

MIGRATION POLICY IN LITHUANIA 2020

Trends in migration
Emigration and return migration
Immigration and integration of foreigners
Asylum
Combating irregular migration
International cooperation
Institutional framework

TRENDS IN MIGRATION

Lithuania during the period of 1990-2021:

Population of Lithuania:

1990

3.693 million » **2.795 million**

2021

Since 1990, the population of Lithuania has decreased by

▼ 898,000
inhabitants



Due to migration:
679,000

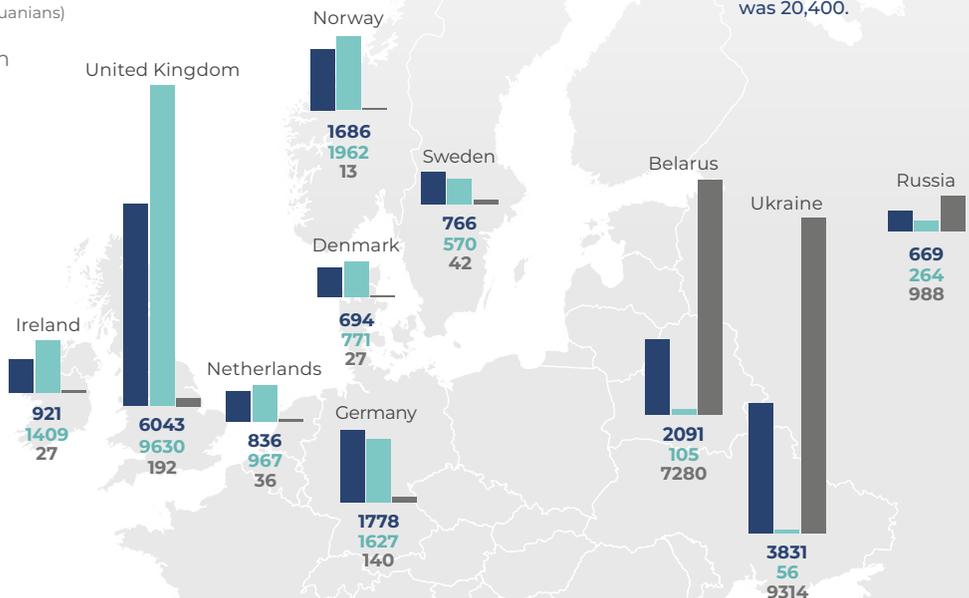


Due to natural population growth:
219,000

In 2020, the largest positive net migration since the restoration of Lithuania's independence was recorded, with around 20,000 more persons entering the country than leaving.

Main emigration and immigration countries in 2020

- Emigration
- Immigration (Returning Lithuanians)
- Immigration (Foreigners)



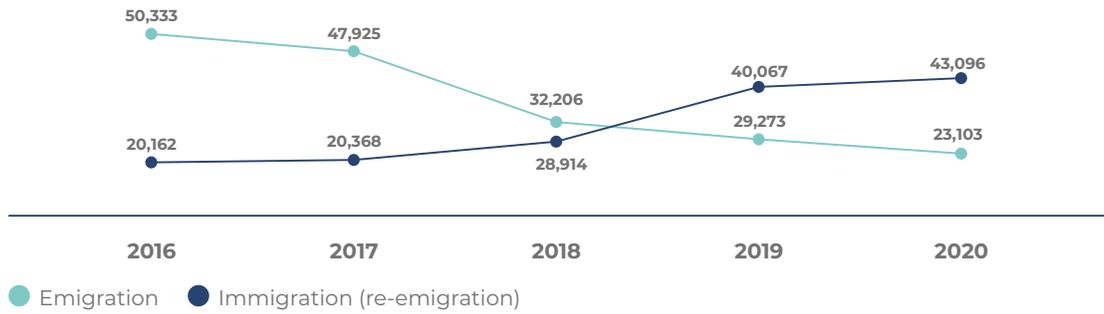
48 %

20,800

of immigrants were returning Lithuanian citizens.

