



LABOUR MARKET AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP OVERCOMING GENDER STEREOTYPES

A TRANSNATIONAL ACTION PLAN
PROMOTED BY BUSINESS WOMEN AND
GENDER EQUALITY ORGANISATIONS

COUNTRY REPORT FOR LITHUANIA



This project is co-financed by the European Commission, Directorate General for
Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities





Labour Market and Entrepreneurship Overcoming Gender Stereotypes

A Transnational action plan promoted
by Business Women and Gender Equality Organisations

This project has been carried out by AFAEMME
Association of Organisations of Mediterranean
Businesswomen (Barcelona, Spain) in association with:

KARAT Coalition (Central and Eastern Europe)
WAD - Women's Alliance for Development (Bulgaria)
SEGE - Greek Association of Women Entrepreneurs
(Greece)

With the co-financing of the:

European Commission, Directorate General for
Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities. The
work contained herein does not reflect in any way the
opinions of the Commission nor is it responsible in any
way for the use of the information; this is the sole
responsibility of the authors.

Chair Committee:

M^{re} Helena de Felipe Lehtonen (President of AFAEMME)
Philippe Lambert (Project Director)
Anna Colamussi (Project Assistant)

With the support of:

Elizabeth Villagomez PHD (Content)
Anita Seibert PHD (Content)

Production and editing:

Lourdes Acedo (Design and Layout)

Special content collaboration from:

Jurate Puidiene (Kaunas Women's Employment
Information Center) and Agne Margeviciute (Kaunas
Women's Employment Information Center)

Published by:

ALFA PI INTERNATIONAL

Context

A key priority for the European Commission is to create equality for men and women throughout Europe. AFAEMME, Association of Organizations of Mediterranean Business Women (Barcelona) was awarded by the European Commission, in partnership with important organizations in Central and Eastern Europe - KARAT Coalition, WAD - Women's Alliance for Development (Bulgaria) and SEGE, Greek association of Women Entrepreneurs (Greece) to implement a unique project "*Labour Market And Entrepreneurship Overcoming Gender Stereotypes*".

The main objectives of this project are:

- to improve the understanding of the issues underlying gender equality and equal opportunities in the fields of employment and entrepreneurship in this area of Europe
- to strengthen gender equality and businesswomen organizations and their active partnership in influencing decision makers on social and economic policy
- and to improve the general economic status of women.

The project includes the elaboration of 12 national reports from Cyprus, Malta, Poland, Latvia, Estonia, Lithuania, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Slovenia, Hungary, Bulgaria and Romania. Which report the obstacles experienced by women in business and assess the impact of EU Employment Strategy on the situation of women in the new ten EU Members states and two candidate countries with case studies of a typical businesswoman in those countries relating to gender stereotypes in the labour market and entrepreneurship, with a final global report containing concrete policy recommendations addressed to European Commission and national governments. The publication is launched at a large scale European conference in Brussels in February 2006.

This report contains the national study from Lithuania



Index

| | |
|---|----|
| ● Executive summary | 5 |
| ● Legal framework | 6 |
| ● Institutional framework | 8 |
| ● Issues for women employees | 11 |
| > Situation of women in the labour market | 11 |
| > Conditions of work/quality of employment | 14 |
| > Access to training. | 16 |
| > The wage - gap | 17 |
| > Reconciliation of work and personal life. | 20 |
| > Impact of the tax - benefit system on women employees and employers | 22 |
| ● Stereotype of working women | 23 |
| ● Issues for women entrepreneurs | 23 |
| ● Stereotype self employed/entrepreneurs | 26 |
| ● Case studies | 27 |
| > Case study 1: Audrone: the working woman | 27 |
| > Case study 2: Zita: an entrepreneur | 27 |



Executive summary

As Lithuania was one of the first countries in Central and Eastern Europe to create a law that regulates equal opportunities (Law on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men, adopted in 1998 by the Seimas - Parliament), it can be said that Lithuania is a leading country in this region. The Lithuanian Constitution declares the equality of all people before the law and the Labour Code prohibits gender discrimination and has adapted its rules to the European laws. One of the most important programmes adopted by the Government about gender equality was the National Programme on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men 2003-2004. It is a complex programme that covers the implementation of concrete measures aimed at improving gender equality. The Government is working hand in hand with social partners and non-governmental organizations for its implementation.

There is a large number of Institutions that are responsible for the implementation of equal opportunities for women and men in the areas of employment and social security. The Inter-Ministerial Commission on Equal Opportunities of Women and Men is the main body responsible for gender mainstreaming policies. The Commission is accountable to the Minister of Social Security and Labour, and the Equal Opportunities Ombudsman can monitor its activities.

Gender mainstreaming is still a new issue within Lithuanian society as well as amongst decision-makers. Even if various programme and rules promoting gender equality exist, efforts to implement gender perspectives in all fields of life need to continue. The participation of women in economic activities has increased since 1995. However, we are still far from a balanced situation. Gender segregation in the workplace remains unchanged. Women are more often employed in service oriented sphere of economy and less in industrial production. The position of Lithuanian women is lower in the workplace hierarchy, and in the pyramid of employment they constitute the majority in the base of the pyramid. Even if the system of free economic market in theory provides equal opportunities for all citizens to seek economic independence, in practice it is not true.

There are cases of all types of discrimination. Though women continue to dominate in the public sector, they have started to enter "men's" fields, such as finance, supply of power, gas and water. Most women of working age remain employed. The discrimination in the labour market, however, is influenced by

the belief of employers, colleagues and society as a whole, that women's place is at home. The stereotypes of "proper" male and female roles enforce and strengthen the gender segregation in working place and the consequences of this phenomenon. It is still believed, that public work belongs to a man, while private sphere is reserved for women. This was noted as one of the main concerns by the CEDAW Committee in 2000. The Social Security is a right of all people in Lithuania irrespective of their gender. The main Social Security rights are guaranteed by the Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania. "The state takes care of the families that raise and nurture children at home and provides support to them as applicable by law." This legislation also provides benefits to mothers before and after the birth of a child, favourable work conditions and other concessions. The social security system is funded through contributions by employers and employees.

The Laws on Social Security in Lithuania detail the remit of the Constitution and includes Law on the Principles of the State Social Protection System, Law on Guaranteed Income, Law on the State Social Insurance, Law on the State Social Insurance Pensions, Law on the Social Pensions, Law on the State Benefits for the Families Raising Children, Law on the Social Services and others. Women entrepreneurs encounter discrimination at all the stages of establishing of their business. Different surveys indicate that women in business are mostly not treated as equal business partners and have to overcome more difficulties than men. Women are committed to participate in entrepreneurship, but facilities are needed to provide them with advice and information. Lack of credit, particularly for start-ups, is a major obstacle.



Legal framework

The Constitution of Lithuania, the European Union Law prohibits gender discrimination. Art.29 (1) of the Lithuanian Constitution declares the equality of all people before the law, the court, and other State institutions and offices. Art.29 (2) states that a person may not have his or her rights restricted in any way or be granted any privileges on the basis of his or her sex, race, nationality, language, origin, social status, religion, convictions or opinions. Following this constitutional provision the Labour Code lays down the principle of equality of all individuals. The Labour Code broadens the list of grounds of prohibited discrimination establishing the equality irrespective of the gender, sexual orientation, race, nationality, language, origin, citizenship and social status, religion, marital and family status, age, convictions or opinions, membership in political party or public organization as well as factors unrelated to the employee's professional qualities.

Prohibition of gender discrimination

According to Art.186 (3) of the Labour Code, men and women shall get equal pay for equal or equivalent work. Art.188 (3) of the Labour Code states that when applying the work classification system for determining the wages, the same criteria shall be equally applied to both men and women and the system must be worked out in such a way as to avoid any discrimination on the grounds of sex. If an employee loses a certain payment related to labour relations due to experienced discrimination, he or she has the right to appeal to the institution examining labour disputes and to demand to abolish or to change the discriminating legal norm or the agreement provision, to obligate to do a duty in kind, and to recover experienced material damage. In such case non-material damage can be recovered as well, the court determines the amount of it.

In 1998 the Seimas (Parliament) adopted the **Law on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men**. This law was one of the first laws regulating equal opportunities in Central and Eastern Europe. For that main reason, Lithuania can be seen as a leading country in this region. The Law prohibits both direct and indirect discrimination against men and women and establishes a legal obligation for state and private institutions to implement gender equality principles in employment, education, science, etc. The amendments to the Law of 2002 extended the scope of the application of the afore-mentioned Law establishing that equal opportunities for women and men have to be guaranteed and implemented in the field of consumers' rights. In addition to a prohibition of giving priority to one of the sexes in employment and education, in advertisements employers were obliged not to ask job seekers about their age, marital status, private life and family plans. The Law on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men is not applied to family and private life.

