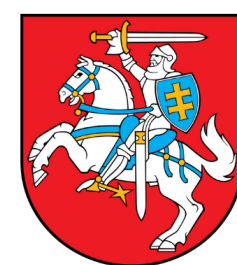


LITHUANIA - STRATEGIC ACTION TO STOP SEXUAL HARASSMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION



OFFICE OF THE
EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES
OMBUDSPERSON

When the **#metoo movement** appeared in academia, the Office of the Equal Opportunity Ombudsman reacted with strategic action to provide long-term solutions to stop sexual harassment in the workplace and studies of higher education institutions.

When the anonymous testimonies on the cases of sexual harassment in one art school showed up, followed by other stories from other universities, the Office took the following actions:

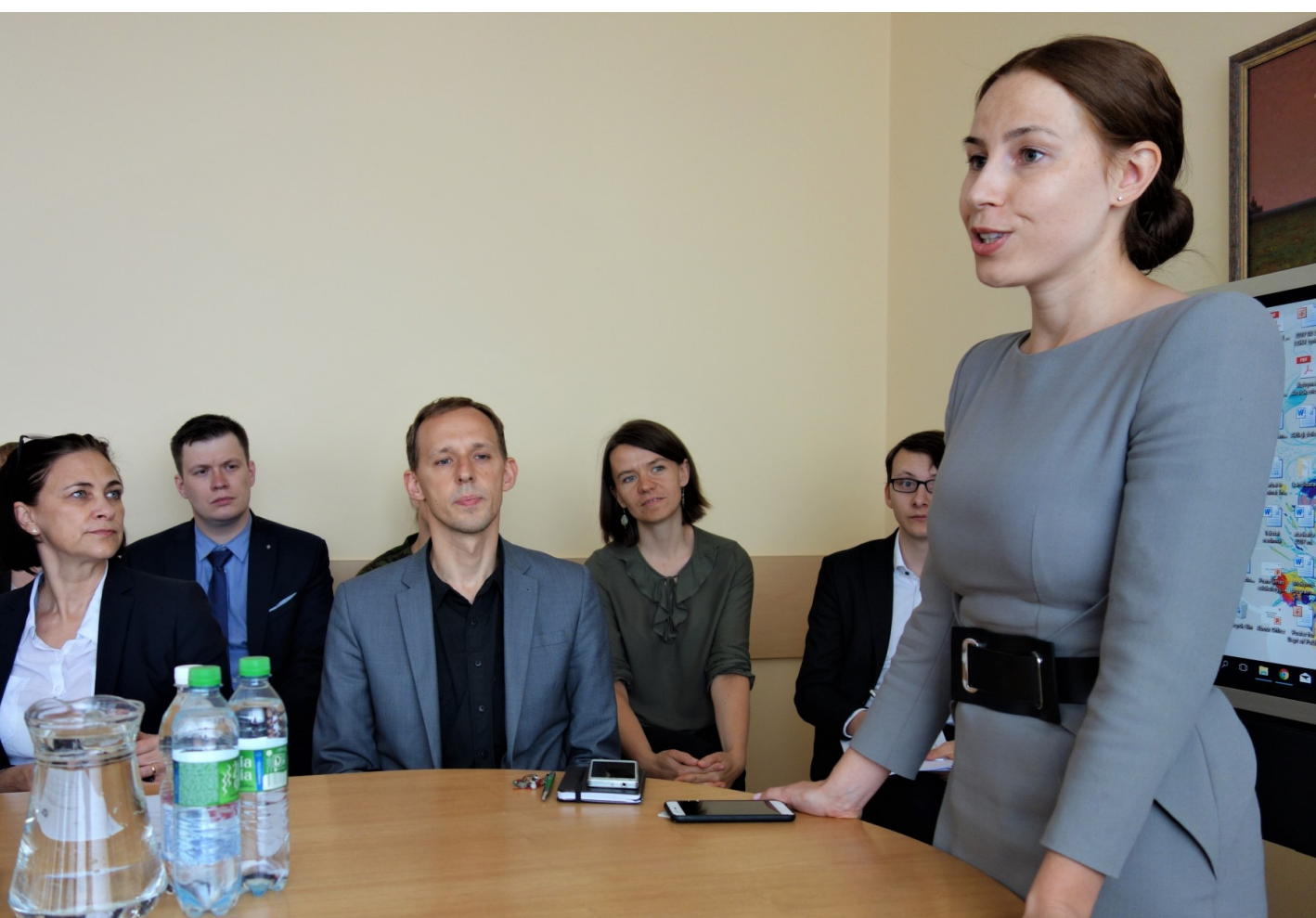
- **The Office provided an ad-hoc expert's intervention** when the scandalous news of sexual harassment in one art school appeared in the media. Our experts participated in the meeting with the staff of the school and suggested how the situation should be handled and explained the legal regulation.
- The Office decided to **run an official survey in all universities and colleges**, asking how they are ready to solve the cases of sexual harassment and what preventive measures they use. Unfortunately, only a few higher education institutions were evaluated positively.
- After the survey, the follow-up meeting was organized by the Ombudsman who for the first time ever **invited the representatives from all higher education school**. The Ombudsman introduced the results of the survey and encouraged schools to take suggested actions to stop sexual harassment at all levels – students as well as the staff – as soon as possible.
- Later, as a result, the Ombudsman and the Lithuanian University Rectors' Conference signed an agreement to cooperate when developing the **recommendatory regulation of prevention of sexual harassment** and gender-based harassment in higher education institutions.
- The Office's experts consulted the Lithuanian University Rectors' Conference during the whole process of regulation writing. **The last version of regulation is prepared and waiting to be signed**. It will be used as a universal standard for higher education institutions in Lithuania to fight sexual harassment in schools.



Picture after signing the cooperation agreement between the Office and the Lithuanian University Rectors' Conference (E. Kurauskas/VU photography)

Impact

- **17 universities and 18 colleges** responded to the survey (4 didn't), showing interest and giving attention to the issue
- **23 representatives** of different higher education institutions attended the meeting organised by the Office to fight sexual harassment in solidarity
- The regulation prepared should be used as a standard for all higher education institutions



The Ombudsman Agneta Skardžiuvienė in the meeting with representatives of higher education institutions

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