

Migration Policy in Lithuania 2023

Migration trends

Emigration and return migration

Immigration and integration of foreigners

Asylum

Combating irregular migration

International cooperation

Institutional framework

MIGRATION TRENDS

Lithuania in 1990-2024:

Population of Lithuania:

1990

3.693 million

2024

2.886 million

Since 1990, the population of Lithuania has decreased by

▼ 807,000 inhabitants



due to migration: **484,000**

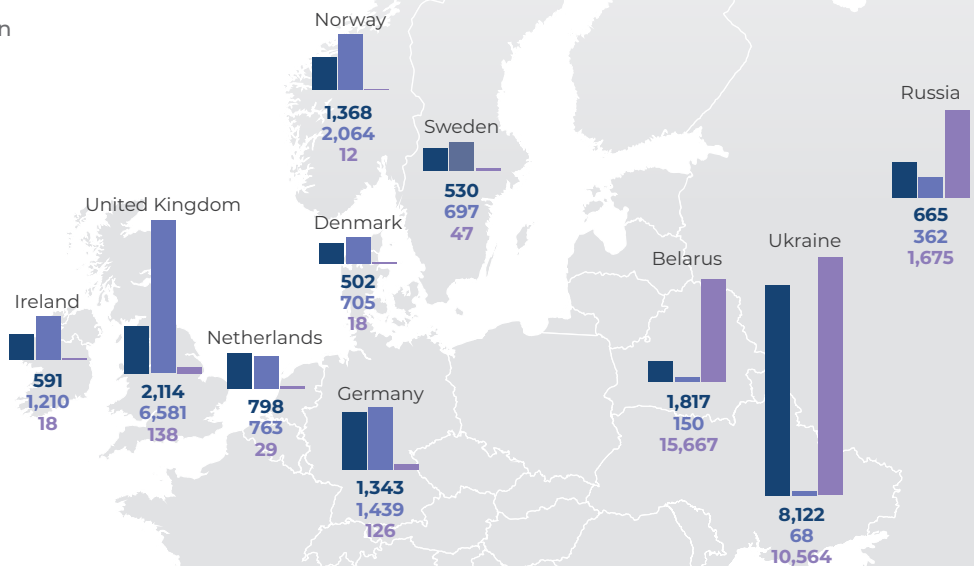


due to natural population change: **275,000**

The trend of positive net migration, which started in 2019, continued in 2023, with 45,000 more inhabitants arriving in the country than leaving.

Top countries by emigration and immigration in 2023

- Emigration
- Immigration (Returning Lithuanian citizens)
- Immigration (Foreigners)



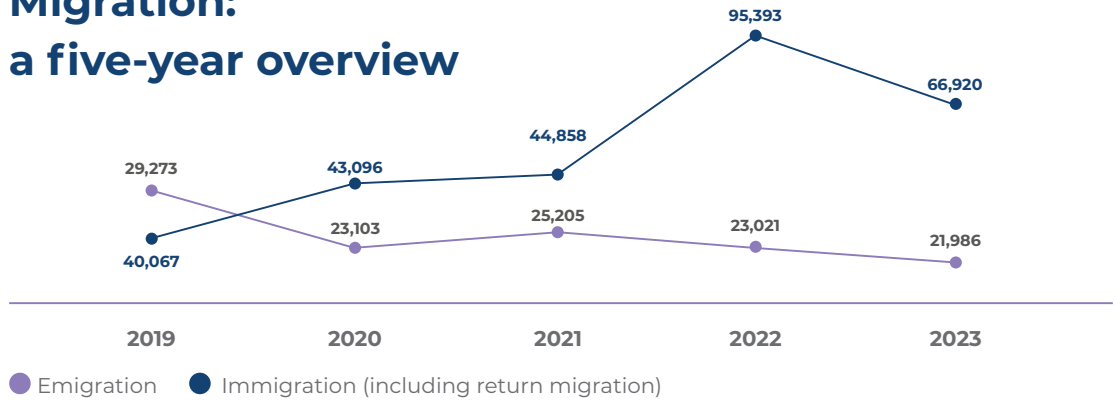
24%

16.6 thousand

of immigrants were returning Lithuanian citizens.

