 May 2012; the National Progress Programme for 2014-2020 approved by Resolution No 1482 of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania of 28 November 2012; Resolution No 212 of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania of 1 February 2012 approving the Procedure for the recognition of education and qualifications relating to higher education and acquired under educational curricula of other countries and international organisations; Resolution No V-1100 of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania of 5 July 2012 on the recognition of regulated professional qualifications of third-country nationals; the Procedure for granting state support for integration of foreigners granted asylum in Lithuania; the Procedure for issuing, replacing and withdrawing temporary residence permits to foreigners in the Republic of Lithuania and for assessing whether a marriage, a registered partnership, child

adoption or an undertaking are fictitious approved by Order No 1V-329 of the Minister for the Interior of the Republic of Lithuania of 12 October 2005; the Procedure for child and adult education in bridge classes and in bridge mobile groups for foreigners and nationals of the Republic of Lithuania arriving or returning to live and work in the Republic of Lithuania approved by Order No ISAK-1800 of the Minister for Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania of 1 September 2005; legislation on education in general education schools for children of foreigners arriving to work or live in the Republic of Lithuania approved by Order No ISAK-789 of the Minister for Education and Science of 4 June 2003.

3. Instruments of the European Union ('the EU'): the Common Basic Principles for Immigrant Integration Policy in the EU (19 November 2004); the European Agenda for the Integration of Third-Country Nationals (20 July 2011, COM(2011) 455 final); Regulation (EU) No 516/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund ([2014] OJ L 150/168); Council Decision 2008/381/EC establishing a European Migration Network ([2008] OJ L131/7); the Racial Equality Directive ([2000] OJ L 180/22); the Employment Directive ([2000] OJ L 303/16); Directive 2011/95/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council on standards for the qualification of third-country nationals or stateless persons as beneficiaries of international protection, for a uniform status for refugees or for persons eligible for subsidiary protection, and for the content of the protection granted ([2011] OJ L 337/9); Directive 2013/32/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council on common procedures for granting and withdrawing international protection ([2013] OJ L 180/60); Directive 2013/33/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council laying down standards for the reception of applicants for international protection ([2013] OJ L 180/96); Regulation (EU) No 604/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing the criteria and mechanisms for determining the Member State responsible for examining an application for international protection lodged in one of the Member States by a third-country national or a stateless person ([2013] OJ L 180/31); Council Directive 2003/86/EC on the right to family reunification ([2003] OJ L 251/12); the Strategy for equality between women and men 2010-2015 (21 September 2010, COM(2010) 491 final); Europe 2020 strategy (3 March 2010, COM(2010) 2020 final).
4. International instruments: the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and the 1967 Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees (*Official Gazette*, 1997, No 12-227); the Convention of the Council of Europe on the participation of foreigners in public life at local level (5 February 1992, CETS No 144); ILO Conventions *on labour migration* (ILO, 1949) and *No 143 concerning Migrations in Abusive Conditions and the Promotion of Equality of Opportunity and Treatment of Migrant Workers* (ILO, 1975); the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (*Official Gazette*, 1998, No 108-2957); the European Social Charter (*Official Gazette*, 2001, No 49-1704); the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (*Official Gazette*, 2011, No 156-7390); the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (*Official Gazette*, 2002, No 77-3288); the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (*Official Gazette*, 2002, No 77-3290).

5. Article 34 of the 1951 Refugee Convention setting out that the Contracting States are as far as possible to facilitate the assimilation and naturalisation of refugees. The 1951 Refugee Convention gives refugees solid grounds on which they can gradually regain social and economic independence necessary for going on with their lives. The logic of the system established by the Convention is as follows: in the course of time and with the bonds and links between refugees and the host State becoming stronger, they should be enabled to enjoy more versatile rights. In this respect, Conclusion No 104 of the UNHCR Executive Committee urges the Contracting States to facilitate, as appropriate, the integration of refugees and recalls that this may require additional effort (UNHCR 2014).

## **Key definitions and the target group**

### *Integration and integration policy*

6. The Lithuanian Migration Policy Guidelines (2014) set out that the foreigner integration policy is to be implemented in accordance with the following principles: assuring human rights and equal opportunities in all areas of life; granting the permanent residence status and/or citizenship; reducing social inequality, vulnerability and exploitation; monitoring working and living conditions; strengthening representation (the Migration Policy Guidelines 2014).
7. The strategic document for the integration of third-country nationals (2015) defines the integration of foreigners as a mutual adaptation process between foreigners and the host State and the society ensuring the rights and equal opportunities for foreigners to participate in promoting national welfare and to use national and public resources in the labour market and in the areas of education, healthcare, social security and political and civic participation (the TCN Strategic Document 2015).
8. The strategic document for the integration of third-country nationals also defines the concept of the foreigner inclusion policy. The integration policy is the entirety of existing legislation and integration measures and activities of participating authorities, non-governmental and foreign organisations seeking to ensure equal rights, duties and opportunities for foreigners to participate in various governmental and public life areas (labour market and employment, education, healthcare, social security, political and civic participation, anti-discrimination and equal opportunities), to reduce social inequality and exclusion, vulnerability and exploitation (the TCN Strategic Document 2015).
9. The procedure for the integration of foreigners granted asylum (2015) defines state support for integration in Lithuania as the entirety of measures envisaged to provide foreigners granted asylum with the same opportunities to support themselves and to participate in public life like other members of the public (the FGA Integration Procedure 2015).

10. The procedure for the integration of foreigners granted asylum (2015) also stipulates that integration of foreigners granted asylum is a process of adaptation of a specific person or family in a foreign environment which starts at a reception centre for refugees and continues in a municipal territory and during which the person (family) receives, as appropriate, educational, medical, social and other services to enable that person (family) to join the community and the labour market (the FGA Integration Procedure 2015).
11. It should be noted that the concepts of integration defined in all of the above documents are essentially appropriate and there is no need to introduce a single concept of integration so that it would be possible in each individual document to highlight those elements of integration that are the most relevant to the area governed by the respective document. That said, given the long-term prospects of integration and international commitments, the recommendation is to expand the concept of integration with aspects of political and civic participation of FGAs and of acquiring citizenship under preferential conditions and with their detailed description.
12. Given the topical nature of the concept of integration, the Document covers the following areas of integration of foreigners: employment and labour market, education, healthcare, social security, civic and political participation (acquisition of citizenship), implementation of the principles of non-discrimination and equal opportunities, creating positive public outlook, family reunification and business/legal activity.

*Asylum in Lithuania: the refugee status and subsidiary protection*

13. Asylum in the Republic of Lithuania is the refugee status or subsidiary protection granted in accordance with the grounds and procedure laid down in the Legal Status Law (Article 2(23) of the Legal Status Law).
14. A refugee is a foreigner who is granted the refugee status in accordance with the procedure laid down in the Legal Status Law (Article 2(18) of the Legal Status Law). Article 86(1) of the Legal Status Law sets out that the refugee status is granted to an asylum seeker who, for a well-founded fear of being persecuted because of race, religion, ethnicity, belonging to a certain social group or political conviction, is out of his or her state of nationality and cannot or is afraid to use the protection of that state or does not hold relevant foreign citizenship, or is out of the state of permanent residence and for the above reasons cannot or is afraid to return. The refugee status is not granted to persons meeting the criteria of Article 86(1) of the Legal Status Law where any of the circumstances listed in Articles 88(1) and (2) of the Legal Status Law are established. In accordance with Article 53(1)(7) of the Legal Status Law, a foreigner granted the refugee status is issued a permanent residence permit in Lithuania renewed every 5 years.
15. The subsidiary protection status: in accordance with Article 87(1) of the Legal Status Law, subsidiary protection is granted to an asylum seeker who is out of his or her

country of origin and cannot return for a well-founded fear of: (1) torture, cruel or degrading treatment or deprivation of dignity or other punishment; (2) a threat of capital punishment or execution; (3) a serious and individual threat to life, health, safety or freedom relating to violence in situations of international or internal armed conflict. Subsidiary protection is not granted to persons meeting the criteria of Article 87(1) of the Legal Status Law where any of the circumstances listed in Articles 88(1) and (3) of the Legal Status Law are established. In accordance with Article 40(1)(9) of the Legal Status Law, a foreigner granted the subsidiary protection status is issued a temporary residence permit in Lithuania renewed every 2 years (Article 48(2) of the Legal Status Law).

16. Family members: Article 2(26) of the Legal Status Law sets out that family members include a spouse or a person with whom there is a registered partnership contract, minor children (stepchildren) ('children') including minor children of a spouse or a person with whom there is a registered partnership contract unless they are married and independent of their parents as well as first-degree direct ascendants supported for at least one year and unable to use the support of other family members residing abroad.
  
17. Vulnerable persons: Article 2(181) of the Legal Status Law sets out that a vulnerable person is a person with special needs (e.g. a minor, a disabled person, a person over 75 years of age, a pregnant woman, a single parent with minor children, a person with mental disorders, a victim of trafficking in human beings or a person previously subjected to torture, rape or other serious forms of psychological, physical or sexual violence). Paragraph 3 of the Integration Procedure stipulates that the concept of vulnerable foreigners granted asylum includes the following categories: unaccompanied minors; pregnant women; persons previously subjected to torture; persons with mental disorders; persons with health disorders causing long-term incapacity for work or persons whose personal ability to learn, participate and act is diminished because of the negative effect of a disease, trauma, injury, congenital or childhood health disorders or environmental factors and require continuous surveillance and support of others; retired persons; single parents with minor children; families with minor children.

## II. GOALS AND PRINCIPLES OF THE INTEGRATION POLICY FOR FOREIGNERS GRANTED ASYLUM

18. **The purpose of the integration policy for foreigners granted asylum** is to ensure a consistent and continuous implementation of FGA integration measures and the monitoring of integration processes, to develop the infrastructure for implementing the FGA Integration Policy and to ensure continuous respect for general principles of the EU integration policy and implementing directives (in particular, having regard to Article 29 of the Qualification Directive and Article 34 of the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees) and for international law commitments (e.g. Article 34 of the 1951 Refugee Convention stipulating that the Contracting Parties are to facilitate, as appropriate, the integration and naturalisation of refugees).

### **Objectives of the integration policy for foreigners granted asylum:**

19. In shaping and implementing the FGA Integration Policy and measures in Lithuania, to implement general EU integration principles and efficiently apply EU directives *de jure* and *de facto* (with particular focus on Article 29 of the Qualification Directive and Article 34 of the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees) and to respect international law commitments (e.g. Article 34 of the 1951 Refugee Convention stipulating that the Contracting Parties are to facilitate, as appropriate, the integration and naturalisation of refugees);
20. To promote the development of FGA integration processes on the national and local levels (vertically) by creating State-coordinated FGA integration infrastructure involving non-governmental organisations and municipalities as the key providers of integration measures; to ensure the transparency and continuity of activities of non-governmental organisations and municipalities as the key providers of integration services; to seek that integration measures for FGAs are in line with the goals and objectives of the integration policy. FGA integration is developed taking into account the results of studies completed in Lithuania, insights put forward by the academic community and international organisations and taking over successful experience of other countries more advanced in FGA integration;
21. In shaping and implementing the FGA Integration Policy, to promote intersectoral cooperation (horizontally) involving state authorities, non-governmental, employer, religious, sports and cultural organisations, schools, vocational and higher education establishments, local councils, communities, trade unions, the private sectors and FGAs;
22. To raise public awareness of immigration processes in Lithuania, to reduce stereotypes, bias and negative public outlook in respect of FGAs entering and residing in Lithuania;

23. To ensure continuous monitoring and evaluation of the asylum policy and FGA integration processes.

**Principles of the integration policy for foreigners granted asylum:**

24. *Integration.* FGA integration is a multi-faceted, long-term and continuous process involving FGAs and all members of the community which seeks to empower and motivate FGAs to participate in integration measures while increasing the openness of the society, respect for diversity and a positive view of multiculturalism and enabling the use of customised integration measures. Integration is about not only the legal status of FGAs but also full family life, equal opportunities in labour and housing markets and in education when receiving services, civil rights and duties and opportunities to become Lithuanian nationals under preferential conditions.
25. *Equal opportunities and non-discrimination.* In developing and implementing the FGA Integration Policy, it is important to rely on provisions that help to ensure human rights and equal opportunities. Activities of state, private and non-governmental institutions and the cultural environment opening new opportunities for a cohesive society must be based on the values of respect for human rights and non-discrimination. It should be noted that in its case-law the European Court of Human Rights has stated that where the relevant State is the only State which, objectively, can assume responsibility for a person in terms of social security, such a person is in an objectively similar situation to nationals of that State (*Andrejeva v Latvia*, No 55707/00, para 88). Given that an FGA does not have another State to take care of the protection of his or her rights, this provision must also apply to FGAs when establishing what social guarantees they are to be afforded;
26. *Respect for diversity.* In increasing the effectiveness of FGA integration, it is necessary to encourage a positive public opinion towards FGAs residing in Lithuania and to reduce manifestations of xenophobia and discrimination;
27. *Social equality.* Integration must be linked with the principles of social justice and people's ability to use their potential and to seek the goals set, which is why there is a need to reduce social inequality, vulnerability and exploitation of FGAs and to ensure the monitoring of working and living conditions and the accessibility of social security (support for employment, housing search, professional development and healthcare services, etc.). Article 29(1) of Directive 2011/95/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 December 2011 on standards for the qualification of third-country nationals or stateless persons as beneficiaries of international protection, for a uniform status for refugees or for persons eligible for subsidiary protection, and for the content of the protection granted sets out that Member States ensure that beneficiaries of international protection receive, in the Member State that has granted such protection, the necessary social assistance as provided to nationals of that Member State. In accordance with paragraph 2 of that Article, by way of derogation from the general rule laid down in paragraph 1, Member States may limit social

assistance granted to beneficiaries of subsidiary protection status to core benefits which will then be provided at the same level and under the same eligibility conditions as nationals. Given that, EU Member States must provide FGAs with such social assistance as to ensure at least the provision of the minimum level of subsistence.

