By gathering 35 local scholars, experts, and civil society activists specialized in racism and human rights, the fifth edition of the European Islamophobia Report addresses a still timely and politically important issue. All 32 country reports included in this book follow a unique structure that is convenient, first, for comparing countries and, second, for selected readings on a particular topic such as politics, employment, or education with regard to Islamophobia across Europe.

The present report investigates in detail the underlying dynamics that directly or indirectly support the rise of anti-Muslim racism in Europe. This extends from Islamophobic statements spread in national media to laws and policies that restrain the fundamental rights of European Muslim citizens and threaten the whole of society. As a result, the European Islamophobia Report 2019 discusses the impact of anti-Muslim racism on human rights, multiculturalism, and the state of law in Europe.

This fifth edition of our report highlights how European societies are progressively overwhelmed by the Islamophobic discourse of the “Great Replacement” and other far-right conspiracy theories. The 32 country reports demonstrate how governments and mainstream media participate in reproducing such discourses that put the fundamental rights of millions of European citizens in jeopardy and how one can counteract these developments. This compendium of useful insights and data aims to provide European policy-makers, institutions, and NGOs with recommendations on how to tackle anti-Muslim racism in Europe seriously.

About SETA
Foundation for Political, Economic and Social Research (SETA) is a non-profit research institute based in Turkey dedicated to innovative studies on national, regional and international issues. SETA is the leading think tank in Turkey and has offices in Ankara, Istanbul, Washington D.C., Berlin and Brussels. The objective of SETA is to produce up-to-date and accurate knowledge and analyses in the fields of politics, economy, and society, and inform policy-makers and the public on changing political, economic, social, and cultural conditions. Through research reports, publications, brainstorming sessions, conferences and policy recommendations, SETA seeks to guide leaders in government, civil society, and business, and contributes to informed decision making mechanisms.
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Executive Summary

According to the latest Lithuanian population census of 2011, only 2,727 persons or 0.09% of the total population identify as Sunni Muslims. Despite the fact that Muslims constitute a very small part of Lithuanian society, the public opinion polls show that Muslims are one of the most negatively viewed religious groups in Lithuania. However, significant positive developments regarding public attitudes have been noticed in recent years. This might be influenced by the fact that mostly negative attitudes towards Muslims do not come from personal experience, but are generated by such external factors as mass media and social networks.

During the reported period, a total of 31 criminal offenses were registered on the grounds foreseen under Chapter XXV of the Criminal Code “Crimes and Misdemeanours against a Person's Equal Rights and Freedom of Conscience”. The Office of Equal Opportunities Ombudsperson received 3 complaints of anti-Muslim discrimination in non-identified areas in 2019.

There were no employment-related incidents regarding Muslims in 2019. There were also no reported discrimination cases on the ground of religion in the area of education. No laws and regulations with Islamophobic arguments or any laws restricting the rights of Muslims in their religious lifestyle were adopted in 2019.

In 2019, three elections took place in Lithuania; however, the discussions on Muslims and their rights did not feature in the political discussion. In general, publicly spread messages during the elections did not contain prejudice towards the Muslim community, but towards the EU and its policies, and particularly related to commitments regarding refugee resettlement/relocation.

Since 2015 and due to the so-called refugee crisis, it was clearly visible that most Islamophobic statements in national media were related to the public discussions of the so-called global refugee crisis and the challenges of the refugees’ integration on national level. During the reported period such messages significantly decreased.

The numbers of reporting and victims of hate speech and hate crime remain low. It is conceivable that due to the ineffective system of reporting and investigating hate speech and hate crimes, these numbers do not correspond to the actual situation. Thus, it is essential not only to ensure systematic support and representation of the victims, but it is also important to improve the effectiveness of the mechanisms that record hate crimes, as well as their investigation. In addition, it is important to carry out monitoring of hate crimes and hate speech in mass media and social networks.
Santrauka

2011 m. visuotinio gyventojų ir būsto surašymo duomenimis, Lietuvoje gyvena 2727 musulmonai sunitai arba 0.09% visų Lietuvos gyventojų. Nors musulmonų bendruomenė nėra didelė, tačiau visuomenės nuostatų tyrimų rezultatai atskleidžia, kad tai viena nepalankiausiai Lietuvos gyventojų vertinama religinių grupių. Pastaraisiais metais pastebima, kad visuomenės nuostatos tampa palankesnės, o tam galimai įtakos turi sumažėjęs neigiamų naujųjų pabėgėlių atžvilgiu srautas žiniasklaidoje. Visuomenės nuostatų tyrimų rezultatai atskleidžia, kad neigiamai nuomonė musulmonų atžvilgiu formuojama ne iš asmeninių patirčių, o kuriama tokii išorinių veiksnių kaip žiniasklaida ar socialiniai tinklai.