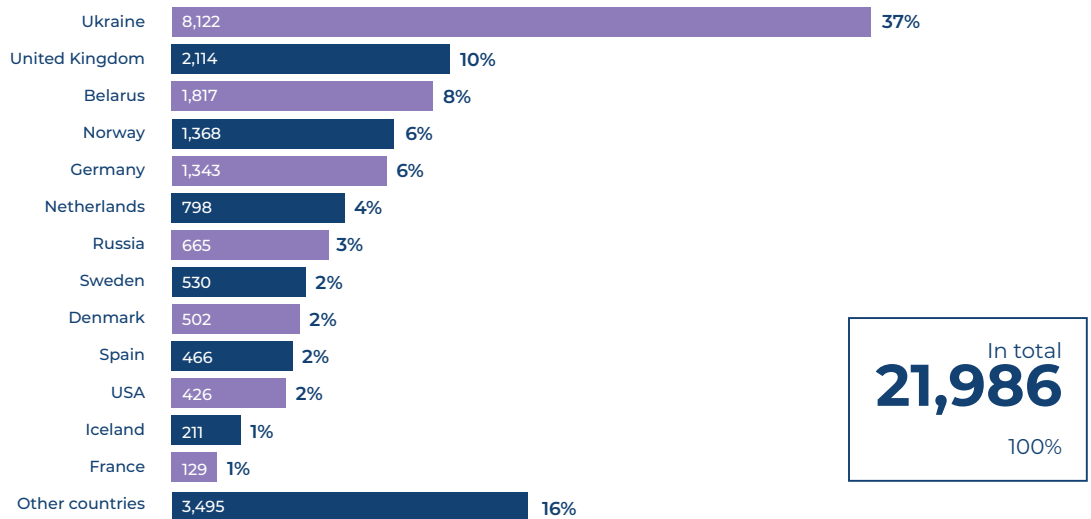
In 2022, the number of returning Lithuanian citizens amounted to 14.3 thousand.

Migration: a five-year overview

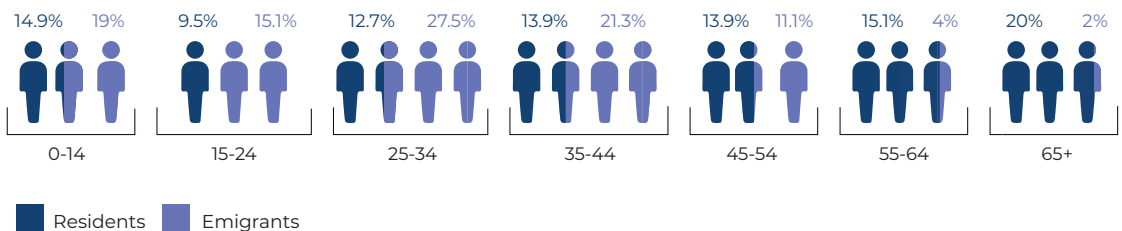


EMIGRATION AND RETURN MIGRATION

Emigrants by country of destination



Emigrants by age



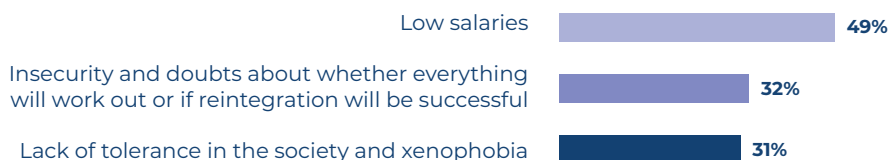
According to a [survey](#) of the Lithuanian diaspora (N=2549) commissioned by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 2023:



Top 3 incentives for returning:



Top 3 obstacles and risks when considering a return:



Remittances to Lithuania

903.26 mn EUR

1.4% of the country's GDP.

In 2023,

there was a 28.8% increase in cash flow, compared to 2022.

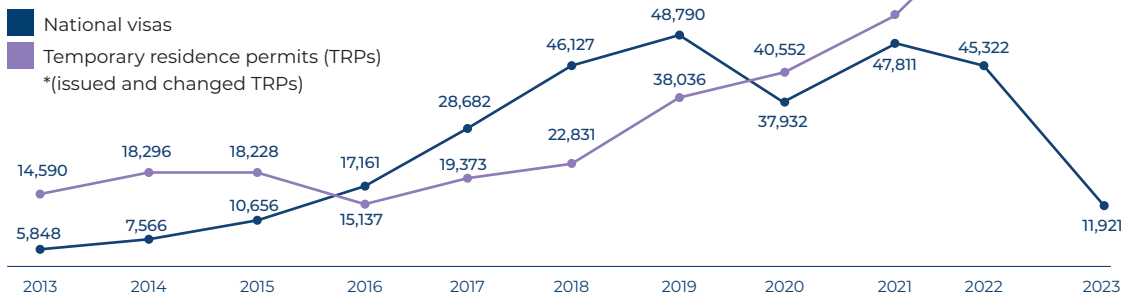
Main areas of work and achievements:

- ▶ To encourage returns to Lithuania and facilitate the (re)integration process, the Action Plan for the Strategic Guidelines for Lithuanian diaspora policy, "Global Lithuania: 2022-2030", was continued.
- ▶ The resettlement of Lithuanian citizens, persons of Lithuanian origin, and their family members from countries experiencing humanitarian crises or conflict zones was implemented, along with support for their integration:
 - In 2023, 9 individuals were resettled from Venezuela to Lithuania, bringing the total to 134 by the end of the year.
 - The resettlement process from Ukraine to Lithuania also continued, with the adoption of a [decision](#) regarding resettlement of persons from Ukraine in 2023. 162 applications for resettlement status were received by the end of the year.
- ▶ To inform Lithuanians living abroad about the Lithuanian labor market, employers, and their expectations, the Employment Service's initiative to promote return migration, "Gal į Lietuvą?" was continued.
- ▶ The activities of the Migration Information Centre (MIC) "Renkuosi Lietuvą" ("I Choose Lithuania"), funded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and implemented by the Vilnius Office of the International Organisation for Migration (IOM Lithuania), were also continued in 2023:
 - A total of 14,177 consultations were provided, 4,795 of which were to returning Lithuanian citizens.
 - In 2023, 9,382 foreigners reached out to the MIC for consultations.
 - The Center's website renkuosilietuva.lt had over 836,000 visitors in 2023.








IMMIGRATION AND INTEGRATION OF FOREIGNERS

In 2023, 50,225 foreigners immigrated to Lithuania. Of these, 31.2% were migrants from Belarus, and 21% were from Ukraine.



Arrival of foreigners to Lithuania in 2013-2023



Foreigners in Lithuania by grounds of entry (TRPs and national visas) in 2023

 <p>7,489</p> <p>Family</p>	 <p>6,192</p> <p>Education +1,218</p>	 <p>79,401</p> <p>Employment +5,810 +2,052</p>
 <p>236</p> <p>Business +4 +89</p>	 <p>298</p> <p>Persons of Lithuanian origin who have the right to restore citizenship</p>	 <p>53,522</p> <p>Temporary protection</p>
 <p>3,439</p> <p>Other +4,889</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Came with a temporary residence permit ● Arrived on the national visa ● Persons arrived as highly qualified professionals ● Persons came under the startup scheme 	

Lists of shortage occupations in Lithuania in 2023

 Highly qualified employees	 Qualified employees
<p>80 occupations</p>	<p>175 occupations</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Computer application engineers ○ Software testers ○ Software developers ○ Graphic designers ○ Biomedical engineers ○ Robotics engineers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Drivers of international freight vehicles ○ Welders ○ Concreters ○ Plasterers ○ Bricklayers

Employees in these occupations enter under a facilitated procedure.

Under Objective 2 of the Asylum, Migration, and Integration Program, "Integration of Third-Country Nationals and Legal Migration" 2,984 third-country nationals participated in integration programs in 2023, a 7.7% increase compared to 2022 (2,770 participants).

Main areas of work and achievements:

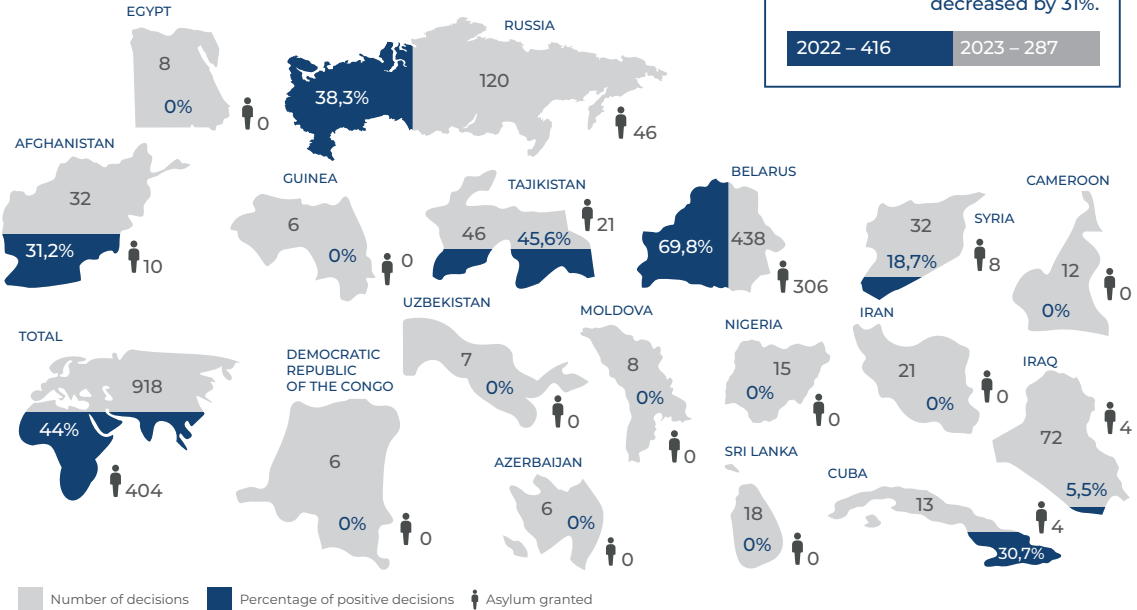
- ▶ Amendments to the Law on the Legal Status of Foreigners came into force, allowing foreigners to apply for temporary residence permits and national visas through external service providers. These amendments reduced the time limits for processing applications for temporary residence permits by one month.
- ▶ In 2023, the Ministry of the Interior, in collaboration with the Ministry of Social Security and Labour, assessed the impact of amendments to the Law on the Legal Status of Foreigners on the labour market, state security, and the demographic situation. Based on the findings, a decision was made to tighten the procedures for employing foreigners and the requirements for companies inviting them to work in Lithuania.
- ▶ Following the enactment of the [Law on the Imposition of Restrictive Measures in View of Military Aggression Against Ukraine](#) in May 2023, restrictions were placed on Russian and Belarusian citizens' ability to obtain visas and electronic residency status in Lithuania. Furthermore, the possibility for Russian citizens to obtain temporary residence permits was also limited.
- ▶ In October 2023, IOM Lithuania opened the Migration Information Centre ([MICenter](#)) to ensure smoother integration for foreigners:
 - 129 legal, career guidance, and integration counselling services were provided.
 - 10 integration events were organized.
 - 3 emotional self-help groups were established.
- ▶ [International House Klaipėda](#) was opened, offering counselling services to highly qualified professionals, entrepreneurs, and EU citizens.
- ▶ An amendment to the [Law on Health Insurance](#) was adopted, facilitating the integration of spouses and registered partners of highly qualified foreign workers.

ASYLUM

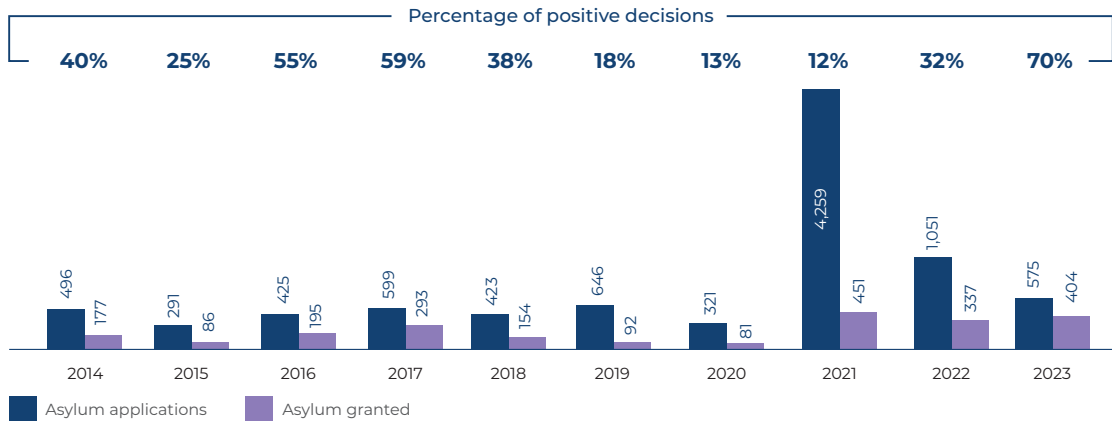
Asylum decisions: top citizenships in 2023

In 2023,
575 people applied for asylum (1,051 in 2022).
Asylum applications from Belarusian nationals decreased by 31%.