28. *Full participation and representation.* In dealing with integration-related matters, there is a need to increase the involvement of FGAs and FGA organisations in policy shaping and implementation processes ensuring the representation of FGA interests;
29. *Prospective eligibility.* FGAs having met the statutory commitments acquire the right to permanent residence in the Republic of Lithuania and the nationality of the Republic of Lithuania (without applying any requirements that FGAs objectively could not meet because of their status);
30. *Meeting various needs.* Integration measures should reflect various FGA needs taking account of their legal status, vulnerability, age, gender, marital status and other social and demographic features. There is a need to take into account the specific situation of FGAs and their opportunities to produce original documents certifying their experience, education and others which in many cases FGAs cannot present.

#### **Integration measures**

31. **The purpose of long-term and short-term integration measures** is to improve FGA integration instruments ensuring the implementation of the principles of integration, equal opportunities and non-discrimination, respect for diversity, social equality, full participation and representation, prospective eligibility and meeting various needs.
32. *Short-term integration measures* include provision of information, drawing up an individual integration plan with the involvement of FGAs proper, initiating mentorship, inclusion in the labour market, organisation of Lithuanian language and constitution courses, provision of individual and group consultations on legal, social and psychological issues, promotion of entrepreneurship and recognition of qualifications, drawing up and disseminating information materials (publications) (the list of measures is non-exhaustive). These measures are implemented by non-governmental organisations. Short-term integration measures must be accessible to all FGAs lawfully residing in Lithuania and their family members, irrespective of the grounds of their arrival and the type of their residence permit; these measures must be implemented taking into account all principles of non-discrimination and equal opportunities.
33. *Long-term integration measures* include public awareness raising, establishing a consultative integration forum, dealing with the problem of FGAs' language barrier by organising integrated official language learning and citizenship courses for FGAs falling within socially excluded groups; providing individual and group consultations, organising training for leaders of informal ethnic groups and communities about requirements for establishing an association, administrative and financial management

of an organisation, marketing, leadership and project development; linguistic (second foreign language), professional and multicultural development of Lithuanian linguists, social workers, migration specialists, teachers within the educational system, healthcare professionals and organisations working with immigrants; enhancing cooperation between institutions providing assistance to FGAs; improving curricula of higher education establishments focusing on intercultural communication; improving the FGA Integration Policy (the list of measures is non-exhaustive). Long-term integration measures must be accessible to all FGAs lawfully residing in Lithuania and their family members, irrespective of the grounds of their arrival and the type of their residence permit; these measures must be implemented taking into account all principles of non-discrimination and equal opportunities.

34. *Application of FGA integration measures*: general integration measures apply to all FGAs under equal conditions, irrespective of the way of entry to Lithuania (arriving on their own or resettled by a decision of the Lithuanian Government).

### III. ENSURING FGA INTEGRATION PROCESSES

35. The FGA Integration Policy and its implementation are the responsibility of the Government coordinating and supporting the involvement of other process participants (public authorities, non-governmental, employer, religious, sports and cultural organisations, schools, vocational and higher education establishments, local councils, communities, trade unions, the private sector and FGAs) in integration processes.

#### EMPLOYMENT, LABOUR MARKET AND LEGAL ACTIVITY

##### Current situation

36. Successful economic integration is achieved where foreigners (third-country nationals, FGAs or refugees) contribute to the economic growth of the host State and receive income ensuring the living of foreigners having arrived in Lithuania and their families at least not below the poverty threshold. In accordance with the Eurofound data, the key factors for successful integration in the labour market are the low unemployment rate among migrants, their integration in the highly-skilled labour market and the assurance of equal rights and opportunities in the area of employment (Eurofound, 2007).
37. In accordance with Articles 58(1)(1) and (3) of the Legal Status Law, both foreigners granted the refugee status and foreigners granted subsidiary protection are exempt from the obligation to obtain a work permit. These persons can therefore start to work under an employment contract as soon as they receive a residence permit in Lithuania. Meanwhile, before the asylum status and the residence permit in Lithuania are granted and during the asylum procedure while the person holds the asylum seeker status, they may not work in Lithuania.
38. In accordance with Articles 2(2) and (7) of the Law of the Republic of Lithuania on individual income tax, persons granted asylum in the Republic of Lithuania may engage in individual activity on the grounds of an individual activity certificate or a business certificate. Such persons may also engage in other legal activity and incorporate various undertakings.
39. In accordance with the data of quantitative studies conducted in Lithuania, many FGAs residing in Lithuania (about 65.2%) used to work before arriving in Lithuania but when residing in Lithuania their employment rate was only half of that (only 34.8%). An analysis of those studies has also revealed that FGAs who have been unemployed in their country of origin tend to be inactive in the labour market in Lithuania. For instance, 34.8% of foreigners interviewed claimed that they were unemployed in their country of origin and their unemployment level in Lithuania increased to 65.2% (Žibas, 2013).
40. During the integration support period, support for employment allocated to FGAs covers the following measures: an introduction to the Lithuanian labour market, establishing opportunities, professional development through retraining or acquiring a new profession, information and, if appropriate, support for starting one's own

business and support for employment under an employment contract (Article 42 of the Integration Procedure approved by an order of the Minister for Social Security and Labour). The authority ensuring integration may conclude a contract with the local labour exchange on the implementation of employment measures in accordance with a foreigner's individual labour market integration plan while vocational training may take place in accordance with customised programmes. The Integration Procedure provides for support for creating new jobs allocated from the integration support funds when concluding a contract with an employer.

41. Integration funds may be used to support a person granted asylum who incorporates his or her own business to obtain a business certificate or a licence and to purchase or lease work equipment (Articles 44 to 47 of the Integration Procedure approved by an order of the Minister for Social Security and Labour).
42. Apart from the employment support measures listed in the Integration Procedure, FGAs are also subject to the Law of the Republic of Lithuania on support for employment (Article 1(2)(2)) according to which support for employment is provided to FGAs on the same grounds as to Lithuanian nationals. It should also be noted that being an FGA for employment purposes does not automatically imply that the person belongs to a vulnerable group entitled to additional support and may be offered additional support measures.
43. Most FGAs look for opportunities to be employed and actively participate in the labour market. Work is viewed as a guarantee of economic prosperity and social integration. FGAs agree to do any kind of work irrespective of their educational background and wishes but more than half of foreigners involved in the study claimed that they were unable to find a job (52.1%) and a mere 6.3% of the respondents stated that the cause of their unemployment was subsistence by benefits. Almost a fifth (18.8%) indicated that they had children and did not actively search for a job because of that; 12.5% cannot find a job because they study; and 10.4% cited their incapacity for work (Žibas, 2013).
44. Studies conducted in the European Union Member States show that opportunities for female FGAs to actively participate in the labour market are often limited because of their childcare duties, family traditions prohibiting women to work if their husbands are unemployed and gender and ethnicity stereotypes (Sansone, 2016), which is why female unemployment rates are particularly high in host countries immediately upon arrival and within 10 years of residence. In the long run the trend is reversed however. The example of Sweden shows that the employment situation of female refugees changes at a slower pace than that of male refugees but after the first 10 years of living in Sweden the employment rate increases significantly, which is closely linked with social policy measures promoting family and work life reconciliation and providing for flexible childcare options and rather generous parental leave schemes (European Parliament, 2016, p. 24).
45. Professional distribution of FGAs shows their preparedness to work in services where Lithuania currently faces a lack of the labour force. In Lithuania FGAs usually work as floor staff, hairdressers, construction workers (builders, finishers, welders, painters and building insulation installers), seamstresses, cooks, car mechanics, engineers and pastry makers (Žibas, 2013).

46. The lack of linguistic skills and support when looking for a job and inadequate level of education and/or qualifications are the main obstacles for foreigners to get employed. Thus, about three quarters of the respondents stressed insufficient knowledge of the language, about a half wished for more assistance in looking for a job and a little fewer than a half believed that they did not have an adequate level of education and/or qualifications (Žibas, 2013).
47. An analysis of the studies shows that foreigners rarely contact employers directly, only 16.7% of the respondents have done so. The least helpful in finding work were advertisements in printed media (8.3%) and the labour exchange (2.8%) (Žibas, 2013).
48. Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden have individualised integration programmes (support for integration) the ultimate goal of which is to ensure that adult refugees acquire basic language skills and are trained to enter the labour market or acquire education. There are also targeted initiatives such as special lectures on employment and trial jobs to facilitate the labour market entry for immigrants and refugees (UNHCR, 2014). Sweden and Denmark share a practice to enable arriving foreigners (refugees, FGAs or immigrants holding another status) to work in the private or in the public sector, with 80% of their job maintenance allocated from the municipal or state budget for a period of 6 to 24 months. Such employment is linked with language training at work organised by the municipality. A half of foreigners participating in such a programme remain employed in the labour market after the end of the programme (European Parliament, 2016, p. 38).
49. In Denmark the programme functions in a similar way. The initial phase is to conduct an individual evaluation of everyone's skills and have them enrolled in Danish language learning (for 4 to 8 weeks). After the end of the first phase, people are offered an opportunity to work as an assistant or trainee in an undertaking and to continue language courses. Employers are not given any financial responsibility, and it is the municipality that takes care of keeping the refugee or the FGA in the labour market (for 26 to 52 weeks) (European Parliament, 2016, p. 38).

### **Problems and challenges**

50. Lithuania still offers no work opportunities for asylum seekers even though the European Union Member States are obliged to do so by Directive 2013/33/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council laying down standards for the reception of applicants for international protection. Article 15 of that Directive sets out that Member States ensure that applicants have access to the labour market no later than 9 months from the date when the application for international protection was lodged if a first instance decision by the competent authority has not been taken and the delay cannot be attributed to the applicant. This provision was to be transposed by 20 July 2015 but it has not been transposed into Lithuanian legislation. It should be noted that the inability to work during the asylum procedure cuts down opportunities for looking for integration solutions from the moment of arrival of asylum seekers in Lithuania and when they are granted asylum in Lithuania it makes it more difficult for them to access the labour market. The UNHCR urges countries to enable asylum seekers to work in 6 months.

