

Migration Trends In Lithuania 2012



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Introduction

Migration remains a topical issue for Lithuania. In 2012, a new Government of the Republic of Lithuania was formed and presented its Programme, which refers to emigration in relation to a number of areas and emphasises that the focus must be placed on addressing the problem of emigration, also on the management of migration processes and development of the Common European Asylum System. Therefore, monitoring of migration processes remains a matter of high relevance.

The European Migration Network (EMN), including Lithuania among its members, annually publishes *Policy Reports* on migration¹. The reports present key statistics and legal developments in 2012.

¹ The complete report provided by Lithuania, also reports submitted by the other 26 EU Member States and Norway are available from www.emn.europa.eu

Migration Tendencies

Emigration. In 2012, 41 100 residents **departed** from Lithuania, which is 12 800 less than in 2011. The main destination countries, just as in 2011, were the United Kingdom (48.3 per cent), Ireland (8.6 per cent), Germany (7.9 per cent) and Norway (7.73 per cent). The biggest diaspora groups in Europe are in the UK, Ireland and Norway.

Immigration. In 2012, 19 843 persons **entered** Lithuania, i.e., 4 158 persons more than in 2011. Citizens of the Republic of Lithuania returning from the United Kingdom, Ireland and Norway accounted for the majority of entries (87 per cent). Among immigrants to Lithuania, there were 755 citizens of the EU Member States (mostly from Latvia and Poland) and 1731 third-country nationals (mostly from Russia, Belarus and Ukraine). The total number of immigrants makes up 2 486 foreign nationals, i.e., 33 per cent more than in 2011.

Chart 1. Number of citizens of the Republic of Lithuania residing abroad at the beginning of 2013

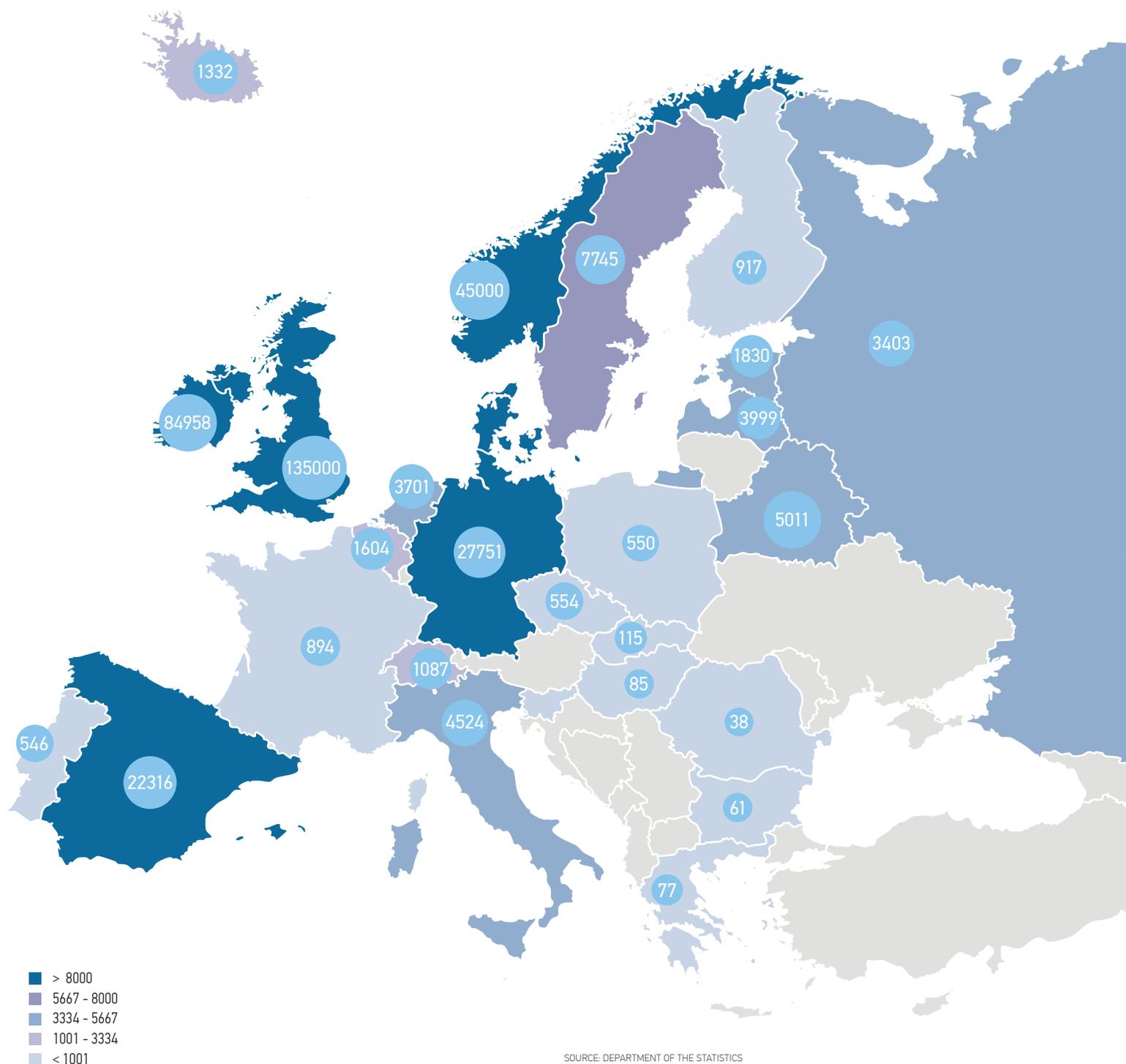
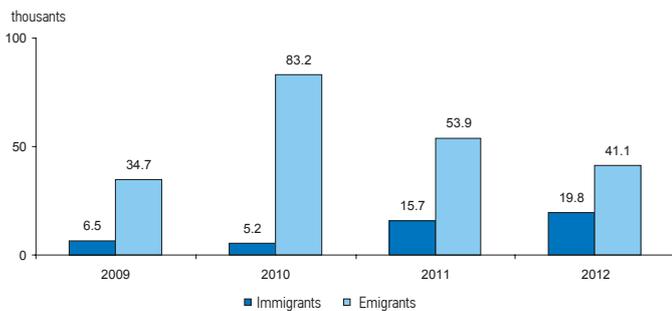