The following cases are not considered to be discriminatory by law:

- > special protection of women during pregnancy, childbirth and nursing;

- > compulsory military service prescribed by the law exclusively for men;

- > different retirement age for women and men;

- > requirements for safety at work applicable to women aimed at protecting women's health related to their physiological characteristics;

- > specific work which can be performed only by a person of a particular sex;

- > special temporary measures foreseen in the laws, which are applied to accelerate the implementation of de facto equality between women and men and are to be cancelled when equal opportunities for women and men are realized;

- > different rules and conditions when implementing specific punishments.

Women and men are guaranteed equal rights in accordance with the EU-law. Lithuania applied the equal opportunities directives and decisions of the Court to access the European Union and transitional periods or derogations were not requested. Problems other than equal opportunities, such as the economic and social situation, are highlighted. Nevertheless, the state is dedicated to change the current situation and to enhance the participation of women in society and to introduce equal opportunity policies. The major work to be done yet is to treat equality matters with seriousness and overcome the prevailing ironic views and to make people aware of which measures they can take in sexual discriminations and harassments matters. Lithuania has also ratified almost all of the main international acts which ban gender discrimination. One of the main one when we speak about gender equality is the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), which was ratified by Lithuania in 1995.

By accepting the Convention, States commit themselves to undertake a series of measures to end all forms of discrimination against women. Countries that have ratified the Convention are legally bound to put its provisions into practice.

The State of Lithuania is an independent democratic republic with the principles of a free market, the rule of law and democracy firmly established. A multiparty system has taken root, free and independent elections have become a norm, the Constitution and the laws are adhered to, human rights are respected, national minorities enjoy broad rights, and the mass media enjoy freedom.

Lithuania is party to the main human rights documents, both global and regional (i.e., Council of Europe). As to the implementation of the norms established in legal documents, it should be noted first of all that the system of coordination between international and domestic law which has been chosen by Lithuania is based on the principle that international treaties are transformed in the State's legal system - i.e., are incorporated into it. The Constitution of Lithuania (part 3, art. 138) stipulates that the international treaties ratified by the Seimas are a constituent part of the domestic legal system. Following the laws of Lithuania, the act of ratification grants a particular international legal document powers superior to those of the laws of Lithuania.

However, since international treaties do not usually define ways of implementation of rights, legal responsibility for violations, terms of reference of appropriate national institutions etc., national laws are applied in order to implement the human rights established in these (ratified) treaties.

As was noted above, international treaties (conventions) ratified by the Seimas become an integral part of national law. This means that there are no obstacles for a direct application of the provisions of those treaties in the courts of Lithuania and other legal institutions. It should be noted that there is no special institution entrusted with the supervision of the process of human rights' enforcement in Lithuania. Nevertheless, it is one of the goals of the Government's policy to guarantee human rights. Therefore, the supervision of human rights' enforcement in Lithuania is pursued by governmental institutions, the Ministry of Justice, in particular, and certain special institutions, like the Department of Regional Problems and National Minorities, Children's Rights Protection Service and others. In the most recent remarks by the CEDAW Committee to the government of Lithuania (2000)¹ it is important to note that

one of the main concerns was "the persistence of traditional stereotypes regarding the role of men and women in the family, in employment and in society which perpetuate discrimination against women. The Committee is also concerned about the lack of targeted educational programmes, mass media campaigns and temporary special measures in education, employment and politics to eliminate these stereotypes. It is also concerned that provisions in the current draft Code of Advertising Ethics may not be sufficient to address the issue that advertisements utilize and support traditional sex-role stereotypes".

The National Programme on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men 2003-2004 adopted by the Government in 2003 is a complex programme, covering the implementation of concrete different measures aimed at improving gender equality in employment, education and science, politics and decision making, combating violence against women and trafficking of women, health protection and the environment. The Programme includes means to overcome stereotypes, raising awareness and others. The implementation of area-specific measures is assigned to competent ministries. Each of them has already undertaken certain activities, mostly in cooperation with NGO's.

¹ - <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/cedaw23/Lithuania%20as%20adopted.html>



Institutional framework

LPSS - Lithuanian Trade Union Unification: It is governed by the Board of Representatives delegated by affiliated branch trade unions. The objective of the LPSS is to unify and co-ordinate actions of trade unions defending rights and legitimate interests of their members, to seek social justice and economic welfare as well as represent the unified trade unions in relation with the Government, employers and other state authorities. <http://www.lps.lt>

Joint trade union commissions:

- > The Commission on Violations of Trade Union Rights
- > The Committee on Integration into EU
- > The Commission on Cooperation of Trade Unions LDF - Lithuanian Labour Federation:

LPSK/LTUC - Lithuanian Trade Union Confederation:
<http://www.lpsk.lt/en>

LPPS (LDS) - Lithuanian Trade Union "Solidarumas"
<http://www.ldf.lt>

Social partners and non-governmental organizations

The majority of the biggest trade unions have Women's councils. Women's councils play an important role in the implementation of equal opportunities and equal treatment provisions in the labour market, ensuring awareness raising on the issue and promoting the rights of women in the employment area and education.

There are more than 80 women's NGO's and one male crisis centre in Lithuania, which in their daily work draw the attention of society to the needs and problems of women. Carrying out projects on equal opportunities in such fields as employment, education, politics and decision-making, combating violence against women and trafficking in women, the NGOs positively influence the development of a gender-equal society. We can mention some of most active NGOs working on the promotion of gender equality issues: Women's Information Centre www.lygus.lt, Equality Advancement Centre www.gap.lt; Kaunas Women's Employment Information Centre www.muic.lt, Elderly Women Activities Centre, Social Innovation Fund, Alytus Women Crises Centre, Kretinga Women Information and Training Centre. In 2000 the Social Innovation Fund initiated the establishment of the informal NGOs Coalition for the Protection of Women's Human Rights in Lithuania. The aim of the Coalition is to unite the NGOs in Lithuania in order to put equal rights for men and

women into practice. Today the Coalition unites 61 NGOs. The Social Innovation Fund has been approved as the co-ordinator of the Coalition.

National Consultative Women's Forum was established in 2003 at the Parliamentary Commission on Family and Child Affairs. The Forum aims at a dialogue between women (organized and not organized) and the policy makers. The Forum has elected its Board which works permanently and has periodic Forum meetings with free participation. The Forum organizes discussions on "hot" issues; it has proclaimed the Vision of the Development of Lithuanian Egalitarian Society.

Gender equality machinery

Parliamentary Commission for Family and Child Affairs has been functioning since 1996. The Commission actively participates in the decision-making procedure by initiating and considering laws or their amendments, which concern: the rights of women and child, family policy and others in that way contributing to gender equality initiatives within the parliament. Group of Women Parliamentarians comprises all women parliamentarians representing each of the parliamentary factions. The aim of this informal group is to promote women's and gender equality issues in parliamentary activities and in society at large.

Parliamentary Human Rights Committee has been officially appointed to work on gender equality legislation in the process of its initiation and consideration. It has already registered amendments to the Law on Equal Opportunities as well as other legal acts which were successfully passed by the members of parliament.

The Office of Equal Opportunities Ombudsman (functions since 1999) is one of the key institutions within the gender equality machinery. The Constitution provides equal rights for men and women; however, women continued to face discrimination. The Office of the Ombudsman for Equal Opportunities of Women and Men was established in May 2000, and the Parliament appointed lawyer Ausrine Burneikiene as ombudsman. The Ombudsman's Office is an independent agency, accountable to the Parliament, which oversees the implementation of the law and investigates complaints concerning violations of gender discrimination and sexual harassment. The ombudsman also has some enforcement powers in this regard, and the new Criminal Code contains criminal sanctions for discrimination or harassment. In cooperation with other office staff, the Ombudsperson supervises mass media in order to eliminate discriminatory advertisements. The Ombudsperson does not treat one gender as in any way superior or better in regard to the other. Additionally,

Ombudsperson may participate at the interviews for a job and admission tests at educational institutions as an observer. Until 2003, the Equal Opportunities Ombudsman had investigated 218 complaints and conducted 53 investigations on its own initiative. Statistics by gender vary each year. On average, more complaints are submitted by women, though men are active as well.

The decisions of the Ombudsperson in cases of discrimination on grounds of sex include the right to refer the material of the complaints to the pre-trial investigation bodies; to address the institutions with a recommendation to discontinue the violations of the Act on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men. The Ombudsperson was granted with a right to investigate administrative cases and impose administrative sanctions for the violations of the Act on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men, which is one of the most important effective tools of the Lithuanian gender equality policy. The Equal Opportunities Ombudsperson² is appointed by the parliament for a four year term. The number of employees (currently seven persons) will increase (as the consequence of the Act on Equal Treatment coming into force on January 1, 2005); therefore the Office has to structure its activities as to ensure effective implementation of the new tasks.

