

Migration Policy in Lithuania 2022

Migration trends

Emigration and return migration

Immigration and integration of foreigners

Asylum

Combating irregular migration

International cooperation

Institutional framework

MIGRATION TRENDS

Lithuania in 1990 – 2023:

Population of Lithuania:

1990

3.693 million

2023

2.857 million

Since 1990, the population of Lithuania has decreased by

▼ 836,000 inhabitants



due to migration:
585,000

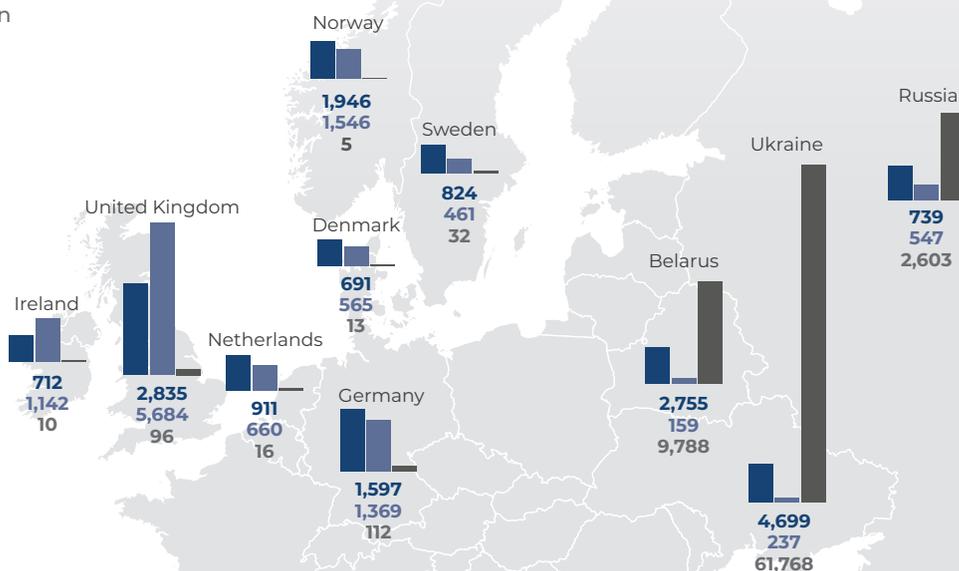


due to natural population change:
264,000

The trend of positive net migration, which started in 2019, continued in 2022 with 72,000 more inhabitants coming to the country than leaving.

Top countries by emigration and immigration in 2022

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



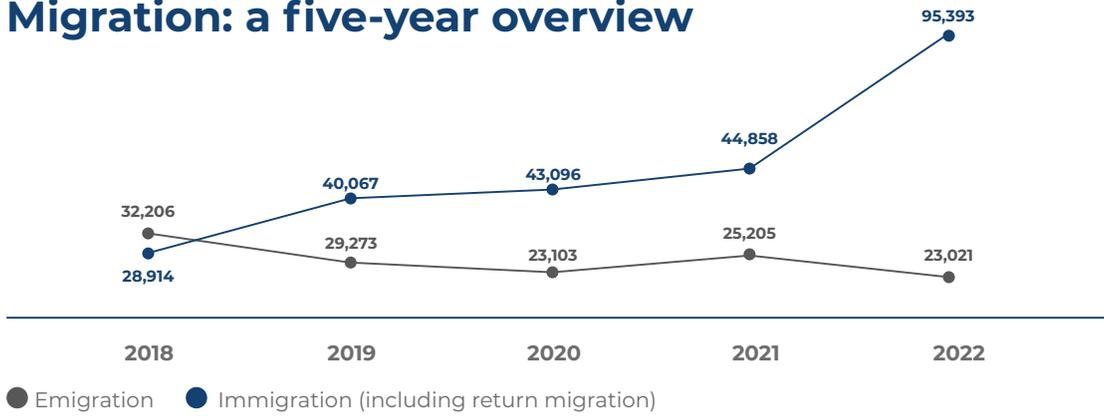
15%

14.3 thousand

of immigrants were returning Lithuanian citizens.