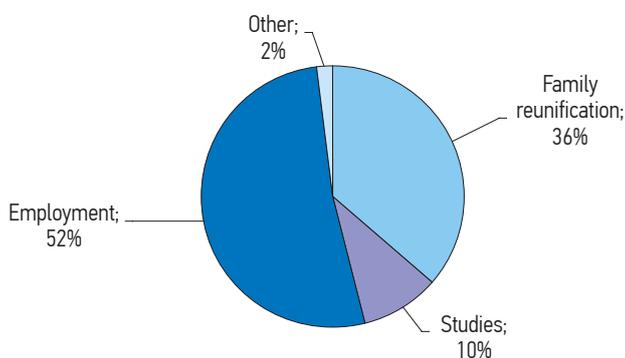
Chart 2. Migration flows during 2009-2012



SOURCE: DEPARTMENT OF THE STATISTICS

Entry reasons. In 2012, there were 12 500 aliens holding valid temporary residence permits in Lithuania. The majority of immigrants entered Lithuania for the purposes of employment.

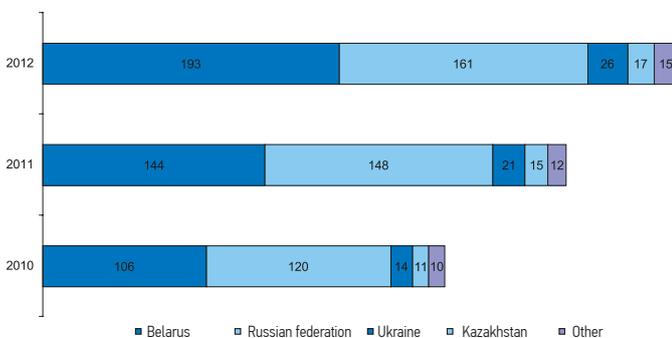
Chart 3. Immigration to Lithuania (by grounds for issuance of temporary residence permits), 2012