All natural and legal persons have a right to file complaints to the Ombudsman's Office by post, e-mail or fax. If the complaint is received by word of mouth or the indications of violating equal rights are found in the print or electronic media or other sources of information, the Equal Opportunities Ombudsman may initiate investigation on his or her own initiative. The existence of the Ombudsperson's institution is of an undeniable importance since it provides victims of discriminations with an easily accessible and relatively speedy remedy. As set by the Act on Equal Opportunities of Women and Men, the complaint must be investigated and the complainant must be given a reply within one month of receipt of the complaint. If necessary, the Equal Opportunities Ombudsperson may extend the time limit of investigation for up to two months. The complainant must be duly notified about this.

Moreover, the Ombudsperson does not provide information on the investigation of a complaint to mass media or other sources without the consent of the complainant. This together with a right given to the Ombudsperson to investigate anonymous complaints if this is considered necessary, should encourage seeking help by those victims of discrimination, who fear publicity. It is worth mentioning, that a number of victims cho-

ose to turn to mass media themselves in order to raise public discussions on the issue.

The Office provides no mediation services. Nevertheless, it forwards the complaints which are not in its competence to the appropriate competent institutions. The Office provides no legal representation for victims of discrimination, but it can give legal advice to persons who experience gender discrimination.

The recommendations of the Equal Opportunities Ombudsperson have a binding character, and persons obstructing the Ombudsperson to exercise his or her duties are held liable under the law and face administrative sanctions. The majority of the decisions of the Ombudsperson were duly implemented by the public institutions as well as private companies so far. It was first in 2004 that the decision of the Ombudsperson was appealed at the court by the chief of a private company that was obliged to discontinue discriminatory commercial on TV and other public places and to pay administrative fine to the state budget.

In 2003, the majority of decisions of the Ombudsperson concerned recommendations to repeal a legal act relating to that (29 percent of all the cases handled). In 22 percent of the cases the Ombudsperson gave a notice for the committed violation, recommended to discontinue the actions violating equal opportunities in nine percent, imposed administrative sanctions in six percent of the cases. Finally, 18 percent of complaints were dismissed because of not being well-grounded. In the first ten months of 2004, eleven violators of the principle of equal treatment as set in the Act on Equal Opportunities of Women and Men were sanctioned with administrative fines.

One of the advisors to the Prime Minister is Advisor on Family, Children, Youth, Gender Equality Issues and Relevant NGOs. Normally the person in this position has considerable experience of working on gender issues and is actively involved in gender equality initiatives.

In 2001 the Minister of Social Security and Labour was entrusted with the co-ordination of gender equality issues in all spheres, implying that this person has been actually acting as the Minister of Gender Equality. Moreover, all ministries in Lithuania are responsible for the implementation of gender equality issues in the area of their particular competence through preparation and carrying a national programme on

2 - The source of the information on the Ombudsperson : Open Society Institute 2005.

equal opportunities as well as international and local projects. Ministry of Social Security and Labour is responsible for the implementation of equal opportunities for women and men in the areas of employment and social security. The main activities of the ministry in the field of gender equality include the drafting of legislation, implementation of relevant laws and other legal acts aimed at ensuring equal opportunities for women and men.

In 2001 the Minister of Social Security and Labour was commissioned to coordinate gender equality issues in all spheres implying that this person is in fact acting as the Minister of Gender Equality. Moreover, all ministries in Lithuania are responsible for implementation of gender equality issues in the area of their particular competence through preparation and carrying out of national program on equal opportunities as well as international and local projects.

The Ministry of Social Security and Labour is responsible for the implementation of equal opportunities for women and men in the areas of employment and social security. Main activities of the ministry in the field of gender equality include drafting of legislation, implementation of relevant laws and other legal acts, aimed at ensuring equal opportunities for women and men. It is also answerable for the overall coordination of the activities carried out on the governmental level, preparation of national reports to a number international organizations as well as raising public awareness on the issue. Social partnership is of particular importance to the ministry and has been facilitated throughout the last years, although it may still be lagging behind the expected level. The Division of Labour Market and Equal Opportunities within the ministry was authorized to coordinate the gender equality activities of the ministry. One has to mention here that by employing only one person working on gender equality, the Division does not have necessary human resources.

Inter-Ministerial Commission on Equal Opportunities of women and Men consists of representatives of all ministries and the Statistics Department. The Commission is the main body responsible for gender mainstreaming policies. The Commission is accountable to the Minister of Social Security and Labour, and its activities can be monitored by the Equal Opportunities Ombudsman. It co-ordinates the implementation of the National Programme on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men as well as other gender-related measures at ministerial level. Within its area of competence the Commission can submit proposals and recommendations concerning gender equality to the Government. The ministry of Education and Science has the obligation to ensure teaching of human rights at schools. Since 1997 the Department of Statistics under the Government has been compiling, analysing

and publishing statistical data on gender. The annual publication "Women and Men in Lithuania" has been published annually since 1997. Gender-segregated statistical data provided to all the state institutions and made known to the public, allows to identify gender equality problems in different fields and to take appropriate measures to combat inequalities. In 2004, the Department started to prepare a list of statistical indices that would explicitly reflect the problematic gender areas in Lithuania. The structure of the Department includes ten County Statistical Boards, which collect statistical data on the county level and send to the central agency.

County Boards are given funding to collect the data according to the indices provided by the Department; therefore they would find it difficult to collect data on specific indices relevant specifically to their county. All the extra surveys are done when ordered and financed. This leads to a lack of municipality-specific gender segregated data and makes it difficult for the municipalities to target gender problems. Unfortunately, municipalities are not too active in implementing gender policies.

The gender equality work at municipal level has only been started. Nevertheless, the Vilnius municipality has already appointed one of its employees to execute tasks in the field of gender equality. A number of municipalities have taken part in projects in the field of equal opportunities.

Priorities of the Programme for the Advancement of Women:

- > Freedoms of speech and press (specifically related to the rights of women)
- > Guarantee equal rights for men and women
- > New economic structures: changes in the social guarantee's systems
- > Changes in the status of women

Challenges to gender equality

Institutions working in the field of gender equality implement policies and projects of mutual interest. They are also responsible for separate segments of the equal opportunities policy; therefore there is an objective need for them to cooperate. There is a need to strengthen social dialogue in the field and implement more training on various aspects of gender equality in all the Lithuanian administrative districts.

Local level initiatives mainly come from NGOs, and not from local municipalities themselves. There are no structural units responsible for the implementation of the gender equality principal at local level, apart from within the Vilnius municipa-

lity. The local women's NGO's are nevertheless trying to fill the gap, but they are not strong enough since they do not have sufficient funding from local or national authorities. It is also very important to continue efforts to raise public awareness on the issues, legal tools available and encouraging people to address public authorities in cases of discrimination. During previous elections to Parliament, the number of women parliamentarians has decreased. Gender mainstreaming is still quite a new issue in Lithuanian society as well as amongst decision-makers, and this has to be tackled by the responsible institutions. The National Programme on Equal Opportunities is a great example in this regard, but efforts to implement gender perspective in all fields of life need to continue. In 2003, in Lithuania the economic activity rate of women was lower than

that of men, i.e. the economic activity level of women was 66.5%, and that of men - 73.1% (table below). In 2001, the economic activity level of women was 65.8% and 65.7% in 2002. After the decline of the economic activity level of women in 2001-2002, in 2003 the economic activity of women increased, however, it did not reach the respective activity level of 2000, i.e. 67.1%.

However, not all women aged 15-64 years belonged to the employed group of the population. In 2000, the employment rate for both women and men was lower than their activity rate and reached 58.4% and 63.7% respectively. In 2003, women's employment rate reached 58.4% compared to 57.1% in 2002, and was the highest since 2000 (57.7%).

Issues for women employees

Situation of women in the labour market

In 2003, in Lithuania the number of women exceeded 1/2 of the population: it accounted for 53.3% (114 women per 100 men). Since 1990 this indicator has changed slightly: it increased insignificantly, though gradually from 1990 (52.7%) to 2002 (53.3%), and continued unchanged since 2002.

The figure in Lithuania and the European Union-15 (hereinafter - EU15) is very similar: in 2003 the EU women accounted for 51% of the total population, and in Lithuania - 53.3%. The difference in the number of the pension age women and that

of men was rather significant, i.e. in 2003 women accounted for 68.8% of the total number of the pension age population. Analysis of the ratio of working age women and men in Lithuania shows that in 2003 working age women accounted for 49.7% of the total working age population. Analysis of the Lithuanian and EU indicators provided in the following table shows that although the share of women in the total population of the EU was lower than the respective indicator in Lithuania, the share of working age women in the total number of the working age population was larger.

| SHARE OF WOMEN IN LITHUANIA AND THE EU IN 2003, % | | |
|--|-----------|------|
| Indicator | Lithuania | EU |
| Share of women in the total population | 53.3 | 51 |
| Share of working age women in the total number of the working age population | 49.7 | 49.9 |

Sources: *Women and Men in Lithuania in 2003*. - Statistics Department at the Government of the Republic of Lithuania, Vilnius, 2004; *European Labour Force Survey Principal Results 2003*. - Eurostat, 2004.