Per ataskaitinį laikotarpį užregistruota 31 nusikalstama veika pagal Baudžiamojo kodekso XXV skyrių „Nusikaltimai ir baudžiamieji nusižengimai asmens lygiateisiškumui ir sąžinės laisvėi“. Lygių galimybių kontrolieriaus tarnyba informavo, kad 2019 m. gavo 12 skundų įsitikinimų ir pažiūrų, religijos ir tikėjimo pagrindais pagrindais, trys iš jų dėl musulmonų diskriminacijos neidentifikuotose srityse.

2019 m. nebuvo užregistruota įvykių, nukreiptų prieš musulmonus darbo rin-koje. Taip pat nepranešta ir apie diskriminacinius atvejus įsitikinimų, pažiūrų, religijos ir tikėjimo pagrindais švietimo srityje. Ataskaitiniu laikotarpiu taip pat neįvyko jokių didelių pokyčių teisingumo srityje.


Nuo 2015 m. dėl vadinamos „pabėgėlių krizės“ buvo pastebima, kad islamofobinės žinutės žiniasklaidoje dažniausiai buvo susijusios su diskusijomis apie pasaulinę pabėgėlių krizę ir pabėgelių integracijos iššūkius nacionaliniame lygmenyje. Mažėjant pabėgelių srautams, pastebima, kad 2019 m. tokios informacijos ženkliai sumažėjo.

Aktualiu klausimu išlieka nedidelis dėl neapykantos kalbos ir neapykantos nusikalčių nukentėjusių ir pagalbos besikreipiančiųjų skaičius. Galima manyti, kad dėl veiksmingai šalyje neveikiančios pranešimo veiklos ir tokių teisių teisingumo srityje, o prieš ES ir jos įgyvendinamą politiką, ypač susijusią su jį pareiškijima dėl pabėgelių perkelimo ir jų integracijos.

Nuo 2015 m. dėl vadinamos „pabėgelių krizės“ buvo pastebima, kad islamofilės žinutės žiniasklaidoje dažniausiai buvo susijusios su diskusijomis apie pasaulinę pabėgėlių krizę ir pabėgelių integracijos iššūkius nacionaliniame lygmenyje. Mažėjant pabėgelių srautams, pastebima, kad 2019 m. tokios informacijos ženkliai sumažėjo.
Country Profile
EIR 2019

Country: Lithuania
Type of Regime: Democratic Republic
Form of Government: Semi-Presidential System
Ruling Parties: Lietuvos valstiečių ir žalųjų sąjunga (Lithuanian Farmers and Greens Union); Lietuvos socialdemokratų darbo partija (Lithuanian Social Democratic Labour Political Group) and the Electoral Action of Poles in Lithuania – Christian Families Alliance Political Group (Lietuvos lenkų rinkimų akcija-Krikščioniškų šeimų sąjunga)
Opposition Parties: Tėvynės sąjunga-Lietuvos krikščionys demokratai (Homeland Union-Lithuanian Christian Democrats), Lietuvos socialdemokratų partija (Lithuanian Social Democratic Party), Liberalų sąjūdis (Liberals Movement of the Republic of Lithuania)

Last Elections: 2019 Presidential Election: Gitanas Nausėda won 66.5% of the vote against 33.5% of Ingrida Šimonytė; 2016 Legislative Election: Lithuanian Farmers and Greens Union (54 seats), Homeland Union – Lithuanian Christian Democrats (31 seats), Lithuanian Social Democratic Party (17 seats), Liberals Movement of the Republic of Lithuania (14 seats), Electoral Action of Poles in Lithuania – Christian Families Alliance (8 seats), Party Order and Justice (8 seats), Labour Party (2 seats), Political Party “List of Lithuania” (1 seat), Lithuanian Green Party (1 seat) and Lithuanian Centre Party (1 seat). Four seats went to self-nominated candidates.

