**Every 4 Minutes, a Child’s Life is Lost: The World Gathers in Vilnius   
to End Violence Against Children**

**Every year, 1 billion children experience violence. One in five girls and one in seven boys are sexually abused. Every four minutes, somewhere in the world, a child dies because of violence. In Lithuania alone, authorities receive an average of 160 reports of possible child rights violations every day. These are not just numbers—they are a call to action.**

From October 6–9, global experts in child protection, healthcare, education, and law will gather in Vilnius to work on solutions. For the first time in Lithuania, the International Society for the Prevention of Child Abuse & Neglect (ISPCAN) World Congress will take place.

In 2023, Lithuania registered more than 55,000 reports of possible violations of children’s rights. Fourteen percent involved violence—physical, psychological, or sexual. Among the most severe cases were 622 incidents of domestic violence, 34 rapes, and 36 cases of sexual assault against children.

“These numbers are not statistics alone—they reflect the daily lives of countless children. They remind us that adults must work tirelessly to ensure every child grows up safe,” says **Edita Žiobienė,** Ombudsperson for Children’s Rights in Lithuania. According to her, about one-third of Lithuanians still do not consider certain actions, such as twisting a child’s ear, to be violence—even though corporal punishment has long been banned in the country. Meanwhile, Lithuania continues to face one of the highest bullying rates in Europe: more than a quarter of students are bullied at school several times a month, and a similar share of teenagers face cyberbullying.

“That is why the arrival of experts from more than 60 countries who work every day for children’s safety is such a unique opportunity for Lithuania,” Žiobienė adds. “Here, we can join forces, share best practices, and make decisions at the highest level for the well-being of children. More than 340 presentations will be delivered during the Congress. We are especially proud that among the six keynote speakers is Lithuanian Professor Rimantas Kėvalas, who will address challenges and innovations in helping children affected by violence.”

The Congress will culminate on October 9 with the **Rise Up Forum**, where government representatives from 25 countries will develop practical strategies for safe schools, parenting support, and cross-sector interventions—turning international commitments into real-world action.

The ISPCAN World Congress, which rotates annually, will be held next year in Melbourne, Australia. Last year it took place in Sweden, and the year before in Scotland. This year’s Congress in Vilnius is organized by the Office of the Ombudsperson for Children’s Rights in Lithuania, marking its 25th anniversary, together with Vilnius University’s Faculty of Philosophy.

Partners include the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport, the Ministry of Health, and the Ministry of Social Security and Labour. Among NGO partners is *Save the Children*, with support from the Hygiene Institute and the international scientific publisher *Elsevier*. The Digital Ethics Center serves as the communications partner.

Organizers are especially grateful to *Go Vilnius*, the city’s development agency, which played a key role in bringing this global congress to Lithuania. The event is expected to generate an estimated €1.9 million in economic impact for the capital.

**More information and registration**: <https://ispcan.org/congresses/vilnius2025>   
The Congress is open to all interested participants.

***About ISPCAN.*** *The International Society for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (ISPCAN) is a U.S.-registered nonprofit organization founded on July 7, 1977, by Henry Kempe. ISPCAN unites professionals from medicine, psychology, law, education, social work, and public policy into a global learning community and active network dedicated to preventing child abuse and neglect, providing support, and strengthening international collaboration. ISPCAN members work to ensure that children’s rights and health are not just aspirations but realities in every country. The organization advocates systemic, sustainable public health changes that improve the lives of children and families worldwide.* [*www.ispcan.org*](http://www.ispcan.org)

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