51. Although FGAs are subject to the Law of the Republic of Lithuania on support for employment, being an FGA does not automatically imply that a person belongs to a vulnerable group entitled additional support (the list of such groups is included in Article 4(1)) and may be offered additional support measures such as subsidised employment; support for the acquisition of work skills; a contract for the acquisition of work skills and support for job creation, which would be particularly useful for integrating persons granted asylum into the labour market.
52. Not all support measures for employment provided for in the Integration Procedure are practically effective. Support for job creation and support for start-ups (paragraphs 46 and 47 of the Integration Procedure approved by an order of the Minister for Social Security and Labour) are in practice used only in exceptional cases.
53. Difficulties in finding a job, unemployment, low wages that fail to ensure family subsistence and living on benefits reflect the dependence of refugees on social integration measures offered by reception centres for refugees, scarce social resources and economic and social vulnerability associated with negative attitude on behalf of employers, co-workers and the public in general (UNHCR, 2014).
54. Studies conducted in Lithuania show that the FGA motivation to integrate into the labour market and become productive residents of Lithuania is significantly weakened by the disillusionment relating to prolonged job search, the understanding that they are undesirable in the country and the lack of intermediation support in looking for a job because refugees face the language barrier and it is difficult for them to obtain information about vacancies. Moreover, it is rather difficult to reach agencies that would help to find a job as possibilities of travelling between reception centres for refugees and bigger cities or between cities are limited because of low financial support (UNHCR, 2014).
55. Unsuccessful job search attempts and the readiness to do any work irrespective of the educational background in the country of origin and wishes with a view to adapting to labour market demands in Lithuania lead to the deskilling of foreigners granted asylum. This may be linked both with the labour market and the language barrier as well as the (non-)recognition of qualifications acquired in the country of origin. Moreover, the readiness of foreigners to work for less prompts their exploitation and aggravates deprivation and the sense of dissatisfaction with the status quo. Such conditions in the long run hinder successful integration of FGAs and affect FGAs' decision to leave Lithuania for Western Europe or Scandinavia (Žibas, 2013; Aleknevičienė, 2013).
56. Although many FGAs participate in professional qualification courses with a view to acquiring professions matching labour market demands, this is often futile in finding a job. FGAs participate in professional development courses without knowing the Lithuanian language (or having very little knowledge of it), which is why such courses are not always useful. Foreigners often have a professional qualification but lack work experience, which is why they do not get employed.
57. The language barrier creates numerous obstacles for foreigners who want to get employed, ensure the quality of working conditions, negotiate working hours and wages and prevent possible exploitation at work. Poor linguistic skills and/or lack

thereof make it difficult to find information about work offers (Žibas, 2013; Aleknevičienė, 2013).

58. The negative attitude on behalf of employers and employees is one of the key obstacles to FGA employment and integration. The language barrier makes it more difficult for a foreigner to speak with the employer while stereotypes and bias lead to a negative assessment of FGAs' ability to work, irrespective of their profession, qualification and/or work experience (Žibas, 2013, p. 20-38).
59. Looking for sources of livelihood, FGAs agree to take up unofficial employment and receive unofficial payment. This situation however poses a threat of exploitation, non-payment of wages or payment of lower wages, absence of social guarantees, the economic and social precariousness of the foreigner's position and stronger lack of confidence in employers (Aleknevičienė, 2013).
60. Study results indicate that there is a lack of support for employment and inadequate intermediation services in Lithuania. The lack of services of social workers and curators as the key resources for employment aggravate high unemployment indicators among FGAs and eventually weaken their social ties with the society through the labour market.

#### **Measures and recommendations**

61. To approve legislative provisions for a possibility to work during the examination of the asylum application. In accordance with Article 15 of Directive 2013/33/EU, the possibility to work must be afforded at least to those asylum seekers whose applications at a first instance are examined for longer than 9 months (which is the case in Lithuania where the file is returned to the first instance by the court). It would also make sense to consider ensuring that right for other asylum seekers whose applications are examined under the general procedure or who are very likely to be granted asylum in Lithuania (e.g. asylum seekers who are resettled or relocated or arrive from countries whose asylum-seeking nationals are usually granted asylum) (OECD, Making Integration Work, paragraph 18).
62. In Article 4(1) of the Law of the Republic of Lithuania on support for employment to include persons granted asylum in Lithuania as one of the groups of persons entitled to additional support. To apply all assisted employment measures and support for job creation to support the employment of such persons.
63. An analysis of FGAs' employment and economic status shows that with a view to ensuring FGA employment there is a need to create favourable conditions for employment, learn the Lithuanian language, take positions in line with professional qualifications, enhance foreigners' economic stability, create conditions for family and work life reconciliation and change the attitude of employers and co-workers. Dealing with these complex issues is one of the key factors for FGA social integration.
64. To promote cooperation between public authorities active in the area of integration and non-governmental organisations with a view to meeting complex needs of FGAs taking into account their individual needs, competences and qualifications and drawing up individual integration plans.

65. To enable FGAs to take joint language and vocational training courses as this facilitates faster integration into the labour market and the acquisition of professional skills required for a specific job.
66. To develop intermediation and assistance services of social workers and curators for FGA employment providing them with better opportunities for active participation in the labour market; to engage in a dialogue and strengthen ties with employers from the public and the private sectors and employer organisations for the sake of FGA employment and information exchange.
67. To organise training for expanding intercultural competences of the staff of the Lithuanian Labour Exchange and employers.
68. To ensure the dissemination of information among FGAs in a language they understand about employee rights and remedies available involving in this process the authorities protecting employee rights: the State Labour Inspectorate and trade unions.
69. For the Ministry of Social Security and Labour together with the Lithuanian Labour Exchange and organisations of socially responsible employers to create a single system network of job offers for refugees and regularly publicise it, to ensure continuous cooperation with employers, to create special incentives for employers employing refugees advertising the added value for their business and changing established negative stereotypes about refugees and asylum seekers. A dedicated system establishing connections between FGAs and Lithuanian employers is what could eventually even become a strong integration alternative where the main load associated with helping FGAs to integrate in Lithuania is shifted from the authorities to businesses and employers who would understand the usefulness of FGAs for the Lithuanian labour market and be interested in successful FGA integration.
70. To sum up, the recommendation is that with a view to ensuring effective FGA integration into the labour market curators of FGA social integration or the staff of the Lithuanian Labour Exchange should play a particular and active intermediation role between employers and FGAs by: (1) collecting information about job offers from employers willing to help FGAs; (2) providing for FGA professional development relating to a specific job; (3) liaising with the employer and FGAs in the course of their labour relations and providing support in dealing with issues relating to intercultural matters.
71. To provide information about opportunities, requirements and procedures for starting one's own business and participating in activities of business incubators. To disseminate information about successful activities of FGAs' businesses. To provide for and apply monitoring and evaluation mechanisms for FGA integration into the labour market: to monitor and evaluate the FGA employment rate, their status in the labour market, working conditions, the effect of various factors (gender, country of origin, ethnicity, language, religion, arrival circumstances, duration of the residence permit, etc.) on the FGA integration into the labour market, incapacity trends, possibilities to participate in the labour market enjoying equal rights with Lithuanian nationals, recognition of qualifications particularly paying attention to the fact that FGAs cannot produce documents certifying their qualifications, retraining trends, etc.

## EDUCATION AND LANGUAGE

### Current situation

72. Lithuanian language courses for adults and courses introducing the Lithuanian culture to persons granted asylum are organised by reception centres for refugees. With further integration continuing on the municipal level, Lithuanian language courses are organised by the authority ensuring integration. Lithuanian language courses take place for 190 hours (about 2 hours per day). After they are completed, during the integration programme FGAs sit for an official language examination. Should they fail for good reasons (mental health disorders, inability to learn what is given within the time allocated, etc.), an additional course of up to 100 hours may be envisaged, following which a person sits for the examination again during the course of the integration programme (paragraphs 28-31 of the Integration Procedure approved by an order of the Minister for Social Security and Labour).
73. The data of studies conducted in Lithuania show that Lithuanian language learning becomes difficult for most refugees and asylum seekers because of mismatches between their needs and the teaching methodology proposed. Illiterate refugees or persons with poor educational backgrounds having no English or Russian language skills thought that language courses could not be as useful for them as they were for others because they were adapted to persons with higher levels of education. Some refugees mentioned that inadequate teacher skills and competences were an obstacle to quality language training. Moreover, according to refugees, the number of course hours was insufficient. Some refugees indicated that an intensive course would be useful. When assessing FGA language skills in Lithuanian, only 2% of the respondents stated that they could read (UNHCR, 2014; Žibas, 2013).
74. Qualitative surveys have revealed that closer relations with the local community would help refugees to learn the language better while employment and communication at work would enhance practical use and knowledge of the language. However, because of isolation, limited financial possibilities, intolerance and/or xenophobia or sometimes traumatic experiences, refugees' ability to develop linguistic skills in a social environment is substantially diminished (UNHCR, 2014). Some refugees having started their own business shared their good experience saying that as soon as they developed their social network (friends, acquaintances and customers), they got more language practice and greatly improved their linguistic skills as compared to learning with a teacher and a textbook (UNHCR, 2014; Žibas, 2013).
75. The example of the Scandinavian countries shows that training methods are also relevant for the effectiveness of courses. Norway uses a three-stage language training method where language learning groups are formed on the basis of the level of literacy of refugees, with teaching methods adapted to them. With a view to assessing foreigners' skills and needs, responsible municipal officials organise interviews with foreigners and use an established methodology for evaluating the level of education of foreigners, their professional skills and work experience, foreign language skills and future plans (European Parliament, 2016, p. 38).
76. The example of Sweden shows that actual language learning is best achieved in real life where the pivot role is given to social contacts, which is why with a view to

facilitating access to the labour market and accelerating language learning, the suggestion, apart from basic language training, is to consider bringing work and language practice together. Such possibilities may include voluntary work and traineeships, work and practical placement where language learning is linked with professional activity or a possibility to work as a trainee in an undertaking or an institution (UNHCR, 2014, p. 43; European Parliament, 2016, p. 38).

77. Research shows that introductory courses on the culture of the host country and civic education are an integral part of the refugee and FGA education policy and these subjects are best learned when such refugee and FGA training courses are integrated in adult education programmes already existing (European Parliament, 2016, p. 39). The Law of the Republic of Lithuania on non-formal education provides for targets and objectives to help persons to meet their self-education needs, expand their cultural interests, develop personal creative powers and competences, become active citizens of a democratic society and acquire theoretical knowledge and practical skills required for their professional activities. In practice, however, the needs of migrants, refugees or FGAs are not incorporated in existing adult education programmes, except for project-based activities of non-governmental organisations organising cultural courses for refugees and FGAs (MEDBALT, 2015, p. 85-87).
78. Lithuanian language training for minors may be organised in pre-school groups and additional Lithuanian language lessons in general education schools (Article 33 of the Integration Procedure). In accordance with paragraph 3 of the Procedure for child and adult education in bridge classes and in bridge mobile groups for foreigners and nationals of the Republic of Lithuania arriving or returning to live and work in the Republic of Lithuania approved by an order of the Minister for Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania on 1 September 2005, students with no Lithuanian language skills spend one year learning Lithuanian in bridge classes or bridge mobile groups before they start continuous general education at school.
79. In accordance with Articles 2(21), 29(9) and 46(2)(3) of the Law of the Republic of Lithuania on education, all children under 16 years of age, both nationals and foreigners entitled to permanently or temporarily reside in Lithuania, must be enrolled in compulsory education programmes. In accordance with paragraphs 1 and 2 of Order No ISAK-789 of the Minister for Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania of 4 June 2003 on education in general education schools for children of foreigners arriving to work or live in the Republic of Lithuania, children of foreigners arriving to live or work in the Republic of Lithuania, minor foreigners enjoying temporary protection in the Republic of Lithuania, unaccompanied minors from abroad irrespective of the legitimacy of their presence in the territory of the Republic of Lithuania are guaranteed enrolment in general education schools organised in accordance with the general education plans of general education schools approved by the Minister for Education and Science and other legislation. Before the start of the school year, school-aged children of foreigners granted asylum are given a benefit equal to 1 base social benefit (EUR 38) for purchasing school supplies out of integration funds (Article 34 of the Integration Procedure approved by an order of the Minister for Social Security and Labour).
80. In analysing learning conditions and language skills of school-aged FGA children, in accordance with the data of studies conducted in Lithuania, 43.5% of the respondents

claimed that their children attended an educational institution because it was important for them that their child would know the Lithuanian language, their mother tongue and English. Among the children attending an educational institution (43.5%), most children go to a Lithuanian school (Žibas, 2013).

