



**SEIMAS OF THE REPUBLIC OF LITHUANIA**

**RESOLUTION**

**ON THE APPROVAL OF THE STATE FAMILY POLICY CONCEPT**

3 June 2008 No X-1569

Vilnius

The Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania, upon considering the Draft of the State Family Policy Concept prepared by the working group composed by the Seimas Board on 23 September 2005 on Decision No 469, has decided:

**Article 1.**

To approve the State Family Policy Concept (appended).

**SPEAKER OF THE SEIMAS OF  
THE REPUBLIC OF LITHUANIA**

**ČESLOVAS JURŠĖNAS**

## STATE FAMILY POLICY CONCEPT

### 1. GENERAL PROVISIONS

1.1. The **Purpose of the State Family Policy Concept** (hereinafter referred as the Concept ) is to substantiate the necessity of the general family policy when implementing the constitutional provision of the Republic of Lithuania that family is the basis of society and the State, that the principal ethnic and culturally valuable objects are fostered in the family, ensuring every person's welfare and historical survival of the Lithuanian State and the nation.

1.2. The **aims** of the Concept:

- to disclose the exclusive value family has for the life of the person and society;
- to define the functions performed by the family in meeting the demands of the person and society;
- to characterise the problems of family development and conditions of family life in Lithuania ;
- to define the state family objectives and principles;
- to project the trends of state family policy development.

1.3. The concept is based on historically formed family values and on the ideas defining family welfare, corresponding to the Constitution and other legal acts.

1.4. The family is the principal good of the society, arising from human nature and based on voluntary matrimonial pledge of man and woman to devote their life to developing family relations, ensuring the welfare of all family members – man and woman, children and all generations and the development of a healthy society, the vitality and creativity of the people and the state. Therefore state and non-governmental institutions must ensure the development of the environment enhancing family integrity, upgrading and improving its legal and social basis.

#### 1.5. Limits of applying the concept

1.5.1. This concept shall not cover a variety of family types found throughout the private and cultural sectors.

1.5.2. The concept is based on the provision that protecting motherhood, fatherhood and childhood the state protects all the persons directly linked by “kin” connection, mutual assistance and common household. Care of orphans, single mothers (fathers) and their children, the children of cohabitants shall fall within the sphere of regulation of other legal acts.

#### 1.6. Definitions

1.6.1. **Immediate family members** – persons related by blood – parents and children, grandparents and grandchildren, siblings.

1.6.2. **Harmonious family** – family which performs the characteristic family functions ensuring the physical, psychic and spiritual well-being of all its members.

1.6.3. **Large family** – family raising three or more children.

1.6.4. **Extended family** – spouses, their children (including adopted), if any, and immediate family members living together.

1.6.5. **Family living through a crisis** – family living through a complicated period of life owing to certain psychological, social, health or other problems (divorcing; a family where one or both parents temporarily live abroad, and their children, left in their native land, often develop the orphan's syndrome (i.e. go through the trauma of parting and its consequences affect mental health and conduct); the family taking care of the patient who experienced a loss or violence, or a family facing other problems).

1.6.6. **Incomplete family** – family or extended family, where, upon termination of marriage, the children have been deprived of one or both parents.

1.6.7. **Marriage** – marriage is a voluntary agreement between a man and a woman to create legal family relations executed in the procedure provided for by law.

1.6.8. **Social risk family** – a family raising children under 18 where at least one of the parents abuses alcohol, narcotic, psychotropic or toxic substances, is a gambling addict, is unable or cannot take proper care of the children due to lack of social skills, subjects them to psychological, physical or sexual violence, uses the assistance received from the state for other than family needs, which puts at risk physical, mental, spiritual and moral development and security<sup>1</sup> of children.

1.6.9. **Family** – spouses and their children (including adopted), if any. The family may also be incomplete or extended.

### 1.7. The concept is based on the following legal provisions:

1.7.1. *Article 38 of the Constitution:* (Official gazette, 1992, No 33-1014) “The family shall be the basis of society and the State. Family, motherhood, fatherhood and childhood shall be under the protection and care of the State. Marriage shall be concluded upon the free mutual consent of man and woman.(...)”

In the family, the rights of spouses shall be equal.

The right and duty of parents is to bring up their children to be honest people and faithful citizens and to support them until they come of age.

The duty of children is to respect their parents, to take care of them in their old age, and to preserve their heritage. “;

1.7.2. *Article 39 of the Constitution:* “The State shall take care of families that raise and bring up children at home, and shall render them support according to the procedure established by law (...).“;

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<sup>1</sup>Law of the Republic of Lithuania on Social Services

1.7.3. Article 26 of the Constitution: „(...) Parents and guardians shall, without restrictions, take care of the religious and moral education of their children and wards according to their own convictions.“;

1.7.4. Article 3.3 of Book Three “Family Law” of the Civil Code(Official gazette, 2000, No 74-2262) :

“1. In the Republic of Lithuania the legal regulation of family relationships shall be based on the principles of monogamy, voluntary marriage, equality of spouses, priority of protecting and safeguarding the rights and interests of children, up-bringing of children in the family, comprehensive protection of motherhood and other principles of the legal regulation of civil relationships.

2. Family laws and their application must ensure the strengthening of the family and its significance in the society, the mutual responsibility of family members for the preservation of the family and the education of the children, the possibility for each member of the family to exercise his or her rights in an appropriate manner and to protect the children of minor age from the undue influence of the other members of the family or other persons or any other such factor.”;

1.7.5. Paragraphs 2, 3, 5, 6 of Article 3.161 of Book Three of the Civil Code:

“2. A child shall have a right to know his or her parents unless that prejudices his or her interests or the law provides for otherwise.