Analysis of the employment rate by age groups of Lithuanian and EU women reveals an interesting trend. Employment of EU women in the 15-24 year age group was higher compared to the Lithuanian situation by 18.2%, employment of Lithuanian women in the 25-54 year age group was higher by 10.2% compared to the EU. This may be explained by the fact that EU women enter the labour market at a younger age (the econo-

mic activity of 15-24 year aged women in the EU accounts for 43.6%, in Lithuania - 25.8%) and start their family life later than Lithuanian women. Comparison of the employment indicators of Lithuanian and EU women shows that the employment indicator of Lithuanian women exceeds the average EU indicator. The highest employment level of women in 2003 was in Sweden (71.5%), Denmark (70.5%), Holland (65.8%)

LABOUR FORCE ACTIVITY RATE BY AGE GROUPS IN 2000-2003, %

| Age | 2000 | | 2002 | | 2003 | |
|---------|-------|------|-------|------|-------|------|
| Groups | Women | Men | Women | Men | Women | Men |
| 15 - 64 | 67.1 | 74.2 | 65.7 | 73.2 | 66.5 | 73.1 |
| 15 - 24 | 30.6 | 41.7 | 26.7 | 34.5 | 25.9 | 34 |
| 25 - 49 | 88.5 | 90.8 | 87.2 | 91.4 | 87.5 | 91.2 |
| 50 - 64 | 51.9 | 66.2 | 52.9 | 68.6 | 57.1 | 70 |
| 65 + | 6.1 | 10.3 | 3 | 7.3 | 3.3 | 8.3 |

Source: *Women and Men in Lithuania in 2003*. - Statistics Department at the Government of the Republic of Lithuania, Vilnius, 2004.

and United Kingdom (65.3%). These four countries have already achieved the employment level target (60%) established in the Lisbon Strategy for 2010. By comparison in 2003, the lowest employment level was in the following EU member sta-

tes: Italy (42.7%), Greece (43.9%) and Spain (46.0%). In 2003, the unemployment rate of men (12.7%) was higher than that of women (12.2%), as shown in the following table. Although the difference is not very high, the preceding analysis of the

EMPLOYMENT RATE BY AGE GROUPS IN LITHUANIA AND EU IN 2003, %

| Age | Lithuania | | EU | |
|---------|-----------|-------|------|-------|
| Groups | Men | Women | Men | Women |
| 15 - 64 | 64 | 58.4 | 72.5 | 56 |
| 15 - 24 | 26.3 | 18.5 | 42.5 | 36.7 |
| 25 - 54 | 79.8 | 78 | 86.5 | 67.8 |
| 55 - 64 | 55.3 | 36.7 | 51.6 | 32.2 |
| 64 + | 8.1 | 3 | ... | ... |

Source: *Employment in Europe 2004*. - Eurostat, 2004

activity and employment rates explain this situation. Although women have almost the same unemployment rate as men, they have higher probabilities of having withdrawn from the labour force altogether and have less chances of being employed. It is in fact the youngest women which face much higher unemployment than men (but also have the lowest activity and employment rates).

Significant differentiation of the employment rate is noticed in different age groups. As shown in the following table, the highest

employment rate for women was in the age group of 25-54 years (in the previous table this is reflected in the age group 25-49). In 2003, the women employment rate throughout all age groups was lower than the employment rate of men.



| UNEMPLOYMENT RATE BY AGE GROUPS, % | | | | | | |
|------------------------------------|-------|------|-------|------|-------|------|
| | 2000 | | 2002 | | 2003 | |
| | Women | Men | Women | Men | Women | Men |
| Total | 13.9 | 18.8 | 12.9 | 14.6 | 12.2 | 12.7 |
| 15 - 24 | 27.4 | 31.9 | 22.9 | 23.1 | 28.1 | 22.5 |
| 25 - 49 | 13.3 | 17.7 | 12.3 | 13.4 | 10.2 | 11.8 |
| 50 - 64 | 11.5 | 15.5 | 11.6 | 15.2 | 12.5 | 11.3 |
| 65 + | 0.6 | 4.8 | 0.5 | ... | 8.9 | 2.7 |

Source: *Women and Men in Lithuania in 2003*. - Statistics Department at the Government of the Republic of Lithuania, Vilnius, 2004.

Finally, it is important to note that unemployment has dropped significantly between 2000 and 2003 in the case of men, but that women's unemployment has done so less rapidly. The analysis by age groups shows that in the case of men all age groups have experienced a drop in the rate, whereas in the

case of women there has been a more erratic pattern where in some cases the unemployment rate has dropped and risen again (for the youngest women), in others it has increase throughout the period (older age groups), and only in the case of women aged 25-49 the rate has dropped more steadily.

Conditions of work/quality of employment

Participation of women in economic activities has greatly increased since 1995. In 1998 women made up to 48.5% among the total number of the employed population. Similar to many other countries feminisation of certain branches of the economy is observed in Lithuania as well, however, horizontal and vertical gender segregation remains unchanged. Women are more often employed in the services and less often in industry. Speaking about the vertical segregation it should be noted that the position of Lithuanian women in the

work place is lower in the hierarchy than that of men, and that in the pyramid of employment women constitute the majority at the base of the pyramid. Moving up to the top, the number of women decreases and only a few of them are in the most prestigious occupations. Analysis of the distribution of employed in the public and private sectors in the table below shows that the number of women employed in the public sector exceeds that of men in the public sector. In 2003, the number of women engaged in the public sector exceeded 1.8 times that of men.

EMPLOYED POPULATION BY SECTOR IN 2003

| Sector | Women | | Men | | Distribution by sex (%) | |
|----------------|-------|------|-------|------|-------------------------|------|
| | Thous | % | Thous | % | Women | Male |
| Public sector | 259.4 | 36.4 | 144.5 | 19.9 | 64.2 | 35.8 |
| Private sector | 452.4 | 63.6 | 581.7 | 80.1 | 43.7 | 56.3 |

Source: *Women and Men in Lithuania in 2003*. - Statistics Department at the Government of the Republic of Lithuania, Vilnius, 2004

Analysis of employment of women by sectors since 2001 shows that the comparative share of women in the public sector declines gradually: 43.2% of all working women were engaged in it in 2001, and 36.4% - in 2003. Furthermore, the expanding market economy and privatisation is strongly affecting professional gender segregation. The level of occupational segregation in Lithuania is higher than for example in the United States according to some analysis measuring the level of occupational sex segregation that was carried out. The numbers of women employed decreased by 17%. Women concentrated in a smaller number of occupations than men. The level of occupational sex segregation differs in the private and the public sectors. Private sector employees who face a newly competitive business environment may, for example, associate higher non-wage costs with women because of their family responsibilities. The emergence of the private sector may have strengthened gender discrimination in the workplace. The data of Labour Force survey conducted by the Lithuanian department of Statistics indicated that during the period of 1994-1998, the share of women in the top of occu-

pations has decreased. The share of women amongst the legislators, senior officials and governors has decreased from 39.6 % to 34.1 %. Women are a majority among the public servants. The economic reforms and the processes of privatisation in Lithuania have resulted in an extensive "flow" of employees from the state sector to the private sector. In the periods of 1990-1997 the total number of people employed in the state enterprises, institutions and organizations has decreased from 1,332.9 thousand to 518.8 thousand, a decline of almost 60%. In contrast, the numbers of people employed in private enterprises have almost doubled from 564.7 thousand to 1,117.7 thousand. At the beginning of the 1998, the share of the private sector in terms of the national employment structure comprised almost 2/3 (68.3%), in comparison with 34.5% in 1991. It should be noted that more than half (around 58%) employees from the state sector were women, meanwhile men were more active in the private sector (their share comprised 57%). There are few reasons behind the slower feminisation of the private sector. Women traditionally employed in education, health care, social work systems. The

analysis of statistical data from Lithuania in comparison with several countries of Western Europe and Scandinavian countries indicated that irrespective of the type of economy, specialisation of males and females in the employment domain was closely interrelated with the traditional gender roles in society and family. Women predominate social services (i.e. education and health care) and men dominate the industrial sector (i.e. construction, transport, some branches of industry). Women and men are positioned differently in the hierarchy of the labour market and perform work pertaining to different status which leads to the vertical gender biased occupational

segregation. Though women continue to dominate in the public sector, education, health care and other "female" activities in particular, the decreasing share of women engaged in the public sector and statistical data show that they have started to enter "men" fields, such as financial mediation, supply of power, gas and water, etc.(table below). 2003, 64% of all employed women were engaged in the service sector, and only 21.6% in industries and 14,4% in agriculture, while in the EU-15 in 2003 84.4% of women worked in the services sector, 12.5% in industry and only 3,1% in agriculture.

