

Migration Trends In Lithuania 2014



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Introduction

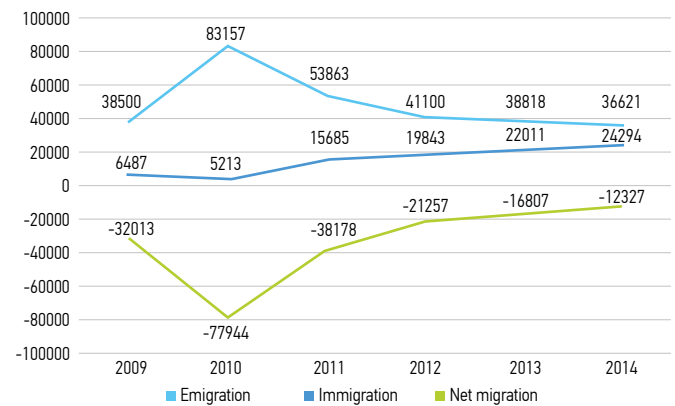
In 2014, emigration flows from Lithuania continued to decline, whereas the number of Lithuanian returnees and aliens entering the country was growing. However, during 2014 1.5 times more persons left Lithuania than entered. The majority of the aliens entered on grounds of lawful activities, family reunification and employment. One of the main legal developments was the tightening of the procedure for issue of temporary residence permits to aliens who entered to Lithuania to engage in lawful activities/business. In 2014, facilitated conditions of the issue of a temporary residence permit and family reunification were introduced for certain groups of aliens (aliens recruited for highly qualified employment, aliens who have made significant investments in activities of an enterprise activities, aliens entering to take up employment as teachers or intra-corporate transferees). The Action Plan for the Implementation of Aliens' Integration Policy 2015-2017 was finally approved.

This report presents key statistics and legal developments in 2014. The information publication has been prepared by the Lithuanian National Contact Point of the European Migration Network (EMN).