Total Population: 2.8 million (at the beginning of 2019)
Major Languages: Lithuanian
Official Religion: No official religion
Statistics on Islamophobia: In 2019, the Office of Equal Opportunities Ombudsperson received 3 complaints of anti-Muslim discrimination in non-identified areas. A total of 16 complaints of discrimination on the grounds of religion, belief, convictions, and views were received by the Office of Equal Opportunities Ombudsperson in 2019.
Statistics on Racism and Discrimination: In the period of January-November 2019, a total of 31 criminal offenses were registered on the grounds foreseen under the Chapter XXV of the Criminal Code “Crimes and Misdemeanours against a Person’s Equal Rights and Freedom of Conscience”. Twenty-eight of them were on the grounds foreseen under Article 170 “Incitement against Any National, Racial, Ethnic, Religious or Other Group of Persons” (3 of them were incitement based on religion), and 2 of them on the grounds foreseen under Article 171 “Disturbance of Religious Ceremonies or Religious Celebrations”. There were no registered criminal offenses based on Article 169 “Discrimination on Grounds of Nationality, Race, Sex, Descent, Religion or Belonging to Other Groups” during the reported period.
Major Religions (% of Population): Roman Catholic (77.3%), Orthodox (4.1%), Old Believers (0.8%), Evangelical Lutheran (0.6%), Evangelical Reformed (0.2%), Other religion (0.9%), No religion (6.1%) (Lithuanian 2011 population census)

Muslim Population (% of Population): According to the data of the Lithuanian 2011 population census, 2,727 persons identify as Sunni Muslims (or 0.09% of the total population); 400 of the latter identify as ethnic Lithuanians.

Main Muslim Community Organizations: Association Ahmadiyya Lithuania (Asociacija Ahmadija Lietuva); Sunni Muslim Religious Centre (Lietuvos musulmonų sunitų dvasinis centras); Islamic Culture and Education Center

Main NGOs Combating Islamophobia: European Foundation of Human Rights, Human Rights Monitoring Institute, Lithuanian Centre for Human Rights (LCHR), Lithuanian Red Cross Society

Far-Right Parties: N/A
Far-Right Movements: N/A
Far-Right Terrorist Organizations: N/A

Limitations to Islamic Practices:
- Hijab Ban: None
- Halal Slaughter Ban: None
- Minaret Ban: None
- Circumcision Ban: None
- Burka Ban: None
- Prayer Ban: None
Introduction

According to the latest data of the Lithuanian population census, carried out in 2011, 2,727 persons identify as Sunni Muslims (or 0.09% of the total population); 400 of the latter identify as ethnic Lithuanians.\(^1\) Lithuanian society remains quite homogenous; there are 58,000 foreigners in total living in Lithuania, which is only 2.08% of the total population.\(^2\) However, the recent trends of international migration show that Lithuania is becoming an attractive country of destination for migrants, especially from Ukraine, Russia, and Belarus. The latest data from the Migration Department reveals that in 2019 the number of foreigners in Lithuania increased by 17.5% compared with 2018.\(^3\) In addition, the number of asylum applications has increased by 38.8% during recent years.\(^4\) In 2018, the majority of asylum applicants were from Tajikistan, Russia, Iraq, and Syria.\(^5\) A total of 154 persons were granted asylum in Lithuania in 2018 (136 refugee status, 18 subsidiary protection). Due to the not-so-intense relocation of refugees from Italy, Greece, and Turkey, the number of relocated refugees has decreased – only 4 persons were relocated during the first half of 2019.\(^6\) A total of 493 persons were relocated to the country as of November 2019 (out of 1,077 that had to be relocated by June 2021). There is no breakdown of data according to religion of foreigners migrating to Lithuania.

Intense international migration brought various political and societal challenges, but this is influenced more by public perceptions and attitudes than by the direct challenges of an increasing migrant population. Despite the fact that the number of Muslims in Lithuania is very small, it is one of the religious groups evaluated most negatively by Lithuanian society. The results of a public opinion poll carried out in 2019\(^7\) reveal that social distance (the degree of closeness or alienation of social, ethnic, and religious groups) between Lithuanian residents and Muslims remains

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4. “Main Statistical Indicators of Migration in the Republic of Lithuania”.
5. “Migration Yearbook 2018”.
6. “Main Statistical Indicators of Migration in the Republic of Lithuania”.
7. The public opinion poll took place in March-April 2019. A total of 1,029 Lithuanian residents (15 years of age and older) from 118 sampling points were involved in the survey. The public opinion poll was initiated by the Diversity Development Group, Lithuanian Diversity Charter and Lithuanian Social Research Centre (Institute for Ethnic Studies). The poll was performed by the Gallup poll organisation “Baltijos tyrimai”. For more information, see: “Visuomenės nuomonės apklauosas”, LSTC, http://www.ces.lt/veikla-2/ziniasklaidos-stebesena/visuomenes-nuomones-apklauosas/, (Access date: 10 January 2019).
large; however, positive developments are noticed as well. According to the data of the public opinion poll, 35.6% of Lithuanian residents would not like to live in the same neighbourhood with Muslims; 24.5% of them would not like to work with Muslims in the same workplace; and 36.7% of them would not like to rent Muslims an apartment.