THE SHARE OF EMPLOYED WOMEN IN THE TOTAL EMPLOYED POPULATION BY TYPES OF ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES IN 2001-2003, %

| Economic activities | Share of women in the total employed population | | |
|--|---|------|------|
| | 2001 | 2002 | 2003 |
| Total | 50.4 | 49.7 | 49.5 |
| Agriculture,hunting,forestry and fishery | 37.9 | 39.5 | 40.2 |
| Industry | 51.5 | 49.8 | 50.4 |
| Supply of electricity, gas and water | 16.9 | 15.4 | 26.3 |
| Construction | 8.2 | 9.7 | 10.1 |
| Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles, motorcycles, individual and household appliances | 50.3 | 50.9 | 52 |
| Hotels and restaurants | 76.4 | 77.7 | 81.3 |
| Transport, warehouses and remote communication | 29.5 | 27.5 | 24.3 |
| Financial mediation | 49.4 | 60.8 | 64.8 |
| Real estate, rent and other business activities | 48 | 51.2 | 49.9 |
| Public administration and defence, mandatory social insurance | 44.1 | 49.7 | 39.8 |
| Education | 79.8 | 78.6 | 79.3 |
| Health care and social work | 87.2 | 85.1 | 85.6 |
| Other municipal, social and individual services | 68 | 58.4 | 61.4 |
| Activities of private households that hire people | 40.5 | 48.8 | 59.7 |

Sources: Women and Men in Lithuania in 2001.- Statistics Department at the Government of the Republic of Lithuania, Vilnius, 2002; Women and Men in Lithuania 2002. - Statistics Department at the Government of the Republic of Lithuania, Vilnius, 2003; Women and Men in Lithuania in 2003.- Statistics Department at the Government of the Republic of Lithuania, Vilnius, 2004.

Access to training

Education and practical skills have a major impact on the business establishment and professional image of a manager. Review of the statistical data shows that women have the same educational basis for being a good manager (in 2001, 13, 5% of women and 11,5% of men had the University degrees). It is obvious that the number of women with

University level of education is larger; however, it does not guarantee better career opportunities for them. The following table clearly shows that the population in Lithuania as a whole has, on average, secondary education or higher. Although these figures are not disaggregated by sex, it is a fact that women's education average is higher.

| POPULATION BY EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT (aged 10 years and older) | | |
|---|---------|-----------------------|
| | Total | Per 1,000 inhabitants |
| Higher | 388,462 | 126 |
| Higher non university (including technicum) | 594,862 | 193 |
| Secondary | 835,699 | 272 |
| Basic | 460,996 | 150 |
| Primary | 640,661 | 208 |

Document updated: 2003. 03 .18, 11:03.

On the other hand, the following table shows the type of jobs that men and women actually have. Women's position in Lithuania is better than that of the average in the EU as more

women are in highly qualified non-physical jobs and also in qualified physical jobs, whereas women in the EU concentrate in low-qualified non-physical jobs.

| EMPLOYED POPULATION IN LITHUANIA AND THE EU, BY WORK NATURE IN 2003, % | | | | |
|---|-----------|------|------|------|
| Work nature | Lithuania | | EU | |
| Highly qualified non-physical job | 40.1 | 23.7 | 37.5 | 36.8 |
| Low qualified non-physical job | 22.4 | 9 | 42.5 | 15.2 |
| Qualified physical job | 26.4 | 56.8 | 8.9 | 39.6 |

Source: European Labour Force Survey Principal Results 2003. - Eurostat, 2004.

The main obstacles in the work place as far as equal opportunities for women are concerned are:

> Stereotypical attitudes in society and in media regarding the roles of men and women. The Equal Opportunities Office has submitted proposals on the implementation of the Law on Advertising and amendments to the Equal Opportunities Law to include the sphere of consumer's protection.

> Uncertainty about equal opportunities. Information, dialogue and raising the public awareness are of great importance. Employers, trade unions, social partners, judges and others must be educated about equal opportunities and what they mean. Employees must know their rights in the labour market and employers must be aware of what legal sanctions they will face in case of failure to comply with the principal of equal treatment.

> Problems with acquiring correct comparable statistics. Negative phenomena, such as domestic violence, violence against women, prostitution and trafficking, are a hotbed for other forms of discriminations.

> Men usually do not partake in the struggle for equal opportunities. Steps are to be taken to engage more men in the spheres traditionally dominated by women. To avoid violence against women, a Men's Crisis and Information Center was instituted last year.

> Women are not represented in greater extent in political decision-making processes. After the elections held in 2000 women MPs constituted 11% and women in municipality councils 18%. During last Parliamentary elections (held in 2004) number of women MP's has doubled and now stands at 21%. This was an outcome of the joined outcome of women NGOs efforts and mass media campaigns.

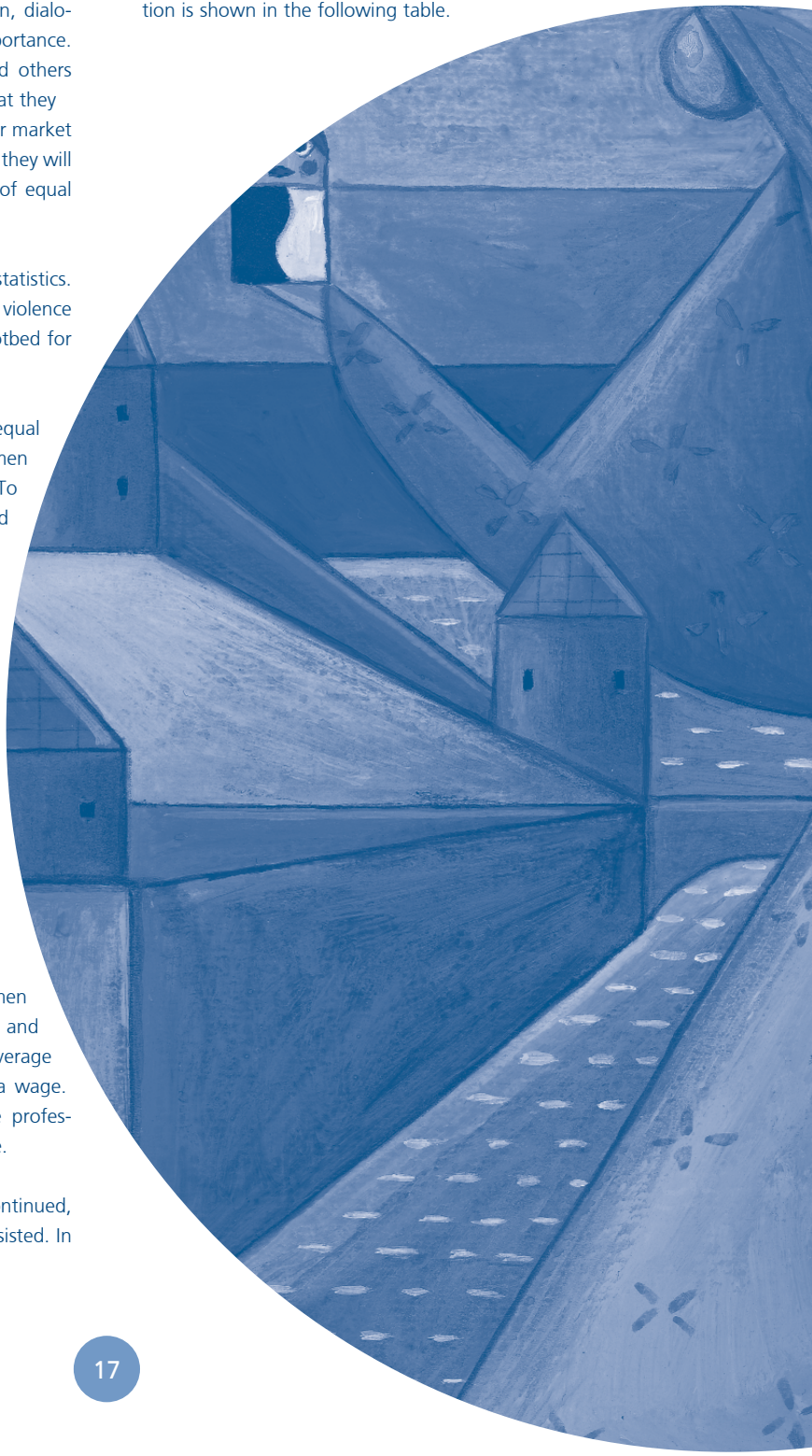
The wage-gap

Official policy specifies equal pay for equal work. Women make up about one-half of the employed population, and in the first quarter of the year, they received on average 82.2 percent of what male employees received as a wage. Women are underrepresented significantly in some professions, business, and the managerial sector as a whole.

Significant inequalities in society based on gender continued, and conservative views about the role of women persisted. In

1999 the Ministry of Education and Science abolished preferential university entrance criteria; since then the equal opportunities ombudsman has followed closely admission examinations to universities and found no violation of equal opportunity.