3. A child shall have a right to live with his or her parents, be brought up and cared for in his or her parents’ family, have contact with his or her parents no matter whether the parents live together or separately, have contact with his or her relatives, unless that is prejudicial to the child’s interests.

5. Children born within or outside marriage shall have equal rights.

6. Children’s rights shall not be affected by their parents’ divorce, separation or nullity of marriage.”;

1.7.6. European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (Official gazette, 1995, No 90-987), Article 12 : “Men and women of marriageable age have the right to marry and to found a family, according to the national laws governing the exercise of this right.”;

1.7.7. Article 5 of the Protocol No 7 to the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (Official gazette No 96-3016):

“Spouses shall enjoy equality of rights and responsibilities of a private law character between them, and in their relations with their children, as to marriage, during marriage and in the event of its dissolution. This article shall not prevent States from taking such measures as are necessary in the interests of the children.”;

1.7.8. The preamble of 1989 U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child (Official gazette No 60-1501) : “(...) the family, as the fundamental group of society and the natural environment for the growth and well-being of all its members and particularly children, should be afforded the necessary protection and assistance so that it can fully assume its responsibilities within the community(...), „(...) the child, for the full and harmonious development of his or her personality, should grow up in a family environment, in an atmosphere of happiness, love and understanding.“

### **1.8. Exclusive value of the family**

1.8.1. *Harmonious family is the good in itself*, as it meets the person’s natural needs and sociability and allows to fully satisfy them:

- being unreservedly loved and accepted regardless of the person’s powers, talents and achievements, as every person is unique and valuable by himself ;
- being open to another person, trusting and sharing one’s life with that person (associating and cooperating);
- having parents as someone to look up to, as someone whom one can trust, from whom one can learn, whose relations can be viewed as an example of interrelation between men and women, and in this way disclose and consolidate one’s own identity.

1.8.2. *The marriage based on family is a historically and scientifically confirmed most trustworthy institute*, **providing best conditions** for all-round and full-fledged development of natural talents and social skills of all its members. Therefore the family is the basis of society’s progress and the guarantor of the welfare and survival of the nation.

1.8.3. *Family is the primary social institution*, ensuring a feedback between family and society, the presence of values, the totality of norms of conduct, formal and informal rules which lie at the basis of every society’s social way of life. Society’s way of life is undermined if the family lacks support and protection.

1.8.4. *Family as primary community* which developed before the state or any other social formation is a natural and *principal unit of society*. Living together as well as community of family members and their mutual interdependence necessitates seeing family in its entirety. Human rights are primarily implemented through the family, not dividing it into its separate members, but strengthening their mutual responsibility. Family created on the basis of marriage between man and woman, even though it becomes incomplete, better protects the rights of its members and prepares for full-fledged personal and social life compared to any institution set up and supported by the state.

1.8.5. *Complementarity of gender and generation differences in a family* ensures the fullness of intercommunion. Equal cooperation of man and woman, close links between generations conditioning the continuity of cultural property and constructive behaviour models has an effect on public solidarity, democracy and public spirit. Gender differences, ever newly confirmed by neurobiology and

neuropsychological studies<sup>2</sup>, do not of its own create unequal opportunities and do not lead to discrimination, but condition different expression, attitudes, talents, experience, providing a possibility of creative cooperation in every area of public life.

1.8.5.1. Gender complementarity, manifesting itself and developed first of all in the family means primarily not dividing areas of life or works into those male or female, but ensuring equal cooperation of man and woman in all spheres of activity (carrying equal responsibility for the life of the family and upbringing of children), recognising and acknowledging the distinction manifested by both man and woman, the contribution of both parties, different in their essence and therefore complementing one another, which guarantees the dynamics of human creativity and mutual interrelation.

1.8.5.2. The unity of spouses and their cooperation in the family is the precondition of gender unity and cooperation, the unity and cooperation between parents and children, grandparents and grandchildren. By their experience, possibilities, attitudes different family members have more conditions to learn tolerance, understanding, hearing the attitude of other people.

1.8.6. *Family stability* – family members' mutual trust and ability to adapt to each other – which guarantees meeting all social and psychological needs of family members, directly affects their creativity as persons, their ability to live in society, to cooperate and adapt themselves in the changing world.

### **1.9. The main functions of the family in the life of person and society**

1.9.1. *Creating the community of people* – establishing and developing relations between people, promoting gender mutuality and complementarity, fostering the people's mutual respect, trust and responsibility accepting the spouse and taking on parental obligations.

1.9.2. *Procreation* – a mechanism by which two living beings, a man and a woman, create, driven by love, a third living being that is different from both the father and the mother, guided by responsible treatment of motherhood and fatherhood, raising of children.

1.9.3. *Education and socialisation* – imparting culture and cultural properties, rules of conduct and primary knowledge, developing knowledge and communication skills, revealing human talents and ensuring the possibilities of their realisation, explaining the person's sexual identity (understanding the role of man and woman in the family and society), developing self-consciousness, social rehabilitation.

1.9.4. *Care and recreation* – ensuring human care, psychological security (especially of children, senior citizens and disabled people), development of psychophysical maturity, rehabilitation and maintenance of a person's psychic, physical and spiritual skills.

1.9.5. *Developing a household* – ensuring communal activities, experiencing solidarity and subsidiarity, developing responsibility and independence, ensuring material self-sufficiency, developing the ability of coordinating family life and employment.