81. Studying in public and municipal schools under pre-school, elementary, basic and secondary education programmes and vocational training programmes for acquiring the first qualification is free (Article 70(1) of the Law of the Republic of Lithuania on education). Higher education however is only free for Lithuanian, European Union and European Economic Area nationals, which means that third-country nationals granted asylum can attend Lithuanian higher education schools only if they pay for them themselves (Article 72(1)(3) of the Law of the Republic of Lithuania on education and studies).
82. The recognition of FGA qualifications acquired in other countries is not subject to any specific provisions. Qualifications of those persons may be recognised in accordance with the general procedure like those of other foreigners as provided for in Resolution of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania approving the Procedure for the recognition of education and qualifications relating to higher education and acquired under educational curricula of other countries and international organisations and Resolution of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania on the recognition of regulated professional qualifications of third-country nationals.
83. An overview of foreign studies shows that not all EU countries have methodologies and/or procedures for verifying professional skills that are suitable for the target group of refugees and FGAs. Pilot methodologies for measuring the level of education and work experience of foreigners (refugees and asylum seekers and recipients) have only been launched and their effect has not been assessed yet. The Norwegian model may however be proposed as good practice. Since 2013 Norway has had a scheme for recognising and validating professional qualifications of refugees having no documents certifying their level of education. The Norwegian education quality assessment agency appoints a committee of experts to conduct an evaluation of a foreigner's education (academic testing and evaluations of task-solving competences and work experience skills). Such an evaluation is followed by a decision whether to recognise a foreign qualification as a qualification meeting the Norwegian standard of professional qualifications (European Parliament, 2016, p. 37).
84. Other research shows that educational opportunities and official language courses particularly enhance integration possibilities for women arriving with minor children. Seeing their children's adaptations, they are additionally motivated to actively engage and participate in integration processes (Sansonetti, 2016).

### **Problems and challenges**

85. For successful FGA integration the best conditions must be created for learning the official language ensuring the consistency of the Lithuanian language learning and methodological compatibility with students' needs. Now, according to FGA integration experts, language courses are given insufficient hours in accordance with either good practices of other European countries or the Lithuanian practice. Only 2% of the foreign respondents can read in Lithuanian. In that context, the level of language skills

required for the integration into the labour market is not achieved. Because of the language barrier, it is difficult for refugees to find information on support, relevant legal aspects and possibilities to find housing (the conclusions and recommendations of the conference *Refugees in Lithuania: integration experience and prospects*, 7 December 2015).

86. Studies analysing FGA integration processes and developments note that schools in Lithuania are not in fact ready for receiving foreign children and have no basic infrastructures and systems reflecting their needs that would allow professionally assessing the quality of knowledge acquired by children abroad and efficiently solving problems integrating into the educational system due to the language barrier (MIPEX, 2015). Although legislation provides for the possibility to attend bridge classes or mobile groups for children having no knowledge of the Lithuanian language so that they would learn it, in practice this provision is ineffective. There are FGAs who because of wars or other disturbances in the country of origin have no elementary and/or secondary education, and Lithuanian schools are not adapted to the integration of such persons into the educational system.
87. The recognition of FGA qualifications and levels of education is challenging because they hold no identification documents or original documents certifying their level of education or qualifications and no possibility to produce them. FGAs having no documents required face difficulties in integrating into the labour market, which makes their situation more vulnerable than that of the country's nationals.
88. Article 25 of the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees establishes the principle of administrative assistance, i.e. sets out that *when the exercise of a right by a refugee would normally require the assistance of authorities of a foreign country to whom he cannot have recourse, the Contracting States in whose territory he is residing arrange that such assistance be afforded to him by their own authorities or by an international authority*. Given that, the asylum country must enable FGAs to enjoy their rights or status, i.e. in this case to obtain documents certifying their qualifications.
89. An analysis of the adult education policy in Lithuania (MEDBALT, 2015) shows that educational measures within the integration infrastructure for migrants (including refugees and FGAs) are very fragmented and are essentially based on individual projects. Such project activities fail to ensure continuity and programme sustainability and do not encourage the creation of tested teaching methodologies reflecting various needs of refugees. It should be noted that because of such fragmentation long-term objectives relating to social inclusion cannot be achieved.
90. FGAs and their children, irrespective of the time spent in Lithuania, cannot study in higher education institutions as state-financed students.

### **Measures and recommendations**

91. With a view to ensuring the successful integration of FGAs, there is a need to increase the duration of Lithuanian language courses and to improve their quality and accessibility. Information and motivation to learn the official language are a very important aspect. It is proposed not to indicate the maximum number of hours of the

Lithuanian language in legislation but to teach in accordance with a continuous programme until the FGA is able to pass the examination to acquire Category I certifying the level of knowledge of the Lithuanian language (provided that the person attends the classes sufficiently and puts in effort in the Lithuanian language courses). More opportunities to learn Lithuanian should also be created for those who seek a higher level of proficiency in Lithuanian, i.e. to enable them to achieve not only A1 or A2 but higher levels of proficiency. Where a person moves to another place to live, continuous language training should be ensured for them. There is a need to seek motivational experience from other countries.

92. It would make sense to consider ensuring that right for asylum seekers whose applications are examined under the general procedure or who are very likely to be granted asylum in Lithuania (e.g. asylum seekers who are resettled or relocated or arrive from countries whose asylum-seeking nationals are usually granted asylum) while the asylum procedure is still ongoing and the course should be consistently continued later, after they have been granted asylum.
93. There is a need to ensure the accessibility and flexibility of language services, i.e. to take into account various levels of education or no education and linguistic proficiency and to create conditions for reconciling language learning with work or vocational training and take into account that women often need to reconcile language learning with childcare.
94. There is a need to consider providing for full or partial compensation for Lithuanian language learning to those foreigners granted asylum who wish to continue their Lithuanian studies and acquire higher levels of proficiency than required for the official language examination as well as to persons who receive no state support for integration.
95. Along with general Lithuanian language training programmes, there might be a possibility for FGAs to study in accordance with specialised Lithuanian language training programmes adapted to the needs of a specific profession or professional activity.
96. The proposal is to provide for more flexible forms of learning in bridge classes or mobile groups that FGA children could simultaneously have additional Lithuanian language training while attending school, not only before they start to attend school. There is a need to consider providing for a procedure that children (adolescents) whose age does not match the required level of education could be enrolled in general education schools.
97. There is a need to enable FGAs and their children to study in higher education institutions as state-financed students.
98. There is a need to create alternative means for recognising the level of education and qualifications of FGAs adapting to that end the existing systems for the recognition of non-formal qualifications.
99. There is a need to strengthen interinstitutional cooperation between various authorities (non-governmental organisations, municipalities, educational institutions,

the Ministry of Education, the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education, the Education Development Centre, etc.) and to organise the identification and recognition of qualifications held by refugees.

100. Municipalities must ensure that teachers regularly participate in professional development in line with the needs of refugees and improve their intercultural skills and ensure the quality of language training adapting educational programmes to foreigners with various needs and skills, in particular taking into account the priorities of FGA children and possibilities for providing additional language training services in schools.
101. There is a need to promote NGO and/or community-based projects that would help to create favourable conditions for the communication between refugees and local residents and for the participation of refugees in the social and cultural life of Lithuania, thus creating a favourable environment for improving Lithuanian language knowledge and skills.
102. Educational measures in NGO activities targeting adult migrants should be a priority. Although such measures are popular among NGOs, there is still a lack of coordination that would improve social inclusion, especially for such vulnerable migrant groups as refugees.
103. Educational measures for adult FGAs should be included not only in long-term migrant integration strategies or action plans but also in vocational training schemes. This would allow including adult FGA integration measures in various national policy programmes for educating all adults.
104. Integration and educational programmes should be decentralised, which is why it is important to develop local initiatives covering learning, integration into the labour market, social inclusion processes and active citizenship. There should be a cultural intermediary (NGOs or migrant associations) that would communicate both with FGAs and with local authorities and could explain in detail what the advantages of participating in education programmes are. Local authorities should be more involved in integration activities along with NGOs, which requires enhanced cooperation between local authorities and the NGO sector.
105. Adult education centres and vocational training schools should be aware of the needs of local communities and FGAs and ways to explain to them the importance of learning and education with a view to empowering FGAs. The training method used should take into account the status of adult FGAs and promote their active participation in various activities and include consistent learning materials that would allow FGAs linking their learning experiences with daily activities and work.

## **SOCIAL SECURITY AND HEALTHCARE**

### **Current situation**

106. FGA support is provided first at the reception centre for refugees for a period of up to 3 months. It continues later on the municipal level, or, should the person concerned wish so and a commission created by the Ministry of Social Security and Labour take a relevant decision, integration may start in the municipality from the

very beginning. Where for objective reasons a foreigner granted asylum fail to prepare for integration in the municipality within 3 months, this period may be extended for up to 4 months. Support offered by the reception centre for refugees to unaccompanied minors, with the child's best interests taken into account, may be extended until they reach the age of 18. In the case of unforeseeable circumstances, subject to a decision of the director of the reception centre for refugees and consent by the commission, support at the centre may continue further (Article 11 of the Integration Procedure approved by an order of the Ministry of Social Security and Labour).

107. After the period of integration at the reception centre is completed, support for integration continues in the municipal territory for a period of up to 12 months counting from the day of departure from the reception centre (for vulnerable persons – up to 36 months). Integration in municipalities continues through municipal institutions and non-governmental organisations (integration institutions) with which contracts on FGA integration are concluded by the reception centre and which receive funding for performing integration activities.
108. Paragraph 20 of the Integration Procedure sets out that taking into consideration proposals put forward by integration institutions and the centre's conclusions and, if appropriate, clarifications provided by the foreigner granted asylum, support for integration may continue or be renewed, subject to a decision of the director of the reception centre. Given that, support for integration may continue for persons who have failed to integrate for personal reasons.
109. The current total period for support for integration is 15 months (3 months at the reception centre and 12 months in the municipality). The minimum social, healthcare and legal assistance services are provided in accordance with the Procedure for providing support for FGA integration approved by the Minister for Social Security and Labour (the Integration Procedure approved by an order of the Ministry of Social Security and Labour).
110. Following the end of the period of support for integration at the reception centre, within 60 days following the date of signature of the contract with the organisation responsible for their integration (a municipal authority or an NGO) refugees are to move to the municipal territory. With the help of the municipal authority or non-governmental organisation, refugees have to find a place to live on their own. The lease contract is concluded between the owner and the refugee (UNHCR, 2014, paragraph 28).
111. Municipalities place persons who cannot live independently and who require supervision, care and healthcare services (retired persons, unaccompanied disabled minors and disabled persons) in care institutions, subject to prior coordination with those persons proper and their legal representatives (paragraph 40 of the Integration Procedure approved by an order of the Ministry of Social Security and Labour).
112. Experience of the Scandinavian countries shows that Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden provide refugees granted a residence permit with support for housing and a possibility to move to municipal territories as soon as possible after they

are recognised. Housing search in the respective municipality and the conclusion of a contract with the owner are taken care of by public authorities. This procedure linked with the general duty of municipalities to organise language training for immigrants and refugees and to ensure childcare services and school attendance is the main distinctive feature of the project of support for integration in the Nordic countries. Municipalities receive financial compensation from the state for the provision of such integration services (UNHCR, 2014, p. 46).

113. During the integration period foreigners granted asylum are entitled to a lump-sum settlement payment and a monthly allowance from the funds allocated to integration. The lump-sum settlement payment is granted for purchasing basic furniture and household articles and covering travel or luggage removal expenses. The amount of that payment for unaccompanied foreign minors when they come of age is EUR 1122 (11 times the amount of state-supported income (SSI)); for adults – EUR 204 (2 SSIs); and foreign minors – EUR 102 (1 SSI). The lump-sum settlement payment for a family must not exceed EUR 612 (paragraph 51.1 of the Integration Procedure approved by an order of the Ministry of Social Security and Labour).
114. The amount of monthly benefits varies depending on the integration period: there is one amount for up to 6 months and another one – for a subsequent period of integration. The amount of that benefit for a single person is EUR 204 and later – EUR 102; for a 2-person family – EUR 306 and later – EUR 153; for a 3-person family – EUR 408 and later – EUR 204; where a family consists of more than three persons, each person receives a monthly payment of EUR 51 and later – EUR 25.50. The monthly benefit for a family should not exceed EUR 510 and later – EUR 255. Such benefits are not allocated to persons who receive inpatient social care services in care institutions and unaccompanied minors accommodated with a guardian (paragraph 51.2 of the Integration Procedure approved by an order of the Ministry of Social Security and Labour).
115. FGAs are supported by a lump-sum childbirth benefit, a funeral allowance and a child benefit which are the same amount as those received by Lithuanian citizens. During the supported integration period such benefits are paid out to foreigners granted subsidiary protection from the funds of the integration programme and to foreigners granted the refugee status (who hold a permanent residence permit in the Republic of Lithuania) they are paid in accordance with the general procedure as provided for in legislation of the Republic of Lithuania like all other permanent residents of Lithuania.
116. FGAs living at the reception centre for refugees are entitled to receive medical services at the centre or use healthcare services available in Rukla Town. They can also receive psychological counselling at the centre. Since 2013 all foreigners holding the asylum status are entitled to health insurance, receive free first aid in Lithuania in accordance with the Law of the Republic of Lithuania on the healthcare system and enjoy equal rights with Lithuanian nationals to use healthcare services (UNHCR, 2014, p. 28).
117. In accordance with Articles 6(1)(1), (4) and (8) of the Law of the Republic of Lithuania on health insurance, persons granted asylum in Lithuania are included in the compulsory health insurance system, which is why during the integration period they

are insured with compulsory health insurance covered by state funds, i.e. they receive the same healthcare services as Lithuanian citizens.