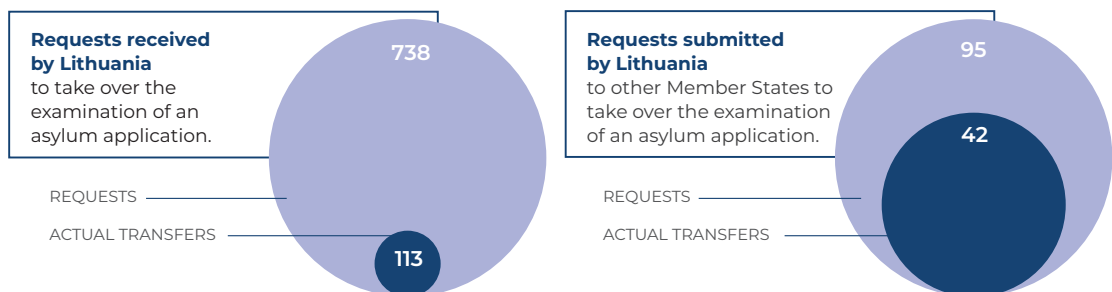
2022 – 416 2023 – 287



Asylum: a ten-year overview



Transfers under the Dublin Regulation in 2023



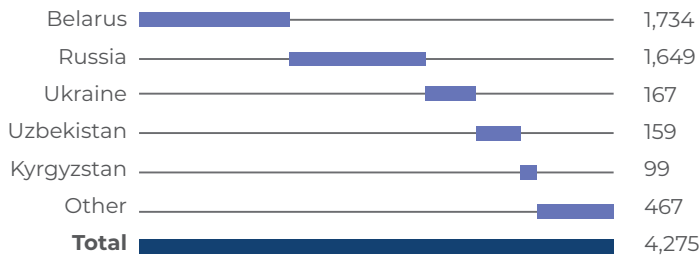
Main areas of work and achievements:

- ▶ Following a ruling by the Court of Justice of the European Union, amendments to the Law on the Legal Status of Foreigners were adopted, repealing provisions contrary to EU law regarding the regulation of irregular migration during states of war, emergency, and mass influx:
 - Foreigners are now allowed to apply for asylum regardless of whether they entered Lithuania legally or illegally.
 - The provision allowing the detention of asylum seekers if they entered Lithuania illegally by crossing the state border has been repealed.
- ▶ A draft law amending the Law on the Legal Status of Foreigners has been submitted to the Seimas to address the challenges posed by the influx of irregular migrants, particularly in ensuring proper reception and accommodation conditions for foreigners.
- ▶ Amendments to the Law on the Legal Status of Foreigners have entered into force, allowing foreigners unable to leave Lithuania for humanitarian reasons to be granted a temporary residence permit valid for one year.
- ▶ In response to Russia's war in Ukraine, the Government extended the temporary protection until March 4, 2025.
- ▶ Solidarity measures continue to be implemented for the resettlement of people needing asylum from other countries. In 2023, 5 asylum seekers from Italy were resettled - 2 Malians and 3 South Sudanese.
- ▶ In 2023, the European Commission allocated €10 million to Lithuania to strengthen the EU's external border capacity and to improve reception and accommodation conditions for incoming refugees.
- ▶ The Migration Department began issuing digital temporary residence permits to Ukrainian war refugees granted temporary protection, eliminating the need for physical identity cards. More than 42,000 of these permits have been issued.

COMBATING IRREGULAR MIGRATION

Foreigners who were refused entry: top 5 citizenships in 2023

In 2023, irregular migration flows to Lithuania, organized by the undemocratic Belarusian regime, decreased by 42.3%.



0.19%

In 2023, of all arriving foreigners were refused entry.

Reasons for refusal of entry in 2023



15% (758)

No valid document / a counterfeit document



38% (1,908)

A threat to security or public order



32% (1,585)

Lack of documents justifying the purpose and conditions of stay



15% (741)

Other

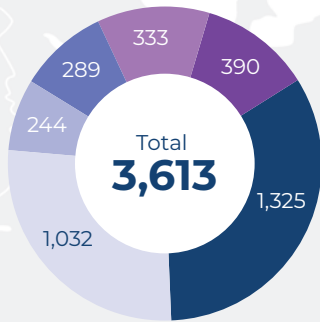
100%

(4,992*)

*a foreigner may be denied entry for several reasons.

