

INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR MIGRATION
EUROPEAN MIGRATION NETWORK

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS IN LITHUANIA

2012



INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR MIGRATION
EUROPEAN MIGRATION NETWORK

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS IN LITHUANIA

VILNIUS, 2012

This research was conducted under the European Migration Network (EMN) Work Programme for the year 2012.

EMN is a network composed of migration and asylum experts from EU Member States, Norway and the European Commission. Its main objective is to meet the information needs of Community institutions and of Member States' authorities by providing up-to-date, objective, reliable and comparable information on migration and asylum, with a view to supporting policy making in the European Union in these areas.

International organization for migration (IOM) Vilnius office was designated by the Lithuanian Government to represent Lithuania in the EMN and to act as the National Information Center. (NCP).

More information about EMN can be found at www.emn.europa.eu.

More information about the Lithuanian EMN NCP can be found at www.emn.lt.

For newest information on migration statistics look here www.emn.123.lt.

Publication of this research received funding from the European Commission and the Government of the Republic of Lithuania.

© International organization for migration (IOM) and European migration network (EMN)

Opinions expressed in the study do not necessarily reflect the views of the International Organization for Migration (IOM), European Commission (EC) or the Government of Lithuania.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or used for commercial purposes without a written permission of IOM Vilnius Office.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abbreviations	4
1. Introduction	10
1.1 Aim and goals of the Study	11
1.2 Methodology and sources of information	11
1.3 Glossary of Terms	12
2. Lithuanian Education System and International Students	14
2.1 Lithuanian Higher Education System	14
2.2 Attracting International Students	17
2.2.1 Policy and Priorities of the Lithuanian Government	17
2.2.2. Recruitment Measures used by Universities	20
2.2.3 Assessment of Measures: Student Survey	22
2.3. Foreign Students in Lithuania: key trends.....	24
3. Entry and Stay: Procedures and Problems	31
3.1. Before Arriving.....	31
3.2. Arrival	32
3.3 Stay.....	38
3.3.1 Replacing Temporary Residence Permit	38
3.3.2. Working During Studies	39
3.3.3. Family Reunion	40
3.3.4. After the Graduation	40
3.3.5. Integration	41
3.4. Misuse of the ‘Student Route’	43
4. International Cooperation	47
5. Impact of International Students	49
List of References	51

Abbreviations

CQAHE	Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education
EC	European Commission
EESF	Education Exchanges Support Foundation
EHU	European Humanities University
EMN	European migration network
EU	European Union
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
KTU	Kaunas University of Technology
LCC	LCC International University
LUHS	Lithuanian University of Health Science
MD	Migration department under the Ministry of the Interior
MES	Ministry of Education and Science
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Lithuania
MOI	Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Lithuania
MRU	Mykolas Romeris University
PRP	Permanent residence permit
VG TU	Vilnius Gediminas Technical University
VU	Vilnius University
TRP	Temporary residence permit
1 EUR	3,4528 LTL

Executive Summary

International students attract a lot of attention across the globe. They constitute a group of migrants that does not provoke resistance in receiving societies and are generally viewed positively. States compete to attract the brightest students, create favorable conditions for their arrival and stay. Experts agree that international students not only provide economic benefits (by paying tuition fees), but also enrich the study process and contribute to the establishment of close business ties between sending and receiving communities. Yet despite the importance of this topic, this specific group of migrants was not properly researched in Lithuania.

This study analyses policy and measures adopted by Lithuania to attract international students, identifies emerging challenges, possible cases of abuse, and aims to evaluate the impact that students exert now and can exert in the future on evolution of universities as well as on society and education. The study has been carried out under the guidelines developed by the European Migration Network. Researchers applied several research methodologies: analysis of statistical data and legal basis, sociological research of international students, interviews with civil servants and university representatives, and online survey of Lithuanian visa services.

Main trends

There are around 3,200 foreign students (both - from EU and non EU nationals) studying in Lithuania. Within the general immigration context, international students amount to 10-15% of all arriving third country nationals or around 2% of all students. The number of third country nationals enrolling in full-time study programme is one half of that: in 2011-2012 academic year, there were 1,600 non-EU nationals enrolled in full-time study programme in Lithuania. In comparison to other EU countries, this percentage is low. The Ministry of Education and Science seeks to increase the number of foreign students 5-6-fold, that is, to increase the number of foreign students to 15,000-20,000 per year.

More than 70% of international students come from the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). The main countries are – Belarus, Russia, Ukraine, a relatively large proportion of international students also come from Azerbaidjan and Moldova. Majority of students from CIS countries enroll in the European Humanitarian University (EHU) and LCC. Almost every tenth foreign student comes from the Middle East (Israel, Lebanon) - they largely enroll in Medicine programme at the Lithuanian University of Health Sciences (LMHS). LMHS example demonstrates that efforts of a single university,

combined with quality studies, can significantly influence the number of arriving students. Lithuania could continue leveraging this area of studies to attract students.

Lithuania has several study areas that attract a relatively large proportion of international students. These include medical sciences (18%), business (18%) and a specific area of studies in EHU university – arts (11%). When compared with average EU rate, this is a rather high percentage. However, Lithuania lags behind in the area of technical sciences. Only 3% of international students enroll in technical science subjects. Besides, other study areas, where Lithuania has a high competitive advantage (e.g. biochemistry, lasers) are neglected. It is important to encourage and extend the numbers of international students enrolling in study widely recognized and prized areas, but one should also raise awareness and work towards promoting the areas, where Lithuania has high potential.

Obstacles and measures to attract international students

The Lithuanian Government has passed two programmes for promotion of internationalization of higher education (years 2008-2010 and years 2011-2012), which aim to encourage the flow of international students to Lithuania. Former Soviet states and rapidly developing Asian states were designated as priority regions. Although it is too early to evaluate the impact of the national programmes, they constitute important political documents, expressing a clear political support for attracting international students.

The main obstacles to internationalization are: fragmentation/dispersal of educational institutions and human capital (there are 47 higher education institutions), there are no clear/priority areas, where Lithuania would hold an undisputed lead, there is a meager number of (study) programmes in foreign languages (especially of joint programmes), there is a lack of information about studies.

On the national level, international students attracted the attention of policy-makers rather recently. Lithuania implements these **main measures for attracting students:** promotion of studies abroad, increasing the number of programmes in foreign languages, developing international cooperation, improving procedures for recognizing qualifications acquired abroad, supporting most talented foreign students (scholarships and loans), participating in international study fairs. An important role is also played by factors like active work of embassy personnel in the countries of destination, informal students' networks, communities of foreign students within the country.

One of the measures to attract students is international cooperation. **Lithuania has signed cooperation agreements or agreements in the areas of education, research and technology with 19 non-EU states**, yet these constitute political documents (declarations) of rather general nature. Cooperation among higher education institutions, especially in developing joint study programmes also happens very slowly. Up to 2011, there were only five joint study programmes registered in Lithuania. Development of these programmes continues to be encouraged and supported, so their number should increase in the coming years and, it is likely, that the number of arriving students shall also increase.

Specific number of students mostly depends on efforts of universities themselves and quality of studies. The most active universities have international relations divisions, taking care of international students, assisting them in resolving migration issues and working on attracting new students. Universities focus a lot on individual work with

potential students, actively advertise online, participate in study fairs/exhibitions abroad (this activity is also supported by the Ministry of Education and Science), waive tuition fees for most talented students. Several universities use agents to attract students or conduct tests abroad.

When choosing Lithuania, students are primarily concerned with whether a diploma is recognized within the EU as well as reputation of a specific university and study area. Other factors (standards of living, linguistic/cultural proximity, social ties) are not very important.

Although promotion of internationalization and attracting foreign students are declared to be priority goals in the programme, **within the context of migration policy, students are not identified as a priority group. There is also lack of intra-institutional cooperation.**

Arrival procedures and living in Lithuania

International students come to Lithuania with multi-entry national visa or with a temporary residence permit (TRP). In practice, universities usually advise students to apply for national multi-entry visa, because in this case a student can come faster (visa is issued no later than in 15 days, TRP is issued but up to 6 months), also, this way state institutions don't come under extra burden. However, students holding TRP acquire more rights, for example, they are considered to be Lithuanian residents, the first year of study is counted towards the period of residence in Lithuania (in case if a student would like to apply for a permanent residence permit later).

In 2011, the entry procedures for international students were simplified. Under the current legislation, all students were permitted to come with national, multi-entry visas and apply for TRP during the first year of studies. This amendment expedited arrival procedure for students.

When issuing a TRP to students, Lithuania requests additional documents, which are not foreseen in the Student Directive, although, according to experts, they are directly related to the requirements of the Directive. Apart from general and special conditions listed in the Directive, Lithuania demands students to prove that they will have proper living premises (it is argued that this requirement is related to have sufficient funds to cover the costs of living) and that inviting institution shall cover the costs of expulsion, if a student is to violate the conditions for lawful stay (this requirement applies to higher education institutions, not a student).

Data from student survey indicates that students evaluate immigration procedures as satisfactory (6,57 points out of 10). The students indicated the following key obstacles: translation of documents to Lithuanian and legalization of the translation, the requirement to have living premises (especially when documents for TRP are to be submitted in the summer, while students are away) as well as lack of information about arrival and stay conditions in foreign languages. Students are especially sensitive to the procedure of replacing TRP. TRP must be replaced every year, using the same procedure – no exceptions are applied. Students and university representatives indicate that both - financial and administrative costs for complying with this requirement are very

high. Possibility to issue TRP for a longer period would be very welcomed by universities as well as students.

Although the law states that students can work from the second year of studies up to 20 hours per week, **in practice, students' work is exception rather than a rule. The requirement to obtain a work permit is very cumbersome**, it hardly depends on a student. According to the research data, as many as 90% of students would like to work. University representatives' views on possibility to work for students diverged. Draft proposals to allow students' work in education research institutions without a work permit are met positively.

Members of students' families can come to reside in Lithuania only in very exceptional cases. Around 40% of surveyed students have indicated that it poses a problem for them. It is especially true for the third study cycle students who are older and often already have created a family. So when it comes to deciding where to study, especially for doctoral students, the issue of family reunification is very important. It is suggested to consider the possibility to simplify the conditions for family reunification for this group (1% of international students).

Students cannot stay in Lithuania after graduation, except when changing the grounds for their arrival to alternative ones. Research data shows that around 50% of students would consider the possibility of staying in Lithuania after studies. University representatives view positively the draft proposal to allow students stay for at least 3 months after graduation to find a job. One should reflect whether such legal regulation could be applied in regards to those who graduate with distinction or students enrolled in specialty programmes, in the fields where Lithuania experiences labor shortage.

Lithuania does not have national student integration programme. Some, most essential integration measures are implemented by universities (language courses in the first and second year of studies), isolated integration measures are also provided by non-governmental organizations, however, these are not sustainable, short-term measures rather than comprehensive ones. Only 13% of the surveyed students feel they are well integrated in Lithuania. Student integration and well-being in Lithuania are important factors determining whether a student will remain in Lithuania/university, whether (s)he will recommend it to friends.

Abuse of the 'Study' route

Experts notice that mechanisms allowing to evaluate international student's education, motivation, and readiness to study could be improved. Primary screening procedures are carried out by universities. Candidates are requested to submit diploma, a document confirming the knowledge of a language, pay tuition fee, and pass (if requires) specialized tests (for architecture, medicine and so on). However, in many cases, universities communicate with students only indirectly (online) and are not always able to assess students' real motivation and goals.

In most cases, the instances of abuse are recorded before a student comes to Lithuania, in Lithuanian visa services (the second part of screening). Most often Asian and African nationals seek to obtain multi-entry national visa for the purpose of studies, although there are doubts on whether they want/can study. According to data of

the Lithuanian embassy in Cairo, around 30-35% applications to issue a national visa on the grounds of studies are turned down. The reasons for turning down an application vary, for example, students don't speak the language of instruction, does not know anything about a university/Lithuania, does not have sufficient funds and so on.

In Lithuania, the numbers of recorded cases of abuse are rare. If a student is expelled from university, the university is obliged to inform about such cases the Migration Department, which immediately cancels the multi-entry national visa or TRP. In a year, an average of 100 TRPs issued on the ground of studies are cancelled. The most common situations involve students who lacks funds to continue their education or suffer from poor academic performance and are expelled from university.

The impact of international students

There were no detailed studies evaluating the impact of international students conducted in Lithuania, which makes it difficult to assess the possible impact of students. Summarizing available information, one can claim that the impact is multi-faceted, mostly positive. First of all, there are changes in educational area: foreign students make the study process more diverse, students acquire international competencies, also, lecturers' competences are improved. Secondly, foreign students also provide economic benefits: they pay full tuition fee, buy services and goods in Lithuania (they spend an average of 1,200 Lt/month on living expenses); they enhance universities' economic clout.

Within the context of immigration policy, international students are one of the most promising groups. They are young, well-educated, proactive, familiar with local culture, know the language, and cultivate social ties. When thinking about attracting immigrants, international students could be singled out as priority target.