Migration Trends

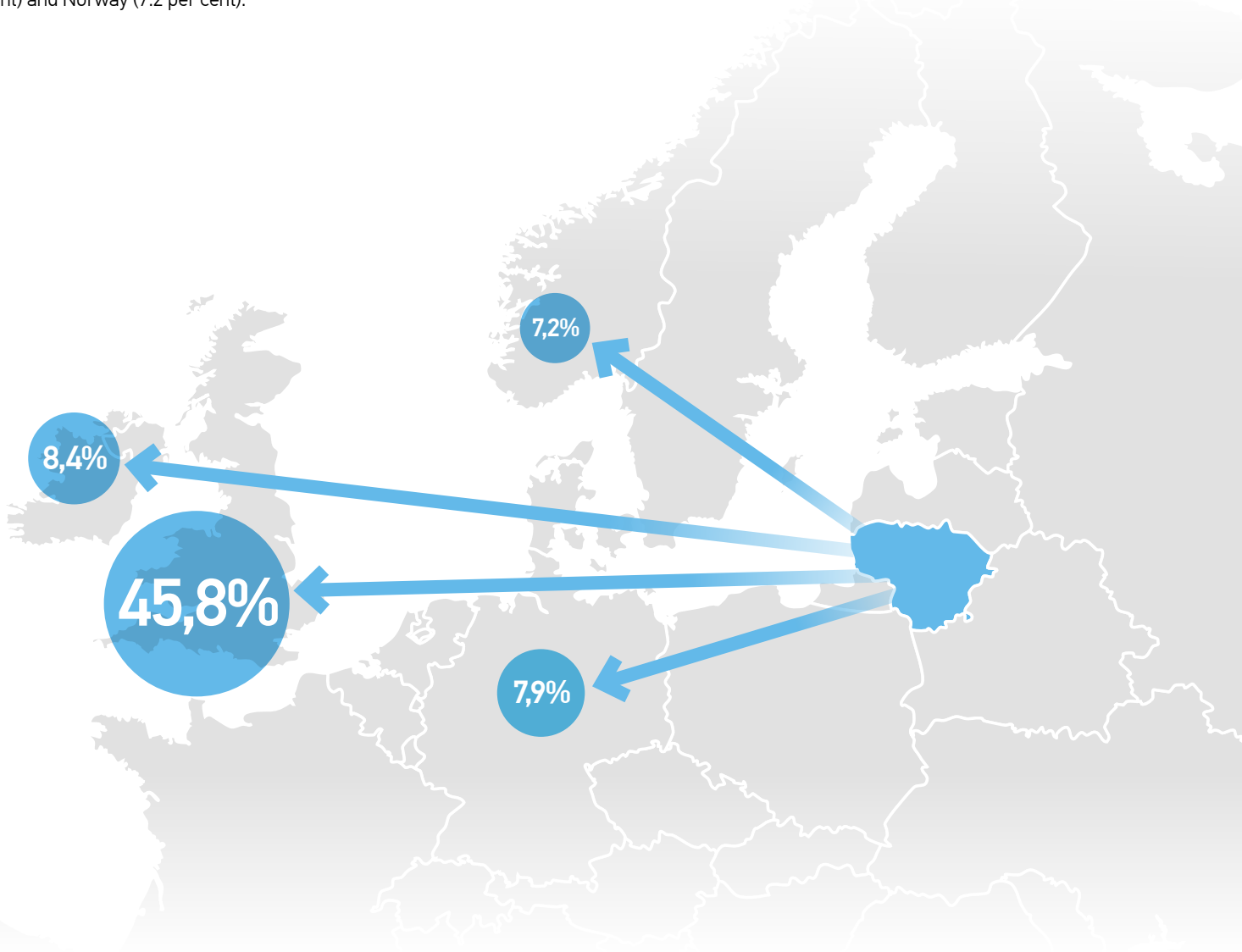
Emigration. In 2014, emigration flows from Lithuania continued to decline: 36 621 residents **left** Lithuania, which is 2 200 persons (5.7 per cent) less than in 2013. The main destination countries remained similar as in 2012: nearly a half of the emigrants (45.8 per cent) left for the United Kingdom, for Ireland (8.4 per cent), Germany (7.9 per cent) and Norway (7.2 per cent).

Chart 1. Migration flows, 2009-2014



SOURCE: DEPARTMENT OF STATISTICS

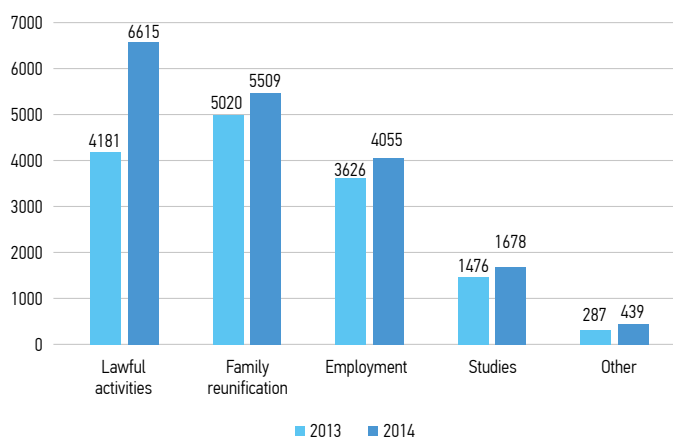
Immigration. In 2014, the immigration rate continued to increase: 24 294 persons **entered** Lithuania in 2014, which is 2 283 persons (10.4 per cent) more than in 2013. The majority of the immigrants (80.4 per cent) were citizens of the Republic of Lithuania, most of whom returned from the United Kingdom, Ireland and Norway. In 2014, 4 766 aliens entered Lithuania (57 per cent more than in 2013): 658 citizens of the EU Member States (mostly from Latvia and Germany) and 4 108 third-country nationals (mainly from Russia, Ukraine and Belarus). As of the beginning of 2015, 39 980 aliens from 132 countries of the



world resided in Lithuania. The number makes up 1.37 per cent of the entire Lithuanian population.