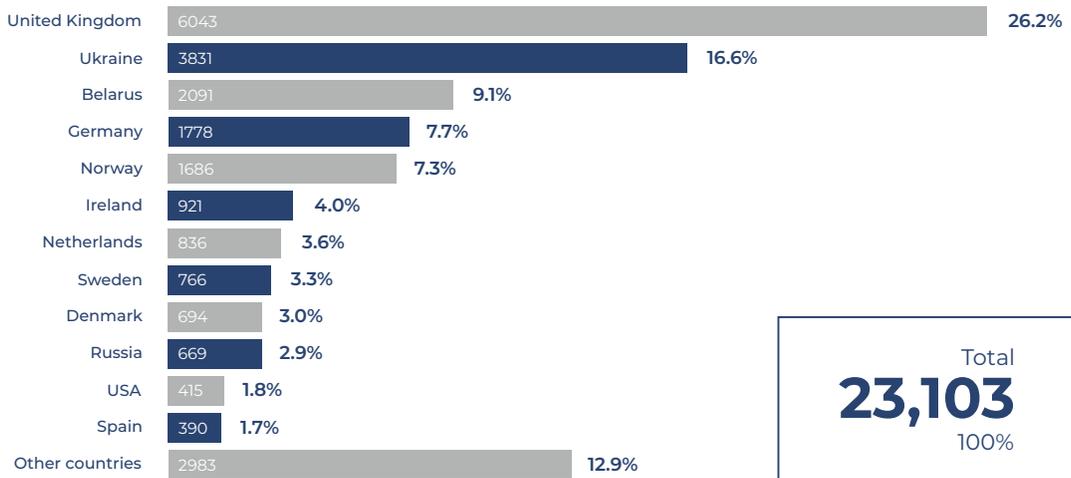
In 2019, the number of returning Lithuanians was 20,400.

Migration: 5-year overview



EMIGRATION AND RETURN MIGRATION

Emigrants by country of destination

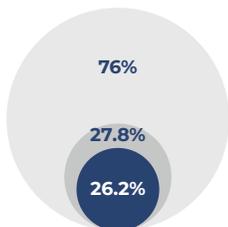
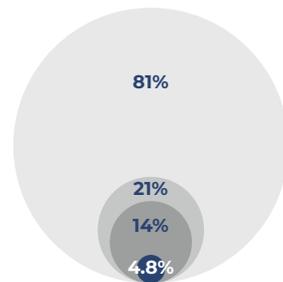


Emigrants by age



According to a survey of the Lithuanian diaspora (N=2288) commissioned by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 2020:

- Thinking about a return to Lithuania;
- Planning a return to Lithuania;
- Planning to return this year or in the next 5 years;
- Planning to return this year or the next year.

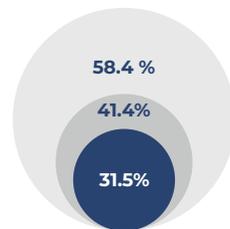


3 main reasons encouraging return:

- Family and friends left in Lithuania;
- I feel best in Lithuania;
- Willingness to work and create for Lithuania.

3 main obstacles and risks when planning return:

- Low wages;
- Lack of tolerance in society, xenophobia;
- Employers' attitude towards employees.



Remittances to Lithuania

EUR 694.31 million

1.4 % of the GDP.

It should be noted that in 2020, the cash flow from the diaspora to Lithuania decreased by around 40 %.

Compare this to government budget allocations:



for defence
EUR 1 billion



for health care
EUR 894 million

Main areas of work and achievements:

- ▶ In 2020, the government continued the implementation of measures under the Global Lithuania programme and the Strategy for Demography, Migration and Integration aimed at promoting the involvement of the Lithuanian diaspora in the creation of change in Lithuania and enhancing return migration.
- ▶ The government continued implementing activities aimed at resettling and integrating Lithuanian citizens, persons of Lithuanian descent and their family members to the Republic of Lithuania from humanitarian crisis-hit countries, areas affected by military conflict and countries in emergency situations.
- ▶ The Migration Information Centre (MIC) "I Choose Lithuania" provided 12,410 consultations to returning Lithuanians (8790 consultations in 2019). The website www.renkuosilietuva.lt received 736,603 visitors. In 2020, the most popular query topics were the following: support for young families, childbirth and child-raising allowances, unemployment benefits, start-up support. The Migration Information Centre began providing psychological assistance in the Lithuanian, English and Russian languages, both for those thinking about returning to Lithuania and for those who have already returned.

IMMIGRATION AND INTEGRATION OF FOREIGNERS

In 2020, 74.4 % of foreigners entered from Ukraine and Belarus.

Arrival of foreigners to Lithuania in 2012-2020



Foreigners in Lithuania by grounds of entry (TRPs) in 2020

58 days – the average duration for issuing a TRP (70 days in 2019).