1. Introduction

International students continue to draw a lot of attention worldwide due to two main reasons. Firstly, attracting foreign students is considered to be a brain gain: Students from abroad not only provide economic benefits (they pay for education), but also enrich the study process in itself. They come from background different than those of local students, and as a result can approach problem-solving differently. Besides, when working alongside people of different nationalities, students acquire inter-cultural communication competences. Secondly, international students is a rather specific group of migrants: those who come to study are young, during study period they gain a degree recognized within the country, become familiar with the local culture, learn the language, establish social connections. They also often have some working experience in the country and therefore are more integrated than other groups of migrants (for example, workers).

Arrival of students from non-EU countries is also considered to be one of the priority areas. EU aspires to position Europe globally as a provider of high quality education and to attract more international students to EU Member States. The European Commission has passed Council Directive (2004/114/EC) of 13 December 2004 on the Conditions of admission of third-country nationals for the purposes of studies, pupil exchange, unremunerated training or voluntary service (the Student Directive). The purpose of the directive is to facilitate and harmonize procedures for arrival and stay of non-EU students in EU Member States.

Lithuania also aspires to attract international students to study in Lithuania. The Government of the Republic of Lithuania has passed programmes encouraging internationalization of higher education, which – among other goals – aim to encourage entry of aliens, including non-EU Member States students, to Lithuania for study purposes.

This study is designed to introduce reader to the situation in Lithuania. The study covers the following topics:

- analysis of international student traffic (how many students arrive, from which countries, to which universities, and which study subjects they choose);
- Policy and measures adopted by the Lithuanian Government and specific universities to attract international students;
- Questions related to entry, stay, work procedures and opportunities to stay after the studies;
- Assessment of possible misuse of the ‘student route’;

The study is intended for policy decision-makers working in the areas of migration and

higher education. We hope that information provided here will contribute to a constructive discussion and development of Lithuanian policy with regards to international students.

1.1 Aim and goals of the Study

The aim of this study is to provide an overview of Lithuanian immigration policy in regards to international students, measures put forward to attract these students, emerging problems as well as assess possible misuse of entry for reasons of study. The study is mostly focused on migration issues, eschewing other, for example, educational topics.

The goals of the Study:

- introduce Lithuanian policy and measures for attracting international students;
- provide key statistical data about international students, who enter to enroll in a full study program in Lithuania;
- review entry procedures for these students, stay and work requirements they are subject to, and challenges they face;
- assess possible misuse of entry for purposes of study;
- assess possible impact of the international students.

The Study defines international students as students from non EU States, who enter to study at higher educational establishment (university) registered and operating in Lithuania, under the programme approved by the higher education institution¹ (therein below – **international students**).

1.2 Methodology and sources of information

Researchers have used variety of data sources and combined several research methods in developing this study. In preparing this study, an effort has been made to include all interested groups, analyze heterogeneous information and provide a wide range of opinions. The following research methods have been used:

1. Analysis of the legal basis. Analysis of Lithuanian and EU legislation regulating entry, stay, and work of international students as well as analysis of other documents related to international component of higher education and international students' studies.

2. Analysis of statistical data

3. Expert interviews

- a. **Interviews with employees responsible for attracting, admitting and organizing studies of international students in 6 universities²** which enrol the largest number of international students. The goal of these interviews/ meetings

¹ This Study omits students who enter Lithuania under exchange programs or through other exchanges and stay in Lithuania up to one year; students who enter to study at a college; also, unpaid interns and pupils, who enter an educational establishment under secondary education programme.

² Meetings with staff members of Vilnius University (VU), Vilnius Gediminas Technical University (VGTU), Mykolas Riomeris University (MRU), Lithuanian University of Health Sciences (LUHS), Kaunas Technological University (KTU), LCC International university (LCC), and European Humanitarian University (EHU).

(there was a total of 7) was to become familiar with universities' strategies and implemented policy in regards of such students and identify practical challenges that are faced by arriving students and universities;

- b. Interviews with civil servants** (in total - 5) responsible for the development and implementation of education and migration policies. The purpose of the interviews/meetings was to identify key policy provisions and practical challenges faced by arriving students³.

4. Internet survey. A special questionnaire distributed to diplomatic missions of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Lithuania in countries⁴, from where most international students are coming. The purpose of the questionnaire was to assess the scale of misuse of the study route, ways and problems.

5. Sociological, semi-structured survey. Based on sampling method selection, 97 international students from 7 universities were surveyed. The purpose was to become familiar with students' perceptions and perspective on problems. The survey was commissioned by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and carried out by JSC 'Socialinės informacijos centras' (Social Information Center).

6. Analysis of secondary sources.

This study has been prepared under the initiative of the European Migration Network (EMN), in accordance with general specifications developed and approved by experts of the network. 26 EU States⁵ and Norway prepare the national studies following the same methodological guidelines. Studies prepared by the Member States later are summarized and presented in a common European study. The Lithuanian study was carried out from March to September, 2012.

1.3 Glossary of Terms

International student – third country national who enters to study at a higher educational institution (university) registered and operating in Lithuania under approved study programme.

Internationalization of studies – inclusion, development, and support of international and global dimensions in studies and support for Lithuanian language (Baltic language) centers abroad, representation of Lithuanian higher education on an international level.

National multi-entry visa – is visa issued to an alien whose purpose for entering Lithuania is a long-term stay in the Republic of Lithuania.

Temporary residence permit – document confirming alien's right to reside temporarily within the Republic of Lithuania during the indicated period of time.

Joint study programme - study programme implemented jointly by no less than two

³ Meetings with Education Exchanges Support Foundation (EESF), charged with promoting Lithuanian higher education abroad and implementing other activities for promoting internationalization, Mobility division of the Ministry of Education and Science, responsible for development and implementation of the national internationalization policy, Migration Department (MD) under the Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Lithuania (MD), responsible for issuing and extending temporary residence permits, Vilnius county Police headquarters Migration Council (PMC), responsible for collecting applications to issue TRP and extension/renewal of TRP.

⁴ Questionnaire was distributed via the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Lithuania to visa services in Belarus, Russia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan, Israel, India and Egypt.

⁵ Denmark does not participate in the European Migration Network.

higher education institutions, as a rule from different countries, upon graduation from the programme a joint qualification degree is awarded.

Visa service – diplomatic mission or consular post of the republic of Lithuania.

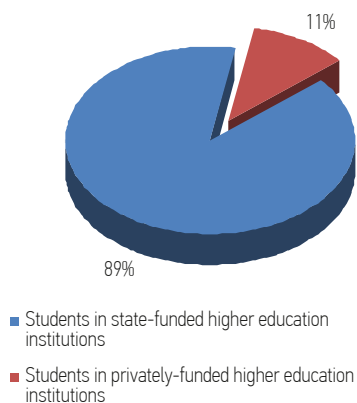
2. Lithuanian Education System and International Students

2.1 Lithuanian Higher Education System

There are **47 higher education institutions** registered in Lithuania: 23 universities and 24 colleges. In comparison to other EU countries (Latvia, Estonia, Poland, Denmark), it is a very big number. Foreign experts have noted the multitude of Lithuanian educational and study institutions which leads to diffusion of educational and financial potential⁶.

In 2012, there were 27 **state-funded** higher educational institutions operating in Lithuania (14 universities and 13 colleges) and 20 **privately-funded** higher educational institutions (9 universities and 11 colleges). In 2011/2012 academic year, 89% of students were enrolled in state-funded higher educational institutions, while 11% were enrolled in privately-funded ones.

Chart 1: *Lithuanian students enrolled in privately- and state-funded higher education institutions in academic year 2011/2012*

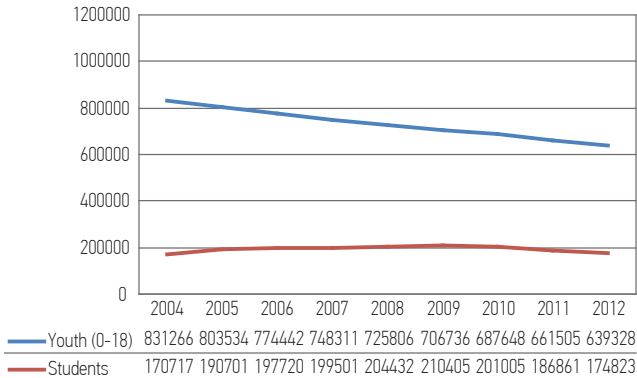


Source: the Department of Statistics

⁶ Recommendations on optimization of the Lithuanian university network are prepared by the Working group convened on order No. 129 of the Prime Minister of the Republic of Lithuania, dated 31 May, 2011 <http://www.smm.lt/smt/siulymai/gaires.pdf>.

Demographic and migration processes result in a decreasing number of young people in Lithuania as well as falling number of people enrolled in higher educational institutions⁷.

Chart 2: *Change in the number of Lithuanian students and young people (0–18) in 2004 – 2012*

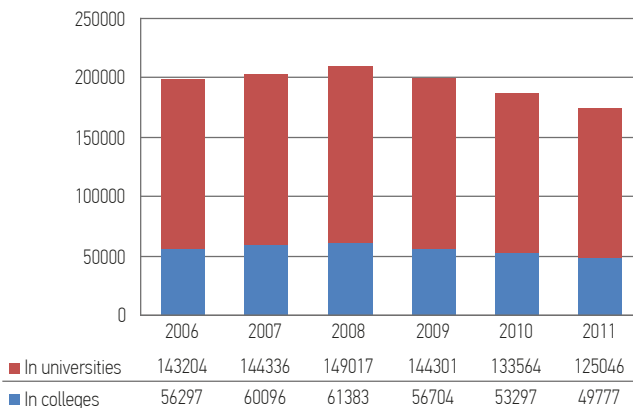


Source: the Department of Statistics

On the basis of the provided chart, one can see a clear downward trend in the number of young people and students. Eurostat's predictions indicate that falling population (including young people) trend will prevail in Lithuania in the future as well. The experts point out that attracting international students might be one of the measures helping to keep a stable number of students.

Lithuanian higher educational institutions implement two types of study programmes: **university⁸** and **college**.

Chart 3: *The Number of Students in Lithuanian Higher Educational Institutions in 2006 – 2011*



Source: the Department of Statistics

⁷ Recommendations on optimization of the Lithuanian university network are prepared by the Working group convened on order No. 129 of the Prime Minister of the Republic of Lithuania, dated 31 May, 2011.

⁸ University type higher education institutions can be called universities, academies, seminaries.

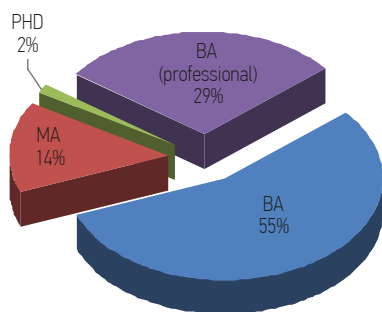
There are three study cycles in higher educational institutions:

- First cycle study (Bachelor's degree, 3-4 years, 180-240 credits⁹);
- Second cycle study (Master's degree¹⁰, no less than one year and 60 credits);
- Third cycle study (Doctor's degree¹¹).

Universities can confer degrees of all cycles. Colleges can only implement first cycle studies and confer professional Bachelor's degree. Studies in colleges last 3 - 3,5 years.

Studies in Lithuanian higher educational institutions are conducted under study programmes **granting a degree** and study programmes **not granting a degree**. Upon graduating from a study programme granting a degree, a professional Bachelor's, Bachelor's, Master's or Doctor's degree is attained. Study programmes not granting a degree are designated to acquire a qualification or independently prepare a student for practical activities (for example, medical residency). Upon graduating from a programme not granting a degree, a qualification is attained (for example, teacher or doctor).

Chart 4: Distribution of Lithuanian Students according to Study Cycles in academic year 2011/2012



Source: the Department of Statistics (BA – Bachelor's, MA – Master's, PHD – Doctor's)

The Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania guarantees free education at state-funded higher education institutions for citizens who achieve good academic results. In 2011, the Constitutional Court explained that the State covers the costs of Lithuanian residents “studying well”¹² at state-funded higher education institutions, while at non-state-funded ones this is done with consideration of the State's needs¹³. It means that school graduates with best exam grades are awarded state-financed bursaries. After the first and later years of study, rotation takes place¹⁴. In 2011, the State financed the studies of almost 19 thousand first-year students. Other students have to cover the costs of studies themselves. The costs of studies are established by each higher educational institution. To

⁹ During one study year, 1,600 hours correspond to 60 credits.

¹⁰ In Lithuania, that is the Master's, Arts or Theology Licentiate degree.

¹¹ There are two types of doctoral studies in Lithuania: science doctoral studies and arts doctoral studies.

¹² The Constitutional Court has established that students who achieve good academic results are those, whose grade average for study subjects during a semester is not less than grade “eight”, within the 10 point grading range.