### **Problems and challenges**

118. Developments in the existing system of support for integration relating to the shortening of the integration period for vulnerable persons from 5 years to 36 months and establishing the integration period for vulnerable persons after they leave the reception centre only 12 months long may have a negative effect on FGA integration opportunities. According to non-governmental organisations and the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), financial support for integration and personal benefits cut by up to 50% at the end of 2015 adversely affects personal integration opportunities at the initial stage.
119. The latest draft amendments to the Integration Procedure provide that where support is extended, support for integration of vulnerable persons may not last longer than 36 months and 12 months – for others. Setting such a period where it is impossible to take into account individual circumstances, varying capacities and needs of a person and his or her vulnerability is to be deemed an unreasonable restriction because it will breach the principles of equal opportunities as compared to the situation of the country's nationals. The previous procedure provided for a possibility to continue integration until an FGA holding a temporary residence permit may apply for a permanent residence permit, i.e. until he or she completely enters the state social security system as any citizen. The period limited to 36 months will create a gap between the situation of FGAs and citizens.
120. FGAs depend on their monthly benefit for leasing housing, maintaining it (i.e. paying for various utility services), food, clothes, other household articles and transportation expenses. The amount of cash allowance allocated is inadequate for meeting basic needs of a person and it is cut in half in 6 months. It should be noted that within a rather short integration period FGAs have very limited possibilities because of the language barrier and negative attitudes in the society to access the labour market, which means that during the initial period those persons cannot support themselves and take care of their own basic needs. State support amounts for FGA integration have been subject to strong criticism by integration NGOs (the Red Cross Lithuania and Vilnius Caritas), association of local authorities and the UNHCR.
121. It should be noted that the lump-sum settlement allowance for unaccompanied minors is now EUR 1122, i.e. 11 SSIs. In accordance with Article 9(1) of the Law of the Republic of Lithuania on child benefits however, the lump-sum settlement allowance for orphans at the end of the guardianship period due to the coming of age, emancipation or marriage, is EUR 2850, i.e. 75 basic social benefits. It should be noted that the purpose of the lump-sum settlement allowance paid to unaccompanied minors and to orphans is the same as both allowances are paid when the child moves out of the guardian's accommodation and starts to live independently (it should be noted that the reception centre is the guardian of unaccompanied minors), which means that the allocation of different support amounts to children granted asylum who are without parents as compared to other children under guardianship is discriminatory.

122. Persons granted subsidiary protection are issued a temporary residence permit in Lithuania, which is why they are not subject to the following legislation: the Law of the Republic of Lithuania on social integration of disabled persons, the Law of the Republic of Lithuania on state benefits, the Law of the Republic of Lithuania on support in the case of death and the Law of the Republic of Lithuania on child benefits. However, given that persons granted asylum and persons granted subsidiary protection are essentially in the same position, they need international protection and support of the host country because they cannot return to their country of origin to enjoy the guarantees available there (it should be noted that although persons granted subsidiary protection are issued temporary residence permits in Lithuania, their actual country of permanent residence is Lithuania). The distinction between those groups and the application of different social support provisions are unjustified and incompatible with the previously cited case-law of the European Court of Human Rights (*Andrejeva v Latvia*, No 55707/00, paragraph 88).
123. The accommodation of persons during the examination of asylum applications at the Foreigners Registration Centre negatively affects the mental health and wellbeing of refugees (UNHCR, 2014, p. 38). With that in mind, persons should be placed in an environment having no negative effect on their physical and mental health already during the initial phase of the asylum procedure and their living environment should be adapted to their specific needs taking into account their previous experiences (torture, persecutions and other hardships in the country of origin and when travelling to a safe country).
124. Although Article 79(5) of the Legal Status Law sets out that, subject to a decision of the Migration Department, vulnerable persons and their family members may be accommodated in other places meeting their special needs administered by non-governmental organisations working with asylum seekers, that provision does not apply in practice. Until 2016 most asylum seekers have been accommodated at the Foreigners Registration Centre administered by the State Border Guard Service which is a law-enforcement institution rather than a social one, which means that the accessibility of social services is limited there and the overall atmosphere is not like that of a social institution (uniformed officers, security with dogs, barbed wire and entry and exit control). The Foreigners Registration Centre is not tasked with FGA integration. In fact, the Foreigners Registration Centre does not accommodate only unaccompanied minors and resettled persons who are accommodated at the reception centre for refugees and asylum seekers residing in a place of their choice who can support themselves without state support to asylum seekers.
125. Research shows that the non-governmental sector and municipality (commune) staff providing social services are an important resource for foreigners granted asylum when dealing with healthcare issues and housing, employment and child education matters. In organising support, NGOs helping people to integrate or staff providing social services are to play an intermediary role in the foreigner's integration and to encourage their independent functioning rather than dependence on the social integration programme (Žibas, 2013; Bartušienė, 2011).
126. A survey of foreigners granted asylum shows that, apart from the most common problems relating to difficulties in searching for accommodation (50.8%), language barrier (50.7%) and the work ban during the examination of the asylum

application (50%), there are other important factors affecting their integration process. They also mention such issues as health disorders (49.3%), a complex bureaucratic apparatus when dealing with legal documents (47.7%), poor living conditions at the Foreigners Registration Centre (44.6%), problems with extending the social integration programme (43.3%), cultural and religious differences (40.4%), challenges relating to job search (40.3%) and negative attitudes in the society (37.3%) (Žibas, 2013).

127. Surveys have demonstrated that the quality and accessibility of health services, albeit guaranteed, are not ensured. Only first aid is provided while services of other specialists, especially dental practitioners, are rarely available without supplementary charges. It is noted that the language barrier exists when healthcare and psychological counselling services are provided. At the same time, the need for psychological help is one of the most important services mentioned by FGAs. More than half of the respondents (56.9%) have expressed interest in receiving psychological help but experts note that because of the language barrier those services are unavailable or provided with poor quality (Žibas, 2013).
128. Foreign practices show that checks of physical and mental health are regularly conducted in Sweden and Finland when performing any medical examinations (European Parliament, 2016, p. 28). Based on the health status assessment, refugees and FGAs are afforded psychological or psychiatric counselling with interpreters. In Sweden a so-called health specialist arrives and speaks with refugees at the reception centre or language training classes where he or she provides information on post-traumatic experiences, their manifestations and services and where one may go to receive help with overcoming their health disorders caused by psychological trauma (ibid). Germany's experience shows that failure to conduct a due assessment of health disorders caused by psychological trauma eventually has negative effects on integration prospects of such persons in the host society.
129. International organisations such as the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the UN Population Fund and the Women's Refugee Commission point out the vulnerable situation of female refugees and high risks that they may be subjected to sexual abuse and/or involved in human trafficking networks. Host countries in Europe rarely assess the risk of sexual violence against female refugees and offer relevant health services to overcome the consequences of sexual abuse. It should be noted that host countries do not create opportunities or create very limited opportunities for female refugees to receive services relating to their reproductive health, pregnancy complications, sexually transmitted diseases and information about prevention thereof (Birchall, 2016, p. 19-20).
130. It should be noted that there is a practical problem with the provision of healthcare services to children born in Lithuania because newborns are insured with compulsory health insurance from the moment when they are issued a residence permit in Lithuania.

## **Measures and recommendations**

131. It makes sense to regulate the duration of support for integration so that it is not limited to any maximum period and, in the case of objective individual circumstances, could continue until integration results are achieved.
132. There is a need to review current benefit amounts and actually evaluate expenses, especially on housing rental and food, with a view to creating conditions for foreigners to have living conditions meeting the basic national standards. The recommendation is to create a coherent mechanism for reducing aid (similar to the one that was in place before the amendment to the Integration Procedure was introduced on 18 November 2015) that would be implemented so that support is reduced gradually, taking into account integration results achieved and the person's ability to work and support themselves independently. The recommendation is to abandon the significant reduction of integration support linked with a specific period of time rather than integration results (e.g. as is now where the monthly cash benefit is halved after 6 months or as provided for in the current draft amendments to the Integration Procedure that support is no longer afforded after 36 months) because keeping that requirement will mean that foreigner integration will be fruitless and that social exclusion and poverty risks will be greater.
133. Having regard to the experience of Scandinavian countries, refugee housing matters are to be tackled by evaluating the amount and form of support afforded to refugees and providing for support measures meeting the basic subsistence needs of refugees, obliging state or municipal authorities to provide intermediary services in searching for accommodation and concluding rental contracts with owners.
134. There is a need to align the amount of the lump-sum settlement benefit for unaccompanied minors with the lump-sum settlement benefit for orphans as provided for in Article 9(1) of the Law of the Republic of Lithuania on child benefits.
135. The Ministry of Social Security and Labour should initiate amendments to the Law of the Republic of Lithuania on social integration of the disabled, the Law of the Republic of Lithuania on state benefits, the Law of the Republic of Lithuania on support in the case of death and the Law of the Republic of Lithuania on child benefits so that they would also apply to persons granted subsidiary protection.
136. There is a need to ensure accommodation for asylum seekers in a place meeting their specific needs so that the majority of asylum seekers would not have to reside at the Foreigners Registration Centre like they do now. To that end, there is a need to implement the provision in Article 79(1) of the Legal Status Law by approving a draft resolution of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania approving the Procedure for accommodating asylum seekers in alternative accommodation (No 16-3881 (2)); providing for a possibility for asylum seekers to receive state support while residing in a place of their choice; expanding accommodation options at the reception centre for refugees to include also other vulnerable persons or even all persons whose asylum applications are not manifestly unfounded.
137. Municipal authorities ensuring refugee integration together with NGOs, as appropriate, must provide all required assistance to refugees independently looking for suitable and affordable accommodation and take all measures necessary to prevent refugee homelessness.

138. There is a need to enhance the ability of NGOs or social workers to act as intermediaries helping to find and lease accommodation and to conclude rental contracts on behalf of FGAs.
139. Municipalities are advised to consider introducing a reduced business certificate fee for natural persons renting accommodation to refugees or other socially vulnerable persons.
140. There is a need to amend legislation ensuring that FGA children born in Lithuania are covered by compulsory health insurance from birth rather from the moment of issuing a residence permit in Lithuania.
141. Healthcare institutions must guarantee psychological counselling for foreigners in a language they understand both at the reception centre for refugees and in municipalities. There is a need to ensure the accessibility of health services relating to female reproductive health. Appropriate services need to be provided with a view to overcoming the consequences of sexual abuse.
142. The Integration Procedure lists specific groups of persons who are to be deemed vulnerable in the integration process. It should be noted that the concept of vulnerable persons is no longer defined in the current draft amendments to the Integration Procedure. Admittedly, the concept defined in legislation presents a non-exhaustive list of vulnerable persons as the vulnerability of a person, unlike in other cases, is determined by the fact that those persons have special needs because of which they require relevant assistance or guarantees so that they could properly enjoy their rights and respective guarantees and procedures. This is why lists of vulnerable persons in various procedures or areas may be different depending on the distinct features of a respective area. This is why the non-exhaustive list of vulnerable persons contained in legislation can be clarified by by-laws regulating a respective area. A by-law governing a certain area may offer a more specific definition of groups of vulnerable persons taking into account their specific needs in a specific area regulated. In that context it makes sense to keep a clarified definition of vulnerable persons in the Integration Procedure taking into account specific needs of such persons and their vulnerability in the integration process.

