Report on the implementation of the Recommendation concerning Education for International Understanding, Co-operation and Peace and Education relating to Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms in

The Republic of Lithuania

For several decades Lithuania absented in the process of developing and applying the international standard-making instruments on human rights. After regaining the independence in 1990, the state was supposed to integrate a range of main regulation of the international law in different spheres of law and preeminently the constitutional law. Human rights constitute one of the main institutes of the constitutional law in Lithuania. The Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania adopted in 1992 was prepared with deep regard to universal instruments of the United Nations Organization and the Council of Europe and it fulfils all international requirements of human rights implementation and protection. In 1993 the Republic of Lithuania became a member of the Council of Europe and in 1995 it ratified the European Convention on Human Rights, which has made a great influence in the formulation and development of the Lithuanian legal doctrine. The preparation for the membership in the European Union required joining a range of international treaties and harmonization of national legislation to comply with EU legal doctrine.

Constitutional human rights set forth in the Recommendation are specified in particular legal acts. Those that are not assigned to the regulation sphere of the Constitutional law should nevertheless and without any exception be harmonized with the provisions of the Constitution, as the basic legal instrument.

Development of human rights education has experienced intense processes and evolution since 1990. The dimension of human rights education (embracing such elements as democracy, the value of peace, equality, justice, non-violence, respect for human dignity, tolerance, non-discrimination, gender equality) lingered through all stages of the educational reform. The process involved many stakeholders including educational institutions, but also non-governmental organizations, professional associations etc. discussing on teaching and learning on human rights guidelines, programmes, content of textbooks, training programmes for pedagogues. Human Rights Education is mainly integrated in the national education policy and curricula, most notably in primary, basic

and secondary education curricula. In primary education curriculum aspects of human rights are included in ethics and world's insight (world science) teaching framework programmes, in basic education – in teaching programmes of civic education, ethics, religion education, history and other subjects, in secondary education – in teaching programmes of history, philosophy and other subjects.

Ninth and tenth grade classes in Lithuanian schools (2 lessons per week (74 lessons in total)) are taught a particular subject – civic education. The definition of civic education is understood in the broadest meaning, embracing knowledge, all skills and competences needed "to live together", namely democratic citizenship, human rights, individual responsibility, tolerance, intercultural understanding, trust. Human rights reserve a special attention at lessons of the subject. Students are in detail introduced to basic human and civic rights embedded in the main document of the state – the Constitution. While discussing Framework programmes, which define the learning content, opinions of representatives of teachers' professional associations, parents' associations, other public stakeholders are heard.

Currently within the process of revising the educational content a framework programme on legal education for secondary schools is being prepared.

Students have a possibility to choose complementary lessons. Since 2001 in cooperation with USA based organization Street Law, Inc. Ministry of Education and Science has been implementing an international project on legal education. The project is aimed to introduce the teaching of practical law, oriented towards practical acknowledgment of legal issues in the society in the Lithuanian educational system.

Since school year 2003-2004 Lithuanian students are given a possibility to choose a subject of humanitarian law as a complementary subject. It is planned to continue this initiative following the agreement between the Ministry of Education and Science and the Lithuanian Red Cross Community. Seminars for qualification development of teachers were organized, the manual on humanitarian law *Discover the Humanitarian Law* was translated into Lithuanian and released by implementing the provisions of the above mentioned agreement.

The *methodological and learning materials for teachers and students* were prepared and published: Integrative Lessons for Teaching Human Rights; on-line material *EDITOR* - released in 2005; *Educational Possibilities for Prevention of Corruption in General Education. Methodological Toolkit*, ŠAC, 2005, Vilnius; *Discover the Humanitarian Law*. Textbook for 7-12 grades, Kronta, 2004, Vilnius; D.Normantienė, V.Punelis, A.Visockis. *Basics of Law*. Textbook for 11-12 grades, Šviesa, 2005, and others.