SOURCE: MIGRATION DEPARTMENT

Visas. A large share of aliens is made up by tourists or aliens entering the country under a visa for the purposes of a short-term stay. In 2012, Lithuanian visa services issued almost 412 000 Schengen visas, i.e., 70 000 more than in 2011. **The majority of the Schengen visas were issued in Belarus (47 per cent) and Russia (39 per cent).** In 2012, Lithuanian visa services rejected 3830 applications for the issuance of visas. The issuance of a visa was mostly refused in Georgia (28 per cent), Russia (21 per cent), Kazakhstan (10 per cent), Armenia (9 per cent) and Belarus (9 per cent).

Chart 4. Countries in which Lithuanian visa services issued the majority of visas, thousands, 2010-2012



SOURCE: EUROPEAN COMMISSION

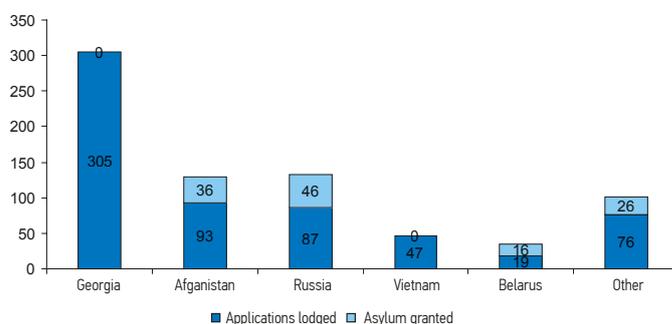
With a view to improving the accessibility of consular services, the Lithuanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs signed in 2013 an agreement on **external service providers**. Under the agreement, 28 visa centres will be opened in Russia and Ukraine to receive applications by aliens for the issuance of visas. The applications will be examined and visas will be issued by Lithuanian visa services.

Asylum

In 2012, third-country nationals lodged **627 applications for asylum**, i.e., 100 applications more than in 2011. The applications for asylum were lodged by citizens of 29 countries. The majority of the applications were lodged by citizens of Georgia (49 per cent), Russia, Afghanistan and Vietnam.

The year 2012 saw an increase in the **number of unfounded applications for asylum**, mostly lodged by citizens of Georgia. In total, positive decisions accounted for 20 per cent of all lodged applications. There was also an increase in the number of asylum seekers who, when provided with accommodation at the Foreigners' Registration Centre, depart from the Centre and do not return to it.

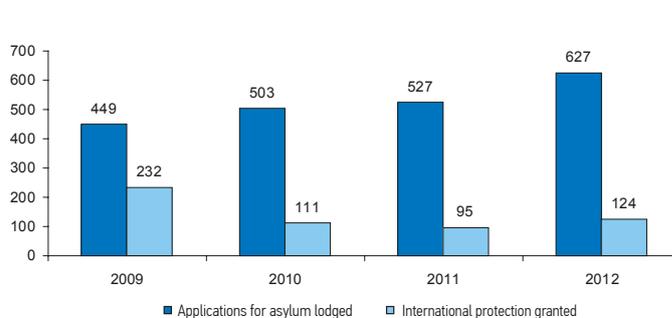
Chart 5. Asylum seekers by citizenship and the number of positive decisions, 2012



SOURCE: MIGRATION DEPARTMENT

In 2012, international protection in Lithuania was granted to 124 persons: subsidiary protection (a temporary residence permit valid for one year is issued and may be extended depending on circumstances) was granted to 111 persons, mostly from Russia and Afghanistan, and refugee status was granted to 13 persons (mostly from Eritrea and Iraq).