## **CIVIC AND POLITICAL PARTICIPATION**

### **Current situation**

143. In accordance with Article 119(2) of the Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania, foreigners holding permanent residence permits in Lithuania may vote and be elected in municipal council elections. As for presidential and parliamentary elections, only Lithuanian nationals may participate (Article 78(2) of the Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania and Article 2(1) of the Law of the Republic of Lithuania on parliamentary elections), and Lithuanian and European Union citizens may participate in elections to the European Parliament (Article 3(1) of the Law of the Republic of Lithuania on elections to the European Parliament). Foreigners holding temporary residence permits in Lithuania cannot participate in elections at all. So, foreigners granted the refugee status may participate in municipal council elections while foreigners granted subsidiary protection may not participate in any elections.

144. FGAs can enjoy the right to form associations and trade unions under the same conditions as Lithuanian nationals. In accordance with Article 4(1) of the Law of the Republic of Lithuania on associations, associations may be established by capable natural persons having reached the age of 18, so the nationality or permanent residence requirement does not apply. In accordance with Article 1(1) of the Law of the Republic of Lithuania on trade unions, the right to freely establish and join trade unions on the national, sectoral or territorial level and to participate in their activities belongs to all natural persons with general legal capacity.
145. At the same time, the freedom of assembly is restricted. In accordance with Articles 3(1) and (2) of the Law of the Republic of Lithuania on assemblies, an assembly or an individual action may be organised by Lithuanian and European Union nationals and foreigners holding a permanent residence permit in Lithuania. So, the right to organise assemblies is not available to persons granted subsidiary protection.
146. The situation of persons with the refugee status and persons granted subsidiary protection is also different when it comes to acquiring the nationality. In accordance with Article 7(9) of the Law of the Republic of Lithuania on citizenship, a person with the refugee status is entitled to dual nationality, i.e. they are not required to forfeit their nationality of origin in order to acquire the Lithuanian nationality. At the same time, no such exception applies to persons granted subsidiary protection. In practice, this prevents persons from receiving the nationality of the Republic of Lithuania as they are to produce documents from their country of origin, which they cannot do.
147. The right to establish and participate in activities of political parties is not granted to foreigners at all. Political parties may only be founded by Lithuanian nationals while Lithuanian and European Union citizens may participate in activities of political parties (Article 3 of the Law of the Republic of Lithuania on political parties).

### **Problems and challenges**

148. The right to organise assemblies is not afforded to persons granted subsidiary protection although that right should be ensured for them in accordance with Article 11 of the ECHR.
149. In accordance with the Law of the Republic of Lithuania on citizenship, persons granted subsidiary protection wishing to acquire the Lithuanian nationality in accordance with the naturalisation procedure must forfeit their nationality of origin, which may prove to be difficult to achieve without any protection from the country of origin.
150. FGAs are subject to the same naturalisation procedure as other foreigners in Lithuania even though in accordance with Article 34 of the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees the Contracting Parties as far as possible are to facilitate the assimilation and naturalisation of refugees.
151. Although persons with the refugee status may participate in municipal council elections, i.e. to vote and be elected, they are not provided with equal opportunities for participating in such elections as compared with Lithuanian and EU nationals because they cannot participate in activities of political parties.

152. Research stresses that the FGA integration support programme in Lithuania encourages the passivity of foreigners and eventually leads to acquired helplessness which manifests in non-participation either in public life or in the decision-making process.
153. Social passivity initially present due to finding oneself in a position of fear and insecurity in a foreign country becomes a norm. In the long run that system leads to a state of acquired helplessness where foreigners have no more internal resources to become active members of the public and independently lead their lives. Structurally, service recipients remain passive programme users without any possibility of changing the system to their benefit and in the end without any willingness to implement the objectives of the programme proper (UNHCR, 2014).
154. Isolation and no relations with the local community are one of the main problems mentioned by FGAs residing at the reception centre for refugees. Such separation from the community enhances the state of mistrust, fear and insecurity both for foreigners and for the local community. In the long run that state generates further polarisation of the two communities (foreigners and the host local community) and leads to failed integration.

#### **Measures and recommendations**

155. To amend the Law of the Republic of Lithuania on assemblies and Article 7 of the Law of the Republic of Lithuania on citizenship so that they would also apply to persons granted subsidiary protection.
156. To amend the Law of the Republic of Lithuania on political parties enabling persons with the refugee status to participate in activities of political parties.
157. To amend legislation on citizenship with a view to providing for an exception also for persons granted subsidiary protection in respect of the requirement to produce documents for applying for citizenship from the country of origin.
158. To provide for less stringent conditions for the acquisition of citizenship by FGAs than by other foreigners in Lithuania such as e.g. the requirement that an application for citizenship may be filed in 5 years as is now stipulated for stateless persons.
159. To strengthen cooperation between public authorities and NGOs working in the field of FGA and refugee integration and information exchange on the status of foreigners, problems and integration challenges. To organise various events inviting representatives of refugees and FGAs to participate in drawing up and implementing political measures and evaluating integration results.

#### **NON-DISCRIMINATION AND PRINCIPLE OF EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES**

##### **Current situation**

160. Foreigners in the Republic of Lithuania enjoy the rights and freedoms provided for in the Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania, international treaties and legislation of the Republic of Lithuania and of the European Union. Foreigners in the Republic of Lithuania are equal by law, irrespective of gender, race, ethnicity,

language, origin, social status, religion, beliefs or views (Article 3 of the Legal Status Law).

161. The principle of non-discrimination is set in Article 29 of the Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania stipulating that human rights may not be restricted and no privilege may be afforded on the grounds of gender, race, nationality, language, origin, social status, religion, beliefs or views. The said principle is elaborated on in the Law of the Republic of Lithuania on equal opportunities for women and men and the Law of the Republic of Lithuania on equal opportunities, and those laws are under the supervision of a specially created Office of the Equal Opportunities Ombudsman. Non-discrimination of foreigners is also stipulated by Article 3 of the Legal Status Law where paragraph 2 sets out that foreigners in the Republic of Lithuania are equal by law, irrespective of gender, race, ethnicity, language, origin, social status, religion, beliefs or views.
162. In accordance with Articles 169 and 170 of the Criminal Code of the Republic of Lithuania, the offence of discrimination and the offence of incitement to hatred and discrimination can only be classified as committed with deliberation.
163. Although the principle of non-discrimination and equal opportunities is stipulated by law, it does not always apply in practice. The average EU gender equality index calculated by the European Institute for Gender Equality is 54 points, which is only halfway to genuine gender equality. This shows that progress on the way to gender equality greatly varies across the EU. Almost half of the Member States (13) including Lithuania have the gender equality index below 50 points (EIGE, 2014).
164. International studies demonstrate that because of multi-layered identity (migration status, ethnic origin, religion, disability, age, etc.) women and men experience multiple discrimination (on the grounds of gender, ethnicity and religion) and face violations of their rights and equal opportunities (ENAR, 2016, Forgotten women). For example, because of their clothing Muslim women are recognisable immediately and visible in the public space which shows a certain negative attitude towards them and this affects their feelings and economic, social and civic opportunities. There is a public stereotype about representatives of another religion (often Islam) that affects the majority governed by superstitious attitudes, which deepens the social exclusion of people practising Islam (ENAR, 2016, Židžiūnaite, 2012).
165. Research shows that because of their clothes Muslim women become the target of religious hatred than men. They are subjected to degrading verbal insults and hatred in public and virtual spaces as well as physical violence and abuse. Hate speech on religious grounds is often accompanied by racist, xenophobic and sexist comments, intimidation and/or abuse. Studies conducted in the EU countries show that Muslim women are subjected to public harassment (in the streets, in shops, in public transport, at work, etc.), spitting, pulling at their clothes, acrimonious remarks, etc. (ENAR, 2016).

## **Problems and challenges**

166. As in accordance with Articles 169 and 170 of the Criminal Code of the Republic of Lithuania the offence of discrimination and the offence of incitement to hatred and discrimination can only be committed with deliberation, the case-law faces a problem that persons committing such crimes escape prosecution.
167. Moreover, in practice hatred incitement cases are handled giving too much attention to linguists' conclusions rather than the identification of genuine motives.
168. International studies indicate that experiences of female and male asylum seekers and refugees are different in the field of employment. More often than men, women are unemployed or employed to do low-paid work, irrespective of their qualification and/or educational background (Women, age, migration, p. 25). On the global level, there is still a problem that female migrants tend to occupy a non-formal niche in the labour market where their social security and rights are particularly vulnerable. A comparison of the labour market situation of women and men holding the migrant or FGA status shows that pay gap is much greater than between women and men in the host society (Birchall, 2016).
169. It is rather difficult to identify cases of multiple discrimination because there is a lack of legislative instruments (many EU countries including Lithuania do not have legal provisions on multiple discrimination) and practices to apply an intersectional approach to cases of multiple discrimination, especially in the employment sector (ENAR, 2016).

#### **Measures and recommendations**

170. The suggestion is to amend Articles 169 and 170 of the Criminal Code of the Republic of Lithuania setting out that the offence of incitement to hatred and discrimination can also be committed inadvertently, i.e. so that criminal liability would also be invoked where the perpetrator has not foreseen that their action or inaction may lead to adverse consequences even though they could and should have foreseen that because of the circumstances of the act and due to their personal characteristics.
171. The suggestion is to rely in the case-law relating to incitement to hatred not on linguists' conclusions but rather on those of specialists who are competent to evaluate the context of the statement and identify its purpose.
172. In the area of the equal opportunities and gender equality policy, to incorporate an intersectional approach with a view to highlighting the effect of discrimination on the grounds of gender, ethnicity and religion and its effect on experiences of women and men and integration prospects.
173. To improve data collection on equality by integrating various indicators on labour market opportunities and experiences of women and men of various ethnic origins and religions. To improve complaint examination procedures relating to manifestations of discrimination and hatred identifying more aspects of forms of hatred such as Islamophobia, hatred for Muslims, etc. and in particular focusing on the vulnerability of women in manifestations of hatred directed against them as Muslim women.

## **PUBLIC ATTITUDES**

### **Current situation**

174. Article 110(7) of the Legal Status Law sets out that one of the integration areas for foreigners granted asylum in Lithuania is public awareness raising about foreigner integration. This statement is elaborated on in paragraph 53 of the Integration Procedure stipulating that public awareness raising with a view to shaping a positive public opinion of foreigners granted asylum, providing information in Lithuanian and other languages about the conditions of state support for integration in Lithuania and statistical information about the granting of support to foreigners granted asylum is to be carried out as follows: through cooperation with the media, drawing up materials for specialised radio and television programmes and articles, organising public seminars, conferences and other events, publishing information and specialised periodicals, organising parties and evening talks with foreigners granted asylum and the local community and regularly updating websites.
175. As of 2005 the Institute for Ethnic Studies has been performing studies of social distances and attitudes of the Lithuanian population towards various social groups and migration developments. The latest results of public opinion polls show that the list of groups unfavourably viewed by the Lithuanian population remains almost unchanged within the last decade: about a third of the respondents noted that they would not want to be neighbours with refugees (27.3%), Muslims (29.7%), the Chechens (30.7%), the Pakistanis (20.9%), Hinduists and Buddhists (20.8%) and black people (16%) (ETI, 2014). In 2015 the views of the population towards refugees deteriorated. This is probably due to the effect of bloody terrorist attacks in Europe on the public and the role of the media covering those events rather than objective information on the refugee crisis (ETI, 2016).
176. Even though as compared to other EU Member States the number of refugees in Lithuania is low, 74% of the Lithuanian population still believe that the number of refugees in Lithuania increases annually while 70% of the population in Lithuania think that Lithuania has enough refugees and no more should be allowed to come. A little more than half (55%) of the Lithuanian population believe that Lithuania should refuse to participate in the refugee resettlement programme (ETI, 2016).
177. Survey data show that Lithuania remains a culturally closed society. Irrespective of the status of newly arriving foreigners, i.e. whether they are migrants coming to work in Lithuania or refugees, the Lithuanian population first of all tends to see some possible threats to social security. In accordance with survey data in 2015, 82% of the Lithuanian population believed that refugees could cause social turmoil in Lithuania while 86% thought that they could increase the level of criminality in the country (ETI, 2016).
178. Social distance attitudes of the public when working at the same workplace show that about a fifth of the survey participants would not want to work together with persons speaking no Lithuanian (19.1%), Jehovah's witnesses (19.2%) and Muslims (22.4%). A smaller percentage would be against working together with the Chechens (17.4%), refugees (15.1%), the Pakistanis (13.1%) and black persons (10.6%). A greater social distance is visible in the area of accommodation rental. More than a

third of the population would not let accommodation to Muslims (31.2%), refugees (34.6%), the Chechens (32.5%) and black persons (21.6%) (ETI, 2014).