Return and expulsion of foreigners

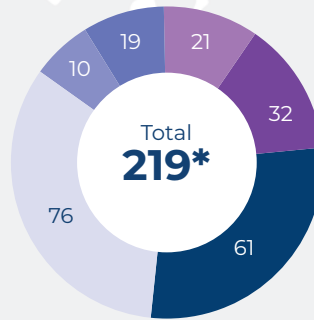
Return decisions by citizenship



- Belarus
- Russia
- Uzbekistan
- Kyrgyzstan
- Tajikistan
- Other

Number of voluntary returns: 52

Expulsion decisions by citizenship



- Belarus
- Russia
- Tajikistan
- Uzbekistan
- Moldova
- Other

Number of persons expelled: 103

* In cases when a foreigner agrees to return to his country of origin voluntarily, an expulsion decision could be changed to a return decision.

Illegal employment

5,621

This is the number of illegal employment inspections carried out by the State Labor Inspectorate in 2023.

Number of illegal work cases



Main areas of work and achievements:

- ▶ In response to the Belarusian regime's continued instrumentalization of irregular migration, Lithuanian authorities in 2023:
 - Adopted amendments to the Law on the State Border and its Protection, allowing authorities, during an emergency, to refuse entry to foreigners attempting to cross the border into Lithuania.
 - Created the institution of State Border Guard Supporters, enabling public involvement in responding to irregular border crossings.
 - Implemented projects to install border surveillance systems along the entire border with Belarus, ensuring 100% monitoring.
- ▶ Expanded the criteria for declaring an emergency due to a massive flow of foreigners. The new criteria include organized crossings involving neighbouring countries, a high volume of asylum applications, and overcrowding in registration and reception centres.
- ▶ The [Law](#) on the Imposition of Restrictive Measures in View of Military Aggression against Ukraine entered into force, introducing additional individual checks for Russian citizens travelling across the EU external border to Lithuania.
- ▶ In 2023, a decision was taken to re-establish the Coast Guard Border Detachment to strengthen border security.
- ▶ Draft regulations of the Interinstitutional Cooperation Centre were prepared. The Centre's mission is to detect violations of legislation related to illegal employment.

INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

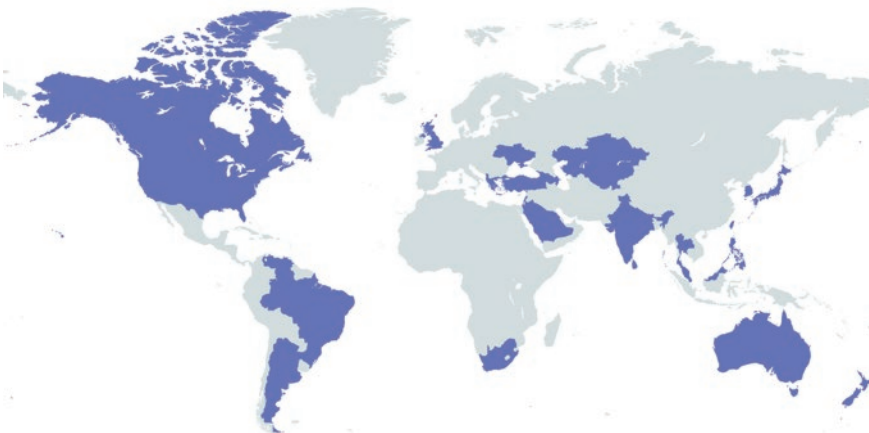
Main areas of work and achievements:

- ▶ In 2023, the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union reached a political agreement on the Migration and Asylum Pact, which establishes a flexible and mandatory solidarity mechanism. Lithuania is expected to receive 158 people or to contribute €3.16 million.
- ▶ In 2023, a memorandum with the Latvian Ministry of the Interior was signed to strengthen cooperation and combat irregular migration.
- ▶ A cooperation plan for 2023-2024 has been signed with the Border Police and the Patrol Police Department of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Georgia, aimed at exchanging experience in the fields of land and maritime border surveillance, cross-border crime investigations, internal security, and the operation of border checkpoints.
- ▶ A declaration by the police and border guards of Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia and Moldova was signed, aiming to strengthen cooperation in combating crime.
- ▶ In 2023, the "Support to Law Enforcement and Security Reforms in Armenia" project was implemented to share with Armenia the best practices of Lithuanian institutions in managing migrant flows.