¹³ http://www.lrkt.lt/dokumentai/2011/2011-12-22_santrauka.pdf.

¹⁴ Student, whose weighted average grade for a given period of time is 20% lower than average grade of all students in the same year, at the same study programme at University for the same period of time, forfeits state-funded waiver studies.

cover the costs of such studies students can obtain a bank loan guaranteed by the State. In total, the Government's expenditure on higher education amounts to around 1% of the GDP (approx. 1 billion Litass). **International students are expected to cover the costs of studies in Lithuania by themselves**, that is, their studies are not covered by the state budget funds, except the cases when they are awarded a stipend or studies-related pay out.

In the recent years, Lithuanian education system has undergone big changes: way of financing studies has been changed (the principle of "study basket" was introduced), decision-makers are tackling the issue of consolidating the network of higher educational institutions. Demographic, globalization, and migration processes already now demand from Lithuania and its higher education institutions to pay ever more attention to promotion of internationalization and the need to attract international students, and this will continue to be the case in the future.

2.2 Attracting International Students

2.2.1 Policy and Priorities of the Lithuanian Government

Entry of international students is both EU and national priority. On December 13, 2004, the Council of the EU has passed Council directive (2004/114/EC) on the conditions of admission of third-country nationals for the purposes of studies, pupil exchange, unremunerated training or voluntary service (the Student Directive¹⁵) aiming to harmonize entry, stay and working during studies conditions for international students as well as increase awareness about the requirements for arrival. **In transposing the directive, Lithuania has chosen the minimal permitted level of harmonization, that is, transposed only provision of the Student directive related to international students.** For other groups (pupils, interns, volunteers) national regulation was left in force.

Lithuania, like other EU states, considers attracting internationals students to be one of its priorities. The Ministry of Education and Science aims to increase the number of international students in the country and turn education into a service, while Lithuania would become the center of attraction for foreign students.

Although isolated universities (for example, LUHS, LCC, VGTU) work with international students since the beginning of independence, on the state level, interest to Lithuania's internationalization and international students became evident fairly recently.

The Government of Lithuania has passed two national **programmes for promoting internationalization of the higher education**: 2008-2010¹⁶ programme and 2011-2012¹⁷ programme. Although these programmes are intended to increase internationalization, the main emphasis continues to be put still on support of Lithuanian language (Baltic studies) centers abroad, also, provision of support to emigrated Lithuanian citizens, promotion of students' and lecturers' mobility, and preservation of relations with global Lithuanian researchers. The need to attract foreign students is emphasised less.

15 Official Journal L 375 , 23/12/2004 P. 0012 – 0018.

16 State Gazette, 2008, Nr. 85-3384.

17 State Gazette, 2011, Nr. 148-6955.

The programmes name these **key factors limiting internationalization and hindering arrival of international students**:

- Internationalization of Lithuanian higher education is inhibited by poor options to select **study programmes in foreign languages and relatively small number of lecturers' teaching in foreign language**;
- In Lithuania, **joint study programmes and joint qualification degrees are off to a slow start**, while higher educational institutions fail to make use of various opportunities provided by higher education programmes supported by the European Commission. This is considered to be a very big drawback when it comes to internationalization of Lithuanian higher education system;
- **There is a shortage of information about available studies in foreign languages**;

Both programmes include **specific measures aimed at tackling these obstacles and encourage entry of foreign students** as well as increase internationalization of Lithuanian higher education:

- **Establishment of the support system for international students** (creation of the system for awarding stipends and bank loans) in order to attract the brightest students from abroad;
- **Eliminating obstacles for arriving students**. Efforts are made to ensure that international students are issued visas and residence and working permits with minimal bureaucratic obstacles;
- **Creation of information system about opportunities for study in Lithuania**. Efforts are made to promote higher education as a service;
- **Development of joint study programmes** that could be attended by international students;
- **Creation and improvement of the system for assessing and recognizing qualifications**;
- **Signing and implementing international agreements with foreign states**.

The above-mentioned measures are implemented by the Ministry of Education and Science via Education Exchanges Support Foundation (EESF). In the table below one can see the review of the implementation of measures for year 2011 and the first half of 2012.

Table 1: *Implementation of measures defined in the programme for promotion of internalization of the higher education*

Measure	Implementation
Foreign students' support system	In 2011, the Government passed the decision on awarding of support to foreigners enrolled in continuous second cycle studies ¹⁸ . Foreigners are awarded stipends (10 basic social payouts amounting to 1,300 LTL per month) and payouts to cover the costs of studies. In 2011, 8 stipends were awarded (4 to both - Ukrainian and Azerbaijani citizens) and 4 study payouts (Ukrainian citizens). In 2012, there were 12 stipends awarded (3 for citizens of each country - Ukraine, Belarus, Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan) and 4 payouts (Ukrainian citizens).
Lowering entry barriers	In 2011, entry procedure for students coming from third countries was facilitated. They were given an opportunity to enter and stay in Lithuania up to one year with multiple-entry national visas. One can apply for temporary residence permit while already within the country. In 2011, a working group was convened, which submitted proposals to amend the <i>Law on the legal status of aliens</i> and allow students from the third countries to remain in Lithuania 3 months after the graduation with a purpose of looking for a job. So far, the proposals are not included into the Law.
Creation of information system	An integrated online website www.studyinlithuania.lt is under development; it will provide necessary information about studies and entry requirements in a way accessible to students. Responsible institutions participated in higher education promotion fairs (together with universities) in Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Ukraine, United Kingdom, and Ireland. A set of marketing collaterals was created: publications introducing Lithuanian higher education studies, promotional video ¹⁹ .
Development of joint study programmes	Competition in development of joint study programmes has been announced. So far, there were 5 joint study programmes registered in Lithuania (2 in VU, 2 in MRU, 1 in Social studies college).

Priority regions. Both programs have identified priority regions. Differently from the first programme, which included a lot of priority countries, the second programme includes a much narrower list of countries. The programme identified the following regions to be targeted in order to attract international students:

- **former Soviet republics** - due to economic and cultural ties and Russian language, spoken by the majority of Lithuanian inhabitants, which makes it easier for newly arriving students to adjust;
- **rapidly developing Asian countries.** The national programme does not mention specific countries nor the reasons.

Presence of state measures to promote arrival of international students is positively viewed by both universities and students. Creation of all inclusive online website, cooperation with universities, and general promotion of Lithuania during fairs provides added value.

However, the programmes fail to formulate clear, long-term goals, they lack comprehensive strategy and vision of the future. For example, it is not clear from

¹⁹ <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=smmemPzj4Kk>

looking at the programme in which areas Lithuania aspires to become center of excellence, why the State works to attract more foreign students, what would be the impact of such policy on Lithuanian society and education, or how the State plans to leverage the potential of students (if international students are given support, why aren't they allowed to remain in Lithuania after the studies) and so on.

The experts also concluded that Lithuania introduces itself as a member of the EU, but makes only half-hearted attempts at emphasizing its unique geographic location and ties to neighboring countries²⁰. Lithuania is being presented as a country whose diploma is recognized within the EU and as state where it is cheap to study rather than being presented as the state with unique historical, geographic, and economic experience. **Too little emphasis is given to areas, where Lithuania could boast high achievements or advantages (for example, high quality medical, technical studies).**

One should evaluate carefully the decision to narrow down the list of priority regions/states. International research and experience of other countries show that exclusive focus on students of one group of countries may be controversial and even limit internationalization. Internationalization increases as a result of very diverse body of students entering country rather than by focusing on specific regions/states. Of course, with resources being limited, such geographic focus is understandable. However, in the future, it should be expanded rather than narrowed down. More mixed body of students serves to promote arrival of other students.

To achieve the goals formulated in the programme, close intra-institutional cooperation is needed. Since promotion of internationalization is one of the priorities identified by the Government, more active involvement (e.g. a common working group) of other important ministries (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, of the Interior, Social Protection and Labour) should be strengthened. Involvement of university communities could significantly contribute towards promotion of internationalization in Lithuania.

Despite all the mentioned shortcomings, the programmes are important political documents expressing a clear support favouring the arrival of international students.

2.2.2. Recruitment Measures used by Universities

The universities view positively the national policy on promotion of internationalization and attracting students and emphasize that State's political support is important. One of the most frequently discussed measures is participation in international higher education promotion fairs sponsored by the State. **Universities view the national programme only as an additional measure and in principle concentrate on measures they implement independently.**

Representatives of universities named **several key measures** that help to attract students:

- **International relations divisions.** All universities have international relations divisions or a responsible individual managing international students. In some universities, a portion of study fees collected from international students are earmarked for

²⁰ Analysis and study of international higher education promotion campaigns. Analysis of internationalization of higher education in five foreign countries and Lithuania.

international relations division. Collected funds are used to finance various measures to promote universities and attract students;

- **Online advertising.** All universities have online section for foreign students. It proved to be an effective channel for disseminating information. It is cheap and at the same time can reach many users. However, university representatives notice that information found online is not trusted equally in different countries;
- **Participation in study fairs/exhibitions abroad.** Majority of universities participate in various events for promotion of higher education and recruiting potential students. So far, effectiveness of fairs as a channel to attract students is not clear, because universities have only limited experience participating in them;
- **Recommendations of actual students.** Many university representatives notice that alumni recommendation is one of the most effective recruitment methods. Often times, students returning home recommend a university to friends, acquaintances thus creating an implied network. Potential students find information disseminated through students to be more reliable;
- **Diplomatic missions of Lithuania.** This is a rather effective measure, although a lot depends on how active embassy employees are. The work of Lithuanian embassy in Baku was given especially positive reviews;
- **Support provided by universities.** All universities allocate own funds to waive study fees to several, most talented students.

Table 2: *The number of international students whose study fees were waived in 2011-2012*

	VU	MRU	KTU	VG TU	LUHS	EHU	LCC
Number of international students	155	55	49	100	210	687	238
Study fee waivers awarded	5	2	4	1	2	25% don't pay for studies	Discounts for students from target countries (CIS)

Certain universities also invoke other, more specific recruitment measures:

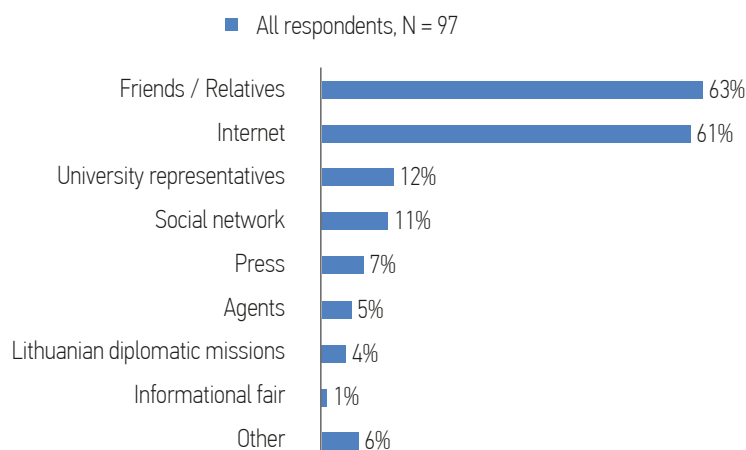
- **Hiring of agents.** Two among the surveyed universities use agents, that is they have a responsible person in a foreign country who engages in student recruitment, administers enrollment tests and so on. Activities of agents are viewed positively. Their services are used in countries, from where a big number of students come to attend a given university. Agents services are being used in Israel, Korea, India;
- **Individual communication with a student.** Staff members of several universities have indicated that the first contact with a student is especially important. It is imperative to react quickly to such inquiries (“to capture students interest”). This often determines whether student will come or not. Other universities (for example, LCC) have lists of potential students, maintain ties with them and their parents, send news updates, relevant, study-related information;

- **Open door day.** EHU organizes open door day, during which students visit the university and are provided with information about studies.

2.2.3 Assessment of Measures: Student Survey

Students also indirectly assessed the measures currently employed. They were asked how they found out about studies in Lithuania. Majority of students obtained the information about studies in Lithuania from friends who studied/study in Lithuania (63% of respondents), found it online (61% of respondents) or from university representatives (12% of respondents).

Chart 5: Sources of information about studies/university



Source: data from the student survey

Only a very small share of students obtained information through official channels, e.g. during informational fair²¹ (1% of respondents) or through Lithuanian diplomatic missions (4% of respondents). **The survey shows that the biggest priority - at least in the short run - should be creation of online website representing all universities.** In the longer term, it is important to improve the quality of studies and conduct research focused on assessing students satisfaction with studies and life in Lithuania.