- Entered under a national D visa
- Employment: highly qualified workers
- Business: under the start-up scheme

Lists of shortage occupations in Lithuania in 2020

 Highly qualified workers	 Qualified workers
<p>57 occupations</p>	<p>72 (first half-year) 59 (second half-year) occupations</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ IT professionals ○ Aircraft operation professionals ○ Ship operation professionals ○ Other 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Long Haul Truck Drivers ○ Welders ○ Concreters ○ Other

Workers in these occupations enter under the facilitated procedure.

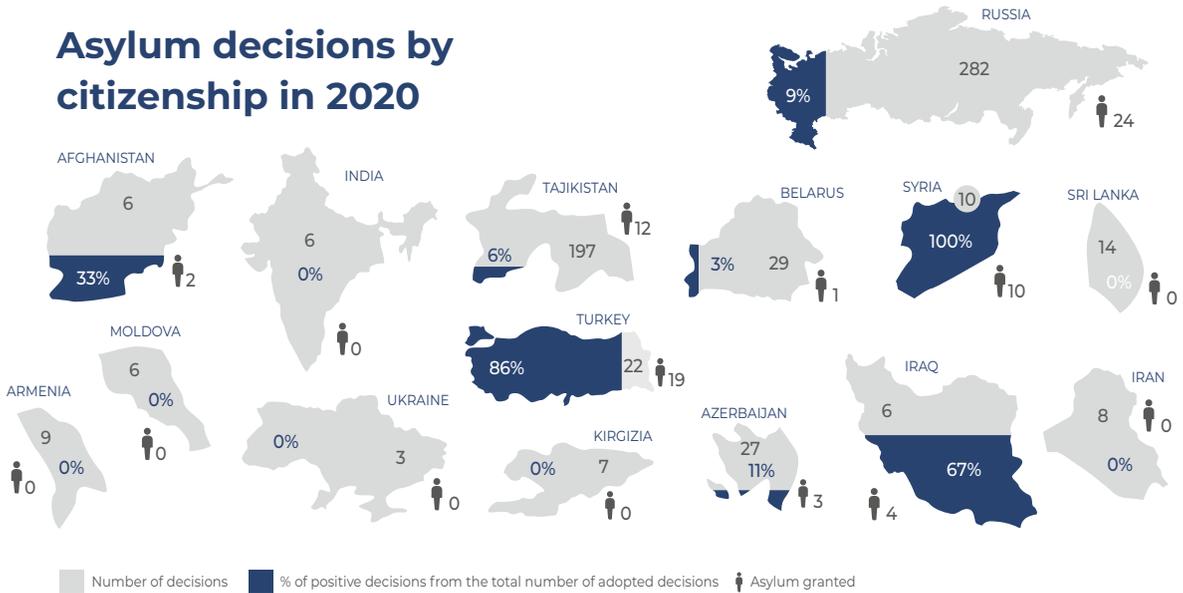
2 418 foreigners participated in integration programmes.

Main areas of work and achievements:

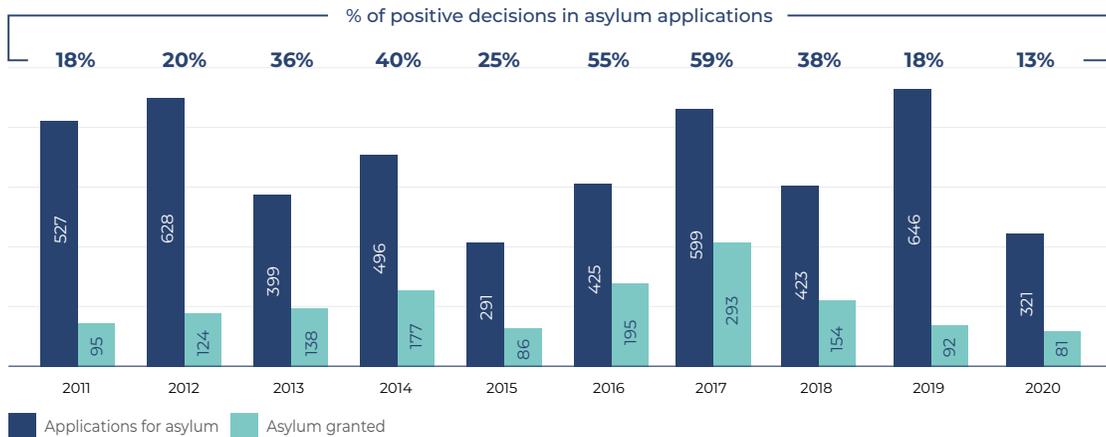
- ▶ In order to improve the existing regulation, the following amendments to the Law of on the Legal Status of Aliens were passed in 2020 and entered into force on 1 March 2021:
 - Highly qualified foreigners and intra-corporate transferees are allowed to begin working immediately after submitting an application;
 - Foreign students and researchers who arrive under EU mobility programmes are allowed to work during their stay in Lithuania;
 - Foreigners who complete their studies in Lithuania will be exempt from both the requirement of work experience and the restriction to take up employment only in the area of their qualification;
 - The working time restriction (20 hours) applies only to foreigners in first cycle programmes;
 - The possibility to take up employment under an employment contract for several employers was provided not only for foreigners holding a temporary residence permit, but also for foreigners who enter Lithuania to take up employment under a national visa.
- ▶ In view of the growing number of enquiries of Belarusian nationals about the possibilities to come to Lithuania for residence and work, the Ministry of the Interior, together with the Migration Information Centre, prepared and distributed information leaflets in Russian and English presenting the most important issues in migration.
- ▶ As of 11 August 2020, Lithuania started issuing permits to nationals of Belarus to enter Lithuania on humanitarian grounds. As of 21 September 2020, nationals of Belarus have been able to obtain a 6-month multiple-entry national visa under facilitated conditions.
- ▶ The Government of the Republic of Lithuania approved amendments to the Description of the Procedure for Providing State Support for the Integration of the Persons who have been Granted Asylum. In implementing the amendments, an individual integration plan is drawn up for each person who has been granted asylum, and the duration of the provision of integration assistance and the allowance rate depend on the individual progress and involvement in integration measures.

ASYLUM

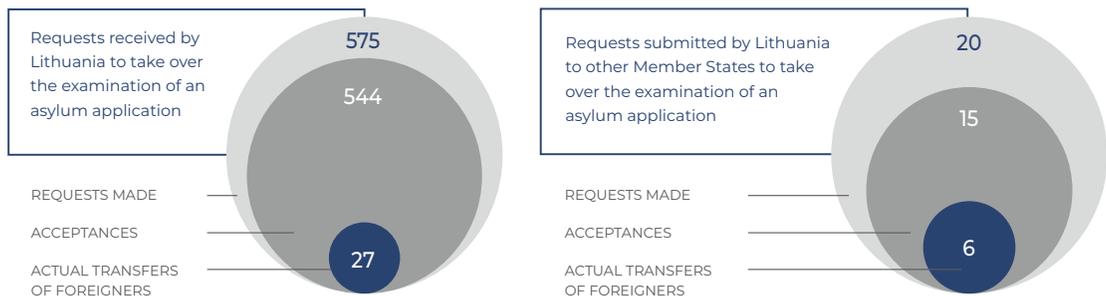
Asylum decisions by citizenship in 2020



Asylum: 10-year overview



Transfers under the Dublin Regulation in 2020



Main areas of work and achievements:

- ▶ Restrictions on the movement of persons due to the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic have led to a decrease in the inflow of asylum applicants in 2020. However, due to the protracted political crisis triggered by the Belarusian presidential elections, the number of nationals of Belarus who entered the Republic of Lithuania availing of legal entry opportunities increased.
- ▶ Lithuania continued to implement solidarity measures by relocating foreigners in need of asylum. In 2020, 6 asylum applicants were relocated from Greece and Jordan.
- ▶ Asylum applicants and detained foreigners were granted access to legal and humanitarian assistance provided by lawyers of the Lithuanian Red Cross Society.
- ▶ Provision was made for the right of asylum applicants to take up employment where the Migration Department does not take a decision on granting asylum in the Republic of Lithuania within 6 months from the lodging of an application for asylum. However, these persons are not able to register with the Employment Service because, under the legislation currently in force, foreigners can register with the Employment Service only if they hold a temporary residence permit in the Republic of Lithuania.
- ▶ In 2020, the Ministry of Social Security and Labour signed a cooperation agreement with Mykolas Romeris University. Eligible persons who have been granted asylum in Lithuania will have an opportunity to enrol in the university's study programmes in English or Lithuanian languages free of charge.
- ▶ To create equal and effective reception conditions for asylum applicants, the Migration Department has been designated as an authorised body responsible for the accommodation of asylum applicants in accordance with the procedure laid down by the Government at accommodation facilities or temporary housing.