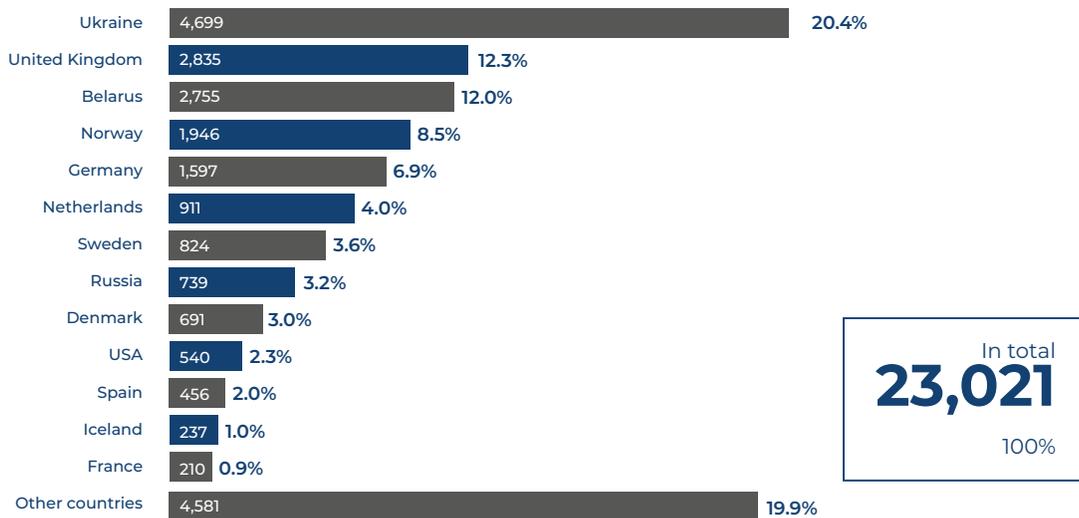
In 2021, the number of returning Lithuanian citizens amounted to 23.7 thousand.

Migration: a five-year overview

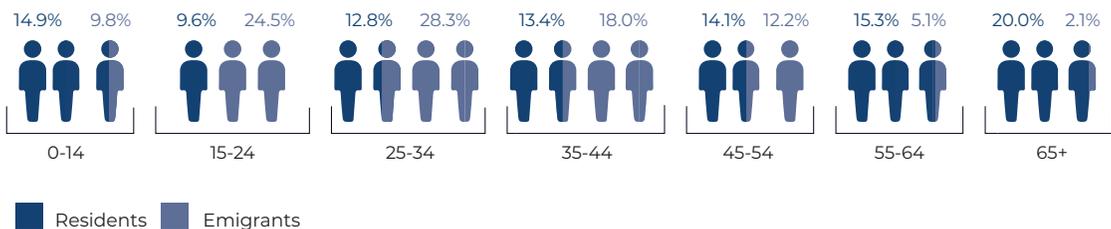


EMIGRATION AND RETURN MIGRATION

Emigrants by country of destination

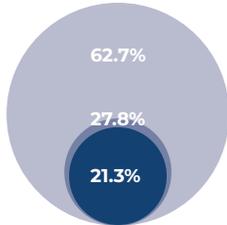
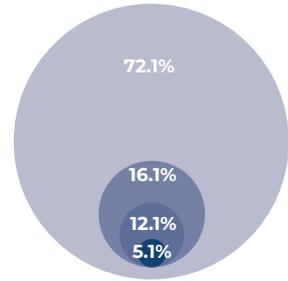


Emigrants by age



According to a survey of the Lithuanian diaspora (N=2059) commissioned by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

- Considers returning to Lithuania (5% fewer than in 2021)
- Plans to return to Lithuania (1.7% fewer than in 2021)
- Plans to return this year or in the next five years (0.2% fewer than in 2021)
- Plans to return this year or next year (1% fewer than in 2021)

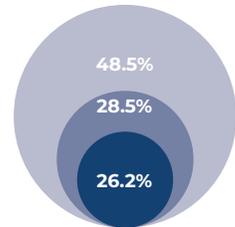


Top 3 incentives for returning:

- Family and friends in Lithuania
- I feel better in Lithuania than anywhere else
- Wish to work and create for Lithuania

Top 3 obstacles and risks when considering a return:

- Low salaries
- Feelings of insecurity and doubts if everything would work out / if reintegration would be successful
- Lack of tolerance in the society and xenophobia



Remittances to Lithuania

701.19 mn EUR

i.e., approximately 1% of the GDP.
While remittances from emigrants to Lithuania have steadily decreased in 2019-2021 (by 46.4%), it increased by 6.5% in 2022.