Compared with 2015, in 2019, the share of Lithuanian residents who would not like to live in the same neighbourhood with Muslims decreased 22%. It is possible that because of the small Muslim community in Lithuania, the opinion about this group does not come from personal experience, but is generated by external factors. The results of public opinion polls carried out in the period between 2005 and 2019 show that societal attitudes were largely affected by the so-called refugee crisis and its reflections on the local mass media.

Discussion of Islamophobic Incidents and Discursive Events

Physical and Verbal Attacks

In the period of January-December 2019, a total of 31 criminal offenses were registered on the grounds foreseen under Chapter XXV of the Criminal Code “Crimes and Misdemeanours against a Person’s Equal Rights and Freedom of Conscience”. Twenty-eight of the offences were committed on the grounds foreseen under Article 170 “Incitement against Any National, Racial, Ethnic, Religious or Other Group of Persons” (3 of them were incitement based on religion), and 2 of them on the grounds foreseen under Article 171 “Disturbance of Religious Ceremonies or Religious Celebrations”. During the reported period there were no registered criminal offenses based on Article 169 defining “Discrimination on Grounds of Nationality, Race, Sex, Descent, Religion or Belonging to Other Groups”.

There were two incidents of vandalism in 2019, when the mosque of the city of Kaunas was damaged. The incidents are under investigation; however, the representatives of the mosque did not relate them to actions against the religious group.

On 10 May 2019, the United Nations’ Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (hereinafter CERD) issued its concluding observations on the combined 9th and 10th periodic reports of Lithuania. One of the recommendations provided by for the CERD Lithuania is related to “a low level of reporting of hate speech and hate crimes, as well as the lack of their registration and effective investiga-

The CERD recommends that “Lithuania should take measures to encourage and facilitate the reporting of hate speech and hate crimes (e.g. by raising public awareness about access to legal aid and available legal remedies, and by ensuring that the perpetrators are adequately prosecuted and punished), to build capacity of law enforcement officers, prosecutors and judges, to collect statistics on investigated cases of hate crimes and incitement to hatred from politicians and from the media, and to enhance the data collection system.”

**Employment**
The Office of Equal Opportunities Ombudsperson reports that there were no employment-related incidents that discriminated against Muslims in 2019.

As is stated in the report “Equal Opportunities in the Lithuanian Labour Market: Overview of the Situation”, the number of complaints of discrimination on the grounds of religion, belief, convictions, and views submitted to the Office of Equal Opportunities Ombudsperson is one of the lowest. According to the results of a public opinion poll carried out in 2019, Muslims are one of the least favoured religious groups in Lithuania. Almost a quarter (24.5%) of the participants of the survey claimed that they would not like to work with a Muslim. In addition, the majority of Lithuanian residents who participated in the survey are against any religious rights to refugees including the establishment of prayer rooms in the workplace (77.5% of respondents); provisions of nutrition based on religion norms (58.7%); and wearing of religious clothing (68.1%). The authors of the aforementioned report note that to provide breaks for prayer and/or to establish a multi-faith prayer room and facilities are among the obstacles that are the easiest to solve; however, they remain among the most sensitive issues, causing many misunderstandings both for refugees and other foreign employees.

**Education**
The Office of Equal Opportunities Ombudsperson did not report any cases of possible discrimination on the ground of religion in education in 2019. Islamophobic content was not identified in any curricula, textbooks, or any other education material.

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10. Ibid.
13. See Footnote 7.
Politics
In 2019, three elections took place in Lithuania: the elections for the local government council; elections of the president of the Republic of Lithuania; and the European Parliament elections. Nevertheless, the discussions on Muslims and their rights were not politically prominent. Only few representatives of far-right parties expressed their negative attitudes towards Muslims, but this was more related to the prejudice towards the EU and its policies in general (particularly related to commitments to the refugee resettlement/relocation) rather than directly targeting the Muslim community. A former candidate for the European Parliament and present member of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania15 (nominated by Party Order and Justice) Vytautas Kamblevičius stated, “...while living in Lithuania, we cannot obey dictatorship and pressure to import Muslims”.16 Another former candidate to the European Parliament Vytautas Radžvilas (Public Election Committee Vytautas Radžvilas: Let’s Get Back the State!) expressed his strong disagreement with the EU quotas for the refugee resettlement as it would lead to the shrinking of the Lithuanian nation.17 These two candidates did not receive the mandatory number of votes and were not elected to the European Parliament.