179. The Lithuanian population rather negatively views its own society and the State. The absolute majority (80%) of the respondents believe that refugees arriving in Lithuania will face negative attitudes of the public while 87% think that they will have difficulty in finding a job and 78% – that they will have difficulty in renting accommodation. More than half (56%) of the respondents believe that refugees arriving in Lithuania will experience violence and face difficulty in the areas of healthcare (62%) or child education (73%). Most Lithuanian residents (74%) believe that refugees do not intend to stay there and seek to make use of Lithuania as a transit country.

180. During the survey a little more than a third of the respondents (35%) agreed with the statement that refugees were a vulnerable group, which was Lithuania had to help them and another fifth (20%) could not/did not answer that question. Attitudes of the Lithuanian population towards refugees arriving in the country remain conservative (ETI 2016; Aleknaviciene, 2013).

### **Problems and challenges**

181. In accordance with the Integration Procedure, public awareness raising in the context of social integration does not cover many matters discussed in the public domain and shaping the attitude to foreigners granted asylum (e.g. on the topic of the refugee crisis in the EU and possible solutions to it). This is why it is important that public awareness raising is not limited to the social integration area coordinated by the reception centre for refugees but rather covers matters shaping the attitude to foreigners granted asylum.

182. A summary of the research data discussed above leads to the conclusion that Lithuania is dominated by a negative rather than positive image of immigration and foreigners granted asylum. On the one hand, the public is dominated by the unchanging hierarchy of (negative) attitudes in treating various groups of immigrants; on the other hand, the public is not well-informed by presenting facts about immigration processes in Lithuania, their causes and their global scale.

183. Publicity measures are indeed the most important and widely spread form of keeping the public in touch with immigrants (including FGAs). It should be noted that the Lithuanian society have the least direct contact with foreigners granted asylum, which leads to the conclusion that the attitude towards FGAs has been greatly fuelled by information presented by the media and the attitudes dominating the public discourse rather than social connections (direct contacts and experiences). The lack of social connections with the large part of the society creates preconditions for exclusion and hindered social integration of FGAs.

184. The public is dominated culturally by its closed nature manifested towards immigrants 'looking differently' and by a clear economic dimension relating to the competition between the majority and immigrants in respect of economic and other resources. It is worth noting that attitudes are more negative towards immigrants from countries deemed "distant" or "alien" (the case of FGAs is to be emphasised as

the majority of refugees in Lithuania come from “culturally distant” countries). The society does not support the statement that immigrants residing or arriving in Lithuania enrich the country’s cultural life. This shows that one of the main barriers for refugee integration is that of cultural attitudes.

185. The unfavourable view of the public adversely affects FGAs’ possibilities to rent accommodation and find a job. During surveys foreigners proper claimed that they felt the unfavourable attitude of public authorities and the public when visiting the labour exchange or meeting with potential accommodation owners and were often afraid to be in public in the evening as they did not feel safe, in particular in small towns (Aleksnevičienė, 2013, UNHCR, 2014).

### **Measures and recommendations**

186. With a view to forming a favourable public opinion of foreigners granted asylum, there is a need to create an active public awareness raising strategy to be implemented on the national, municipal and community levels involving refugees proper and not limited to the social integration area coordinated by the reception centre for refugees.
187. Promoting and publicising awareness raising about foreigner experiences, needs and capacities are needed both on the national and on the local levels. Promoting projects for youth and school students with a view to establishing and maintaining contact with children arriving in Lithuania. In cooperation with the Lithuanian Union of Journalists, to involve journalists, editors and other responsible persons in public debate and other events attended by FGAs with a view to encouraging full disclosure of experiences of FGAs and refugees to the general public. To provide for basic intercultural training modules and competitions for students who are to become journalists with a view to ensuring better balanced ethnic and religious minority narratives with the use of correct terminology.
188. To provide for intercultural training for persons responsible for public visualisation of various social groups including ethnic and religious minorities, refugees, etc. and for visual text with a view to shaping a complex image of various groups.
189. To support projects and various initiatives of NGOs and communities aiming at involving FGAs in joint activities and raising public awareness of FGA experiences and preventing racism, xenophobia and related intolerance.

### **FAMILY REUNIFICATION**

#### **Current situation**

190. The existing legal regulation provides for a possibility both for persons with the refugee status and for those with the subsidiary protection status to reunite with their family members. In accordance with Articles 2(26) of the Legal Status Law, family members include a spouse or a person with whom there is a registered partnership contract, minor children (stepchildren) (‘children’) including minor children of a spouse or a person with whom there is a registered partnership contract unless they are married and independent of their parents as well as first-degree direct ascendants

supported for at least one year and unable to use the support of other family members residing abroad. Family members seeking to reunite with a person granted asylum in Lithuania are subject to Article 43(1)(2) of the Legal Status Law (where a minor child arrives), Article 43(1)(4) (where a minor child's parents arrive) and Article 43(1)(5) (where a spouse arrives). In the case of family reunification the temporary residence permit is issued to a foreigner for the same period of time for which the temporary residence permit is issued to the foreigner to whom the former arrives for the sake of family reunification. The temporary residence permit to a foreigner arriving for the sake of family reunification to another foreigner holding the permanent residence permit is issued for a period of one year and renewed for 2 years (Article 43(5) of the Legal Status Law).

191. An application for the temporary residence permit in Lithuania may be filed by a foreigner whose family members arrive for the sake of family reunification or by one of adult family members (Article 43(2) of the Legal Status Law). An application may be lodged with a diplomatic or consular mission of Lithuania or the migration unit of the local police department (Articles 28(2) and (3) of the Legal Status Law and paragraph 6 of the TRP Procedure).

192. In accordance with paragraph 17 of the TRP Procedure, when filing an application for the temporary residence permit, the application must be accompanied by the following: the foreigner's passport and the Schengen or national visa unless the visa-free regime is in place, where documents are lodged with the migration unit; a personal photo; documents certifying the grounds for issuing the permit (documents proving family relations, i.e. a birth certificate, a marriage certificate and the residence permit of the foreigner to whom the other is coming in Lithuania); documents certifying that the foreigner has adequate funds or receives regular income sufficient for living in the Republic of Lithuania (the adequate subsistence amount per adult person per month is the minimum monthly pay while that for a child is 0.5 of the minimum monthly pay); a document certifying that they have residential premises where they intend to declare their place of residence and where the residential surface area per adult declaring their place of residence there is at least 7 square metres; a document certifying health insurance and a document certifying that the person is covered by compulsory health insurance in the cases listed in the Law of the Republic of Lithuania on health insurance; a criminal record certificate from a foreign country where the foreigner has resided before arriving in the Republic of Lithuania or currently resides for the last 2 years (where the application is filed by a person over 14 years of age); a list of foreign countries which the foreigner has visited or lived in during the last decade before arriving in the Republic of Lithuania.

193. It should also be noted that where documents issued by foreign countries are filed (e.g. a birth or marriage certificate or a criminal record certificate), they must be legalised or apostilled in accordance with the statutory procedure, except where in accordance with laws of the Republic of Lithuania, international treaties or European Union legislation the document cannot be legalised or apostilled (paragraph 41 of the TRP Procedure).

194. Where documents for the residence permit in Lithuania are filed by a foreigner to whom his or her family members are coming, i.e. a person granted asylum where the family members are not in Lithuania, the requirement to have a Schengen

or national visa does not apply (paragraph 19 of the TRP Procedure) but the requirement to produce a travel document does apply (in such a case it is possible to file a notarised copy of the travel document).

195. In implementing Council Directive No 2003/86/EC of 22 September 2003 on the right to family reunification, Article 26(3) of the Legal Status Law sets out that requirements relating to documents certifying health insurance, required subsistence funds, the place of residence and a list of visits to other countries do not apply to a foreigner granted asylum in the Republic of Lithuania as well as family members of a foreigner granted asylum in the Republic of Lithuania who apply for the residence permit in the case of family reunification within 3 months following the granting of asylum in the Republic of Lithuania. However, as is apparent, Lithuania has made use of the possibility to limit the non-application of requirements to a period of 3 months as provided for in Article 12(1)(3) of the Directive.

196. In accordance with Article 43(6) of the Legal Status Law, family reunification with a person granted asylum is not subject to the requirement that the family member to whom the others are coming should have lived in Lithuania for two years before the reunification. Also, in accordance with Article 6(8) of the Law of the Republic of Lithuania on duties, these persons are not subject to state duty for the issuance of temporary residence permits in Lithuania.

197. It should be noted that in accordance with Lithuanian legal regulation support for integration is provided to a person granted asylum and their family members, i.e. family members receive support for the same integration measures as the person granted asylum. In accordance with paragraphs 2.1.1, 2.2 and 12 of the Integration Procedure, support for integration is provided to a person granted asylum and their family members who arrive in Lithuania for family reunification. It should be noted that paragraph 2.1.2 of the Integration Procedure does not stipulate that integration is also ensured for family members of persons granted subsidiary protection who arrive for family reunification but the said persons are subject to the principle of legal analogy and they like family members of refugees receive support for integration.

198. Given that support for integration is also provided to family members of persons granted asylum, they receive support for accommodation and healthcare. This implies that these persons would have a place of residence (at the reception centre for refugees or rented accommodation) and be covered with compulsory health insurance in accordance with the statutory procedure.

### **Problems and challenges**

199. Although Article 26(3) of the Legal Status Law setting out that the requirement to provide documents certifying the availability of subsistence funds, the place of residence, health insurance and a list of visits to other countries does not apply could be understood as stipulating more favourable provisions for persons granted asylum and their family members, taking into account the procedure for issuing residence permits, documents to be produced and the special status of persons granted asylum, the 3-month period should be seen as inadequate. It should be noted that there are often situations where because of an armed conflict in the country of

origin or persecution family members may get lost and have no information about the whereabouts of one another, which is why it may take time before family members are found and contacted. For that reason, persons may fail to file an application for the residence permit in Lithuania within 3 months. Moreover, FGAs and their family members may have no documents to be filed when lodging an application for the residence permit (i.e. documents proving family ties or travel documents). It thus may take time to obtain, translate those documents into Lithuanian and legalise them, and the 3-month deadline may be missed.

200. Where family members apply for the residence permit after the 3-month deadline, general requirements concerning required subsistence funds applicable to them may be difficult to implement. It should be noted that FGAs are often in a difficult economic situation (during the asylum procedure they may not work and after they are granted asylum, their access to the labour market is often complicated because they do not speak Lithuanian) and the economic situation of family members is also difficult because of the situation in the country of origin, which is why these persons cannot usually ensure subsistence funds required by law, now amounting to EUR 350 per person per month (i.e. EUR 4 200 per year). Moreover, it should be noted that even monetary support allocated to persons granted asylum and their family members in accordance with paragraph 51.2 of the Integration Procedure to ensure their subsistence is smaller than required when applying for the temporary residence permit (e.g. support allocated to a 2-person family is EUR 306 while when applying for the temporary residence permit a 2-person family should demonstrate the availability of EUR 700 per month). Given that FGAs can reunite with their family members only in the country of asylum and with a view to ensuring the principle of respect for family life set in Article 8 of the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, Article 23 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and Article 7 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, those persons must be enabled to reunite with their family members irrespective of whether they have the amount required by law.

201. When applying for the temporary residence permit in Lithuania, foreigners must produce documents certifying the grounds for issuing the permit, i.e. documents proving family ties such as a birth certificate or marriage certificate which must be legalised or apostilled in accordance with the statutory procedure. It may however prove difficult for persons granted asylum and their family members to produce the said documents because of their specific situation, i.e. persecution or military action in the country of origin. The said documents may be lost or destroyed or the person may have no such documents, or contacting competent authorities for the issuance or legalisation of such documents may be dangerous because of persecution. Article 25 of the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees establishes the principle of administrative assistance, i.e. sets out that *when the exercise of a right by a refugee would normally require the assistance of authorities of a foreign country to whom he cannot have recourse, the Contracting States in whose territory he is residing arrange that such assistance be afforded to him by their own authorities or by an international authority*. The purpose of Article 25 of the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees is provide refugees with all administrative assistance usually afforded to country nationals by public authorities or with their intermediation. In that context, the requirement to produce documents proving family ties that would be legalised or

apostilled should be treated in a flexible manner taking into account individual circumstances.

