



MIGRATION TRENDS IN LITHUANIA, 2011

INTRODUCTION

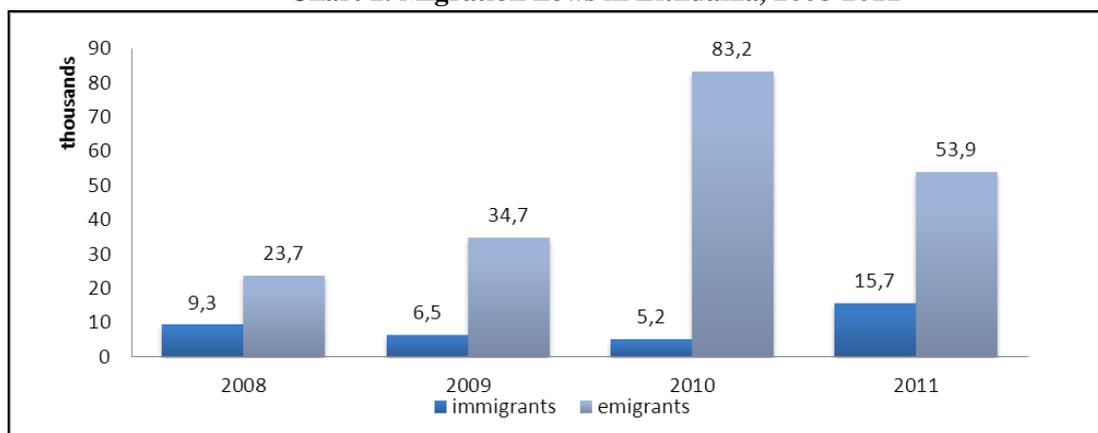
European migration network (EMN) produces yearly Annual Policy reports on migration and asylum¹. This is the summary of the Lithuanian report. The report includes data on migration flows and policy/legal changes which happened in 2011.

MIGRATION TRENDS

In 2011, 53 900 residents **emigrated** from Lithuania, i.e., by 29 300 less than in 2010. The main countries of destination for emigrants are the United Kingdom (50 per cent), Ireland (10.4 per cent), Norway (7.1 per cent) and Germany (7 per cent). In 2011, 15 700 persons **declared their entry to Lithuania**, i.e., three times more than in 2010. Absolute majority of immigrants (89 per cent) are Lithuanian citizens. It is argued that these big fluctuations in the numbers of Lithuanian citizens might be related not only to changes in emigration/return patterns but also due to changes in regulations on registration of residence. Since the introduction of the compulsory health insurance policy in 2009 more people tend to declare their departure and arrival now.

1 700 aliens **immigrated** to Lithuania in 2011. This shows an increase of 38 per cent if compared to 2010. Most aliens arrived from Russia, Belarus, and Ukraine.

Chart 1. Migration flows in Lithuania, 2008-2011

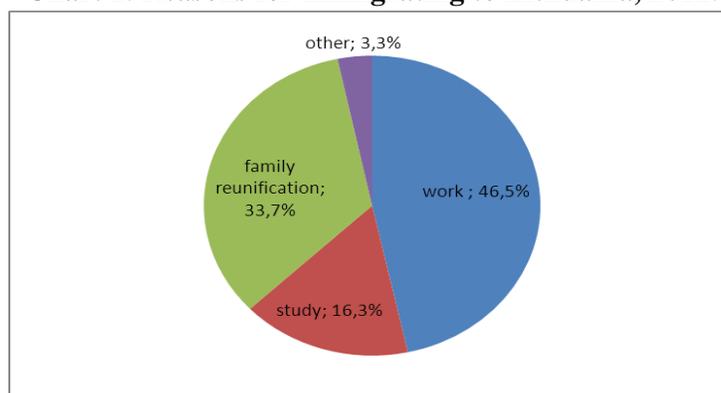


Source: The Department of Statistics of Lithuania

¹ Available at www.emn.europa.eu

The **majority of immigrants** arrived in Lithuania for work purposes in 2011. The Lithuanian Labour Exchange issued 3327 work permits for aliens to work in Lithuania, almost twice the number of work permits than in 2010. Most work permits were issued/extended to drivers of international freight vehicles – 68 per cent.

Chart 2. Reasons for immigrating to Lithuania, 2011.