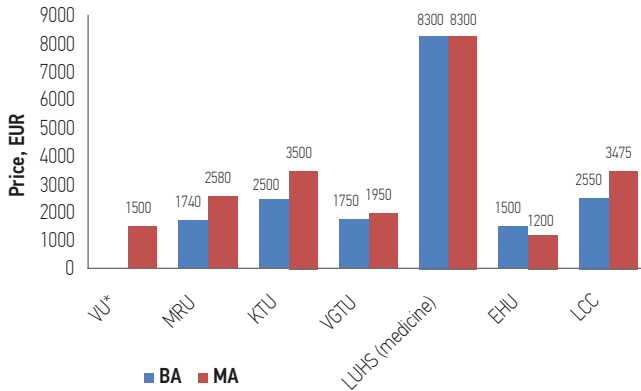
If one wants to attract international students, it is crucial to identify reasons that lead students to choose Lithuania. These specific factors should be emphasized when promoting Lithuania during informational events. University representatives indicated the following **major reasons for choosing Lithuania:**

- **Lithuania EU Member State and its diplomas are recognised in EU.** This is one of the most important reasons leading international students to choose studies in Lithuania. After graduating from first cycle studies, they are free to pursue studies in other EU countries and later find employment;

²¹ Participation in fairs began to be managed on the national level only since 2011, so it is premature to judge its effectiveness.

- **Quality of Studies;**
- **Easy licensing procedure upon graduation²²;**
- **Country/city specific.** Lithuania is a small country with good infrastructure.
- **Relatively low costs of studies and inexpensive costs of living.**

Chart 6: Cost of studies per year (in Euros) in different universities in 2011 academic year



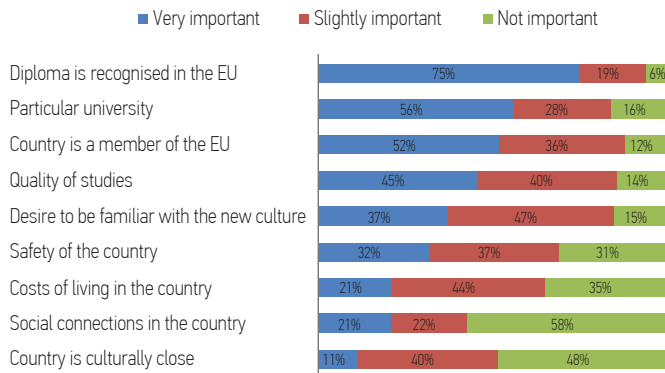
Source: Universities data. *VU does not have BA studies programme

Similar reasons were provided by students as well. They chose Lithuania:

- for opportunity to obtain higher education **diploma recognized throughout the EU**. This is important, since a lot of plan to continue their studies or seek employment in EU states. On the other hand, EU diplomas in some countries are given preference in comparison to diplomas from other states;
- for a **specific university** (quality of studies).

I am only interested in a diploma and university. Gaining a diploma in Lithuania enables me to work in Europe, whereas before, for example, I studied in China, where things are more complicated, there I would also have to pass a language test and so on." (LUHS student, Pakistan),
 „Graduating from VGTU university allows me to work in Turkey. Of course, EU is the most important thing, because if I want to work in the EU, I need to have EU diploma" (VGTU student, Turkey).
 „Back in Turkey, I have seen a list of EU universities where we can study. For example, if one was to graduate from a university in Texas, it would not be recognized in Turkey, since the diploma will not be legally valid" (VGTU student, Turkey).

²² This reason is relevant for medical students who have an opportunity to pass licensing exams and acquire the right to practice medicine in all countries recognizing Lithuanian university programmes (EU, USA, Lebanon, Israel, Turkey and so on)

Chart 7: Reasons for choosing Lithuania

Percentages are calculated from the total sample, N=97.

Source: data from the student survey

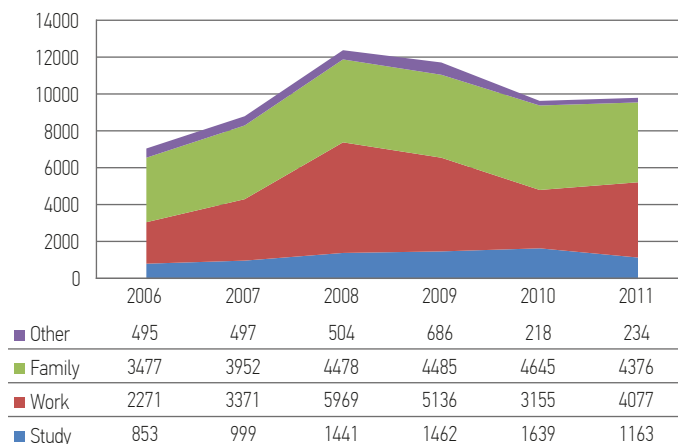
It is interesting to note that half of the students find it irrelevant whether a country is culturally close, even though this specific reason is identified as the guiding principle for choosing priority countries in the national programme. Also, every third student is not interested in costs of living in the country.

2.3. Foreign Students in Lithuania: key trends

In the general immigration context, students constitute around 10-15% of all arriving third country nationals.

Chart 8: Temporary residence permits (TRP) issued in 2006-2011 by grounds for issuance*

*Since non-EU students are permitted to enter with both - national visas, and with TRP, numbers provided in the chart do not necessarily coincide with actual numbers of students.

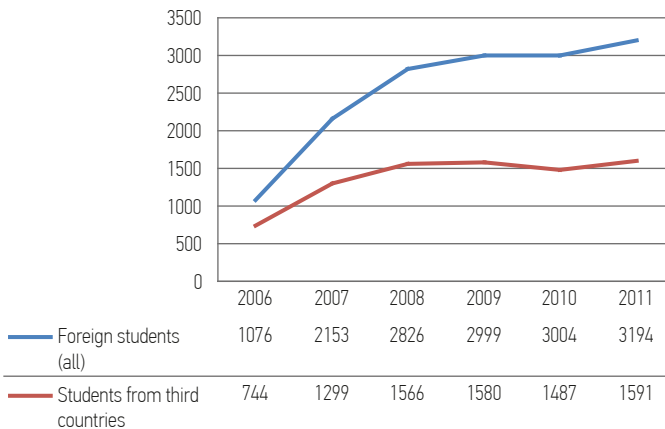


Source: the Migration Department.

During 2011-2012 academic year, there were almost **3,200 foreign students enrolled in Lithuanian higher education establishments**²³. This number constituted around 2% of the entire student body. In comparison to other EU states, this percentage is low: a lower percentage is only recorded in Latvia and Poland²⁴. The Ministry of Education and Science seeks to increase this number 5-6-fold, that is, to bring the number of foreign students to 15,000 - 20,000 per year²⁵.

The number of international students who came to Lithuania for the entire study programme is even lower. During 2011-2012 academic year, only about 1,600 of students from non EU states studied in the country. This amounted to around **1.3% of all students**.

Chart 9: Foreign students (all) and international students, who arrived to pursue entire study programme, 2006-2011



Source: the Department of Statistics

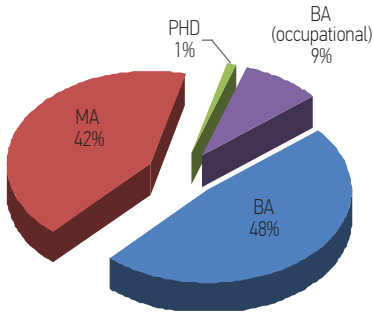
The number of international students in Lithuania increases every year. This increase was conditioned by establishment in 2006 in Vilnius of the European Humanitarian University (EHU) – a Belarusian university in “exile”. Every year around 600-700 Belarusian students study in this university. As a result, the increase in the number of students should be assessed with this important circumstance in mind.

International students in Lithuania study in first (Bachelor’s degree and professional Bachelor’s degree), second (Master’s degree), and third (Doctor’s degree) study cycles. Although the State funds only second and partially third study cycles, 57% of international students arrive specifically to pursue first cycle studies.

²³ This number comprises all foreign students – both from EU and outside of EU as well as those who enrolled for full-length study programme and those who only seek to complete partial studies.

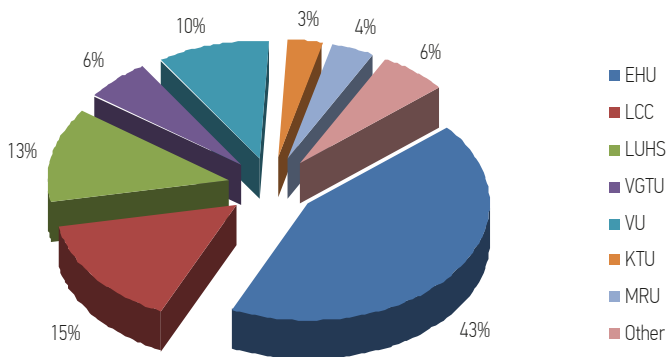
²⁴ 2009 Eurostat data.

²⁵ <http://www.balsas.lt/naujiena/515406/smm-planuose-is-uzsienio-privilioti-15-20-tukst-studentu>

Chart 10: International students by study cycles

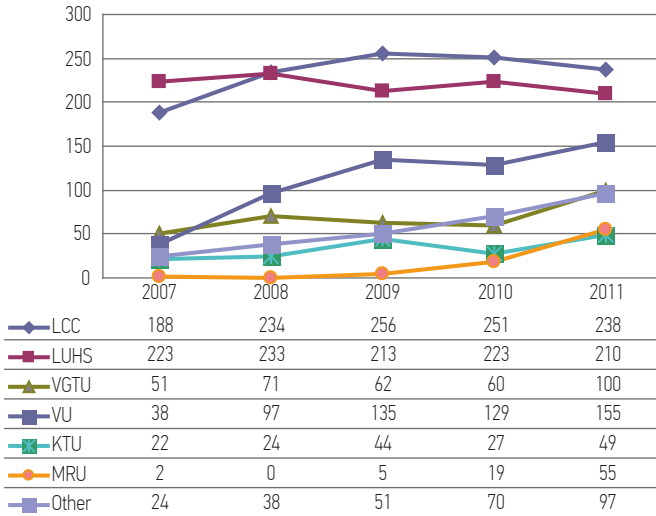
Source: the Department of Statistics (BA – Bachelor's, MA – Master's, PHD – Doctor's)

The absolute majority of students enrol in 7 main universities – EHU, LCC, LUHS, VGTU, VU, KTU, MRU. These universities conduct more active policy to attract students and offer study programmes in Russian and English languages. In **2011/2012 academic year, the majority of international students studied at the EHU (687 students), LCC (238 students), LUHS (201 students).**

Chart 11: International students by universities, 2011/2012 academic year

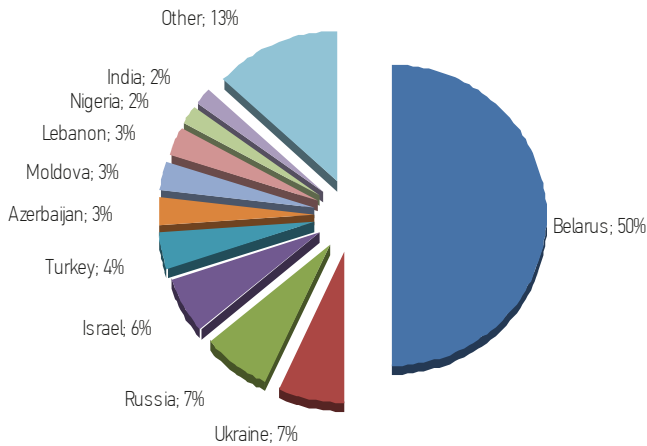
Source: the Department of Statistics

The number of students in the main universities increased only slowly or even remained unchanged. In picture 12, one can see the number of students on October 1, from 2006 to 2011 (excluding EHU).

Chart 12: International students by universities (without EHU), 2006-2011

Source: the Department of Statistics

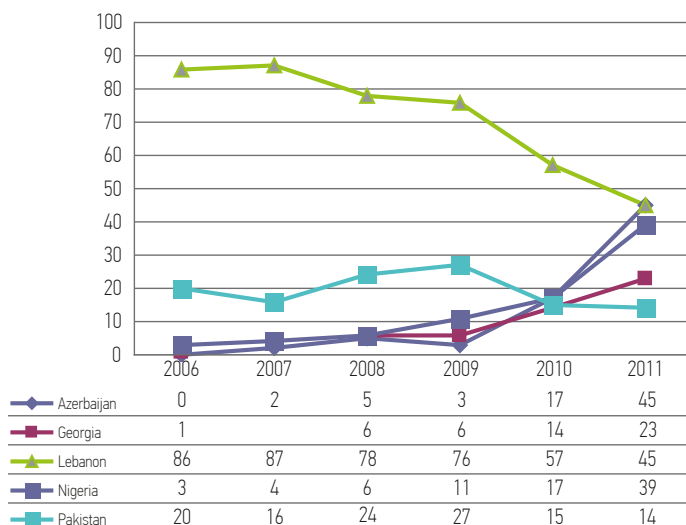
More than 70% of international students come from the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). **The main states are Belarus, Russia, Ukraine.** If one takes the size of countries into account, many international students come from Azerbaijan and Moldova. Around 9% come from the Middle East, the main countries being **Israel, Lebanon.**

Chart 13: International students by nationality, 2011/2012 academic year

Source: the Department of Statistics

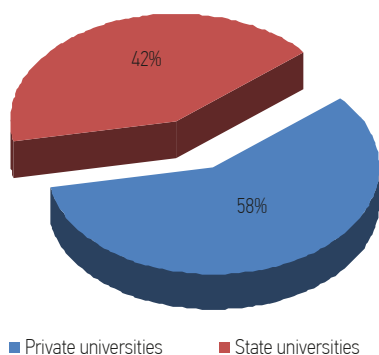
It is interesting to note that there are few students coming from such geographically and culturally close countries like Ukraine and Russia. There are very few students from other priority countries for Lithuania (for example, Kazakhstan), even if the number is growing (in 2009 – 6, in 2010 – 10, in 2011 – 15 students). Meanwhile, the percentage of students coming from Israel remains very large. The absolute majority of Israel and Lebanon citizens arrive to study medicine at LUHS. This number indicates that efforts of one university and the quality of studies can significantly affect the number of arriving students. Lithuania could continue using this study area to attract students.