202. Where a person seeking to reunite with a family member arrives in Lithuania with a Schengen or national visa with a view to filing documents for the temporary residence permit, although the purpose of their arrival is reunification with a family member granted asylum, no support for integration is given throughout the period until the issuance of the temporary residence permit to such family members as paragraph 12 of the Integration Procedure sets out that support for integration is provided as of the moment of issuance of the residence permit in Lithuania.

### **Measures and recommendations**

203. When applying for the temporary residence permit for FGA family members, the suggestion is to abandon the 3-month period provided for in Article 26(3) of the Legal Status Law.
204. When issuing the temporary residence permit to FGA family members, the suggestion is not to apply the requirement on monetary funds.
205. The requirement to produce documents proving family ties that would be legalised or apostilled should be treated in a flexible manner taking into account individual circumstances.
206. Support for integration to FGA family members should be provided as of the moment of their lawful arrival in the Republic of Lithuania rather than of the issuance of the residence permit in Lithuania, which may take several months.
207. In accordance with the practice of applying paragraph 2.1 of the FGA Integration Procedure, the Lithuanian state support for integration is afforded to foreigners granted asylum and their family members. It should be noted that the current draft legislation amending the Integration Procedure no longer provides for support for integration to family members of persons granted asylum. As one of the key preconditions for successful integration is integration of the entire family of foreigners granted asylum, it makes sense in the Integration Procedure to keep the provision that support for integration is afforded to foreigners granted asylum and their family members.

## **BUSINESS AND LEGAL ACTIVITY**

### **Current situation**

208. In accordance with Articles 2(2) and (7) of the Law of the Republic of Lithuania on individual income tax, persons granted asylum in the Republic of Lithuania may engage in individual activity on the grounds of an individual activity certificate or a business certificate. Such persons may also engage in other legal activity and incorporate various undertakings.

209. During the integration period integration funds may be used to provide support for integration to persons granted asylum who incorporate their own business to obtain a business certificate or a licence and to purchase or lease work equipment (paragraph 47 of the Integration Procedure) but those measures practically apply in exceptional cases.

### **Problems and challenges**

210. Business activity is one of the forms of efficient integration of FGAs in the Lithuanian labour market but support afforded in this area is practically provided in exceptional cases. It should be noted that FGAs arriving from countries possibly very different from Lithuania by language, traditions and culture have a cultural barrier for meeting the expectations of Lithuanian employers but different cultural experience may also be an advantage when establishing one's own business and providing the Lithuanian public with services not yet developed in Lithuania. It is therefore essential that support for business to foreigners granted asylum is not an ancillary solution but rather an equivalent or even priority solution as compared to employment of foreigners granted asylum. At present the Integration Procedure mainly focuses on qualifications of foreigners granted asylum enabling them to find a job in Lithuania but it would make sense to focus also on qualifications enabling them to start a business in Lithuania.

### **Measures and recommendations**

211. The recommendation is, apart from provisions on support for business, to ensure that the Integration Procedure includes training of foreigners granted asylum on how to do business in Lithuania (e.g. about forms of business, taxation environment, drawing up a business plan, loan procedures, accounting and recruitment).

#### **IV. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE INTEGRATION POLICY AND IMPROVEMENT OF IMPLEMENTATION METHODS**

212. The implementation and monitoring of the FGA integration policy and the improvement of implementation methods is the cornerstone of effective integration associated with cooperation between public authorities, non-governmental organisations and municipalities, which is why the Document recommends the following:

- To create State-coordinated FGA integration infrastructure based on intersectoral cooperation involving non-governmental organisations and municipalities as the key providers of integration measures;
- To ensure the involvement of other institutions (all ministries and municipalities, trade unions concerned and foreigner associations) in integration processes;
- To ensure the incorporation of FGA integration measures in strategic documents and measure plans of other policies;
- The implementation of the FGA integration policy must cover three levels: supranational, national and local. These policy shaping and implementation levels constitute an intersectoral cooperation platform covering the implementation of international instruments (EU directives, conventions and international treaties) and initiatives of public authorities (centralised authorities) and municipal institutions and the non-governmental sector (non-governmental organisations and private initiatives);
- There is a need for legal regulation of the institutional structure for the shaping and implementation of the FGA integration policy and defining the functions, competencies and responsibilities of authorities and organisations concerned.

213. There is a need to establish the functions and activities of the institution responsible for integration on the national level, the Ministry of Social Security and Labour, ensuring the efficient coordination, implementation and monitoring of the FGA integration policy. On the national level the institution's functions should be:

- To ensure the implementation of the FGA integration policy;
- To administer co-financing (state budget funds, EU financial mechanisms, etc.);
- To include matters relating to FGA integration in the political agenda of the Government and to review and put forward draft proposals;
- To regularly update the plan of implementation measures of the FGA integration policy and to ensure its implementation and continuity;
- To monitor the implementation of the FGA integration strategy and evaluate progress, to set and apply evaluation indicators for FGA integration processes, to commission research and to monitor topical areas;
- To coordinate intersectoral cooperation;
- To develop competencies of the staff of public authorities, NGOs and municipalities.

214. There is a need to appoint a unit or person responsible for integration on the municipal level and to provide for the following functions:

- To implement the national FGA integration policy on the local level;
- To draw up reports on the implementation of the FGA integration strategy on the local level and to put forward proposals on policies implemented in this area; to collect statistical data on positions taken by FGAs in the society (unemployment rate, child education, adult education indicators, etc.);
- To continuously monitor integration services and issues on the local level;
- To select strategic partners (service providers) implementing integration measures and to monitor their activities;
- To ensure intersectoral cooperation on the local level involving all parties concerned;
- To improve the dissemination of information on the local level.

215. There is a need to create an intersectoral commission coordinating the implementation of the integration policy that should include public authorities, non-governmental and FGA organisations and municipalities relating to integration. There is a need to ensure the continuity of the commission's work and to enable the commission to put forward proposals to the Government on how to improve FGA integration;

216. To ensure continuous activity of non-governmental organisations, the continuity of service provision, quality control, financing and long-term planning taking into account the objectives of the integration policy. Functions of the non-governmental sector:

- To provide FGA integration measures to FGAs on the local level in cooperation with the local government;
- To monitor and analyse the need for, relevance and quality of services provided to various FGA groups;
- To improve service provision, capacity and competencies;
- To participate in activities of the intersectoral commission coordinating the implementation of the integration policy, to provide information on challenges and good practices and to put forward proposals to the commission.

217. To ensure the accessibility of services to FGAs living in smaller towns. It is appropriate to apply local integration programmes creating working groups active on the local level that would include educational establishments, the municipality, NGOs, the private sector and the local community. Each municipality should deal with its own specific issues taking into account the immigration structure and targeted policy measures applicable to various FGA categories;

218. To establish whether services provided meet the needs of various groups, to evaluate, monitor and improve the competence of service providers and to build their

capacity on the grounds of long-term planning and organisation of targeted services for foreigners.

219. To involve FGAs and their organisations in policy-making processes, cultural and civil projects and other initiatives. Deeper FGA integration is only possible with representation mechanisms in place where FGAs are brought together in institutional networks and organisations, which is why it is essential:

- To promote the involvement of FGAs and their organisations in intersectoral cooperation processes on the local and national levels;
- To strengthen the ties of FGA organisations with public authorities and other non-governmental organisations;
- To strengthen voluntary FGA activities deepening their integration in local communities and promoting the civil spirit.

220. The private sector must be involved in FGA integration processes. The involvement of the private sector and support for FGA integration may vary: additional sources of financing, dissemination and enhancement of social liability (provision of services required by FGAs, e.g. language lessons, support for various initiatives and participation therein), involvement of FGAs in activities carried out (job offers, promoting volunteer work), strategies promoting diversity in personnel management, etc.

### **Financing**

221. Ensuring the financing is the basis for implementing the FGA integration policy. The principle of financing for FGA integration presented in the Document consists of two components: long-term strategic planning and balanced combination of various resources;

222. The main source of financing currently functioning and supporting the FGA integration infrastructure is the EU structural funds the allocation of which is not coordinated and does not reflect the strategic objectives and measures of the integration policy. There is a need to ensure stable and long-term financing for implementing the strategic objectives of the integration policy. At the same time, it is essential to provide for possibilities to receive financing from other sources;

223. Properly drafted integration programmes do not use a single kind of resources but rather employ a balanced combination of various resources making it possible to use the entire contribution of participants efficiently: public financing, municipal infrastructure, the non-governmental sector, volunteer work, EU financing and the private sector. Funds (project activities) should not perform functions assigned to the State; they should add to activities carried out by the State and be innovative.



## V. MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF FGA INTEGRATION

224. The monitoring and evaluation coordination of FGA integration processes is the responsibility of the Ministry of Social Security and Labour. The monitoring and evaluation must be performed by independent evaluators such as research institutes or universities in cooperation with non-governmental organisations, public authorities and municipalities concerned.
225. The collection, processing and summarising quantitative and qualitative data and continuous monitoring and evaluation of immigration processes and policy efficiency must be a strategic component of the FGA integration policy. Evaluation procedures must involve public authorities making and implementing the policy, the non-governmental sector, research institutions, independent experts and FGAs.
226. The evaluation of the policy efficiency should be both quantitative and qualitative. The qualitative evaluation should cover the continuous monitoring of how legislation making the FGA integration policy is implemented and evaluate how legislation, public authorities, non-governmental organisations and municipalities contribute to implementing the objectives and principles provided for in this Document. The quantitative evaluation should cover a broader FGA integration context and collect statistical data by key integration areas listed in the Document from all institutions concerned.
227. With a view to establishing the needs of FGAs and creating flexible integration measures, it is appropriate to carry out continuous monitoring of FGA integration processes. The evaluation and monitoring of FGA integration require continuous quantitative and qualitative applied research based on the following principles:
- The main task should be the development of an empirical database. Quantitative studies are important for analysing both the asylum (immigration) structure and individual (the most numerous) FGA groups and their living and working conditions;
  - There is a need to create a register (database) collecting and generalising information relating to the life of FGAs in Lithuania (any issues arising, solutions, etc.). That register is also useful for evaluating and monitoring any developments in and efficiency of the FGA integration policy;
  - There is a need to ensure the monitoring of developments. When removing FGA integration barriers, it is necessary to take into account and analyse development factors dependant on personal, social and environmental factors decisive for the human ability to choose. That analysis is important in evaluating how smoothly persons or social groups can seek their objectives and provide for ancillary measures for implementing them;
  - Policy making and implementation must be based on research. The provision of services must be based on information systematically collected on what service recipients and their needs are paying attention to obstacles diminishing the accessibility of services. An analysis of the use of services should show whether they meet recipients' needs. It should be noted that disproportionately excessive use of

services by FGAs may mean that there is a lack of information about services or that services provided do not meet their needs. An analysis of complaints of service recipients and quantitative and qualitative research help to unveil the pros and cons of services provided.

- Public awareness raising must be based on research. At present public and political debate on asylum seekers, refugees and migrants heavily relies on myths having nothing in common with the reality (e.g. reality assessed on the basis of research contradicts unrealistic fears that FGAs ready to do low-skilled work contribute to the reduction of remuneration offered to the local population in the labour market, that non-local population tends to commit more crimes, that the economy of countries accepting more FGAs is in recession, etc.) misleading the public, so various legal instruments are adopted based on various unrealistic fears rather than actual public needs.

## **VI. FINAL PROVISIONS**

228. The implementation of the goals and objectives of the Document will help to seek social cohesion in the society, create more favourable conditions for FGA integration and respect for human rights and improve the country's social demographic, economic and cultural development;
229. The goals, objectives and measures of the FGA integration policy listed in this Document are to be included when drawing up strategic documents, programmes and action plans for related policies. Local government authorities of the Republic of Lithuania are urged to implement the provisions of this Document on the local level;
230. The Ministry of Social Security and Labour will coordinate the implementation of this Document having regard to changing migration processes, economic conditions, internal and external developments and new opportunities and put forward proposals to the Government of the Republic of Lithuania clarifying the goals, objectives and measures of this Document;
231. With a view to ensuring the implementation of the goals and objectives of this Document, an action plan for the FGA integration policy will be drawn up every two years presenting specific measures for efficient FGA integration in the areas listed in the Document and appointing responsible persons, the period of implementation of such measures and preliminary funding needs for the implementation of the measures.

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