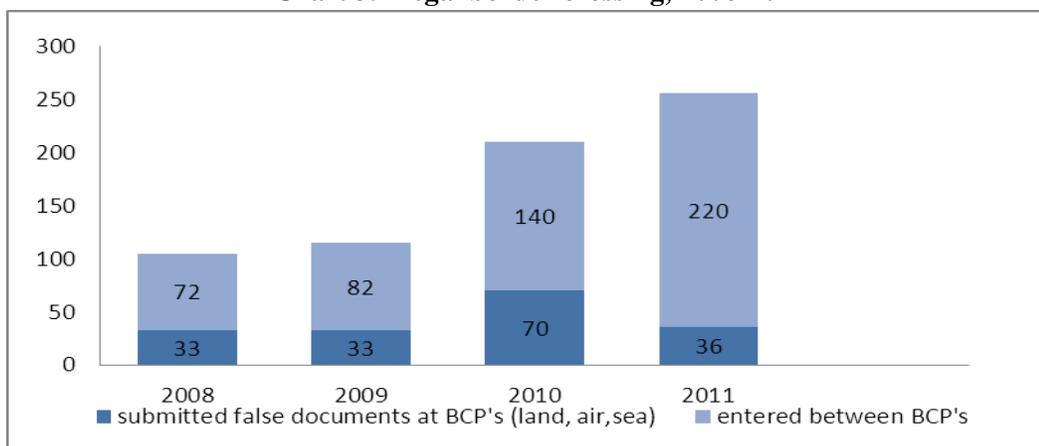


Source: Migration Yearbook, Migration Department

ILLIGAL IMMIGRATION

In 2011, 256 cases of **illegal border crossing** were detected: 86 per cent of those were done by third country nationals who tried to enter Lithuania avoiding designated border crossing points and 16 per cent presented false/forged documents. The Border was crossed illegally most frequently by citizens of Georgia (123 cases), citizens of Russian Federation (43), Afghanistan (25) and Belarus (15).

Chart 3. Illegal border crossing, 2008-2011



Source: State Border Guard Service

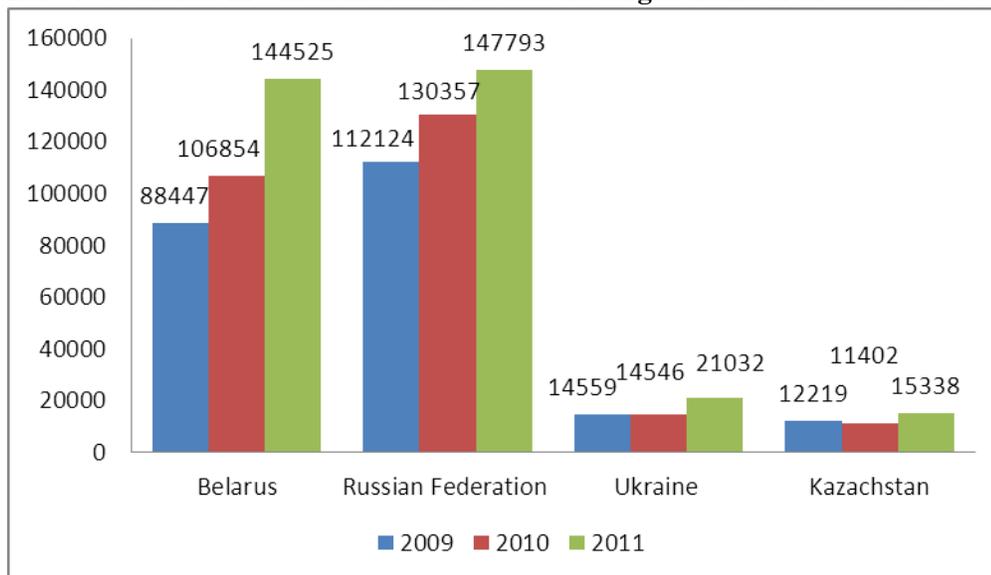


VISAS

Lithuania issues two types of visas – national long-term (D) visa and Schengen (C) visa. Usually national visa is issued for those who intend to stay in Lithuania longer than three months and on certain grounds provided by the law. Schengen visa is mainly issued for tourists and allows to stay in the country up to 90 days within a six months period.

The number of issued visas is constantly increasing. The majority of Schengen visas are issued in the Russian Federation and Belarus. Highest increase in Schengen visas was noticed in Belarus in 2011. The highest rate of refused visa applications was noticed in Delhi (20.4 per cent), Georgia (19.9 per cent), Armenia (18 per cent) and Egypt (17.4 per cent).

Chart 4. Countries in which Lithuania issued the largest number of visas in 2009-2011



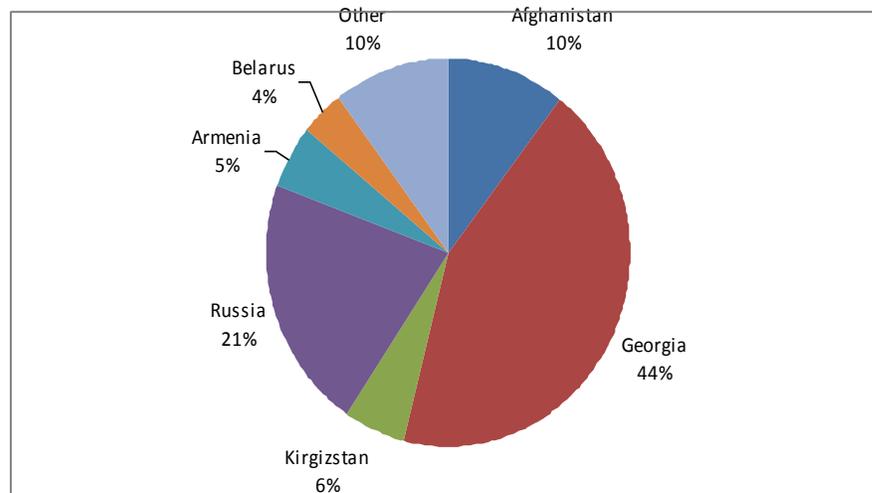
Source: European Commission



ASYLUM

In 2011, 527 applications for asylum in the Republic of Lithuania were lodged, which is by 5 per cent more than in 2010. In 2011, applications for asylum were lodged by citizens of 26 countries. The majority of the applications were lodged by Georgian citizens.