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<sup>2</sup> Brizendine L., Wels S., *The Female Brain*, N.Y.: Morgan Road Books, 2006.

## 2. PROBLEMS OF FAMILY DEVELOPMENT AND FAMILY LIFE

2.1. Social and economic instability, new possibilities and challenges (which reduced the capacity of adaptation to new circumstances), absence in the state of the common family policy, intended for strengthening family role and fostering family values, insufficient attention to sustainable healthy family highlighted the increasing crisis of family institution. This situation is exemplified by the problems discussed further: family demography, changes in the cultural environment and changing values, economic situation, education of children, ensuring security and other problems.

### 2.2. Demographic problems

2.2.1. **Small number of marriages.** Although after the fall in the number of marriages lasting for a whole decade (1991–2001), during the recent five years their number started increasing. In 2006 the number of married couples was 21.2 thou. (larger than in 2005 by 1.3 thou. couples)<sup>3</sup>, but, as in 1990 the number of couples that wed was 36.3 thou., relatively the number is rather small.

2.2.2. **People are getting married at older age.** In 2006 the average age of males at first marriage was 27 years, females – 25 years. In 2000 – respectively 26 and 24 years.<sup>4</sup> According to the population census of 1989 the number of married males in age bracket between 20 and 24 amounted to one third (32.8 percent), and according to the data of 2001 their number decreased by 50percent, amounting only to one sixth (16.5 percent), while the number of married females of the age accordingly decreased from 55.5percent to 32.5percent.

2.2.3. **The divorce rate is rather high.** In 2006 about 11.2 thou. divorces were registered (by 202 couples more than in 2005). In 1990 35 divorces were registered per 100 marriages, in 2005 the number of divorces increased to 58.<sup>5</sup> On the average, within a year after the divorces about 10 thou. children are left without one of the parents (in most cases without a father).<sup>6</sup>

2.2.4. **The number of couples living in cohabitation is growing.** According to the data of the Institute of Social Research, nearly a half (44percent) of the respondents aged 18 to 24 years approve of living out-of-wedlock. As is evident from research data<sup>7</sup>, living in cohabitation increases tension in mutual relations, inclination to adultery, unwillingness or delay to have children, possibility to use violence against women and children; infant mortality in cohabiting couples exceeds that of married

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<sup>3</sup> Information of 2007-05-11 of the Department of Statistics “The Lithuanian Family Today” („Lietuvos šeima šiandien“), <http://www.stat.gov.lt/lt/news/view?id=1110> Statistical Department 2007-05-11 informacija

<sup>4</sup> Information of 2007-05-11 of the Department of Statistics “The Lithuanian Family Today” („Lietuvos šeima šiandien“), <http://www.stat.gov.lt/lt/news/view?id=1110>

<sup>5</sup> Annual Report of the national health Council, 2006, Vilnius, 2007, p. 11.

<sup>6</sup> Information of 2007-05-11 of the Department of Statistics “The Lithuanian Family Today” („Lietuvos šeima šiandien“), <http://www.stat.gov.lt/lt/news/view?id=1110>

<sup>7</sup> Garrison M., „Is Consent Necessary? An Evaluation of the Emerging Law of Cohabitant Obligation“// *UCLA Law Review*, February, 2005, p. 815-896; Wilcox W.B. et al. *Why Marriage Matters: Twenty-Six Conclusions from the Social Sciences*. N.Y.: Institute for American Values, 2005; Wilcox W.B. and Nock S.L., „What’s Love Got to Do with It? Equality, Equity, Commitment, and Women’s Marital Happiness“// *Social Forces* 84: 1321–1345.

parents, children of cohabiting parents have more behavioural problems, they are more inclined to alcohol, narcotic substances abuse, have early sexual relations.

**2.2.5. Decline in fertility.** The total fertility rate <sup>8</sup> (decreased from 2.02 in 1990 to 1.3 in 2006) does not ensure demographic renewal. In 2006 21.3 thou. children were born in Lithuania (724 children more than in 2005). Although starting from 2003 birth rates have been on the rise, but in Lithuania fertility is still one of the lowest in the EU member states<sup>9</sup>.

**2.2.6. The number of children is decreasing.** In 2006 alone the number of children decreased by 23.3 thou. (3.2 percent). In ten years from 1990 to 2000 the number of children fell by 125.4 thou. (12,6percent) and from 2000 – by 175.8 thou. (20.2percent proc.).<sup>10</sup>

**2.2.7. The number of women giving birth in older age is steadily increasing.** In 2006 the average age of women at first childbirth was 25 years<sup>11</sup>, whereas in 1994 – 23 years.

**2.2.8. The number of extra-marital live births is growing.** According to the data of the Department of Statistics under the Government of the Republic of Lithuania, in 1990 7percent of children were born out of wedlock, while in 2003 -29.5 percent. In 2005 8.6 thou. children were born to cohabiting parents, whereas in 2006 the number of such children reached 9.3 thou. as against only 7.7 thou. in 2000.<sup>12</sup>

**2.2.9. Mortality rate of infants under 1 year.** This indicator is treated as equivalent to the country's social and economic =development indicator. In 2005 209 infants under 1 year died, in 2006 – 212. Average mortality rate of infant is 6.8 per 1000 live births, the EU member state average – 5.2.<sup>13</sup>

**2.2.10. The number of children living without parental care is growing.** Due to divorce, poverty, emigration the number of households, where the children are brought up by one of the parents or by the guardian is increasing. In 2005 the number of such households constituted 11 percent, and in 2006 already 13 percent of Lithuanian households. Nearly one half of the people who departed from Lithuania in 2005 were married persons, therefore a new family type is forming in Lithuania, with one or both parents temporarily living abroad and their children, being left living in their native land, often suffer from the orphan's syndrome..