Statistical data show that wages in the activity sectors with a higher women employment level are lower compared to the sectors where mostly men are employed. This correlation is shown in the following table.



| AVERAGE MONTHLY WAGES OF WOMEN AND MEN (LTL) AND THE SHARE OF WOMEN IN THE TOTAL EMPLOYED POPULATION (%) BY ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES IN 2004-2005 | | | |
|--|---------------|----------------|-------------|
| | Women's wages | Share of women | Men's wages |
| Agriculture, hunting and forestry | 900.4 | 6.54 | 1,023.9 |
| Fishing | 973.7 | 0.01 | 1,139.3 |
| Mining and quarrying; manufacturing | 1,027.2 | 8.80 | 1,336.7 |
| Electricity, gas and water supply | 1,561.8 | 0.45 | 1,816.3 |
| Construction | 1,166.7 | 0.69 | 1,123.9 |
| Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles, motorcycles and personal and household goods | 1,047.4 | 8.08 | 1,315.8 |
| Hotels and restaurants | 771.6 | 1.83 | 1,227 |
| Transport, storage and communication | 1,343 | 1.65 | 1,405.4 |
| Financial intermediation | 2,186.1 | 0.72 | 3,829.7 |
| Real estate, renting and business activities | 1,313.2 | 1.77 | 1,590.4 |
| Public administration and defence; compulsory social security | 1,866.8 | 2.27 | 1,986 |
| Education | 1,123 | 7.68 | 1,152.9 |
| Health and social work | 996.6 | 5.74 | 1,220.7 |
| Other community, social and personal service activities | 1,021.8 | 2.53 | 1,213.4 |

Source: Women and Men in Lithuania in 2003.- Statistics Department at the Government of the Republic of Lithuania, Vilnius, 2004

The table above shows that the average monthly wages were lowest nearly in all economic activities where women predominate. Furthermore, in the following two tables below, the ratios of women's average wage to that of men is shown for the whole economy and separately for the pri-

vate and the public sector and the actual average wages. As opposed to many of the outcomes for women in the public sector in other EU countries, the wage gap is much worse for women in the public sector and it seems to be deteriorating further at a greater rate than in the private sector.

| WOMEN'S EARNINGS AS PERCENTAGE OF MEN'S, % | | | |
|--|---------------|---------------|----------------|
| | Whole economy | Public sector | Private sector |
| 2000 | 81.7 | 77 | 84.5 |
| 2002 | 81.2 | 74.9 | 85 |
| 2003 | 80.9 | 75.2 | 83.8 |

Source: *Women and Men in Lithuania in 2003*. - Statistics Department at the Government of the Republic of Lithuania, Vilnius, 2004

| AVERAGE MONTHLY GROSS EARNINGS BY ECONOMIC SECTOR (Sole proprietorship are excluded (LTL)) | | | | | | |
|---|---------------|-------|---------------|-------|----------------|-------|
| | Whole economy | | Public sector | | Private sector | |
| Year | Women | Men | Women | Men | Women | Men |
| 2000 | 956 | 1,170 | 980 | 1,272 | 918 | 1,087 |
| 2002 | 1,010 | 1,244 | 1,018 | 1,360 | 998 | 1,174 |
| 2003 | 1,050 | 1,297 | 1,065 | 1,416 | 1,029 | 1,228 |

Data: <http://www.std.lt/web/main.php?parent=755&module=755&action=page&id=151&print=y>

Reconciliation of work and family life

A survey made in Lithuania (in 1997 by the Women Study Centre of Vilnius University) shows the public opinion, that if there is lack of working places, it is easier for men to get work, than women. The employers are more likely to hire men in more prestigious and better-paid professions. Similarly to other post-communist countries, in Lithuania the idea of 'returning' woman back to the family or to her home is popular. In certain way, this is a natural reaction to negative consequence of paid employment of women and related with it "double burden" where working women continue to be responsible for majority of domestic duties. As an interim conclusion, we can say that as long as women will consider their duties at home and childcare a priority, they will carry "double burden of occupation" and receive lower payment for their work, as compared with men.

One of the main obstacles for women to join labour market on better conditions is the lack of reliable and accessible system of child care. Besides that, the discriminatory situation in the labour market is influenced by the belief of employers, colleagues and society, that women's place is at home. The stereotypes of "proper" male and female roles are enforced and strengthened by the gender segregation in the working place and the consequences of this phenomenon. It is still believed, that public sphere belongs to a man, while the private or home sphere is the domain of women.

On the other hand, the Social Security legislation ensures that social protection is a right of all people in Lithuania irrespective to their gender. The main Social Security rights are guaranteed by the Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania. "The state takes care of the families that raise and nurture children at home and provides support to them as applicable by law." This legislation also provides benefits to mothers before and after the birth of child, favourable work conditions and other concessions. The social security system is funded by contributions by employees. The Laws on Social Security in Lithuania details the remit of the Constitution and includes Law on the Principles of the State Social Protection System, Law on Guaranteed Income, Law on the State Social Insurance, Law on the State Social Insurance Pensions, Law on the Social Pensions, Law on the State Benefits for the Families Raising Children, Law on the Social Services and others. In the following section a description of the various types of benefits that can be identified as supporting women in the reconciliation of work and family life are described. The possible effects (negative or positive) that they can have on women's decisions to participate in the labour market are analysed in a separate section below.

Benefits

Sickness and maternity insurance is compulsory for permanent residents in Lithuania who work and receive remuneration for their work. The self-employed and other persons can voluntary choose this kind of insurance.

Maternity (Paternity) Benefit

Maternity leave is usually associated with women, but maternity benefits can be paid either to the mother or the father who is insured by the state social sickness and maternity insurance. Women are entitled to maternity benefits for 70 calendar days before the birth of their child and 56 days after giving birth, they receive 100% of the compensated wage. When this period has expired, either one of the parents on the child care leave in accordance with the Law on Vocation receives the benefit until the child is one year old. The benefit is 60% of the compensated wage, but cannot be less than the approved minimum wage. If the recipient of the maternity benefit is dismissed from work during these periods due to the liquidation of the enterprise or organisation, the payment of the maternity benefit is continued, but not if the person is in receipt of severance pay. Working mothers are protected under the Law on Employment Contract, as the employer cannot on his own initiative cease the contract with pregnant women and mothers raising their children under 3 years old. When there are job cuts in the employee numbers, women have the priority to remain at work. The pregnant women and women with children under 14 years of age or those with a disabled child under 16 years of age have the right not work a full day. Women who are pregnant or those women raising/caring for children are also eligible for benefits. Other guarantees to pregnant women, women after the confinement and breast-feeding mothers, employees raising a child until he or she has reached the age of 3 as well as to employees who are raising as single parents a child until he or she has reached the age of 14 or a child with disabilities until he or she has reached the age of 16, are as follows:

- > Assignment for overtime work upon their consent only (Art.150 (4) of the Labour Code);
- > Assignment for a business trip upon their consent only (Art.220 (3) of the Labour Code);
- > Assignment for stand-by duty at the enterprise or at home upon their consent only (Art.155 (4) of the Labour Code);
- > Assignment to work during annual holidays upon their consent only (Art.162 (2) of the Labour Code);

> Right to demand to set the part-time work (Art.146 (1) of the Labour Code);

> Right to choose the time of annual holiday after 6 months of uninterrupted work (Art.169 (4) of the Labour Code).

Maternity Grant to Women in Full Time Education

Families raising children can get different kinds of benefits from the state and local authorities. Pregnant women who undertake regular studies during the day and are not eligible for the state social insurance maternity benefit have the right to a maternity grant, this is paid for 70 days before due date of birth and amount to 75 % MLS.

Child Birth Grant

Every mother is entitled to a single grant, this amount to 6 MLS when she gives birth to a child (except in case of baby being placed for adoption or state care). In case of mother's death or removal of parental rights, the grant is paid to the father of the baby or another person who has care of the baby.

Family Benefit

A Family that is not eligible for a maternity grant is given family benefit from the date of birth of the child until the child is three years old, this amounts to 75 % MLS monthly. Families who are entitled to maternity benefit also receive this benefit of the same amount, except that it is paid during the period when the child is one year old until the child is three.

Child Care Benefit

The child care benefit of 4 MLS is paid out to persons, families or non-governmental care institutions for every orphan taken care of, or child deprived of parents' care in case one does not get any other support from the state of any kind.

Benefit to Families Raising Three or More Children

Women raising three or more children up to the age of 16 years old and older children who continue their studies receive a monthly benefit of 1 MLS, if the income of the family is less than the three Government-approved incomes. For the fourth child and subsequent children the benefit is increased by 0.3 MLS and paid irrespective of income. This benefit can be paid to the father in case the mother is missing, unable to care for her children due to illness or is deprived of the maternity rights. Low-income families are eligible for social benefit and heating compensation which are means tested. Social Benefit is paid to families in which persons with working capacity earn very low income or do not work for the justifiable reasons. This benefit is not provided for the families and per-

sons with the working capacity and able to work but refuse to work and is not active job seekers.