In general, far-right parties do not occupy an important place in the political arena of the country. However, anti-migrant and xenophobic statements can be sometimes heard from the representatives of mainstream parties as well.

Media
During the past years it was clearly visible that most Islamophobic statements in the Lithuanian media were related to the public discussions on the so-called global refugee crisis and the challenges of refugee integration on national level. Due to the decline of refugee flows in Europe, the attention to this issue is decreasing in national media as well. While analysing media content focused on Islam/Muslims, it is clear that the published messages are mostly related to (newly arrived) Muslim migrants and their (integration) stories, as well as discussions on public attitudes towards Muslims and other ethnic groups.

The media can also become a channel helping to reveal discriminatory cases. On 29 May 2019, the news media portal “15min” published an article based on

15. Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania is the unicameral parliament of Lithuania.
the complaint of a woman, who is a citizen of Turkey. She approached “15min” to inform them about an incident when the officer of the Migration Board of Vilnius County refused to take a photo for a document, because she refused to remove her hijab in a room full of people. Furthermore, according to the complainant the statutory exceptions were not explained to her.

Delfi, one of the largest news websites, remains open to various blogs and expressions of personal opinion including texts which have no Islamophobic intentions, but contribute to scaremongering and stereotyping (see Politics section).

Justice System
During the reported period there were two cases related to the religious dietary restrictions in detention centres. On 16 June 2019, the Supreme Administrative Court of Lithuania (Lietuvos ypintasis administracinis teismas) adopted the final decision on the case based on a complaint on catering in prison. A convicted individual complained that he had lodged a request to prison authorities to have halal food and noted that is able to understand only Russian or Kyrgyz language. Prison authorities didn’t approve the request and answered in the Lithuanian language. Court established that by current Lithuanian legislation and standards prison authorities are not obliged to provide special religious food, but have responsibility to provide food which could be fit to consume for religious persons as possible. In addition, prison authorities are providing vegetarian/vegan food and convicts have possibility to buy food from prison shop. It was established, that person had opportunity to use and buy food from shop and could eat vegetarian/vegan food, thus prison authorities didn’t discriminate by religious grounds. But prison authorities were obliged to provide answer in language which convict could understand, thus their answer in Lithuanian language was considered as unlawful.

Another case was identified at the Foreigners Registration Centre in Pabradė. An investigation initiated by the Seimas Ombudsman’s Office revealed that Muslims staying at the centre are not able to receive alternatives to pork dishes. Thus, the Seimas Ombudsman Office recommended ensuring that foreigners have the right to adequate food in accordance with their religious beliefs.

There have not been any laws and regulations with Islamophobic arguments or any laws restricting the rights of Muslims in their religious lifestyle adopted in 2019.

The CERD sees the necessity for Lithuania to bring provisions on reparations of victims of racially motivated crimes in line with EU requirements and recommends “to include compensation to victims of discrimination and incitement to hatred falling under Articles 169, 170 and 171 of the Criminal Code in the draft Law on the Compensation for Victims of Violent Crimes”. 21

Internet
As in previous years, the most important concern regarding webpages and initiatives regularly spreading Islamophobic stereotypes lies in the fact that the responsible government institutions and law enforcement agencies do not properly monitor xenophobic statements and initiatives on the Internet. Furthermore, it is observed that people are not willing to approach the responsible institutions because of fear and indifferent attitudes of these institutions towards such type of criminal offences. Consequently, the official numbers of documented Islamophobic and, in general, xenophobic manifestations, as well as the pre-trial investigations related to the mentioned initiatives, are low and apparently do not correspond to reality.

As mentioned in the previous reports, Islamophobic messages can be mostly found on far-right websites, such as Pro Patria or Alkas. For instance, Pro Patria translated an article by William Kilpatrick arguing in favour of the view of Pope Francis’s advocacy for Islam. 22 The article raised the question of whether Pope Francis’s favourable view towards Islam and Muslim migrants could destroy Europe. Both Alkas and Pro Patria have Facebook profiles. In addition, such Facebook groups as Lietuva – Šeimininkams 23 (“Hosts of Lithuania”) or Pabėgėliams-ne! Demografiniam lietuvių bumui ir Žeimos rėmimui -taip! (“No for refugees! Yes for demographic boom of Lithuanians and family support”) 24 promote negative attitudes towards refugees and migration in general, and continue to exist and spread xenophobic and Islamophobic messages.