In comparison, the state budget allocated:



National defense
1.65 bn EUR



Healthcare
1.53 bn EUR

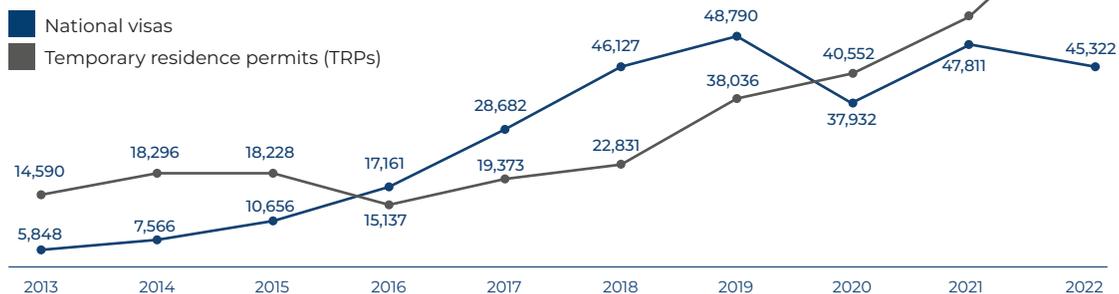
Main areas of work and achievements:

- ▶ Strategic guidelines for Lithuanian diaspora policy "Global Lithuania: 2022-2030" and its annual implementation Action Plan were approved to strengthen ties with the diaspora.
- ▶ A mechanism was implemented for the resettlement to Lithuania of and integration support for citizens of the Republic of Lithuania, persons of Lithuanian origin and their family members who live in countries under humanitarian crises or find themselves in extreme situations and territories engulfed by a military conflict:
 - By the end of 2022, 124 persons were transferred to Lithuania (of which 50 were transferred last year).
 - In 2022, the Government adopted a decision regarding the resettlement of persons from Ukraine. By the end of the year, authorities received 110 applications from Ukrainian residents seeking this status.
- ▶ The Employment Service implemented a return migration project [Gal i Lietuvą?](#) which provides information to the Lithuanians residing abroad on Lithuania's labor market, employers, and their expectations.
- ▶ In 2022, the Migration Information Center "[Renkuosi Lietuvą](#)" ["I Choose Lithuania"] continued carrying out activities funded by the Ministry of the Interior and implemented by Vilnius Office of the International Organization for Migration (IOM Lithuania):
 - The Center's website [renkuosilietuva.lt](#) had 984,345 visitors, which is 40 thousand more than in 2021.
 - The number of consultations reached 14,449, exceeding the number of consultations provided in 2021 by more than 2,500. Returning Lithuanians received 4,459 consultations.