The investigation of living conditions of the recipients of social benefit has revealed the following as the most commonly claiming benefit (and those whose income is the lowest):

> unmarried women raising children and unable to work; they often live with their

> parents or somebody else;

> divorced women who do not receive alimony for their children;

> families with many children, where the woman usually receives the benefits and the man receives a minimum wage or does not work at all.

The social benefits as well as other social payments are very important source of income for women raising children. Though we usually talk about the equal status of every person according to the law, women employees distinguish themselves by exceptional psychophysical qualities that is why they need additional labour guarantees.

Legislative statements regulating labour relations grant additional guarantees:

> to pregnant women

> to women, who have recently given birth

> to breastfeeding mothers

> and in some cases to women, raising a child under 3 years old or an older one.

The employer, who accepted a woman for a job, has to not only define her work in the agreement and pay the agreed payment, but also to ensure safe and healthy working conditions as well. This includes working environment, nature, working and rest time, directly influencing the feelings, working capacity security and health of the employee. Special attention is paid on pregnant, breastfeeding mothers and mothers who have recently given birth. These women belong to the exceptional risk group.

Having determined the possible effects, the employer must take precautions to eliminate following risks:

1) if a pregnant woman, a woman who recently given birth or breastfeeding woman has job, defined in the list of forbidden



jobs, she must be moved to another post before pregnancy and child birth leave.

2) if a pregnant woman, a woman who recently given birth or breastfeeding woman is affected by dangerous factors, the measures should be taken to eliminate them.

If it is not possible to eliminate these factors, the employer has to implement measures for improving working conditions, so that a pregnant woman, a woman who recently given birth or breastfeeding woman will not experience the effect of these factors.

Guarantees for women cancelling working agreement

It has to be mentioned that enterprises, institutions, and organizations can enact local standard legislative statements. Triangular agreements and collective agreements defining additional guarantees for working women can be signed as well, provided that they do not deteriorate the situation of working women as compared to the guarantees stated in Labour Code and other standard legislative statements.

Impact of the tax-benefit system on women employees and employers

The different benefits and guarantees for working women as described in the preceding section have a series of effects on women themselves and on employer's willingness to hire or retain them as workers. According to various studies on the impact of the tax-benefit system on various aspects of women's position in the labour market, it can be said that in Lithuania there are benefits which promote the hiring and retention of women, while there are others which motivate the employer to avoid employing women or to seek that they

do not return to work after child birth. Further, some of these benefits can clearly increase the probability that women themselves will choose to remain at home given the family income and the lack of needed social services (mainly, but not exclusively, affordable, quality child care and also, in some cases, affordable quality services for dependent adults). In addition to the apparently strong stereotypes existing about women's place in society in Lithuania, the present mix of benefits which give incentives to women to remain at home after child-birth and up to the age of three of the child, with a low number of quality child-care facilities may seem to fit more a pro-natalist

policy rather than a policy conducive to increasing women's participation in the labour market. However, the fact is that fertility rates in Lithuania have plummeted from 1.94 in 1992 to 1.25 in 2003³. The mix of uncertainty in the labour market, with decreasing levels of social expenditure, and the negative effects of the benefit system, can be the main cause for this situation, as in other EU countries (particularly those of the Mediterranean)⁴. It is also important to mention the effects of other benefits such as retirement pensions. The right to receive the old age pension is guaranteed to all persons of retirement age, the amount of social insurance paid is dependent on the amount of years served and satisfying some other requirements.

Women in Lithuania could retire five years earlier than men. Since 1995, however, the pension age margin has been increased by two months annually for both women and men. This will continue until it will reach 60 years for women and 62 years 6 months for men. Nevertheless, the increase of the pension age margin is more rapid for women for whom 4 months are added annually (for men it is only 2 months). The old age pension is paid monthly until the death of the pensioner and two months after the death as a funeral benefit.

The amount of pension benefit entitlement is not related to the wealth of the pensioner or number of dependent persons. Working pensioners receive the full benefit of the old age pension when they are 65 years old. These changes in age, taking into account the need to finance pensions as fertility rate drops and longer lives. In this respect it is important to keep in mind the fact that other changes to the pension system, such as privatisation and individualisation, can also be affecting more negatively those persons with lower wages (on average more women).

3 - Eurostat. http://epp.eurostat.ec.eu.int/portal/page?_pageid=1996,39140985&_dad=portal&_schema=PORTAL&screen=detailref&language=en&product=Yearlies_new_population&root=Yearlies_new_population/C/C1/C12/cab12048

Stereotype of working women

Since the change of the system from the soviet to a democratic one the involvement of women in the economy continues to be very high. A social stereotype of a working woman reflects this, although traditionally for a stereotype it is lightly one sided.

A stereotype of a working woman show her as well educated, extremely busy workaholic, constantly preoccupied with her work, and hence not have time for her private life (i.e. she does not have one). She has no time for social activities; she

also does not have a family. Such description makes it clear that society thinks of a working woman, as a woman who works in a high, well paid position, such as a manager, lawyer, business woman, governmental officer, etc. This stereotype is only partly correct. It is true, that most of the working women in such positions do have a high level of education and devote most of their time to their professional duties. At the same time however, these women are usually are most successful in managing their personal and family life as well. This feature of a working woman is not reflected in the social stereotype.

Issues for women entrepreneurs

The system of free economic market provides, in theory, equal opportunities for all citizens to seek economic independence; however, in practice it is not always true. There are cases, when women are discriminated on the basis of sex in job-seeking. Therefore, more and more women are willing to start their own business and gain economic independence this way.

Moreover, women recruit other women more willingly and create jobs not only for themselves, but also for other women, filling in at the same time the existing niches on the free market. According to the data of the Statistics Department women ran approximately 29% of businesses in 1998. Men traditionally are much more active in starting up a company but the

activity of women in this respect has been improving in the course of recent years. In 1997, only 28.8% of newly established companies were managed by women, in 2001 this figure reached 40%. In 2003, as the following table shows, only

12.9% of all employed women were employers and self-employed (compared with 20% of men in the same situation).

The major share of women (82.9%) were employees. Also it is important to note the higher share of family workers among women, this is particularly important in a country such as Lithuania with a high percentage of people dedicated to agriculture. Indeed, the number of men who are also family workers represents almost 3% of all male workers while the percentage for women is just above 4%.



4 - For a recent review of the impact of the tax-benefit system on women's labour market outcomes and on the reconciliation of work and family life, see the European Parliament report "Social Security Systems in the EU and their impact on reconciliation of work and family life", prepared by Almenara Estudios Económicos y Sociales, 2004.

| EMPLOYED POPULATION BY EMPLOYMENT STATUS IN 2003 | | | | |
|--|------------------|-------|-------------------------|------|
| | Total (thousand) | | Distribution by sex (%) | |
| | Female | Male | Female | Male |
| Total | 711.8 | 726.2 | 49.5 | 50.5 |
| Employed | 589.9 | 554.8 | 51.5 | 48.5 |
| Employers and self-employed | 91.6 | 151.2 | 37.7 | 62.3 |
| Family workers | 30.3 | 20.2 | 60 | 40 |

Source: *Women and Men in Lithuania in 2003.- Statistics Department at the Government of the Republic of Lithuania, Vilnius, 2004*

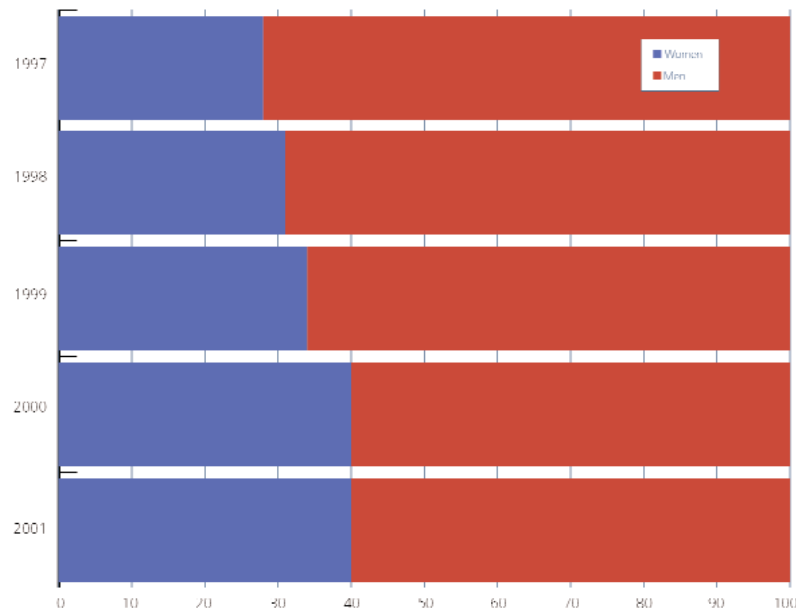
Nowadays women have started to enter the conventionally male business world more enthusiastically. Although currently both men and women are legally provided with equal opportunities to start up their business, the key business players continue to be men. In 2003, in Lithuania self-employed women accounted for around 38% of the total self-employed population. In the EU this indicator accounts for 32%.