**2.2.11. Every second family is childless.** In 2006 more than half (55 percent) of the families were childless, 22 percent had one child, 17.3 percent had 2 children, 6 percent of families brought more children. Average family often consists of 2.4 persons.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Total fertility rate – the average number of children that would be born to a woman over her lifetime if she were to experience the exact current age-specific rates through her lifetime

<sup>9</sup> Information of 2007-05-11 of the Department of Statistics “The Lithuanian Family Today“(„Lietuvos šeima šiandien“

, <http://www.stat.gov.lt/lt/news/view/?id=1110>

<sup>10</sup> Information of 2007-05-11 of the Department of Statistics “The Lithuanian Children” („Lietuvos vaikai“)

<http://www.stat.gov.lt/lt/pages/view/?id=1878>

<sup>11</sup> Information of 2007-05-11 of the Department of Statistics “The Lithuanian Family Today”

<http://www.stat.gov.lt/lt/news/view/?id=1110>

<sup>12</sup> Information of 2007-05-11 of the Department of Statistics “The Lithuanian Family Today”,

<http://www.stat.gov.lt/lt/news/view/?id=1110>

<sup>13</sup> Annual Report of the National Health Council (Nacionalinės sveikatos tarybos metinis pranešimas), 2006, Vilnius, 2007, p. 11.

2.2.12. **The population is aging.** In 2006 the people aged 60 years and more constituted 20.4percent of the population, while the children under 14 years – 16.5percent. Index of aging<sup>15</sup> increased in the period from 2001 to 2006 from 98 to 124.<sup>16</sup>

### **2.3. Changes in cultural environment and changes of values**

2.3.1. **Weakening of marriage.** It is conditioned by the changing society values – recognition of new forms of cohabitation, the importance of personal self-expression, attempts to achieve career and solid material basis, avoidance of commitments and responsibility.

2.3.2. **Lack of culture in the people's interrelations.** The society has a poor psychological background, its knowledge of the psychosocial levels of family and personality development is insufficient. Conflicts in the family have a negative effect on the spiritual health of both children and parents.

2.3.3. **Dissolution of solidarity between generations.** Alienation and animosity is frequently felt between generations.

2.3.4. **Parents' occupation.** The fact that parents are very busy affects the relations between parents and children, little attention is given to caring for children and to their education, which undermines the relations between family members.

### **2.4. Social and economic family problems**

2.4.1. **Poverty of families.** Incomplete families and large families first of all fall among those living in poverty. Here we may also mention families with small children, families of persons who take care of the disabled, also families with low motivation, unable to adjust to changing conditions of life. According to the data of the Department of Statistics under the Government of the Republic of Lithuania, relative poverty indicator<sup>17</sup> was increasing from 2003 (15. percent) and in 2005 amounted to 16.9percent. In households having children relative poverty indicator is higher than the country's average and amounts to 17.2 percent. In large families having many children the said indicator amounted to 36.5 percent.<sup>18</sup>

2.4.2. **Housing problems.** The structure of the stock of dwellings does not correspond to the structure and needs of household. Housing credit granted by the State for acquiring or renting a housing is not sufficient. At the end of 2006 persons (families) who required social housing amounted to more than 16 thou. (In 2005 the persons (families) numbered 13.5 thou.), including young families which constituted 35.8 percent. Throughout 2006 only 890 persons (families) were granted a possibility to rent housing (in 2005 such families numbered 956).<sup>19</sup> Housing problem is one of the main reasons of

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<sup>14</sup> Information of 2007-05-11 of the Department of Statistics "The Lithuanian Family Today", <http://www.stat.gov.lt/lt/news/view/?id=1110>

<sup>15</sup> *Index of Aging – Amount of people aged 60 and more falling to 100 children under 14.*

<sup>16</sup> Annual Report of the National Health Council, 2006, Vilnius, 2007, p. 10.

<sup>17</sup> *Relative poverty indicator (When the expenses of the resident are 50 percent less than Lithuania's average consumer costs).*

<sup>18</sup> Department of Statistics. Living Standard and Poverty, 2005, Vilnius, 2006, p. 20.

<sup>19</sup> Department of Statistics. Renting Social Housing and State Supported Housing Credits. 2006, Vilnius, 2007, p. 4.

the decline of marriages, their postponement for later years, small birth-rate and emergence of problems related to creation of more favourable conditions for child education..

**2.4.3. Problems of compatibility of work and family duties.** Flexible employment arrangements are poorly developed (part time work, flexible and part-time hours, homeworking, etc.) and insufficient child care services limit the possibilities for parents to choose professional work and child education regime, to ensure gender equality and seek amelioration of demographic results.

**2.4.4. Emigration.** It is conditioned by small wages, low standard of living, problems arising to young people finding their first employment, long term unemployment, rather high level of unofficial employment. The level and intensity of emigration of Lithuania's residents is very high. Over the first years of EU membership (in 2004) the number of emigrants from Lithuania increased by 1.4 times – from 22.7 thou. to 32.5 thou. The majority – 48.1 thou. (2 times more than in 2003) emigrated in 2005. Through 2006 the number of emigrants fell: only about 27.8 thou. emigrated, i.e. nearly twice less than in 2005 and by one fifth more than in 2003. Among those leaving Lithuania are most often young people, having 20-29 years, secondary, tertiary or high education, people capable of work.<sup>20</sup> Due to qualitative changes in Lithuania's population connected with emigration, growing age and gender disproportion, "brain-drain", the modification and lack of labour force has a negative effect on family institution. Return migration is not sufficiently encouraged. Labour force mobility inside Lithuania is ineffective.