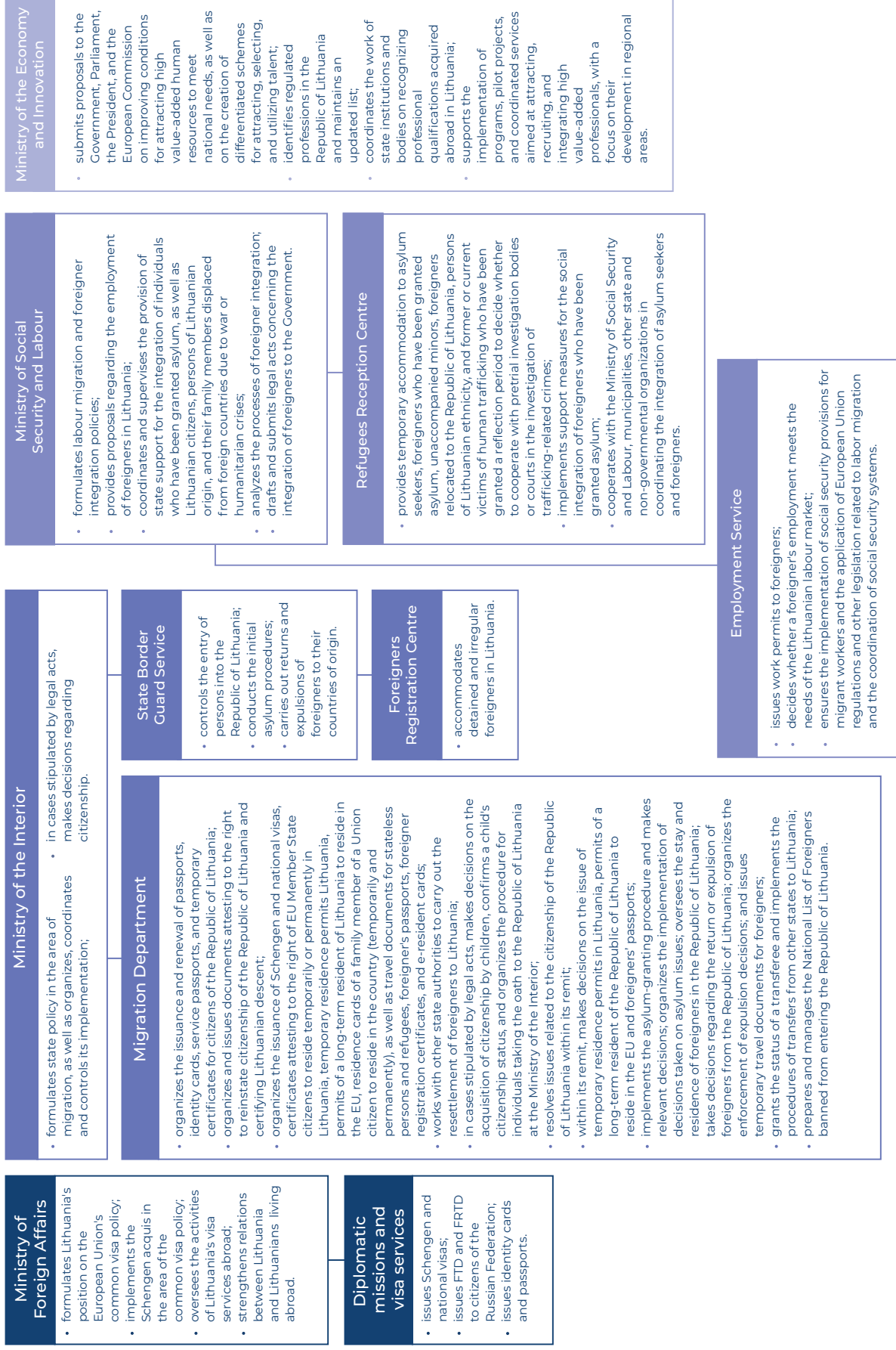
INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK

Main areas of work and achievements:

- ▶ Following amendments to the Law on the Legal Status of Foreigners, allowing applications for a temporary residence permit to be submitted through an external service provider, services began being offered in 34 countries.



Key institutions in migration



Ministry of Foreign Affairs

- formulates Lithuania's position on the European Union's common visa policy;
- implements the Schengen acquis in the area of the common visa policy;
- oversees the activities of Lithuania's visa services abroad;
- strengthens relations between Lithuania and Lithuanians living abroad.

Ministry of the Interior

- formulates state policy in the area of migration, as well as organizes, coordinates and controls its implementation;
- in cases stipulated by legal acts, makes decisions regarding citizenship.