Grounds for entry. In 2014 Lithuania issued or renewed 18 296 temporary residence permits to aliens, which is 25 per cent more than in 2013. In comparison to 2013, in 2014 the number of temporary residence permits issued on the ground of lawful activities increased by 58 per cent. This is explained by the fact that since 1 November 2014, a new more rigorous procedure entered into force, forcing the aliens to hurry to renew or obtain temporary residence permits.

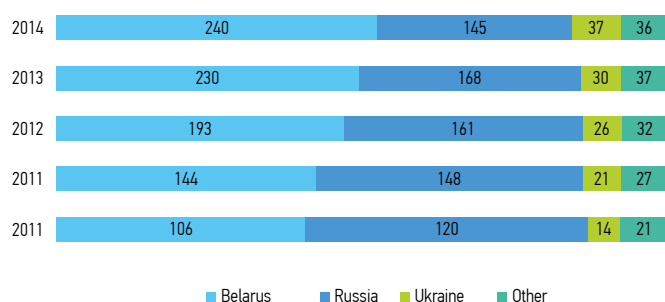
Chart 2. Immigration to Lithuania (by grounds for the issue of temporary residence permits), 2013-2014



SOURCE: MIGRATION DEPARTMENT

It has been observed in practice that aliens abuse this ground for entry: they often acquire the enterprises registered in Lithuania, appoint themselves as heads of the company and apply for the issue of a temporary residence permit seeking to gain access to the Schengen Area rather to carry out lawful activities. On 1 November 2014, amendments to the Law on the Legal Status of Aliens entered into force stipulating more stringent requirements for the issue of a temporary residence permit to aliens who enter to engage in lawful activities/business. The amendments introduced the requirement for an alien to participate in achieving objectives of an enterprise or in its management, also it became mandatory that an enterprise would have carried out the activities indicated in its documents of incorporation for not less than 6 months prior to the alien's application for the issue of a temporary residence permit, that the value of the enterprise equity capital/assets would amount to not less than EUR 28 000, of which not less than EUR 14 000 would be the assets invested by the alien, and that such an enterprise had created workplaces for not less than 3 full-time employees. Since 1 November 2014, 259 applications have been lodged, that is, following the change in the conditions of the issue of a temporary residence permit on the ground of lawful activities the number of applications for the issue of a temporary residence permit on this ground has considerably decreased.

Chart 3. Countries in which Lithuanian visa authorities issued the majority of visas, thousands of visas, 2010-2014



SOURCE: EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Visas. In 2014, Lithuanian visa authorities issued 466 758 visas (in 2013 – 471 258), including 459 192 Schengen visas and 7 566 national visas. The majority of Schengen visas were issued in Belarus (52.3 per cent) and in Russia (31.7 per cent).

In 2014, Lithuanian visa authorities refused to issue 5 179 Schengen and national visas (5 per cent more than in 2013) and annulled 1 792 visas (20 per cent less than in 2013). The issue of Schengen visas was most often refused in Armenia (25 per cent), Georgia (22 per cent), Russia (19 per cent), Belarus (7.7 per cent) and Kazakhstan (7 per cent).