**2.4.5. Insufficient social assistance and family support system.** There is no economic stability, development of family assistance and its quality has not been guaranteed. The present infrastructure of social support is poorly developed, coordination of actions is insufficient, there is a lack of qualified specialists working with the family. The system of social assistance and support is to a great extent oriented not to preventive work or provision of services to a family, but to the consequences, to payment of social benefits. Payment of benefits indirectly habituates parents of dysfunctional families to live off their children and avoid any socially useful work. Integration of young people into the labour market is not sufficient.

**2.4.6. Insufficient state assistance and crisis support for families.** Comprehensive assistance and support for families in case of social, psychological and other crises is lacking. The number of institutions that can implement and coordinate social, pedagogical and psychological support for families is not sufficient.

## **2.5. Problems of child education and of ensuring comprehensive security**

**2.5.1. Many children are left without parental care due to emigration.** The problems of emigration are complex, connected with the aspects of the child's legal representation, his emotional, moral condition, the process of his education and self-education, suitable living conditions. About half

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<sup>20</sup> Information of 2007-05-11 of the Department of Statistics , <http://www.stat.gov.lt/lt/news/view?id=1927>

of the emigrants had children, but only every second of them left together with children. The results of investigation of emigration shown that the children of every other emigrant remained in Lithuania with one of the parents or grandparents or other relatives.<sup>21</sup>

**2.5.2. The number of children growing in foster homes is not diminishing.** In the beginning of 2007 there were 13.3 thou. children left without parental care. At the end of 2006, like in 2005, 6.1 thou. children lived in foster homes.<sup>22</sup>

**2.5.3. The number of social risk families and children growing in them is high.** At the beginning of 2007 13.5 thou. social risk families were entered in the record of the child rights protection services and the number of the children growing in them was 31.4 thou.<sup>23</sup> About two-thirds of the families have been entered in the record due to alcohol abuse. Very often such families lack social competences and motivation to independently arrange their life, therefore they are unable to properly educate their children, use against them psychological, physical violence and use the money received as state assistance not for family needs. To all evidence, they will pass their bad living habits to other generations.

**2.5.4. Violence against children.** In 2006 5.1 thou. children (186 children more than in 2005) were victims of crime. In most cases 14—17 year teenagers, two-thirds of them boys, suffer from criminal activity. Cases of sexual violence against children are increasing. Children constitute more than a half of those registered as victims of such crime. In 2006 272 (2005– 239)<sup>24</sup> children were subjected to such criminal activity.

**2.5.5. The number of children suffering from various health disorders is growing.** According to the data of the Department of Statistics under the Government of the Republic of Lithuania, in 2005 three-fourths of children suffered from at least one disease. In 2005 there were only 43 percent of healthy children under 16 among those subjected to health checks, while in 2000 this number was 46 percent. In 2006 disabled children in Lithuania numbered 15 667, i.e. 2.7 percent of all Lithuanian children.<sup>25</sup>

**2.5.6. Insufficient preparation of young people for family life.** Pedagogically sound programmes aimed at preparing young people for family life are rather reluctantly introduced in schools. In most cases teachers are oriented only towards family's procreative function, the principles of responsible paternity and maternity are neglected. Girls and boys are not taught to discuss problems of their interrelations, to recognise and accept the differences of their views and psychological reactions.

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<sup>21</sup> Information of 2007-05-11 of the Department of Statistics, <http://www.stat.gov.lt/lt/news/view/?id=1927>

<sup>22</sup> Information of 2007-05-11 of the Department of Statistics, Social services (Socialinės paslaugos), 2006 m., p. 1.

<sup>23</sup> Information of 2007-04-27 of the Department of Statistics, Social services, 2006 m., p. 1.

<sup>24</sup> Information of 2007-05-31 of the Department of Statistics „The children of Lithuania“ („Lietuvos vaikai“), <http://www.stat.gov.lt/lt/pages/view/?id=1878>

<sup>25</sup> Investigation by the Institution of the Ombudsman for Children „The Situation and Problems of the Disabled Children in Lithuania“ („Neigaliųjų vaikų situacija ir problemos Lietuvoje“), <http://www3.lrs.lt/docs2/XRIAERBQ.DOC>

**2.5.7. Some young people initiate sexual activity too early.** This has a negative effect on future long-term commitments of these persons, based on mutual respect and love, necessary for creating and developing a comprehensive family. According to the data of the Lithuanian Health Information Centre, in 2006 the number of childbirths of women in the age-group under 18 was 443 (1.5 percent of all childbirths), the number of induced abortions of women in the 15 to 17 age group was 213 (2.2 percent of the number of all abortions).

**2.5.8. Harmful habits are rapidly spreading among young people.** According to the investigation data, 19 percent of 15–17 year old teenagers who are inmates of children's care homes have at least once in their life used a narcotic substance, 12 percent – at least once in last 12 months. 8 percent – in the last 30 days. 1 042 persons who committed criminal acts connected with disposing of narcotic or psychotropic substances were registered in 2006 (in 2005 – 1010, 2004 – 869 persons). 47 underage persons who committed criminal acts connected with illegal trade in narcotics were registered in 2006, (in 2005 – 46, 2004 – 49, 2003– 37, 2002 – 15 persons).<sup>26</sup>

**2.5.9. Insufficient employment of children and young people.** The amount of children and young people employment programmes and specific services, day centres, other institutions for additional education of the children is not sufficient; the problems of summer rest and employment of children have not been addressed. Charges for additional education services at schools or other institutions are a too heavy burden for part of families.