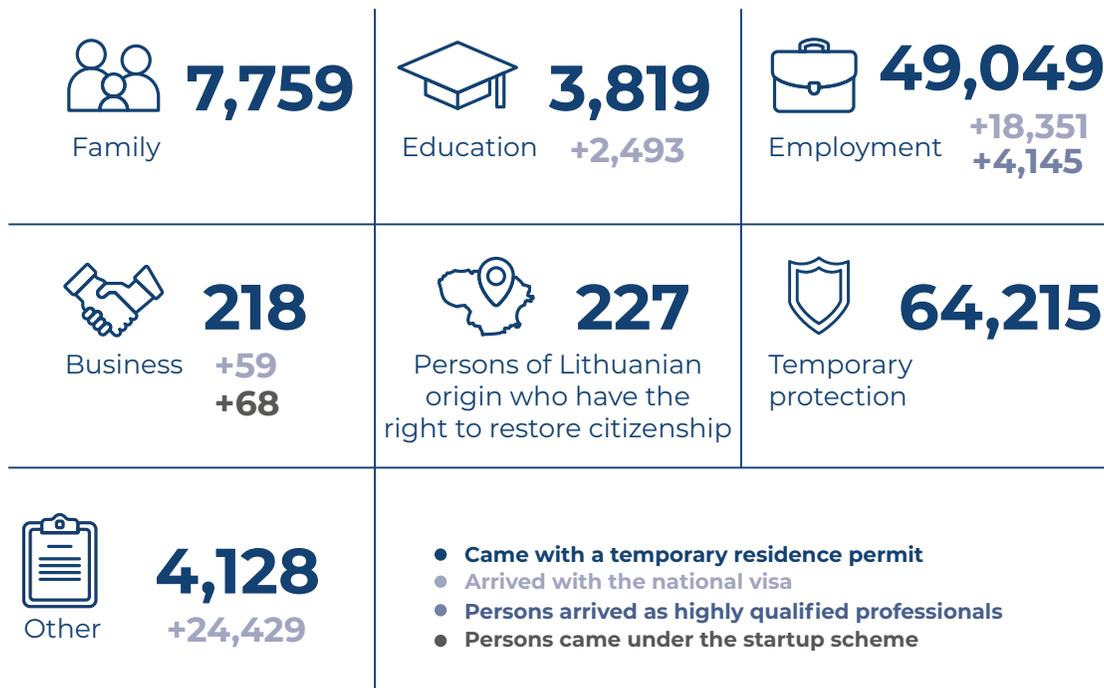
IMMIGRATION AND INTEGRATION OF FOREIGNERS

In 2022, 81,041 foreigners immigrated to Lithuania. 76% of them were migrants from Ukraine, which has been embroiled in an ongoing war since February 24, 2022.

Arrival of foreigners to Lithuania in 2013-2022



Foreigners in Lithuania by grounds of entry (TRPs and national visas) in 2022



Lists of shortage occupations in Lithuania in 2022



Highly qualified employees



Qualified employees

67 occupations

Including the following:

- Computer application engineers
- Software testers
- Software developers
- Graphic designers
- Aircraft operation professionals
- Ship operation professionals
- Other

163 occupations

Including the following:

- Drivers of international freight vehicles
- Welders
- Concreters
- Plasterers
- Bricklayers
- Other

Employees in these occupations enter under facilitated procedure.

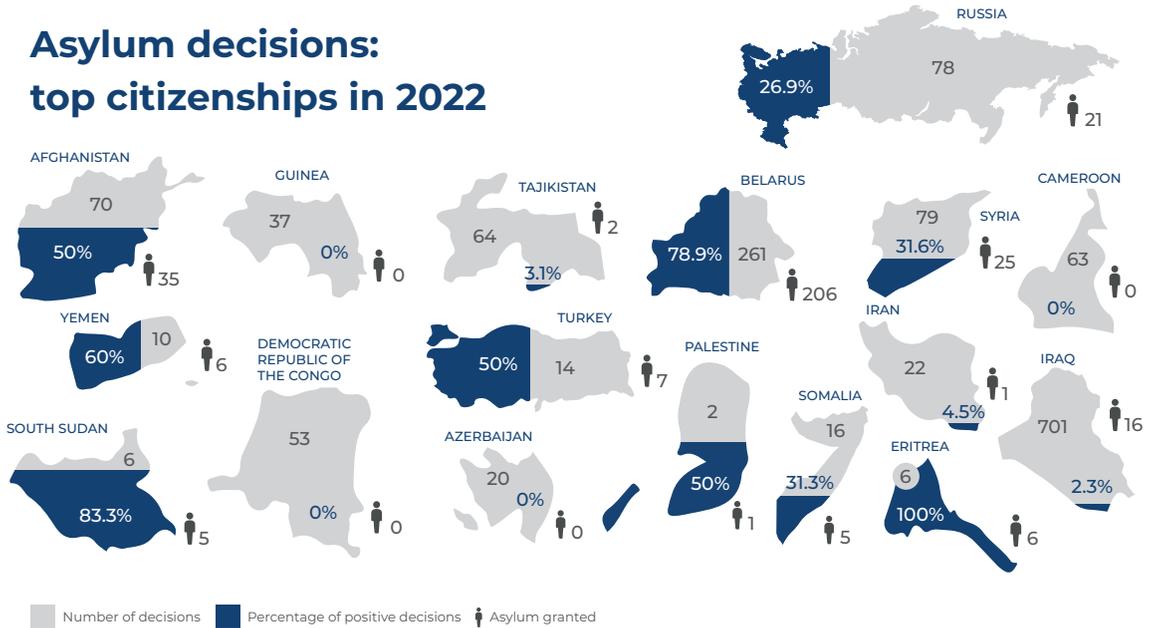
2,770 third-country nationals participated in integration programs, which is 56% less than in 2021