On 2 October 2007 (Decision N.1062) the Government of the Republic of Lithuania has approved the **National Programme on Education for Sustainable Development** 2007-2015 based on provisions of the Vilnius Framework for the implementation of the UNECE Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development and the International Implementation Scheme for the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development. The implementation of the programme embraces all levels of education, as well as general education schools. Among most topical issues of sustainable education are citizenry, democracy and governance, human rights, poverty alleviation, peaceful resolution of conflicts etc.

New quality of teaching thereof new competences of teachers is needed to carry on the tasks provided. Therefore a transformation of systems of training, retraining and improving qualifications of pedagogues are carried out. The tendency that Lithuanian society is transforming into more and more intercultural and even multicultural has been growing recently bringing new dimensions to the human rights education. For the diversified intercultural contexts new competencies, such as better comprehension of cultures in modern societies, communication capacities between people from different cultures, a more flexible attitude to the context of cultural diversity in society, a better capacity of participation in social interaction, and the recognition of the common heritage of humanity, are needed. Intercultural principles concentrate on openness to the other, active respect for difference, mutual comprehension, active tolerance, providing equality of opportunities, fighting discrimination. In 2007 a new initiative aimed to prepare school teams competent and skilled in implementing sustainable development oriented learning models in their schools and share this experience with colleagues, as well as to create and develop teacher professional activity improvement network - sustainable development competence network - , designed to maintain permanent, interactive support for pedagogues, implementing strategic provisions of sustainable development and other educational innovations. The creation of a network, its development and implementation

of concrete projects and practical means is regarded as an integral part of a constantly evolving system of teacher training and professional development. As the quality and content of education cannot be understood as a constant, but a variable or an ongoing process, dependant on a range of inner and outer circumstances, the project is designed to enhance the lifelong learning quality by means of soundly improving qualification of teaching personnel prepared to work in changing circumstances and adapt to new challenges while pursuing objectives of sustainable development, information society development and relevant concepts.

An important role in the area of human rights education is played by various **non-governmental organizations**, as the Human Rights Monitoring Centre, the Centre of Civic Initiatives. The Centre of Civic Initiatives devotes much of its activity for development of students' civic, communal consciousness, human rights education. Brochures, other informational materials are published, various competitions, projects are annually organized.

With the implementation of the education reform in Lithuania educational settings were granted more freedom for financial and administrative decisions, thus expanding possibilities for students, parents, pedagogues and administrators of education to choose, discuss and take on decisions individually. The trend towards more autonomy has boosted the self-reliance of teachers, teaching teams and schools as regards methodology and didactics on human rights. The diversity of initiatives and activities at schools on human rights contributive to the consolidation of social relations and citizenship penetrate both the education content and methodology, both formal and non-formal education. Non-formal education embraces the social activity, which is obligatory for students of 5-10 grades in general education schools, as well as communal life, self-government, and complementary educational activity (projects, events, associations etc.) Non-formal education on human rights is provided in various after-school activities: clubs, such as debate clubs, active citizenship clubs, centres of tolerance, intercultural learning clubs. It embrace debates on various topics related to human rights, implementing international projects aimed to practically experience intercultural diversity, carrying out various social and historic research, such as research on manifestations of xenophobia, stereotypes. Additional lectures, debates on a variety of topics, meetings with interesting people, excursions to sites are organized.

The Lithuanian National Commission for UNESCO coordinating the national network of **UNESCO Associated Schools Project** periodically surveys the activity of schools-members of the network on their activity along UNESCO priority spheres, including the education on human rights. The results of past and recent surveys indicate that as relates both formal and non-formal education human rights education in its broadest sense is an area that all schools are involved in to a considerable extent. Various activities involving the school community as well as parents, local community are organized to celebrate international days related to various aspects of human rights. Many schools focus on bullying prevention, surveys, research were initiated to tackle causes of this phenomenon and solve it. Associated schools use and test methodological materials translated from other states and create new methodology.

Some schools have long term programmes for pupils of senior classes on human rights. In the run of the programme pupils explore the situation of human rights of specific groups of people (children, minorities, handicapped people etc.) in Lithuania.

The best pilot projects on human rights education, innovative methodological materials are shared among member of the network. Access to such information is also made possible via the internet web-site of the national network of UNESCO Associated Schools project (www.aspnet.lt).