Chart 6. Applications for asylum lodged and international protection granted during 2009-2012



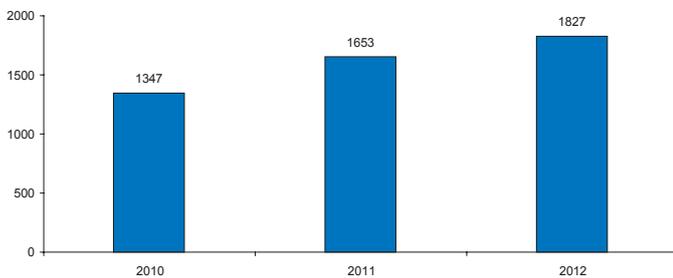
SOURCE: MIGRATION DEPARTMENT

Irregular Migration

Unauthorised entry. For the majority of irregular migrants, Lithuania is a transit country. In 2012, detention was applied in respect of 477 third-country nationals entering the country by illegally crossing the state border of the Republic of Lithuania between border crossing points. Illegal border crossing was mostly attempted by citizens of Georgia (54 per cent). The majority of irregular migrants were detained at the border with Belarus, whereas the number of those detained at the border with Russia is small.

Irregular migrants. There are no official data on the potential number of irregular migrants in the country. Data are collected on the cases of detected breaches of the procedure for lawful stay in Lithuania. In 2012, there were 1 800 identified irregular migrants, including 1 400 migrants who departed voluntarily, 65 persons whose departure was assisted by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and 236 persons who were expelled.

Chart 7. Third-country nationals subject to departure on grounds of unauthorised entry, stay or residence in Lithuania



SOURCE: MIGRATION DEPARTMENT

Legal Developments

In 2012, amendments were adopted to the Law of the Republic of Lithuania on the Legal Status of Aliens. Most amendments were adopted in transposing EU legislation on migration, in particular the following legal acts of the EU:

■ **EU Blue Card directive (2009/50/EC).** In respect of aliens entering for the purposes of highly qualified employment, the procedure for issuing temporary residence permits was fast-tracked (applications must be processed within two months), the requirement to hold a work permit was lifted (the amendments provide for a procedure for assessing the conformity to labour market needs), and the time limit during which the employer must search for employees in Lithuania was shortened. Moreover, the amended Law stipulates more favourable conditions of entry and residence (e.g., the right to immediate family reunification, the right to change the employer following two years of residence) and relaxes the salary requirement (not less than two amounts of average monthly gross earnings in whole economy);

■ **Return Directive (2008/115/EC).** The amendments introduce the concept of a vulnerable person and stipulate other requirements for protection. Nonetheless, proposals have been submitted to improve certain provisions of the Law (e.g., to provide third-country nationals who illegally entered the country with the possibility of assisted voluntary return);

■ **Employer Sanctions Directive (2009/52/EC).** The amendments to the Law stipulate the possibility of issuing a temporary residence permit in the Republic of Lithuania to aliens who are or were victims of illegal employment and cooperate with a pre-trial investigation body;

■ In implementing the provisions of the regulations, the Law a) stipulates the requirement to provide the documents issued to aliens with biometrics and b) revokes the provisions on Schengen visas (the issuance of Schengen visas is directly subject to the procedures and conditions stipulated by the Visa Code).

Other legislative amendments:

■ **Amendments to the Criminal Code,** which expand the concept of trafficking in human beings, that is, this crime should mean a person's exploitation covering various forms of sexual exploitation, servitude, slavery, forced services, use in forced marriage, begging, etc. The amendments stipulate liability for using a person's forced labour or services if it is known that the victim was forced into such conduct through the use of physical violence, threat or deception against him.

■ **Amendments to the Code of Administrative Offices,** which stipulate administrative liability against the persons who employ an alien not authorised to engage in specific activity. Under the Code, this offence is subject to a fine from LTL 2 000 up to LTL 3 000.

About EMN

The European Migration Network (EMN) is a network comprising the European Commission, 26 EU Member States and Norway. The Network aims at collecting, analysing and sharing up-to-date information in the area of migration and asylum. Within the EMN, the Government of Lithuania is represented by IOM Vilnius Office.

www.emn.europa.eu

www.emn.lt

About IOM

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) was established in 1951. The IOM seeks to ensure a well-organised and humane management of migration, promotes international cooperation in addressing the issues of migration, participates in search for practical solutions to migration problems and provides the necessary humanitarian assistance to migrants.

www.iom.int

www.iom.lt