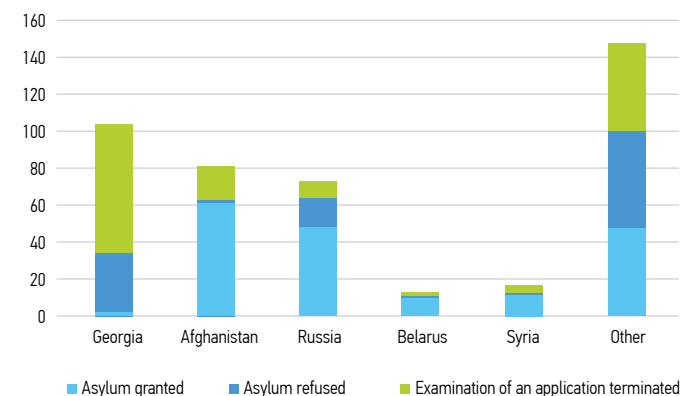
Asylum

In 2014, third-country nationals lodged **496 applications for asylum**, i.e. 24.3 per cent more than in 2013. 53.4 per cent of applications for asylum were lodged by aliens at border crossing points. The majority of asylum applicants were citizens of Georgia (117 applications), Afghanistan (99 applications) and Russia (74 applications). The number of asylum applicants from Ukraine grew sharply (in 2014, they lodged 70 applications for asylum, in 2013 – 5).

In 2014, similarly to 2013, the percentage of positive decisions accounted for 35.7 per cent.

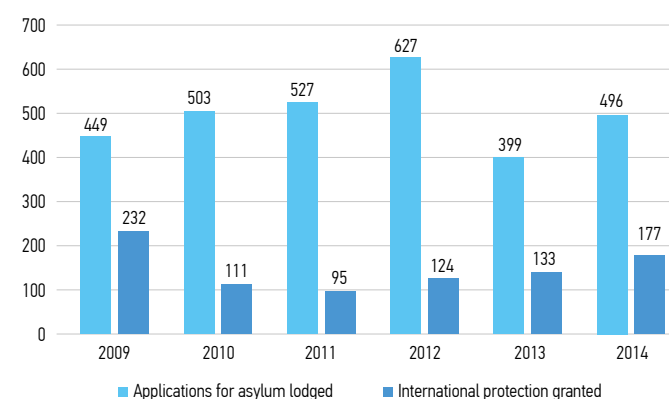
In 2014, asylum in Lithuania was granted to 177 persons, which is 28 per cent more than in 2013. 24 persons were granted refugee status (in 2013 – 15 persons). The majority of them were citizens of Russia (11), Afghanistan (10), also citizens of Belarus (1), Kazakhstan (1) and a stateless person. 153 persons were granted subsidiary protection (in 2013 – 123 persons). Subsidiary protection was granted to 50 citizens of Afghanistan, 37 citizens of Russia and 31 citizens of Ukraine (77.6 per cent of all decisions to grant subsidiary protection).

Chart 4. Asylum decisions by citizenship, 2014



SOURCE: MIGRATION DEPARTMENT

Chart 5. Applications for asylum and granting of asylum, 2009-2014



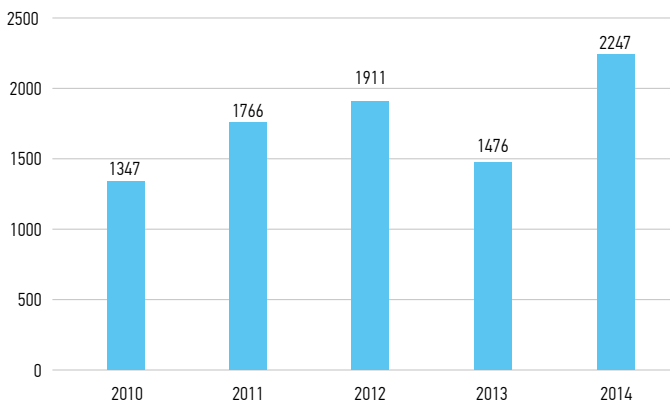
SOURCE: MIGRATION DEPARTMENT

Irregular Migration

Unlawful entry. In 2014, 375 aliens (in 2013 – 329) were detained for attempting to illegally cross the state border (at places other than border crossing points). The year 2014 witnessed a particularly sharp increase in the number of Vietnamese citizens attempting to unlawfully enter the country.

Irregular migrants. In 2014, 2 247 illegally staying aliens¹ were detained on the territory of the Republic of Lithuania, which is 8 per cent more than in 2013. The majority of such migrants are those who have failed to leave upon the expiry of a visa.