COMBATING IRREGULAR MIGRATION

Refusals of entry: top 5 by citizenship in 2020



0.34 %

The number of foreigners denied entry accounted for 0.34 per cent of all arrivals

Reasons for refusal of entry in 2020



16% (737)

No valid document / a counterfeit document



70% (3216)

A threat to security or public policy



8% (347)

No documentation justifying the purpose and conditions of stay



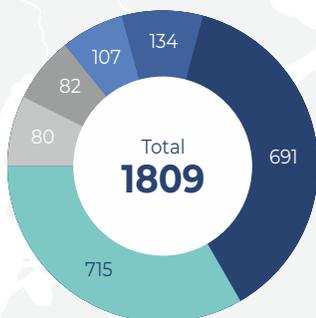
6% (275)

Other

100% (4575)

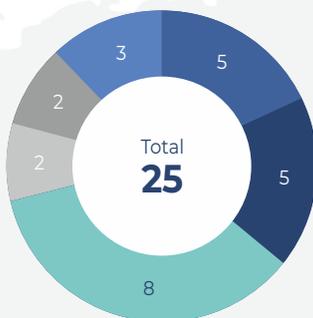
Return and expulsion of foreigners

Number of **returned** foreigners by citizenship



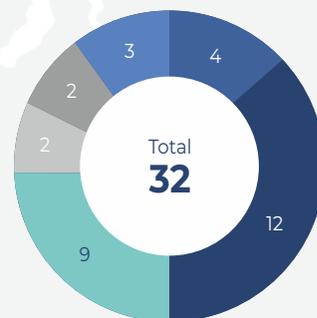
- Ukraine
- Russia
- Uzbekistan
- Kazakhstan
- Tajikistan
- Other

Number of **expelled** foreigners by citizenship



- Belarus
- Moldova
- Georgia
- Ukraine
- Russia
- Other

Number of foreigners **returned voluntarily** with the assistance of IOM Vilnius



- Belarus
- Ukraine
- India
- Nigeria
- Russia
- Other

Illegal employment

2020 m.

4161

This is the number of illegal employment inspections carried out by the State Labour Inspectorate.

It should be noted that as the number of third-country nationals entering Lithuania to take up employment continues to grow, over the past years an increase in the number of illegally employed foreigners has been recorded.



Main areas of work and achievements:

- In 2020, the number of detained third-country nationals who entered Lithuania by irregularly crossing the EU's external border decreased. Most of the persons were detained at the border with Belarus.
- The State Border Guard Service and the Baltic Institute of Advanced Technology (BPTI) signed an agreement on cooperation and data exchange in the development of innovative technologies between border control staff and scientists.
- Foreigners whose period of legal stay in Lithuania expired when Lithuania introduced quarantine (from 16 March 2020 to 16 August 2020) and who were unable to leave Lithuania on time through no fault of their own were granted a tolerance period of 2 months, counting from the end of quarantine. The same tolerance period applied to persons in respect of whom a return decision had been taken but the period of voluntary departure expired during quarantine.

INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

Main areas of work and achievements:

- ▶ In 2020, Lithuania chaired the Strategic Group of the Prague Process (a regional consultative platform on migration, bringing together 50 countries) and participated in the events of the process.
- ▶ The implementing Protocol between the Government of the Republic of Lithuania and the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine to the Agreement between the European Community and Ukraine on the readmission of persons entered into force on 1 January 2020.
- ▶ On 17 March 2020, the Agreement on Employment and Cooperation in the Field of Labour Migration between the Government of the Republic of Lithuania and the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine came into effect. The agreement aims to ensure the protection of workers' rights and interests and combat illegal employment.
- ▶ In 2020, the nature of bilateral cooperation of the State Border Committee of the Republic of Belarus with the State Border Guard Service changed: the fruitful cooperation that took place in previous years has become only formal.

INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK

Main areas of work and achievements:

- ▶ In 2020, the development of MIGRIS continued in order to improve the quality of migration services output and of customer service. It should be noted that following the launch of MIGRIS and the prevention of fake visit appointments, the waiting time for a visit for foreigners was reduced from 3 months to 1-2 working days.
- ▶ The implementation of the "International House Vilnius" project, which has the aim of increasing Lithuania's competitiveness by attracting talents from abroad, was continued.
- ▶ On 2 September 2020, the Migration Department's customer service quality assessment indicators and their evaluation system were approved, and on 30 October 2020, the Migration Department's customer service standard was approved. These changes have enabled to harmonise the working practices of all migration units, ensure the uniform provision of information and standardise the application and decision-making procedures.