During the last 6 years, **the biggest jump in numbers of arriving students was registered from Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Nigeria, whereas the number of students from Lebanon saw the sharpest drop.** Increase in numbers of arriving Azerbaijani students is attributable to very active efforts of the Embassy of the Republic of Lithuania in Baku. Meanwhile, students from Nigeria “discover Lithuania through an informal network”. Nigerian citizens come to study in Lithuania largely due to already existing local community of Nigerian students, “word of mouth information” and positive attitude of Lithuanian universities when it comes to enrolling.

Chart 14: *Change in numbers of students from selected countries*

Source: the Department of Statistics

58% of international students study in private universities – EHU (43%) and LCC (15%). These universities conduct active recruitment campaigns to attract students. The number of students studying in state universities is lower (42%). Only one state university (LUHS) has a somewhat bigger share of international studies. It is the university that managed to present itself as an attractive higher educational institution and secured recognition of its name in certain countries.

Chart 15: *International students in private and state universities, 2011/2012 academic year*

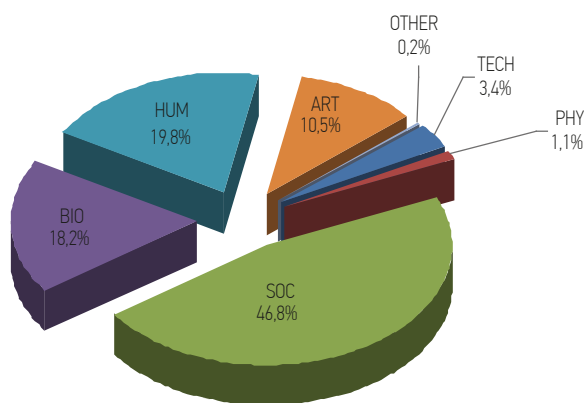
Source: the Department of Statistics

Lithuanian higher education institutions offer around 130 study programmes in Russian and English languages and 10 doctoral level programmes in foreign

language. The majority of programmes are offered in English, though the most popular ones (business management, engineering) are also offered in Russian.

Although around half (48%) of all international students arrive in Lithuania to study social sciences, Lithuania has two niche study areas attracting a relatively large proportion of international students. These are bio-medicine (medicine) studies (18%) and arts²⁶ (11%). In comparison with EU average, these are high numbers. For example, in 2009, in all of EU, 13% of foreign students studied medicine, and 5% - arts²⁷. **However, Lithuania significantly lags behind when it comes to technical studies.** In the EU, around 15% of foreigners arrive to pursue technical studies, meanwhile in Lithuania the number is 5 times smaller, that is - 3%.

Chart16: Study areas pursued by international students in 2006-2011 academic year



Source: the Department of Statistics (SOC – Social studies, ART – Arts, HUM – Humanitarian studies, PHY – physical studies, BIO – Biology studies, TECH – technical studies).

In conclusion one can say that only a small fraction of international students arrive in Lithuania to pursue entire study programme - around 1.3% of enrolled students. In the EU, this number amounts to around 7.5%. 58% of students come to study at private universities. In comparison to other EU states, relatively many students coming to Lithuania choose medicine (18%), and arts (11%), but Lithuania significantly lags behind in attracting students to technical studies - only 3% choose technical studies. Lithuania will find it hard to compete with other, strong universities in EU countries, which makes it imperative to extend and promote further arrival of students pursuing niche subject areas where Lithuania has accumulated experience.

²⁶ Majority of students pursue this specialty at the EHU.

²⁷ Eurostat data.

3. Entry and Stay: Procedures and Problems

3.1. Before Arriving

Arriving students are screened by two institutions: primary screening procedures are carried out by universities and secondary ones - by consular employees in the country of origin. Universities invoke the following screening procedures:

- **Verification of qualifications.** *The Law on education and studies* stipulates that education acquired abroad must be assessed and recognized in Lithuania. Recognition and assessment of diplomas in Lithuania is done by the Center for Quality Assessment in Higher Education (CQAHE) and from 2012 Research Council of Lithuania and higher institutions (if they have a permission from the minister of education and science). According to the law, qualification acquired abroad must be assessed before a student arrives in Lithuania to study. Although this procedure is regulated by the law, in practice it is not always observed. Not all universities ask their students to assess qualification acquired abroad before coming to Lithuania. It is mostly students coming from certain countries who are asked to verify qualifications. University representatives have indicated that when there are doubts for grounds, applicants are always requested to verify their qualifications before arrival. When there are no grounds for doubts, applicants are permitted to verify qualification during their stay in Lithuania. In some cases, universities recognize diploma without assessment;
- **Language verification.** All universities ask for documents or conduct interviews designed to assess candidate's knowledge of language of instruction;
- **Specialized tests.** When applying for specialized studies (architecture, medicine), universities conduct specialized tests in the country of origin. As a rule, tests are administered by agents;
- **Tuition fees.** All universities demand that tuition fees would be paid before requesting arrival documents to be processed and forwarded to the Lithuanian embassy or consulate. Universities remark that this serves as an indication of the fact that student is determined to pursue his/her studies. Depending on the country, students are requested to pay tuition for half a year or entire year (depending on the degree of risk involved);
- **Other documents** (CV, motivational letter, recommendations).
- Upon reviewing all the documents and receiving tuition fees, universities prepare the

letter of acceptance for issuing multi-entry national visa or temporary residence permit (TRP). Student applies with this letter to a visa service with a request to issue visa. Visa is issued on the basis of university's letter of acceptance.

3.2. Arrival

International students can enter Lithuania when holding one of the following documents²⁸:

- Schengen visa or residence permit/visa issued by another Schengen state²⁹ (visa/TRP allows one to stay for the period indicated in the visa-TRP but not exceeding three months in any six-month period);
- National multi-entry visa (visa permits student to stay in Lithuania for up to 12 months);
- Temporary residence permit (TRP allows one to reside in the country for the entire period of studies, but has to be replaced annually).

Schengen visa. A person must apply for visa via Lithuanian visa service abroad³⁰. Visa is issued, if a person fulfils the requirements set in the Visa Code and submits the necessary documents. Schengen visa permits a person to stay within the territory of the State for the maximum of **3 months within any 6 months period**. In the case of students, Schengen visa can be used, for example, by a student enrolled in a distant learning course and who enters Lithuania for a short period, e.g. to pass exams. Such practice is currently applied by EHU to students, who are enrolled in distant learning.

Procedure to obtain Schengen visa:

Application to visa service³¹ and fingerprints seals + **60 EUR fee** → Processing of application → Visa and arrival
15 days

28 Article 11 of the Law on the legal status of aliens provides for conditions, documents and period of time third country nationals can enter and reside in Lithuania.

29 If visa regime is applied. If a citizen of the third country enjoys visa-free regime, he can stay in Lithuania no longer than 3 months.

30 In countries, where Lithuania does not have its visa service and has concluded representation agreements with other EU members, [citizens] can also approach embassies of other EU states. The list of visa services of other states representing Lithuania abroad, can be found here: <http://www.migracija.lt/index.php?1405994731#5>.

31 If there is no Lithuanian diplomatic mission or consular agency in the country of [applicant], citizen of the third country can apply to any Lithuanian diplomatic mission or consular agency in another country. If a person enjoys a visa-free regime or he stays in Lithuania lawfully, application to obtain visa can be submitted to the Migration Department or migration services.

National multi-entry national visa.

This visa can be issued to a student admitted to higher education institution registered and operating in Lithuania or arriving to study under student exchange programme³². The visa is issued for the first year of studies. National visa can also be issued to a student who arrives to pursue partial study programme, for example, orientation courses (e.g. Lithuanian language) and intends to remain in Lithuania up to a year. National multi-entry visa is issued for up to a year and cannot be extended.

Documents for national multi-entry national visa:

1. **Application** to issue visa,
2. **Travel document**
3. **Photo;**
4. **Health insurance;**
5. Document confirming availability of **subsistence funds** (for students 425 Lt/month or 5100 Lt/year) and funds for return;
6. **Request of a Lithuanian higher education institution**, whereby the institution guarantees that alien shall be provided with proper accommodation and that, if needed, alien's subsistence and return costs shall be covered;

Procedure for obtaining multi-entry national visa³³:

Application to visa service³⁴ → Processing of application → Visa and arrival
+ 60 EUR fee³⁵ **15 days**³⁶

Lithuania applies identical entry criteria for all students and does not make any exceptions for any student groups. Lithuanian visa service also can at any time request an interview with a foreigner. Foreigner applying for visa for the first time must be present at visa service personally. Entire screening procedure (based on single-window principle) is carried out when a student is still outside of Lithuania.

During the meetings, university staff members gave positive assessment to national multi-entry visas, but added that some student groups still face problems, because visas do not cover the entire period of their studies: for example, a student who arrives to learn Lithuanian language at orientation courses (for partial studies programme), can be issued with national multi-entry visa for up to one year. However, if such student would like to extend his/her language studies, his/her visa cannot be extended. He also cannot be issued with TRP, because the student did not come for full-time study programme, but rather to pursue an orientation course.

³² Before 2009, national visa could be issued only to students enrolled in sequential, that is full time, studies, however, legislation currently in force extend the basis for issuing national multi-entry visas and comprise all types and forms of studies. Besides, visa is issued for 1 year. Before 2009, this visa was issued for 6 months.

³³ This procedure is in force since 2011, when order of the Minister of the Interior and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Lithuania of March 24, 2011 No. IV-233/V-66 "On amending the Order of the Minister of the Interior and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Lithuania of September 2, 2004 No. IV-280/V-109 "On approval of procedure description for submission of documents to obtain visa, visa issuance and cancellation, consultations, accrediting travel organizers and travel agencies and approving alien's invitation to arrive temporarily in the Republic of Lithuania"" was passed (State Gazette, 2011, No. 38-1832).

³⁴ If there is no Lithuanian diplomatic mission or consular institution in person's country, national of the third country can apply to any Lithuanian diplomatic or consular institution in another country. If a person enjoys visa-free regime or he stays legally in Lithuania, he can submit visa application to Migration Department or Migration services of 3 main Lithuanian cities.

³⁵ **Fee is waived for Belarusian nationals under the Decision of September 14, 2011 No. 1077** "On waiving consular fee for processing applications to issue national visas to nationals of Republic of Belarus" (State Gazette, 2011, No. 115-5411). The Government of the Republic of Lithuania has decided to waive collection of consular fee for processing applications to issue national visas to citizens of Republic of Belarus. **Students arriving to study under international agreements also have their fees waived** (Law on duties of the Republic of Lithuania, State Gazette, 2000, No. 52-1484) Article 6, Paragraph 15.

³⁶ In exceptional cases, the period for making a decision can be extended to 60 days.

Temporary residence permit (TRP).

TRP can be issued to students admitted for study in higher education institution under a study programme (programmes) or to doctoral studies³⁷. TRP is issued for 1 year, but can be replaced annually until studies are completed. If a student applies for TRP in his/her country of origin, (s)he submits the application and necessary documents to Lithuanian visa service abroad. The decision to issue TRP is taken by the Migration Department. Application processing time can be up to 6 months. When the Migration Department takes a positive decision, Lithuanian visa service can issue a student with a national single-entry visa to enter Lithuania. This visa allows a student to enter Lithuania and receive his/her TRP in the country.