**2.5.10. Lack of preschool educational institutions and non-conformity of the provided services to the needs.** The need for pre-school educational institution is growing in Lithuania. At the end of 2006 there were 652 institutions of pre-school education in the country or by 62 institutions less than in 2000. The number of pre-school children attending the institutions of pre-school education in the country is growing: in 2000 – 41 percent, in 2006 – 55 percent, of them in the town – 75 percent, in the countryside – 20 percent<sup>27</sup>. The number of single-time and periodic care services lasting several hours is growing (in most cases they are provided to children under 1 year) or are oriented to developing certain capacities of the child at home or preschool educational institution.

**2.5.11. Time spent by parents and children together.** The success of education in the family depends on the time spent together with the child and on the pedagogical use of the time spent. This is common work performing household activities, cognitive excursions and holiday-making, creating family traditions and family festivals, playing common games, other ways of spending leisure together, etc. However in Lithuania little attention is paid to the fact that the working and holiday time of parents bringing up school-age children has to be agreed with the time the children are occupied at school.

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<sup>26</sup> Drug control department. Statistical information about the spread of narcotic and psychotropic substances and illegal trafficking in Lithuania, Vilnius, 2007, p. 3–4.

<sup>27</sup> Department of Statistics. Education 2006, p. 37.

<sup>27</sup> Information of 2007-05-31 of the Department of Statistics "The Lithuanian Children" (Statistikos departamento 2007-05-31 informacija „Lietuvos vaikai“, <http://www.stat.gov.lt/lt/pages/view/?id=1878>)

2.5.12. **Negative effect of public information on juveniles.** One of the main difficulties the parents encounter when bringing up children is the spread of sexualised information fraught with violence on the TV, the Internet and other mass media. This has an exceptionally bad influence on the child's personality development, the formation of his value system. According to the data of 2006, the most popular subjects favoured by the media were criminal news, erotica and sex. The information presented here forms the juveniles' distorted system of values, causes disrespect for another human being, induces hate and aggression.

## **2.6. Other problems**

2.6.1. **Problems of termination of pregnancy and infertility.** There are cases when pregnancy is terminated without having given the woman in advance the required social, pedagogical, psychological, legal, material or any other form of assistance. Insufficient attention is given to prevention and treatment of infertility. Little heed is paid to pedagogically justified sexual education of teenagers and youth, formation of responsible sexual behaviour.

2.6.2. **The number of cases of violence is increasing.** According to the data of investigation undertaken by the National Committee for UNICEF, psychological or physical violence is characteristic of 65 percent of families (the investigation data does not specify whether violence occurs in married or cohabiting couples). About two-thirds of women have at least once been subjected to physical, psychological or sexual male violence. In 2006 730 children have been subjected to violence by their parents, which is by 38 percent larger than in 2005 m.<sup>28</sup>

2.6.3. **Insufficient attention is paid to preventive, interventive, postventive work with the family** – pedagogical, psychological, medical and economic education and consulting of families, provision of physical, mental and spiritual rehabilitation services leaves much to be desired.

2.6.4. **There is no system of coordination in the area of family policy.** Systematic and comprehensive analysis of family condition and needs is not carried out, the adopted strategic provisions are not always complied with. There is no common system of family policy and the available policy means are implemented inconsistently and by fits and starts.

2.6.5. **The listed problems have a negative effect on the family institution and only a strong responsible family is capable of coping with the said difficulties.**

## **3. OBJECTIVE, PRIORITIES AND PRINCIPLES OF STATE FAMILY POLICY**

3.1. **The objective of the state family policy** – to envisage and implement the common policy supporting and strengthening the common institution of family, which would guarantee the common conditions in providing differentiated aid by the state and public organisations to the family in all areas,

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<sup>28</sup> Information of 2007-05-31 of the Department of Statistics "The Lithuanian Children" (Statistikos departamento 2007-05-31 informacija „Lietuvos vaikai“, <http://www.stat.gov.lt/lt/pages/view/?id=1878>)

seeking that it be provided conditions for being autonomous, responsible, firm, stable, active and independent institution capable of comprehensive fulfilment of its functions.

3.2. As life in the family is most favourable for comprehensive socialisation of every person, **the priority of state family policy** is creating the environment favourable for the family:

- to provide conditions for carrying out the family function of procreation, especially harmonising it with other functions guaranteeing socialisation of the family;

- to provide differentiated complex services to the family, strengthening the role of parents as the first and most important educators of the child, seeking family preservation and proper socialisation of the children;

- to support programmes of education and social assistance, helping to restore positive family experience, thereby educating the persons who do not have it (orphans, children brought up in not full families, divorced persons, single persons) instilling in them courage and capacity to create a family by obligating oneself to get married;

- to shape a positive attitude to family in the society, first of all through the state system of education and through other state institutions, public organisations, communities, to restrict public actions undermining the institution of family.

### **3.3. The principles of implementing state family policy**

3.3.1. **Family priority.** Based on historically and scientifically checked trustworthiness of family as the primary institution of the society, guaranteeing the development of well-being and progress of the nation, society and the state, because the family based on marriage provides the best conditions for all-round and comprehensive development of inborn capacities and social skills of all its members as persons.

3.3.2. **Cherishing the culture of life.** Based on developing responsible paternity and maternity, respect for life and human dignity at any stage of development of human being as a person, especially giving priority to hapless children, old people, disabled people, women doubting whether to keep life after the started pregnancy or whether to bring up a born child.