Key migration institutions

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

- formulates and implements the position of the Republic of Lithuania on the common visa policy.

Ministry of the Interior

- formulates state policy in the area of migration, organizes, coordinates and controls its implementation;
- takes decisions on issues of citizenship in accordance with the procedure laid down by legal acts.

Ministry of Social Security and Labour

- submits to the Government of the Republic of Lithuania proposals regarding the labour market and support of employment, recruitment of foreigners (third-country nationals) in the Republic of Lithuania;
- coordinates and supervises the provision of state support for the integration of the foreigners who have been granted asylum in Lithuania;
- analyses foreigners' integration processes;
- drafts and submits to the Government of the Republic of Lithuania legal acts concerning the integration of foreigners.

Diplomatic Missions

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

Migration Department

- organises the issue and renewal of passports, identity cards, service passports, temporary certificates to citizens of the Republic of Lithuania;
- organises the issue of and issues the documents attesting to the right to reinstate citizenship of Lithuania and certifying Lithuanian descent;
- organises the issue of Schengen and national visas, certificates confirming the right of a national of an EU Member State to reside in the Republic of Lithuania temporarily or permanently, temporary residence permits in the Republic of Lithuania, permits of a long-term resident of the Republic of Lithuania to reside in the EU, (temporary and permanent) residence cards of a family member of a Union citizen, travel documents of stateless persons and refugees, a foreigner's passports, a foreigner's registration certificates, e-resident's cards;
- together with other state authorities, carries out resettlement of foreigners to Lithuania;
- in cases stipulated by legal acts, takes decisions on the acquisition of citizenship by children, confirms the fact of holding citizenship by a child; organises the procedure of taking of individuals' oath to the Republic of Lithuania at the Ministry of the Interior;
- resolves, within its remit, the issues of the citizenship of the Republic of Lithuania;
- within its remit, takes decisions on the issue of temporary residence permits in the Republic of Lithuania, permits of a long-term resident of the Republic of Lithuania to reside in the EU and foreigners' passports;
- implements the asylum-granting procedure and takes relevant decisions, organises the implementation of decisions taken on asylum issues;
- controls the stay and residence of foreigners in the Republic of Lithuania;
- takes decisions regarding the return or expulsion of foreigners from Lithuania, organises the enforcement of the decisions taken regarding the expulsion of foreigners from Lithuania, issues a temporary travel document;
- grants the status of a person to be resettled, implements resettlement procedures of asylum seekers from other countries to Lithuania;
- draws up and manages the national no-entry list.

Employment Service

- issues work permits to foreigners in Lithuania, takes decisions regarding the compliance of a foreigner's employment with the needs of the labour market of the Republic of Lithuania.

Refugees Reception Center

- provides temporary accommodation to unaccompanied minors, resettled and relocated third-country nationals and foreigners who have been granted asylum in Lithuania;
- provides accommodation to foreigners who have been granted a reflection period during which they, as present or former victims of crimes related to trafficking in human beings, must take a decision on cooperation with a pre-trial investigation body or the court investigating the crimes related to trafficking in human beings;
- implements the social integration of foreigners who have been granted asylum.

State Border Guard Service

- controls the stay and residence of foreigners in Lithuania;
- receives and supports foreigners who have been detained and accommodated at the SBGS;
- conducts the initial asylum procedure;
- carries out removals of foreigners from the Republic of Lithuania;
- issues Schengen visas;
- carries out control of the entry of persons into the Republic of Lithuania;
- takes decisions on refusal of admission of foreigners into the Republic of Lithuania.

This publication was prepared in cooperation with the Ministry of the Interior, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) Vilnius office, and the European Migration Network (EMN) in Lithuania. The publication was prepared according to the 2020 Report on the Implementation of the Lithuanian Migration Policy Guidelines and Monitoring of Migration Processes. The Migration Policy Guidelines are the main strategic document establishing the goals, principles and directions of the migration and asylum policy in Lithuania.

EMN is a network of EU Member States, Norway and the European Commission aimed at gathering, analysing and sharing up-to-date, objective, comparable information on emerging issues relating to asylum and migration in Europe. According to the resolution of the Lithuanian Government, Lithuania is represented in the network by IOM Vilnius office which works in close cooperation with the Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Lithuania and its institutions under the Ministry.

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