Documents to obtain TRP:

1. **Application** to issue temporary residence permit;
2. Valid **travel document**;
3. **Picture**;
4. Document confirming that student has **sufficient funds** to reside in Lithuania (not less than 425 LTL/month and 5100 LTL/year, paid the **fees for studies** and had **funds to return**;
5. Document confirming that student has **living premises in Lithuania**;
6. **Health insurance** (can be submitted when collecting TRP);
7. Documents confirming that national of the third country **is admitted to study** in higher education institution;
8. **Letter of acceptance** from higher education institution;
9. **Parental authorisation** (if student is a minor);
10. If needed, student can be requested to provide the **list of travels and places of residence in foreign countries**;

Procedure to obtain TRP:

Application to visa service³⁸ + 60 EUR³⁹ → Processing of application by MD, **up to 6 months** → Single entry national visa⁴⁰ → Arrival and collecting TRP⁴¹

In this case, conditions outlined in Articles 6-7 of the Student Directive⁴² are checked in the country of origin. Described procedure is currently invoked only rarely, because the absolute majority of students arrive with national multi-entry visas. However, the law does not prohibit students from applying for TRP as well, instead of applying for a long-term national visa. In practice, universities recommend students to apply for national multi-entry visa, because then students can arrive much quicker (visa processing time is 15 days, TRP – up to

37 The Law on legal status of aliens foresees that TRP can be issued to a national of third country who is enrolled in a higher education institution to pursue full-time, sequential studies (Article 40, Part 1, Paragraph 6; Article 46). However, as the Law on studies and research have been amended (State Gazette, 2009, No. 54-2140) full-time studies were abolished in Lithuania and many other forms of studies appeared. Currently, these laws are not harmonized. As a result, Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania is recommended to change definitions used in the laws and establish that a temporary residence permit can be issued to a national of third country who is **"enrolled in higher education institution under a study programme (programmes) or in doctoral studies;"** (see http://www3.lrs.lt/pls/inter3/dokpaieska.showdoc_l?p_id=421948&p_query=&p_tr2=2).

38 If there is no Lithuanian diplomatic mission or consular institution present in person's country, a national of the third country can apply to any Lithuanian diplomatic mission or consular institution in another country. If a person enjoys visa-free regime or stays lawfully in Lithuania, he can submit an application to issue a visa to the Migration Department or migration services of 3 main Lithuanian cities.

39 Applications are processed for free only in the case of students who arrive under international treaties of the Republic of Lithuania, agreements concluded with corresponding foreign state institutions by ministries or Government institutions, on behalf of other state institutions and within their competence.

40 TRP card is issued only within the territory of Lithuania, so a student wishing to collect it must enter Lithuania. If student needs a visa to enter Lithuania, he is issued a single entry national visa free of charge. This visa is not issued automatically, a person must apply for it and with his application submit additional documents. Single entry national visa is designated to enter Lithuania only once, its duration does not depend on duration of studies. It is issued within 15 days.

41 Student must come and approach the migration service about execution of TRP within 3 months from the date of a positive decision is taken.

42 Article 6 of the Directive stipulates these general conditions: travel document, parental authorisation (if a minor), health insurance, fee for application processing, does not pose a threat to public order. Article 7 of the Directive stipulates special conditions: a student must be admitted to study, has funds to cover living expenses, knows the language in which studies will be conducted.

6 months). Another reason is that state institutions are less burdened, since issuing of visa is a less expensive process than issuing of a TRP. However, students holding a TRP gains more rights, for example, (s)he is considered to be a resident of Lithuania, the first year of his/her studies is counted towards the period of time (s)he resided in Lithuania (if a student would like to apply for permanent residence permit later on⁴³) and so on.

Table 3: *Comparative analysis of documents necessary for international students to enter Lithuania*

	Schengen's visa	National visa	Temporary residence permit
Who can apply?	All nationals (and students) of third countries who fulfil requirements set in the Visa Code (for example, students pursuing distant learning courses)	Students who arrive to pursue all forms of studies (including orientation year and language courses). In most cases is issued for the first year of studies	Students who arrive to study under approved study programme. Most often issued for the second year of studies
Where to submit an application?	Usually in a visa service in the country of origin	Usually in a visa service in the country of origin If national of the 3rd country stays lawfully in Lithuania: Migration service Migration department	Usually in a visa service in the country of origin If national of the 3rd country stays lawfully in Lithuania: Migration service Migration department
Where to collect?	Usually in the country of origin	Where application has been submitted	Only in Lithuania
How quickly is it processed?	10 days	15 days	6 months (in most cases quicker)
Expedited procedure?	Not available	Not available	Not available
How long can one stay?	Maximum 3 months during any 6 months period	Up to 1 year. Non-extendable	1 year. Can be replaced
How much does it cost?	60 EUR	60 EUR	115 EUR (400 LTL)
Facilitating circumstances	Under the Visa Code	The fee is waived for citizens of Belarus and students arriving under exchange programmes	Living costs for students 400 LTL per month, for other nationals of third countries 800LTL per month
Social services	Not available	Not available	The same as for residents of the Republic of Lithuania
Sources of information	www.urm.lt (in Lithuanian, English, Russian, French) EU Immigration Portal Planned www.studyinlithuania.lt	www.migracija.lt (in Lithuanian, Russian, English) Universities publications (in English, Russian) EU Immigration Portal Planned www.studyinlithuania.lt	www.migracija.lt (in Lithuanian, Russian, English) EU Immigration Portal Planned www.studyinlithuania.lt

⁴³ Permanent residence permit is issued if student resided for 5 consecutive years while holding TRP. From 2013, only half of the actual study time will be counted towards the period spent residing in Lithuania for students.

Correspondence of Entry Procedures invoked in Lithuania to the Student Directive

The Student Directive foresees that Member states must admit students who fulfil general and special conditions listed in the Directive. The table provides conditions listed in the Directive and conditions that a student must fulfil before being allowed into Lithuania.

Table 4: Comparative analysis of requirements for international students in the Student Directive and in Lithuania

Student Directive requirements	National multi-entry visa	Temporary residence permit
Travel document	-	-
Parental authorisation (for minors)	-	-
Health insurance	-	-
Does not pose a threat to national security, public security and health	-	-
Application processing fee	-	-
Admitted to study	-	-
Holds funds for subsistence	-	-
Knows the language in which studies will be conducted	Required ⁴⁴	Required
Tuition fee	Not required	Not required
Living premises (not included in the Directive)	Higher education institution's obligation to provide proper accommodation for a student	Document proving that a student has living premises (can be higher education institution's obligation to provide a student with premises)
Funds to cover return (not included in the Directive)	Higher education institution's obligation to cover the costs of expulsion/return	Higher education institution's obligation to cover the costs of expulsion/return
List of travels and places of residence in foreign countries (if needed)⁴⁵ (not included in the Directive)	Not required	Defined in the law, but not used in practice

From Table 4 it can be seen that in additionally to general and special conditions listed in the Student Directive, Lithuania also requests documents that are not directly named in the Directive: namely, to prove that a student has proper living premises, that sponsoring higher education institution shall cover the costs of his/her expulsion if student would violate conditions of a lawful stay in the country. The law also foresees that officials can request the list of travels and places of residence in foreign countries (although this provision is not invoked in practice).

These requirements are not directly stipulated in the Directive, yet - according to experts

⁴⁴ In 2011 a new requirement was introduced. Now universities have to indicate the language of instruction so so that visa/TRP issuing officials can check if a student knows the language of instruction.

⁴⁵ In practice not required.

- they are derivative and directly related to the requirements of the Directive. The requirement to have living premises is one of the forms of the requirement to hold sufficient funds. If one was to remove this requirement, the amount of minimal subsistence funds would have to be increased.

One of the possible recommendations is to differentiate the requirement to have funds for subsistence. Students who fail to submit a document confirming availability of living premises, could be requested to secure higher amount of subsistence funds, whereas those, who submit such a document, could do with a smaller funds.

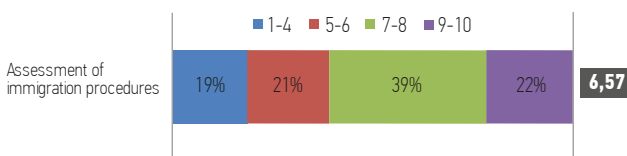
Another requirement stipulated in the Directive - to cover the costs of expulsion applies not to a student, but to a sponsoring institution, so - in the opinion of experts - it cannot be considered an additional requirement. Taking these arguments into consideration, one can draw a conclusion that admission procedure fully corresponds to requirements of the Student Directive.

No major challenges are encountered in the process of admission/arrival. With introduction of new procedure for issuing national long term multi entry visas, arrival procedures for students were simplified and facilitated. Students can deal with all formalities within 1-2 months, whereas before the procedure it would take up to half a year.

Experts also noted that Lithuania seeks to avoid queues building up in visa service due to seasonality. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs puts efforts to staff visa services in a way that ensures there is more civil servants working in visa services during the period of students' visa applications, especially in the countries from where most students come, for example, Belarus.

Survey data shows that students give a positive assessment to immigration procedures – on average, they give 6.57 points (within 10 points system).

Chart 17: Assessment of Immigration procedures



Point scale was used, where 1 means "very bad", and 10 – "excellent"

Source: data from the student survey

Students most often mentioned the following circumstances making immigration more difficult: no embassy present in the country of origin, the need to legalize diploma, the need to translate all document into Lithuanian, lack of information about arrival procedures in foreign languages. However, during the analysis of survey results it became obvious that these issues are less important (low correlation) and their impact on the overall satisfaction with immigration procedures is not high, that is, despite the discomfort they cause, students can endure these obstacles.

3.3 Stay

3.3.1 Replacing Temporary Residence Permit

For students whose studies last for more than one year and who came to Lithuania with national multi-entry visas, for second and following years of their studies TRP is replaced. Students can apply for a TRP during the period of validity of national multi-entry visa, while they stay in Lithuania. Decisions on the first TRP is taken by the Migration department and decisions on replacements by migration service.

The procedure to replace TRP:

Application, documents → Decision within 2 months → Issuing of TRP (100 LTL) to migration service (300 LTL)

Students must submit application to replace TRP to the migration service at the place of residence or the Migration Department 4-2 months before the expiry of the current temporary residence permit. The application to replace temporary residence permit is processed not later than within 2 months, temporary residence permit is issued for the period of studies, but no longer than for 1 year.

Together with their application, students must submit the same documents that were requested to issue the first TRP and pay state duty of the same amount, that is, every time the entire procedure is repeated from the beginning to the end and the fact that a student applies for the first time or N-th time does not make any difference. Similarly, student's academic achievements and other study contributions are not taken into account. In the eyes of both - universities and students such legal regulation poses administrative hardships for universities and financial ones for students. 50% of the surveyed students viewed replacement of TRP as a burdensome procedure, because it had to be carried out each year, required the same documents to be translated and submitted, and 400 LTL fee to be paid for issuance of a document. Both students and universities would very much welcome the possibility of issuing TRP for at least 2 study years.

During conversations with students, another practical challenge became obvious – the requirement to have living premises when replacing TRP. In most cases, TRP is replaced during the summer, when students have no classes and are away. As a result, they sometimes cannot provide documents indicating that they have premises (for example, rental contract), because at that specific moment they do not need premises. As it was already mentioned earlier, the requirement to have living premises could be abolished for students who possess extensive.

In conclusion student sociological survey indicates that issuance and replacement of TRPs merits an especially close scrutiny. The impact of this procedure on overall level of satisfaction is high. So regardless of the fact that there is smaller amount of overall problems encountered in this area (TRP did not pose problems as often as the absence of embassy, for example), students react to these problems much more sensitively.

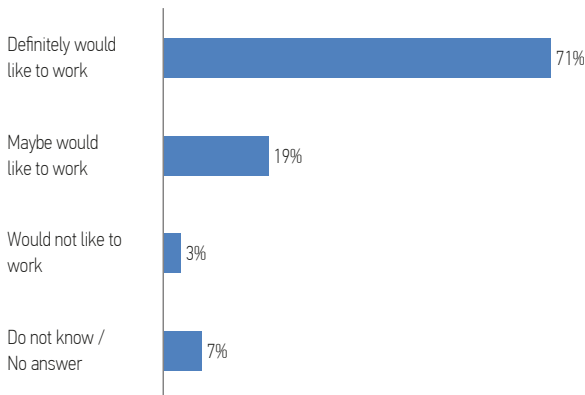
3.3.2. Working During Studies

The *Law on the legal status of aliens* stipulates that students from third countries can work no longer than 20 hours per week from the second year of their studies, but they are obliged to obtain a work permit⁴⁶. Although legally students have the right to work, in practice this is possible only in exceptional cases. The requirement to obtain a work permit is highly limiting condition, because the employer wishing to employ a student must prove that (s) he was unable to find an employee in Lithuania or the EU. The employer must publish a vacancy 30 days in order to look for Lithuanian or EU national to fill this it. Only if an employee cannot be found during this period, an employer can request to issue a work permit for a third country national. The work permit is issued by the Lithuanian Labour Exchange. Such legal regulation is meant to protect Lithuanian labour market from foreign workers. Naturally, under these conditions only few students manage to take employment.

Current legal regulation attracts uneven assessments from universities: some of them think that international students are Lithuanian residents and should be subject to the same rules and permitted to take up employment without the requirement to obtain a work permit. Others are of the opinion that students come to study and do not have time to work during their studies due to heavy academic load.

The absolute majority of students taking part in the survey expressed a desire for working: 90% indicated that they want/would like to work and only 3% would not like to work. It is likely that if students are exempted from the requirement to obtain a work permit, more than half of students would actively look for work.