3.3.3. **Complexity.** Support covers all functions performed by the family, ensuring the material, social and spiritual welfare of the family.

3.3.4. **Differentiation.** Differentiated support is provided, taking into account the family's real welfare needs, performing family life crisis or decay prevention.

3.3.5. **Subsidiarity.** The assistance and support provided to the family aids and promotes the family self-dependence in all stages of its life, i.e. helps the family to responsibly perform whatever it can perform by its own forces, instead of taking over the tasks from it or performing its functions. Specialists in familistics and family consulting specialists have to be prepared for supporting and strengthening family subsidiarity; the system of education and social assistance in preparing youth for

family life, parent education and consultation have to be developed, family mutual assistance groups have to be set up assisting families to settle the arising problems and strengthen family stability.

3.3.6. **Gender equality.** The support provided to the family helps its members to express and realise the inborn and developed powers, being oneself and thereby serving the family by performing the family mission through the main family functions.

## **4. DIRECTIONS OF ACTIONS OF STATE FAMILY POLICY**

### **4.1. Directions of family policy actions in the areas of culture, child education, education**

The system of education and culture is based on close cooperation between family, school and society, helping the family to educate a person capable of understanding the world independently and together with others settle his own problems and those of the society life.

The aspiration – to help the family to prepare children and youth for independent life, building a functional and harmonious family, educating mature, moral an independent persons, capable of developing their own lives and that of the community

#### **4.1.1. Objectives**

4.1.1.1. To introduce in schools programmes of preparation for family and sexual education which would educate a mature, independent person, capable of critical thinking and would assist in preparing schoolchildren for family life, promote understanding and cherishing of family values;

4.1.1.2. to develop responsibility and respect for human life from the moment of conception until natural death;

4.1.1.3. to strengthen the attitudes of community spirit, public spirit, respect for the surrounding people, to form a positive attitude to human equality. To develop responsibility for one's conduct and its consequences, the ability to resist negative influence;

4.1.1.4. to impart on parents, guardians or custodians knowledge and skills required for all-round communication with children;

4.1.1.5. to ensure favourite conditions for parents to spend their leisure with children, support with families cultural, sporting and leisure events;

4.1.1.6. to develop informal education of children, create the system of psychological, pedagogical, social assistance access to which is free to every family. Special attention should be given to organising the activities of pre-school and child day supervision institutions;

4.1.1.7. to authorise the Lithuanian national broadcaster to propagate family values by demonstrating positive examples.

#### **Directions of family policy actions in the area of employment**

Employment is the main precondition of integration in society, ensuring the family's financial well-being, a full-ledged life and social security.

Aspiration – to provide an opportunity of employment and to receive adequate income, to develop flexible employment arrangements, which help harmonise professional interests with family duties, thereby creating favourable conditions for family building and bringing up children.

#### **4.2.1. Objectives**

4.2.1.1. To shape the policy of employment, oriented towards the creation of conditions for participation in labour market and reduction of flows of emigration seeking to ensure economic and social security of the families;

4.2.1.2. to create favourable conditions for family business by improving the quality of informing, consulting and teaching;

4.2.1.3. to create favourable conditions for harmonising professional employment, studies and family life; developing flexible employment arrangements;

4.2.1.4. to increase employment of family members, to support the development of small business services sector, to develop motivation of families and their capacity to adapt to different forms of employment;

4.2.1.5. to develop the system of child care leave that would guarantee the possibility of using it by both parents, at the same time remaining in the labour market; creating favourable conditions for getting employed after the expiry of the child care leave, to provide a possibility for restoring professional knowledge or retrain;

4.2.1.6. to set up child day care centres at academic townships for taking care of children of student families during the parents' lecture hours.

#### **4.3. Directions of family policy actions in the area of acquiring or renting housing**

Acquiring or renting housing and adapting the residential area to suit family needs – one of the factors for developing family living conditions, which has a deciding effect on the building of a family, its stability, birth-rate.

Aspiration – to form a stock of dwellings which meets family needs and to create favourable conditions for family living.

#### **4.3.1 Objectives**

4.3.1.1. To improve the system of housing crediting and subsidising which would meet family needs;

4.3.1.2. to develop the municipal stock of social dwellings;

4.3.1.3. to promote the development of the municipality non-profitmaking sector of hired housing;

4.3.1.4., to compensate the home heating and other related expenses taking into account the family possibilities;

4.3.1.5. to increase state support in acquiring housing to families bringing up children, especially large families;

4.3.1.6. to create in every residential district an environment favourable conditions for family living, meeting the needs of every family member (to set up green areas, child play grounds, sport grounds, rest areas; to create the infrastructure favourable for the family; to promote support for clean residential area).

#### **4.4. Directions of family policy actions in the area of social support and family services**

Social support and services to families is one of the areas ensuring social integration of families with social problems or lacking appropriate skills and possibilities to independently take care of one's family.

Aspiration – to ensure the possibilities for families to receive the required aid oriented towards strengthening the families' capacities to independently settle one's social problems, the motivation to create in the family safe, healthy and harmonious environment. To create favourable conditions for adult family members taking care of their children, disabled persons, old family members, to harmonise work and family duties.