Main areas of work and achievements:

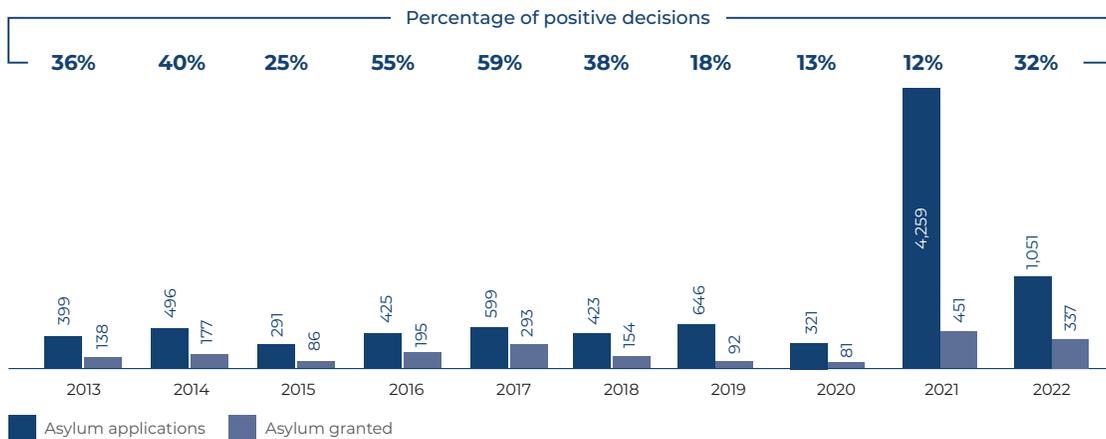
- ▶ To streamline immigration procedures, amendments were made to the Law on the Legal Status of Foreigners which simplified the conditions for issuing residence permits in the Republic of Lithuania on the bases of work and family reunification, as well as for startup founders and highly qualified professionals.
- ▶ The revised EU Blue Card Directive was transposed into national law. Additionally, to facilitate the entry of highly qualified specialists into the Lithuanian labor market, the following amendments to the Law on the Legal Status of Foreigners were adopted:
 - The concept of high professional qualification was broadened significantly. As of August 1, 2022, when the amendments to the Law took effect, the qualification of information and communication technology (ICT) professionals is no longer solely based on holding a higher education diploma. Instead, it is now also recognized by a minimum of three years of professional experience in the ICT field;
 - Foreigners employed in jobs that demand high professional qualifications are no longer required to apply to the Employment Service to assess the compatibility of their work with the needs of the Lithuanian labor market;
 - The process for highly qualified foreigners holding a temporary residence permit to change their job functions while employed by the same employer has been streamlined and simplified;
 - Highly qualified foreigners with a temporary residence permit are now permitted to work for multiple employers as long as they remain with the initial employer who committed to employing them in the first place.
- ▶ In March 2022, the Ministry of the Interior implemented provisions to facilitate the ongoing relocation of businesses from Belarus. The provisions have eased the arrival conditions for foreigners who come to work in Lithuania from companies that were established in Belarus and relocated their operations to Lithuania.
- ▶ Description of the Progress Measures for the 2021-2030 Social Cohesion Development Program "Developing the Integration System for Foreigners" was approved. The approved description aims to address the challenges arising in the field of foreigners' integration and to enhance the involvement of migrants in Lithuanian society.
- ▶ In response to the war in Ukraine, authorities offered Ukrainian nationals vital support, including access to essential information, social services, psychological and legal consultations. Moreover, they created favorable conditions for accommodation, integration into the labor market, education, and opportunities to learn both the Lithuanian and English languages.