Chart 18: *Students working during studies and those wishing to work*



Source: data from the student survey

⁴⁶ Students/other foreigners are exempted from the need to hold a work permit, if a student: (1) registers a company, institution or organization in Lithuania as an owner and is the head of this company, institution, or organization registered in Lithuania; (2) is owner of a company registered in Lithuania, with equity capital no less than 50 thousand Litas, and his presence in Lithuania is imperative to achieve company goals and conduct its operations; (3) is co-owner of a company registered in Lithuania, whose share of company's equity amounts to no less than 50 thousand Litas of nominal value, and his presence in Lithuania is imperative to achieve company goals and conduct its operations; (4) is head of a company registered in Lithuania, whose equity capital amounts to no less than 50 thousands Litas; (5) is member of voluntary programmes supported by the European Union or its Member States. See Description of procedure and conditions for issuing work permit to aliens, approved by the Minister of Social Protection and Labour of the Republic of Lithuania by August 14, 2009 order No. A1-500 (State Gazette, 2009, No. 98-4134).

Work is a very important factor in students' life. Currently, in the Parliament there are amendments registered recommending additionally allow students studying in the second and third cycle studies (Master's and doctoral studies) to work in study and research institutions in the areas of scientific research and (or) in the areas of experimental (social, cultural) research without the requirement to possess a work permit.

Discussions on the topic of whether international students should be allowed to work without a work permit should continue by taking into account possible impact of this group on employment/unemployment of Lithuanian population (especially the youth). Suggestions to allow students to work in research institutions without a work permit are positively viewed.

3.3.3. Family Reunion

Members of student's family can reside in Lithuania only in exceptional cases. The law states that third country nationals wishing to invite to Lithuania his/her minor children, a spouse, or a registered partner or supported parents, must have resided in Lithuania for 2 years, hold a temporary residence permit valid for no less than 1 year, and be reasonable grounds to acquire a permanent residence permit in Lithuania⁴⁷. Due to this specific requirement, only very few students can invite their family members because almost no student can prove to have reasonable grounds to receive a permanent residence permit.

In case where family members would come to the country and obtain TRP, they could enter a labour market (they would be exempt from the need to obtain a work permit) and enjoy the same work, social, and health insurance guarantees as citizens do.

The Law "On the legal status of alines" does not provide for exceptions. However, family reunification is possible in the cases when minors are involved. In this case a UN Convention on the Right of the Child becomes effective. The Convention provides for the right of the child to live with his/her family. Therefore, a TRP can be issued to a child of an international students. The survey data shows that due to unknown reasons (ignorance?) students not always exercise this right.

Around 40% of the surveyed international students indicated that the current regulation poses problems to them, because they have no possibility to bring their family for a long-term stay. The question of bringing family is most acute for students in the third cycle studies, because they are older and most often already have formed families. It is likely that when choosing where to study the family reunification dimension is very important, especially for doctoral students. Since a very small percentage of international students come to Lithuania to pursue doctoral studies (1%), it would be wise to consider the possibility to simplify family reunification conditions for this group.

3.3.4. After the Graduation

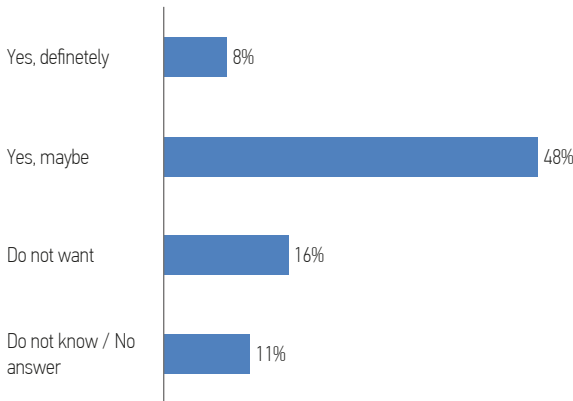
Law on legal status of aliens foresees that student who graduates must leave Lithuania.

⁴⁷ This requirement is only fulfilled by foreigners who are: (1) persons having the right to restore citizenship of Lithuania; (2) persons of Lithuanian descent; (3) other nationals of third countries who can substantiate with documents the basis for residing in Lithuania for 5 continuous years. See Description of procedure for submitting documents to obtain temporary residence permit in the Republic of Lithuania and issuing, replacing, and cancelling temporary residence permits in the Republic of Lithuania to aliens, also evaluating whether marriage or registered partnership agreement were formed or a child was adopted for an alien to obtain temporary residence permit in the Republic of Lithuania, approved by order of the Minister of the Interior of the Republic of Lithuania of October 12, 2005, No. 1V-329 (State Gazette, 2005, No. 126-4509; 2009, No. 62-2501).

There is no possibility to stay in Lithuania after the studies are completed. One can stay in Lithuania only by obtaining a permit on other grounds that is by changing the basis for ones stay from studies to other – employment or family reunification. Students can change the basis for their stay without leaving Lithuania provided they lawfully stay in Lithuania (e.g. have a valid TRP). For example, if a student finds a job according to his/her specialty and holds a valid TRP, (s)he could apply for TRP on the basis of employment while in Lithuania. Currently, in the Parliament, there is a registered amendment recommending to change this provision of the law and allow students to remain in Lithuania three more months after graduation and look for employment.

Survey results show that around half of international students would like the law to be amended in this way. 56% of the surveyed students would consider the possibility of staying in Lithuania after their studies.

Chart 19: *Students' desire to remain in Lithuania after the studies*



Source: data from the student survey

It is recommended to consider the possibility to extend the period after graduation when students are allowed to stay and look for employment for up to 6 months⁴⁸. It is recommended to consider whether such legal regulation could be applied to students with best academic record or students studying in areas whose employees are in high demand in Lithuania.

3.3.5. Integration

Lithuania does not have national integration programmes for any types of immigrants (except for those who are granted international protection), and this is also the case with international students, who are considered to be only temporary immigrants. Lithuania limits these students' right to work, prevents them from staying on after their studies.

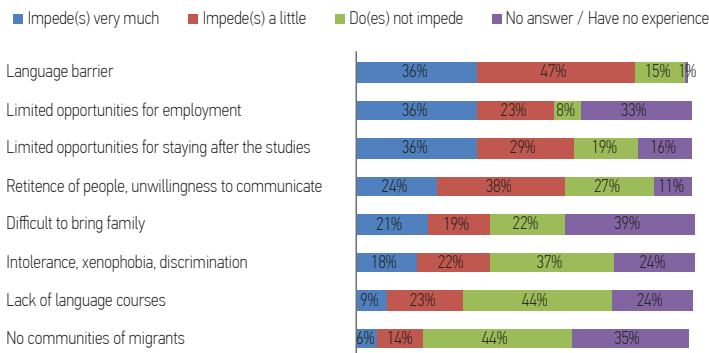
The most necessary integration measures are provided by some universities. These are often comprised of language courses (during the first and second study years). Isolated

⁴⁸ Currently, the 3 months stipulated in the project fall on summer months, when it is more difficult to find a permanent employment.

integration measures are also provided by non-governmental sector. These measures are as a rule financed by funds of the European Integration Fund, yet, they are isolated, short-term, and not systemic measures. As a result, students' integration is left for them to figure out by themselves.

As sociological survey of international students reveals, only 13% of respondents feel they are well integrated in Lithuania. A similar number (14%) don't feel integrated, even if they would like to. The students identified the following obstacles to integration – language barrier, limited opportunities for employment, and inability to stay in Lithuania after the studies.

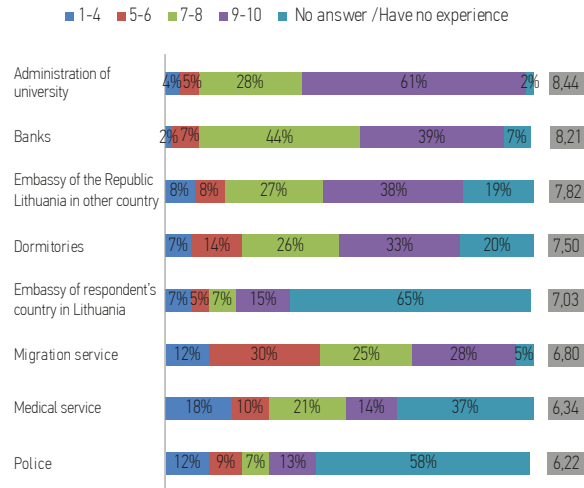
Chart 20: Obstacles to closer integration



Source: data from the student survey

Students have indicated that integration is facilitated by presence of Lithuanian friends, knowledge of Lithuanian language, and living in a dormitory. It is important to mention that around fifth of students encounter incidents of intolerance and xenophobia.

Insufficient integration creates additional problems outside of university walls. Especially given that far from all institutions can provide necessary services in other languages than Lithuanian. When asked to evaluate the quality of work of institutions students encountered, they viewed positively university administration, banks, Lithuanian embassy in the country of origin and dormitories. Migration services, medical institutions, and police scored worse on this count.

Chart 21: Evaluation of quality of work and positive attitude of encountered institutions

Source: data from the student survey

In conclusion one must say that students' integration and well-being in Lithuania is an important factor. University staff members notice that the best way to attract new students is recommendations provided by those who studied here. For this reason, it is important to think not only about the quality of studies, but also about how well integrated students are and how they feel in Lithuania. The Minister of Education and Science has drawn attention to this fact when emphasizing that "apart from attractive study programmes, we also have to offer good social conditions, degree of tolerance"⁴⁹.

3.4. Misuse of the 'Student Route'

Lithuania registers few cases of the misuse of the student route. These are isolated cases. However, one observes signs of possible misuse outside of Lithuanian borders, when future students still apply to Lithuanian visa service.

The instances of misusing of study route are established:

- outside of the country, that is, when a student only applies for a visa or TRP (by evaluating refused applications to issue a visa);
- inside the country, when student's TRP is revoked (by evaluating the ground for revoking TRP);

(a) The biggest number of misuse is observed in Lithuanian visa services, that is before a student comes to Lithuania. According to data provided by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Lithuanian embassy in Egypt often encounters misuse among students from Asia and Africa attempting to obtain a national visa with the purpose of studying. This region poses most concerns due to the scale of illegal migration. In 2011, around 30-35% of applications

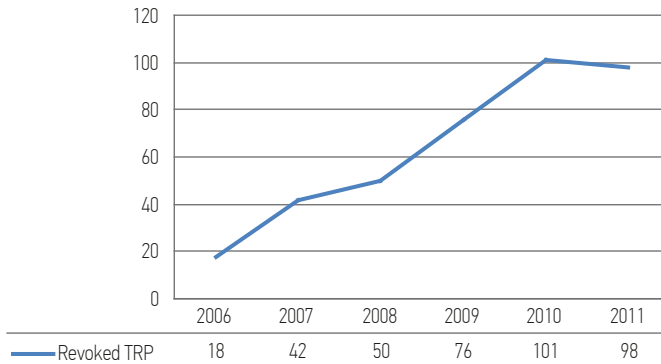
49 <http://www.balsas.lt/nauijena/515406/smm-planuose-is-uzsienio-privilioti-15-20-tukst-studentu>

to issue national visa on the ground of studies have been refused in the embassy in Cairo. Embassy employees point to these main reasons:

- A student is incapable of proving that (s)he has enough funds to subsist and study (no documents are provided or provided documents are forged);
- Visa service employee has reasonable doubts about the risk of illegal migration (for example, during the conversation it is established that a student does not speak the language of studies (s)he is admitted to, does not know anything about the university, Lithuania and so on);
- There are reasonable grounds for assuming that a student belongs to a group exhibiting the signs of organized illegal migration.

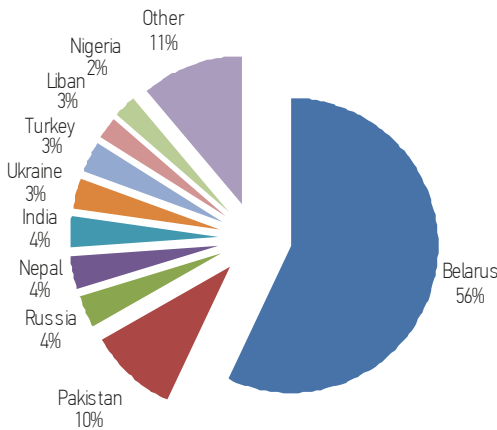
In the opinion of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, this situation can be explained by the fact that there is no established mechanism permitting to firmly evaluate whether an alien - based on his/her education and motivation - can study in a specific higher education institution. Universities are not always able to conduct reliable selection of students (especially when it comes to African countries). Currently, students do not have to provide to the visa service documents confirming existing education, there is also no defined requirement to have good knowledge of a language in which studies will be conducted. The only document that a student has to submit to the visa service is the letter of acceptance from higher education institution. The letter states that a student has been admitted to a specific higher education institution, it names the subject area. All other documents related to student's educational background and knowledge, under the system existing today, are verified by the higher education institution. Different higher education institutions apply different criteria. Moreover, one has to be aware of the fact that higher education institutions cannot always verify the authenticity of documents or motivation of a student. In some cases, a student is admitted to study as a result of indirect communication, that is by exchanging emails. Only upon student's arrival at the embassy it becomes clear that (s)he has no idea where and what subject (s)he will study. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs notes that in African countries there emerged networks of intermediaries who offer students not studies, but rather immigration to Europe services. These cases are identified during interviews at the embassy.