Central Figures in the Islamophobia Network
There are no institutions or persons that have fostered Islamophobic campaigns, stirred up debates and/or lobbied for Islamophobic laws. As was mentioned in the Politics section, only a few representatives of far-right parties have expressed their negative attitudes towards Muslims. These opinions were related more to the prejudice towards the EU and its policies in general (particularly related to

23. For more information, see: Lietuva – šeimininkams, Facebook, https://www.facebook.com/pg/seimininkai/about/?ref=page_internal, (Access date: 21 January 2020)
24. For more information, see: https://www.facebook.com/groups/992677937419738/about/, (Access date: 21 January 2020).
commitments toward the refugee resettlement/relocation) than directly directed against Muslims community.

**Observed Civil Society and Political Initiatives to Counter Islamophobia**

Organisations like the Islamic Culture and Education Center, the Equal Opportunities Ombudsperson, the Lithuanian Centre for Human Rights, the European Foundation of Human Rights, and the Human Rights Monitoring Institute implement various projects and local initiatives to promote dialogue and dispel prejudice. In addition, the Association Ahmadiyya Lithuania has continued to organise clean-ups of the main square in Vilnius after New Year festivities in order to highlight the positive contribution of the Muslim community to society.25

The Prosecutor General’s Office in cooperation with the Ministry of the Interior and the Office of the Inspector of Journalist Ethics implemented the project “Enhancing Response to Hate Crimes and Hate Speech in Lithuania”, which focuses on the following three areas: strengthening law enforcement and judicial authorities’ capacities; building trust between national public authorities and vulnerable communities; and building capacity on reporting online hate speech.26

In 2019, in the frame of this project, a qualitative study on the communities vulnerable to experiencing hate crimes was commissioned. “The study assessed the level of vulnerability, the impact of hate crimes and hate speech, the reasons for not seeking justice, and the needs for protection of five communities: the Jewish and Roma communities, LGBTI, persons of other races, and Muslims living in Lithuania.”27

**Conclusion and Policy Recommendations**

The results of the study reveal that Islamophobic cases are quite rare in Lithuania. However the perceptions of the host society towards Muslims remain negative, furthermore, low numbers of reporting and victims of hate speech and hate crime supposedly do not correspond to the actual situation. Thus, based on the situation described in this report the following recommendations are proposed:


• To carry out awareness-raising campaigns promoting tolerance and understanding of the host society towards different religious groups, national minorities, and migrants including asylum seekers and beneficiaries of international protection.
• To promote the responsibility of the mass media in the formation of positive attitudes towards Muslims and other religious groups.
• To ensure systematic support and representation of victims of hate speech and hate crime.
• To implement continuous and systematic measures to encourage and facilitate the reporting of hate speech and hate crimes.
• To improve the effectiveness of the mechanisms that record hate crimes and educate those responsible for recognising hate crime.
• To improve the monitoring of hate crimes and incitements to hatred in mass media and social networks.
• To carry out the monitoring of politicians using hate speech, especially during election campaigns.

Chronology

• **29.05.2019**: An officer of the Migration Board of Vilnius County refused to take a document photo of a woman from Turkey because she refused to remove her hijab in a room full of people. The statutory exceptions were also not explained to the woman.

• **19.06.2019**: The final decision of the Supreme Administrative Court of Lithuania based on a complaint on catering in prison was issued. The established facts prove that the complainant had conditions to eat according to his religious beliefs and there was no information that he was discriminated on religious grounds.

• **28.08.2019**: Lithuania’s National Land Service gave the Vilnius Sunni religious community the right to use an 8,4000-square metre land plot free of charge for a mosque in the Liepkalnis area of Vilnius.

• **06.09.2019**: The report of Seimas Ombudsmen’s Office on the investigation in the Foreigners Registration Centre was issued. The Seimas Ombudsmen’s Office revealed that Muslims staying at the centre are not able to receive alternative to pork dishes.

• **21.09.2019**: First incident of vandalism against the mosque in the city of Kaunas.

• **18.11.2019**: Second incident of vandalism against the mosque in the city of Kaunas.