##### **4.4.1. Objectives**

4.4.1.1. To develop the policy of active social support to families, ensuring more active harmonisation of pecuniary social support and social services system, strengthening active socio-educational family assistance, promoting its own motivation and responsibility in helping to do away with social exclusion;

4.4.1.2. to create common active accessible system of social services, ensuring all-round assistance to families, oriented towards individual family needs and interests, appropriately financed both from municipal and state budget;

4.4.1.3. to create and develop a comprehensive psychological assistance and social services system for families experiencing a crisis and families of social risk, to strengthen support to families with special needs and children. Develop family crisis assistance centres;

4.4.1.4. to improve the system of ongoing training of specialists carrying out preventive, interventive and postventive work with families;

4.4.1.5. to seek close social partnership based on communal spirit, mutual assistance, cooperation between departments, making use of the potential of non-government organisations, professional preparedness and experience in the sphere of provision of social services;

4.4.1.6. to increase the amount of tax-free income to families with children and those taking care of old and disabled family members;

4.4.1.7. to transform health insurance and pension insurance systems – to treat the contribution of mothers bringing up children at home to work remunerated by the state;

4.4.1.8. to grant additional employment guarantees to the person who is the only breadwinner of the family bringing up children or is the breadwinner of other persons in need of care;;

4.4.1.9. to provide, under favourable conditions, child or family members care services (setting up, under favourable conditions, pre-school educational institutions, nurses' services or private kindergartens or extension of said activities, extension of services' network of social workers visiting at home old people or disabled persons), thereby ensuring the possibility to flexibly agree work and family duties;

4.4.1.10. to plan the system of providing assistance to families of students, college graduates, residents.

#### **4.5. Directions of family policy action in the area of family health**

Health is all-round physical, mental and social welfare.

Aspiration – to strengthen family health, to carry out health policy favourable for the family, to urge family members to actively contribute to health policy.

##### **4.5.1. Objectives**

4.5.1.1. To ensure the quality of health care services to all members of the family, to improve life quality at all stages of human life;

4.5.1.2. to promote safe environment strengthening family health, carrying out harmful habits prevention programmes, upgrading the quality of early diagnostics of illnesses;

4.5.1.3. to provide all-round (psychological, informative, consulting, teaching of nursing skills, etc.) assistance to family members nursing sick persons or old people;

4.5.1.4. to give special attention to strengthening mental health of the family. To support programmes giving assistance to all family in case of risk of dependence, psychic illness and suicide;

4.5.1.5. to ensure accessibility of information about fertility function, physiology of sexual system, counter indication of artificial contraceptics. To develop the scientific base for restoring the fertility function of spouses;

4.5.1.6. to develop a comprehensive mother and child health care system. To improve the system of pregnant women consulting and education, childbirth, newborn and infant health care services;

4.5.1.7. to create a system of consulting pregnant women experiencing a crisis. A woman A woman choosing an abortion as the last resort should be guaranteed consultation and psychological, social, legal and other assistance;

4.5.1.8. to improve children and teenager health care services, laying down in the consciousness of children the principles of a healthy lifestyle. To create preconditions for developing a health strengthening school.

**4.6. Directions of family policy actions ensuring child safety in the family, strengthening the responsibility of parents for implementing the rights of the child and his legitimate interests**

Protection of the rights of the child – ensuring the rights of the child to live a full-fledged life in the family, his right to protection, welfare and participation in the life of the society.

Aspiration – to create favourable conditions for children to grow up in the family of biological parents, providing appropriate support and assistance to family and children.

#### **4.6.1. Objectives**

4.6.1.1. To upgrade the system of comprehensive, coordinated action and means, raising the parents' responsibility for implementing appropriate rights and duties for the child;

4.6.1.2. to promote respect for the opinion of children and develop the child' capacity to take befitting according to age duties in the family;

4.6.1.3. to promote child care in the family, seeking reduce the number of institutions engaged in child care;

4.6.1.4. to prevent all forms of violence against children. To provide qualified comprehensive assistance to children who have been subjected to violence and their families, to promote rehabilitation of people inclined to violence;

4.6.1.5. to support and develop the activity of free telephone service providing psychological assistance to children and youth;

4.6.1.6. to carry out legal education of the society, to create and instil the procedure for settling family disputes;

4.6.1.7. to strengthen the protection of minors from negative influence of public information.

## **5. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONCEPT**

5.1. *Coordination of family policy.* In order to ensure consistency, conceptuality, lasting character of the family policy, the integrity of actions and their coordination, an institution shaping and implementing family policy is set up (e.g. reorganising the ministries of Education and Science, Social Security and Labour and other ministries, the ministry for the Affairs of Family and the Child is set up). The committee for the affairs of family and the child is established in the Seimas.

5.2. **In the area of family research and monitoring.** The system of criteria and indicators of family assessment and monitoring is created, which is used for permanent analysis of family condition with a view to witnessing the dynamics of changes in family life quality and demographic data, and for performing justified and reliable research.

5.3. **In the area of social services.** An infrastructure network of the necessary social services, covering the system of training and ongoing training of social workers is created. Services are provided in developing, creating, reorganising and improving the quality of both preventive and therapeutic family services.

5.4. ***In the area of education.*** A system of measures for educating a mature personality is created.

5.5. ***When planning human resources.*** The demand for family specialists, the level of competence, ongoing training is analysed. Higher educational establishments are included in the creation of new programmes for preparing family specialists

5.6. ***When planning and allocating financial resources.*** Distributing state resources, financing programmes to develop family welfare, material justification of implementation of family functions and promotion of all structures included in the full-rate realisation of family functions is gradually taken into account.

5.7. ***In the area of public information.*** Mass media is encouraged to propagate the importance of family values, to activate the public to strengthen the family institution.

5.8. ***Legal regulation of family policy.*** The Seimas and the Government, preparing legal acts in the sphere of family policy, take into account and agree them with the provisions of this concept.