(b) Cases of misuse can also be identified by analyzing the reasons for expelling students from the student body. Under the existing procedure, universities must notify the Migration Department if a student is expelled from the student body. TRP or national multi-entry visa of such student is automatically revoked.

Chart 22: *Revoked temporary residence permits issued on the grounds of studies*

Source: the Migration Department

TRPs have been revoked most frequently for students from Belarus, yet, if one takes into consideration the number of students from Belarus, the number of revoked TRP becomes relatively low. In comparative terms, a lot of TRPs are revoked for students from Pakistan, Nepal, and India, that is, from countries with a high risk of illegal migration.

Chart 23: *Revoked TRPs by nationality in 2006–2011, because a student was expelled from the student body*

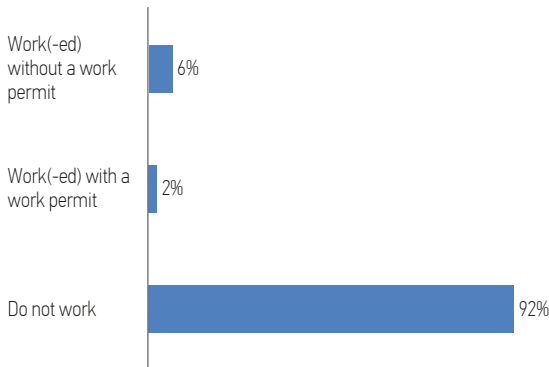
Source: the Migration Department

Although the Migration Department is collecting data about all expelled students, it does not group accumulated data according to reasons for expelling a student. For this reason, there is no possibility to establish how many students were expelled due to abuse (for example, for failing to attend studies). During the interviews with university staff members it was established that there are very few cases of obvious misuse (1-2 per year).

Another form of misuse is illegal employment (without a work permit or by exceeding permitted number of hours). Prevention of illegal employment is conducted and instances of illegal work are recorded during inspections by the State Labour Inspection. The Inspection has not recorded any cases of illegal work among international students. However, it

is likely that a small fraction of students work during their studies without a work permit. Survey data indicates that the number is around 6% of students. Students usually provide individual services (teach languages, translate, work as baby-sitters). They are usually paid in cash, so it is very difficult to establish these violations.

Chart 24: *Working International Students*



Source: data from the student survey

One could claim that currently most cases of misuse are established outside of the territory of the country, in consular services of the Republic of Lithuania. However, it is important to observe the cases when students are expelled from the student body due to clear abuses, for example, for failing to attend studies, departing abroad during studies and so on. Prevention measures currently in place, such as knowledge of the language, motivation, advance payment of tuition fees, are not always efficient in preventing the misuse of the study immigration route.

4. International Cooperation

International cooperation in the area of higher education is conducted on different levels. One could distinguish the following levels of international cooperation:

- Bilateral cooperation, coordinated by the Ministry of Education and Science;
- Cooperation among higher education institutions (for example, in developing and implementing joint study programmes and other EU programmes)

2011-2012 programme for promotion of internalization of higher education intends to extend cooperation in the area of higher education by concluding international agreements, especially with priority states. Lithuania has signed cooperation agreements or agreements in the areas of education, research, and technology with the following non-EU states: Belarus, Israel, China, Iceland, Japan, Mexico, Switzerland, Turkey, Croatia, India, Kazakhstan, Mongolia, Montenegro, Philippines, Russia, Serbia, Ukraine, United States of America, Uzbekistan. These bilateral agreements are of general nature and more political documents (declarations). They encourage exchanges of students and researchers, implementation of joint research, facilitate in recognition of qualifications and arrival of persons. Depending on the agreement or the nature of provisions, citizens of these countries can obtain state stipends for full-time or partial studies in Lithuania, Lithuanian language summer courses, Lithuanian language or Baltic studies.

Cooperation among higher education institutions, especially in developing joint study programmes, is proceeding slowly. Before 2011, there were five joint study programmes registered in Lithuania:

- Comparative social policy and well-being (second cycle, MRU)
- International law (second cycle, MRU)
- Baltic regional studies (second cycle, VU)
- Sustainable regional health-care systems (second cycle, VU)
- International business (first cycle, Social studies college)

Creation of these programmes continues to be promoted and supported, so their number should grow in the coming years. This should contribute to the growth in numbers of international students.

Increasing student mobility will require Member States to tackle emerging challenges related to migration. The number of international students who will come to Lithuania for only a part of their studies will increase (for example, under the joint study programme). Under the existing law, international students can enter Lithuania with documents issued

by another EU Member State, though not longer than for 3 months within the 6 months period. If students would like to stay in Lithuania for a longer period, they must apply for a national visa or TRP. It means that a document of EU Member State (visa, residence permit) allows the student to stay in Lithuania only up to 3 months. As a result, a student who enrolls in another EU Member State, but would like to spend a part of his/her studies in Lithuania, must make sure to obtain a visa or TRP in Lithuania. The student can submit documents to obtain a national visa or TRP in any state where (s)he stays lawfully. Lithuania does not have any facilitated entry procedures in place for students participating in EU or other programmes.

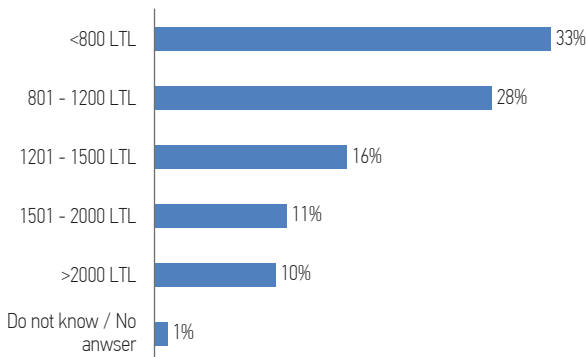
Students indicated that the current regulation poses challenges. It is difficult for students to understand why they cannot come for the purpose of studying to another state if they legally reside in one of EU member state. It is likely that some international students who depart/arrive to study in/from another EU state do not apply for necessary documents, because in principle there is no way to check how much time they spent in another EU member state. It is necessary to improve and simplify the current regulation in the whole EU. This could be done by preparing amendments of the Student Directive.

5. Impact of International Students

Lithuania has not conducted any studies on the impact of international students. When writing this chapter, we relied on available statistical information, sociological survey material, and observations made by universities/experts. For this reason, this chapter only identified the areas that would benefit from further research designed to evaluate in detail the impact of students:

- **Economic.** The majority of students pay the full price of studies and cover themselves their costs of living in Lithuania. The results of student survey indicate that around 70% of students pay for their studies. In the areas like medicine, tuition fee is rather high and amounts to 30.000 Litas per year. International students bring and spend in Lithuania their money by buying services and goods. Survey data shows that majority of surveyed students studying in Lithuania spend up to 1,200 LTL per month on living costs, excluding tuition fees.

Chart 25: Money spent by international students (per month)



Source: data from the student survey

- The most common source of income among respondents was support from parents or relatives. Only one fifth of students taking part in the survey have indicates that they receive a stipend.

- **Educational.** University experts notice that international students contribute to improving the study process in itself. Money from tuition fees allows universities to invite better lecturers. Within mixed groups, the study process also becomes more varied. Studying in a mixed group improves students' multi-cultural skills and competencies, helps students to learn working with people from different cultural backgrounds, which is a very important competence in a globalizing world. At the same time, the competences of lecturers increase too: they prepare and teach lectures in foreign languages.
- **Entrepreneurship.** During the study period, students develop ties with Lithuania. No studies have been done to date, but the experience of other countries show that studies contribute towards establishment of business ties between origin and destination countries.
- **Demographic.** Arrival of foreign students also contributes towards solving Lithuania's demographic problems. Foreign students are well-educated, young, possess initiative. If one was to create conditions for them to stay in the country, they could contribute to solving demographic problems.
- **Security.** Data available at the moment does not provide basis for claiming that studies are used as a channel for illegal migration. However, one must monitor processes and continue to analyze whether international students misuse this ground for arrival.

When evaluating the impact of international students, one is left with the conclusion that it could be bigger, if decision-makers were to make an effort to leverage it. At the moment, the potential held by international students is not used – students' possibilities for working during studies is limited, they are prohibited from staying in Lithuania after graduating to find a job. Further discussion are needed on how Lithuania could better use international students' potential.

List of References

Studies

1. Study and analysis of experience of promoting higher education on international level. Analysis of international dimension in higher education in five foreign countries and Lithuania. Prepared by Jaržemskis and experts, Vilnius, 2011.
2. Recommendations on optimization of Lithuanian university network prepared by the working group convened by the decree of the Prime Minister of the Republic of Lithuania of May 31, 2011, No. 129.
3. *External Education Policies and Tools: Developments, trends and opportunities in the internationalisation of education in the EU and its Member States*. Published by DG Education and Culture.
4. "Value migration" research study conducted by the Expert Council of German Foundations on Integration and Migration, 2012.
5. *Mapping Member States' external Education & Training policies and tools*. DG EAC 2011.

Legislation

6. The Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania. *State Gazette*, 1992, No. 33-1014.
7. Law on the legal status of aliens of the Republic of Lithuania. *State Gazette*, 2004, Nr. 73-2539.
8. Law on education and studies of the Republic of Lithuania. *State Gazette*, 2009, No. 54-2140.
9. Law on duties of the Republic of Lithuania. *State Gazette*, 2000, No. 52-1484
10. The ruling of the Constitutional Court on correspondence of provisions of the Law on education and studies of the Republic of Lithuania (April, 30 2009 edition) to the Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania, December 22, 2011(Case No. 13/2010-140/2010)
11. Decision of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania on 2008-2010 Programme for promotion of internalization of higher education. *State Gazette*, 2008, No. 85-3384.

12. Decision of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania on 2010-2012 Programme for promotion of internalization of higher education. *State Gazette*, 2011, No. 148-6955.
13. Decision of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania on Approval of description of procedure for provision of support to aliens admitted to study in second cycle full-time study form study programmes in Lithuanian higher education institutions. *State Gazette*, 2011, No. 50-2440.
14. Order of the Minister of the Interior and the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Lithuania of March 24, 2011, No. 1V-233/V-66 on Amending the order of the Minister of the Interior and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Lithuania of September 2, 2004 No. 1V-280/V-109 "On approval of procedure description for submission of documents to obtain visa, visa issuance and cancellation, consultations, accrediting travel organizers and travel agencies and approving alien's invitation to arrive temporarily in the Republic of Lithuania". *State Gazette*, 2011, No. 38-1832.
15. Description of procedure for submitting documents to obtain temporary residence permit in the Republic of Lithuania and issuing, replacing, and cancelling temporary residence permits in the Republic of Lithuania to aliens, also evaluating whether marriage or registered partnership agreement were formed or a child was adopted for an alien to obtain temporary residence permit in the Republic of Lithuania, approved by order of the Minister of the Interior of the Republic of Lithuania of October 12, 2005, No. 1V-329. *State Gazette*, 2005, No. 126-4509 and *State Gazette*, 2009, No. 62-2501.
16. Decision of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania on waiving consular fee for processing applications to issue national visas to nationals of Republic of Belarus". *State Gazette*, 2011, No. 115-5411.
17. Order of the Minister of Social Protection and Labour of the Republic of Lithuania, of August 14, 2009, No. A1-500 on Approval of description of procedure and conditions for issuing work permit to aliens. *State Gazette*, 2009, No. 98-4134.
18. Council Directive 2004/114/EC of 13 December 2004 on *the conditions of admission of third-country nationals for the purposes of studies, pupil exchange, unremunerated training or voluntary service*. Official Journal L 375, 23.12.2004, p. 12–18.
19. Regulation (EC) No 810/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 July 2009 establishing a *Community Code on Visas*. Official Journal L 243, 15.9.2009, p. 1–58.

Internet websites

20. <http://www.lrs.lt>
21. <http://www.stat.gov.lt>
22. <http://www.migracija.lt>
23. <http://www.smpf.lt>
24. <http://www.lrvk.lt>
25. <http://www.pasienis.lt>
26. <http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/eurostat/home/>

Other sources

Study Thesaurus (http://www.skvc.lt/studiju_zodynas/tezauras.html).

“G.Steponavičius tikina, kad aukštojo mokslo reforma bus vykdoma toliau” (G.Steponavicius claims that higher education reform shall continue). Lrytas.lt, December 22, 2011.

“ŠMM planuose – iš užsienio privilioti 15-20 tūkst. Studentų” (Plan of the Ministry of Education and Science is to attract 15-20 thousand students). Balsas.lt, December 11, 2010.