ASYLUM

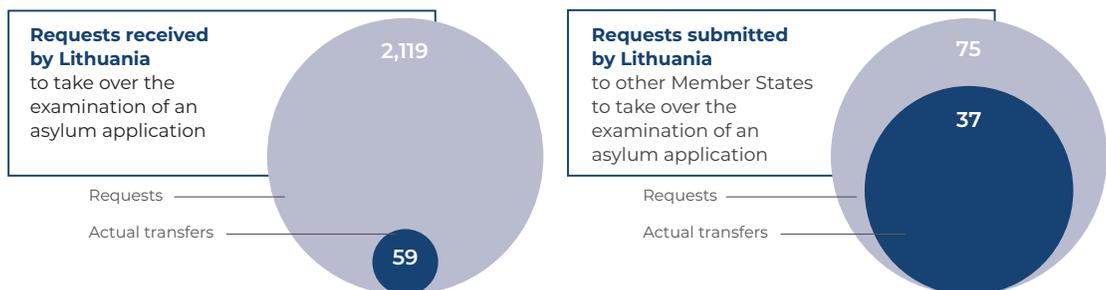
Asylum decisions: top citizenships in 2022



Asylum: a ten-year overview



Transfers under the Dublin Regulation in 2022



Main areas of work and achievements:

▶ In response to the Russian aggression in Ukraine, Lithuania extended temporary protection to more than 66 thousand Ukrainian nationals. As a result, authorities:

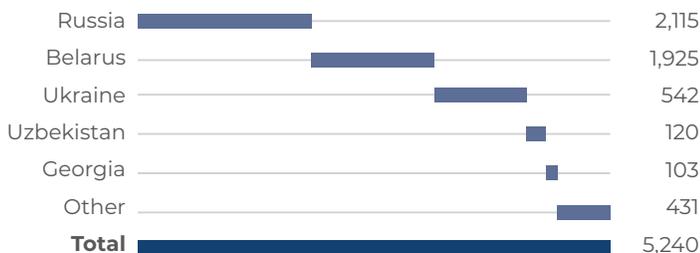
- Amended legal regulations to create more favorable conditions for reception, accommodation, employment, and access to social services;
- Established a digital temporary residence permit to live in Lithuania;
- Provided opportunities to collect data on incoming Ukrainian nationals to better organize the services provided to them by various institutions;
- Cooperated with municipalities and non-governmental organizations to address the reception and support measures for Ukrainian nationals. As an example, Public Enterprise "Strong Together" provided accommodation to 29,784 individuals, which accounted for 44% of all individuals who left Ukraine to seek refuge in Lithuania.

▶ In response to the irregular migration flows organized by the Belarusian regime, the legal regulations pertaining to migrants and asylum seekers who crossed the Belarus-Lithuania border irregularly were enhanced and improved:

- Changes were made to the procedure for appealing decisions made by authorities regarding the denial of asylum, the right to work, or pursuit of independent economic activity. Additionally, during an extreme situation, procedures for examining asylum requests and providing accommodation to migrants were amended;
- Amendments to the Labor Code came into effect, allowing the Employment Service to provide mediation services to asylum seekers who have the right and intention to work in Lithuania under an employment contract;
- Migrant reception conditions were improved, ensuring adequate accommodation infrastructure, well-organized activities in temporary housing facilities, and the provision of psychological and humanitarian support, along with translation and legal services;
- A concept for the restructuring of migrant reception and accommodation was developed.