Migration Department

- organizes the issuance and renewal of passports, identity cards, service passports, and temporary certificates for citizens of the Republic of Lithuania;
- organizes and issues documents attesting to the right to reinstate citizenship of the Republic of Lithuania and certifying Lithuanian descent;
- organizes the issuance of Schengen and national visas, certificates attesting to the right of EU Member State citizens to reside temporarily or permanently in Lithuania, temporary residence permits Lithuania, permits of a long-term resident of Lithuania to reside in the EU, residence cards of a family member of a Union citizen to reside in the country (temporarily and permanently), as well as travel documents for stateless persons and refugees, foreigner's passports, foreigner registration certificates, and e-resident cards;
- works with other state authorities to carry out the resettlement of foreigners to Lithuania;
- in cases stipulated by legal acts, makes decisions on the acquisition of citizenship by children, confirms a child's citizenship status, and organizes the procedure for individuals taking the oath to the Republic of Lithuania at the Ministry of the Interior;
- resolves issues related to the citizenship of the Republic of Lithuania within its remit;
- within its remit, makes decisions on the issue of temporary residence permits in Lithuania, permits of a long-term resident of the Republic of Lithuania to reside in the EU and foreigners' passports;
- implements the asylum-granting procedure and makes relevant decisions; organizes the implementation of decisions taken on asylum issues; oversees the stay and residence of foreigners in the Republic of Lithuania; takes decisions regarding the return or expulsion of foreigners from the Republic of Lithuania; organizes the enforcement of expulsion decisions; and issues temporary travel documents for foreigners;
- grants the status of a transferee and implements the procedures of transfers from other states to Lithuania;
- prepares and manages the National List of Foreigners banned from entering the Republic of Lithuania.

Ministry of Social Security and Labour

- formulates labour migration and foreigner integration policies;
- provides proposals regarding the employment of foreigners in Lithuania;
- coordinates and supervises the provision of state support for the integration of individuals who have been granted asylum, as well as Lithuanian citizens, persons of Lithuanian origin, and their family members displaced from foreign countries due to war or humanitarian crises;
- analyzes the processes of foreigner integration; drafts and submits legal acts concerning the integration of foreigners to the Government.

Ministry of the Economy and Innovation

- submits proposals to the Government, Parliament, the President, and the European Commission on improving conditions for attracting high value-added human resources to meet national needs, as well as on the creation of differentiated schemes for attracting, selecting, and utilizing talent;
- identifies regulated professions in the Republic of Lithuania and maintains an updated list;
- coordinates the work of state institutions and bodies on recognizing professional qualifications acquired abroad in Lithuania;
- supports the implementation of programs, pilot projects, and coordinated services aimed at attracting, recruiting, and integrating high value-added professionals, with a focus on their development in regional areas.

Refugees Reception Centre

- provides temporary accommodation to asylum seekers; foreigners who have been granted asylum, unaccompanied minors, foreigners relocated to the Republic of Lithuania, persons of Lithuanian ethnicity, and former or current victims of human trafficking who have been granted a reflection period to decide whether to cooperate with pretrial investigation bodies or courts in the investigation of trafficking-related crimes;
- implements support measures for the social integration of foreigners who have been granted asylum;
- cooperates with the Ministry of Social Security and Labour, municipalities, other state and non-governmental organizations in coordinating the integration of asylum seekers and foreigners.

Foreigners Registration Centre

- accommodates detained and irregular foreigners in Lithuania.

Employment Service

- issues work permits to foreigners;
- decides whether a foreigner's employment meets the needs of the Lithuanian labour market;
- ensures the implementation of social security provisions for migrant workers and the application of European Union regulations and other legislation related to labor migration and the coordination of social security systems.

Diplomatic missions and visa services

- issues Schengen and national visas;
- issues FTD and FRTD to citizens of the Russian Federation;
- issues identity cards and passports.

This publication was prepared in cooperation with the Ministry of the Interior, the International Organization for Migration Vilnius Office (IOM Lithuania), and the European Migration Network (EMN) in Lithuania. The publication was prepared according to the 2023 Report on the Implementation of the Lithuanian Migration Policy Guidelines and Monitoring of Migration Processes. The Migration Policy Guidelines are the main strategic document establishing the goals, principles and directions of the migration and asylum policy in Lithuania.

The European Migration Network (EMN) is an EU network of migration and asylum experts who work together to provide objective, comparable policy-relevant information and knowledge on emerging issues relating to asylum and migration in Europe. According to government resolution, Lithuania is represented in the network by IOM Lithuania working in close cooperation with the Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Lithuania and its subordinate institutions.

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