Chart 6. Third-country nationals subject to decisions regarding return, expulsion or the obligation to leave, 2010-2014



SOURCE: EUROSTAT

Return and expulsion. The aliens who are in breach of the terms of lawful entry, stay and residence must leave the Republic of Lithuania. In 2014, the aliens leaving Lithuania were mostly citizens of Belarus (516), Russia (365) and Kyrgyzstan (325) who have violated the conditions of legal stay in the Republic of Lithuania. If an alien fails to voluntarily comply with a return decision within the period granted to him (7-30 days), he is expelled from the Republic of Lithuania.

In 2014, expulsion from the Republic of Lithuania² was applied in respect of 362 aliens, most of them being citizens of Vietnam (185), Georgia (95), Russia (30) and Belarus (12). In 2013, expulsion was applied in respect of 279 aliens, the majority of whom were citizens of Georgia (173).

In 2014, International Organization for Migration Vilnius Office assisted in the voluntary return of 66 aliens to the country of origin (in 2013, there were 43 such aliens).

¹ Third-country nationals subject to a decision regarding return, expulsion or detention or the obligation to leave

² According to Article 126 of the Law on the Legal Status of Aliens (LLSA)

Legal Developments

Shortening of the period of examination of applications for the issue of temporary residence permits from 6 months to 4 months and introduction of the possibility of taking of a decision regarding a residence permit under the accelerated procedure within a twice shorter time limit subject to payment of a higher fee.

Increasing of the period of validity of a temporary residence permit for aliens entering to take up employment (up to 2 years), aliens entering to conduct scientific research or teach (up to 2 years), highly qualified aliens (up to 3 years), aliens who have invested in an enterprise equity capital/assets not less than EUR 260 000 and have created workplaces for not less than 5 persons (up to 3 years) and aliens who have been granted subsidiary protection (up to 2 years).

Stipulation of more stringent requirements for the issue of a temporary residence permit to aliens entering to engage in lawful activities/business. They may apply for the issue of a temporary residence permit only if their presence is necessary and if an enterprise has carried out the activities indicated in its documents of incorporation for not less than 6 months and has created workplaces for not less than 3 persons, providing full-time employment to residents of the Republic of Lithuania, and if the value of the enterprise's equity capital/assets amounts to not less than EUR 28 000, of which not less than EUR 14 000 are funds or other assets invested by an alien.

Facilitation of entry for highly qualified aliens. Aliens, provided that the employer undertakes to pay them a monthly wage of not less than 3 amounts of average gross monthly earnings, are not subject to the test of conformity to the needs of the labour market.

Facilitation of family reunification for aliens who make significant investments in an enterprise (EUR 260 000) and create not less than 5 workplaces, enter to teach or are intra-corporate transferees. The family may accompany them when they enter the Republic of Lithuania.

Provision of more favourable conditions to students from third countries. They are not subject to the requirement to be in possession of a work permit when taking up employment as interns or at higher education and research institutions in the area of research or experimental development. Upon completing their training or studies in Lithuania, they are allowed to stay in the country for a further period of 6 months.

Approval of the Action Plan for the Implementation of Aliens' Integration Policy 2015-2017. The Plan provides for integration measures applicable to all aliens, both EU citizens and third-country nationals.

Introduction of more stringent requirements aiming at reducing the potential for abuse of the residence permit issue system (introduction of the requirement to possess suitable residential premises, stipulation of the concept of a fictitious enterprise, increase of penalties for the provision of false data, etc.) and **the asylum system** (stipulation of criteria for determining the risk of an alien's absconding in order to avoid return to a foreign state or expulsion from the Republic of Lithuania and the necessity of his detention on this ground) and **stipulation of the principle that an asylum applicant may be detained only to identify the grounds underlying his application for asylum**, where the information cannot be obtained without detaining the asylum applicant.

About EMN

The European Migration Network (EMN) is a network comprising the European Commission, 27 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