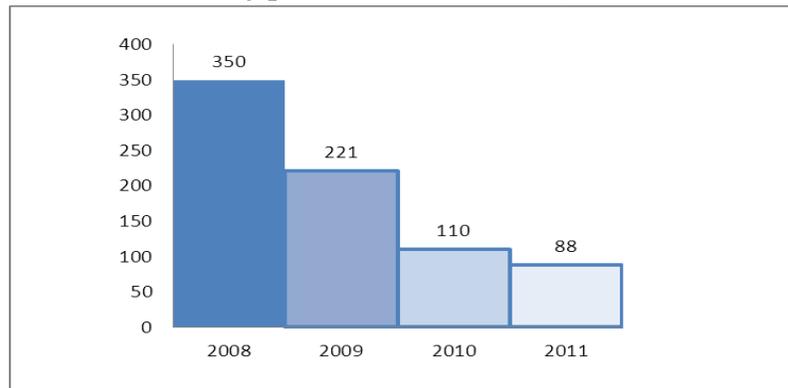
Chart 5. Asylum seekers by citizenship in 2011



Source: Migration Department

In 2011, 95 persons received international protection in Lithuania: subsidiary protection was granted to 88 persons (main nationalities – Russian Federation, Afghanistan) and refugee status was granted to 7 persons (main nationalities - Belarus, Afghanistan). The positive **decision rate** accounted to 18 per cent.

Chart 6. Granted subsidiary protection in Lithuania, 2008-2011



Source: Migration Department



LEGAL CHANGES

In 2011 several legal changes in the field of migration were introduced.

On 1 April 2011, the **rules regulating the issuance of visas** entered into force². They facilitate and expedite the arrival of:

- Family members of those non-EU citizens who come to Lithuania for pedagogical work and/or for conducting scientific research. Their family members can arrive to Lithuania immediately with a national D visa;
- Workers – now all workers who have obtained work permits can arrive to Lithuania with the national D visa and, if necessary, receive the temporary residence permit while in Lithuania;
- Students – now all students independent of the type of study can arrive with the national D visa and if necessary apply for a residence permit while in the country.

On 1 April 2011 the new version of the **Law on Citizenship** entered into force. It states that a Lithuanian citizen cannot be a citizen of another state (only in very specific cases detailed by the law). The Law introduced new provisions with regards to stateless persons, to persons who by marrying acquire a citizenship of another state (they can retain then the Lithuanian citizenship), to persons who acquire double citizenship by birth (they may retain the Lithuanian citizenship until 21 years old) and other provisions³.

On 23 December 2011, **the Criminal Code** was supplemented with an article stipulating criminal liability for employers who employ third country nationals illegally staying in Lithuania. The code foresees a fine of 3,000-10,000 litas or imprisonment up to 2 years⁴.

On 22 December 2011, the **Code of Administrative Offences** was amended. It imposes now *inter alia* administrative liability against persons for provision of false data in order to verify letters of invitation for aliens to enter Lithuania or for assisting an alien by other unlawful means to obtain a document confirming the alien's right to stay or reside in Lithuania⁵. The code foresees a fine of 250-1000 litas.

On 8 December 2011 the Law **“On the Legal Status of Aliens”** was amended (the amendments entered into force on 1 February 2012), by transposing the Return directive⁶. The law sets limits for detaining irregular immigrants (6 months with the possibility to prolong by 1 year) and gives priority to their voluntary return over forced expulsion.

² - Official Gazette, 2011, No. 38-1832

³ Official Gazette, No 144-7361, 2010;

⁴ - Official Gazette, 2012, Nr. 4-115

⁵ - Official Gazette, 2011, Nr. 163-7758

⁶ Directive 2008/115/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 December 2008 on common standards and procedures in Member States for returning illegally staying third-country nationals



About EMN

European Migration Network (EMN) is a network of migration specialists from the European Commission, 26 EU Member States and Norway. It aims to collect, analyze and share up-to-date information in the areas of migration and asylum. IOM Vilnius Office represents the Government of Lithuania in the EMN.

www.emn.europa.eu

www.emn.lt

About IOM

International Organization for Migration was established in 1951. IOM works to help ensure the orderly and humane management of migration, to promote international cooperation on migration issues, to assist in the search for practical solutions to migration problems and to provide humanitarian assistance to migrants in need.

www.iom.int

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