The main reasons determining a lower level of women's participation in business:

- > Outdated stereotype approach towards a woman's social role;
- > Difficult compatibility of the family and business;
- > Lack of self-confidence;
- > Lack of specific knowledge necessary to run business, etc.

Regardless the above provisions, the situation of women in business is improving. In 2001, the Statistics Department at the Government of the Republic of Lithuania together with the Ministry of Economy of the Republic of Lithuania carried out the survey of business environment for small and medium-sized enterprises which shows that the number of women managers in companies is increasing. In 2000, in Lithuania the share of women managers accounted for only 29,2%, while in 2001 already 40% as the following graph shows.

Managers of newly established enterprises by size in 2001, (% total number of companies different years = 100)

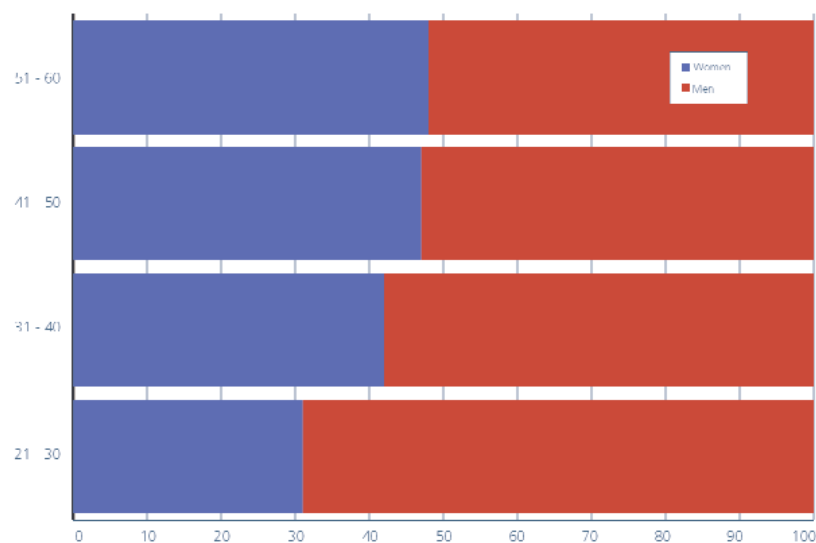


Source: *Small and Medium-Size Business in Lithuania and Central Europe - Vilnius, Statistical survey, 2002*

In the following graph, it is shown that in all age groups the share of men managers is higher. This difference is obvious in the age group of 21 - 30. The biggest number of women managers is in the age group of 41 - 60 years. In 2003 the

biggest share of women-managers in the EU was in France (women-managers accounted for 36%), Great Britain (32%) and Spain (32%), and the smallest share - in Italy (20%), Denmark (21%) and Luxemburg.

Distribution of entrepreneurs by sex and age in 2001 (%) (total number of entrepreneurs in a respective age group = 100)



Source: *Small and Medium-Size Business in Lithuania and Central Europe - Vilnius, Statistical survey, 2002*

Only 21-24% of entrepreneurs in all age groups are women. The situation regarding women entrepreneurs in Lithuania and the EU is very similar. In all age groups (25-39 years, 40-49 years, and 50+ years) the number of women entrepreneurs is smaller than that of men entrepreneurs. In the EU the biggest number of women entrepreneurs is in the age group of 50+ years (5,5% of the total number of the age group employed women). This number is slightly lower, 4.5%, in the age group of 40-49 years and 3% in the age group of 25-39 years.

Lithuanian women entrepreneurs develop their activities mainly in the following areas: sewing, hairdresser's salons and the barber's, beauty salons, small restaurants and cafes, private dentist surgeries and private clinics, sports clubs, etc. According to the survey Women and Entrepreneurship in Lithuania, report by Ruta Aidis (January 1998) based on interviews with women, one of the major outcomes is that the majority of the women entrepreneurs (71%) have encountered discrimination, 82% feel that it is more difficult for women to be entrepreneurs, whereas 49% feel that they are more vulnerable. Also the study brought forward the negative entrepreneurial image of women and the limited sources of capital, particularly for start-ups.

Another pilot survey report by UNDP, Businesswomen in Lithuania, indicates that women in business are mostly not treated as equal business partners and have to overcome more difficulties than men. This report also shows that special advice, training and support on financial issues is needed. It is also noted in this report that this type of support is not very widespread and is not very affordable. Women are committed to entrepreneurship, but facilities are needed to provide advice and information. Credit, particularly for start-ups,

is a major consideration. Although small loans are said to be available there is certain paucity in higher range of money. It can be explained by unwillingness of the banks to extend their loans to small business since there is no difference for the banks in costs of servicing small and big loans. The Mission Report by John Allen and Atena Duicu (UNDP-RBEC)⁵ points out that although various organisations are active in the field of gender and/or business on the one hand and credit for small and medium-sized business on the other, there is clearly a need for an organisation combining training/advisory facilities and a credit scheme, particularly focussed on women.

Various initiatives are developed by selected women's NGOs. WEINC (Kaunas Women's Employment and Information Centre) has started a mobile service ("Consultancy Center on the Wheels") with the aim of advice rural women in the region around Kaunas. The mobile service is going through towns and villages, talking to women that are interested in starting a new business. Based on success of other rural credit unions, LFWA (Lithuanian Farm Women's Association) has established a women's credit union.

Since 1995, more than 29 credit unions have been founded. The women credit union is assisted by SDID (the Canadian Société de Développement International Desjardins). SDID will reimburse the costs when the credit unions has gained "critical mass" and it also gives a term deposit at the start to ease the early development of the credit union. The credit unions operate according to the Law on Credit Unions, which gives stringent regulations on the foundation, the organisation and the functioning of credit unions. It is the Central Bank of Lithuania who licenses, supervises and monitors them.

Stereotype of self-employed/entrepreneurs

The stereotype of a self-employed/entrepreneur is similar to the stereotype of a working woman, but with more distinct "single woman" elements. Such approach comes from a long patriarchal societal thinking. People see female entrepreneurs/self-employed as women who most likely failed in their marital/family life, do not have a husband

who would provide for them and this is why they need to think of a way to support themselves. Even though this stereotype is slowly changing, the professional skill, knowledge, capacity and potential of such women do not receive the attention they should.

5 - For both UNDP reports see *Wanted: Women in Business project summary* at <http://www.undp.lt/files/pdf/Economic/Lit99Q12.pdf>

Case Studies

Case study 1: Audrone, the working woman

Audrone works as an assistant manager at a private enterprise. She is married and has two children of ages 14 and 5. She works a regular week of 5 working days. Since she is an employed staff of the enterprise, and not an owner, she has to strictly abide the working schedule. Her working day starts at 8 A.M., and ends at 5 P.M. Before work, Audrone drops both of her children off at school, then goes to her office. Audrone uses her lunch break to pick her youngest daughter from school and drives her to her after-school activity. Then she goes back to the office to finish up the rest of the working day. Audrone agrees that there are at least once a week occasions when she has to work overtime. She is very happy that her oldest son is of an age where he can look after his younger sister, so she does not have to worry so much about leaving her children alone during the overtime hours. Her husband works in another town and commutes every day, so he also gets home quite late. Audrone is quite satisfied with her job, because it pays well and has career opportunities, but she agrees that it takes up a lot of time that she would rather spend with her family. Over all, she finds the timetable and the lifestyle a bit stressful, because she is very worried about her children. She wishes her spouse was more involved in child care, but she also understands that her husband also needs to work and advance his career. After all, both Audrone and her husband work for the better future of their children.

Case study 2: Zita, an entrepreneur

Zita, together with her husband owns a small factory that manufactures uniforms for restaurants, cafes, etc.. As Zita said herself, she had this business for over 15 years most of which she has spent "working like crazy", taking all the orders, working over time, paying extra for the over time of her workers and hardly making the ends meet. Several years ago she became involved in a large international project for women entrepreneurs from the Baltic States. She met a woman from Sweden who was involved in the similar type of business. A trip to Sweden to visit the business of a newly met friend was one of the most valuable lessons of her life. There she learned that quality of her work and of the clients can make a big difference in the business and in the earning.

She realized that taking in all the orders does not always help out the business. Zita started looking for clients, which need and were worth the quality that Zita's factory could provide. And things started to change. Now Zita is very happy with the way things are developing in her company. She has clients from all over Europe and is a very successful business woman. Zita says that shifting the quantitative approach towards the quality has improved not only her business, but made a lot of positive changes in her personal and family life too.