COMBATING IRREGULAR MIGRATION

Foreigners who were refused entry: top 5 citizenships in 2022



0.29%

of all arriving foreigners were refused entry.

Reasons for refusal of entry in 2022



22% (1,374)

No valid document/
a counterfeit document



50% (3,062)

A threat to security
or public order



21% (1,301)

Lack of documents justifying the
purpose and conditions of stay



7% (435)

Other

100% (6,172)

Return and expulsion of foreigners

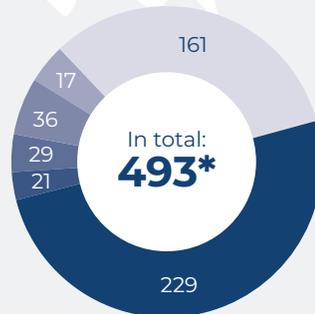
Return decisions by citizenship



- Belarus
- Iraq
- Russia
- Kyrgyzstan
- Uzbekistan
- Other

Voluntary returns with the assistance of State Border Guard Service: 639
IOM Lithuania: 40

Expulsion decisions by citizenship



- Iraq
- Guinea
- Cameroon
- Democratic Republic of the Congo
- Tajikistan
- Other

Number of persons expelled: 18

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

Illegal employment

2022

4,217

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

Number of illegal work cases

2021

483

2022

489

Main areas of work and achievements:

As a result of the Russian aggression that commenced in Ukraine on February 24, 2022, Lithuania bolstered its state border protection measures. From February to September, a state of emergency was in effect throughout the entire territory of Lithuania, and from September to March 2023, it was limited to the border areas with Belarus and the Kaliningrad Oblast, as well as border control points located outside the border zone. During the state of emergency, the following measures were taken to ensure national security and address potential threats:

- The visa regime for Russian and Belarusian citizens was tightened, and from September 19, 2022, the movement of Russian citizens across the EU's external border was restricted;
- National authorities completed the construction of approximately 530 km of physical barrier along the border with Belarus. Additionally, border surveillance systems were installed, allowing to monitor about 94% of the Belarus-Lithuania border;
- Individuals who intended to cross or already crossed the EU's external border at unspecified locations were not allowed to enter the territory of the Republic of Lithuania. To address this situation, assistance from the international community was sought. FRONTEX, Europol, and European Union Agency for Asylum provided support to Lithuanian authorities in terms of both human and technical resources.

As the Belarusian regime continued instrumentalizing irregular migration in 2022, Lithuanian institutions:

- Prepared a new module for the reception and accommodation of migrants that enabled a swift response to changing migrant flows;
- Cooperated with partner states in advocating for changes to the EU's legal framework governing migration policy. In response, the European Commission presented legislative proposals aimed at amending the Schengen Borders Code, countering the instrumentalization of migration, and imposing sanctions on carriers involved in illegal transportation of people;
- Participated in activities coordinated by Europol aimed at preventing international criminal groups from illegally transporting migrants to Europe through Belarus;
- Encouraged voluntary return of foreigners to their countries of origin;
- Actively cooperated with responsible institutions and diplomatic agencies of the migrants' countries of origin.

INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

Main areas of work and achievements:

▶ In 2022, the main international cooperation actions were directed toward assisting Ukraine during the invasion by Russia:

- During the International Migration Review Forum at the United Nations, the Lithuanian delegation strongly denounced Russian aggression and called upon both Russia and Belarus to uphold international law and its principles;
- Lithuania, together with other Baltic States and Poland, made a regional decision to restrict the entry of Russian citizens via the external border of the European Union;
- The responsible ministries of Lithuania and Ukraine signed a cooperation agreement to ensure the protection of Ukrainian children affected by the war in Ukraine.

▶ Authorities continue to draw attention to the issue of irregular migration flows orchestrated by the Belarusian regime. As part of their efforts, the Ministry of the Interior collaborated with colleagues from Austria and Greece to hold an international conference on Border Management in Vilnius. During the conference, the EU's border protection and migration policies were discussed, as well suggestions were made how the EU should respond to the instrumentalization of migration flows.

▶ The Ministries of the Interior and Social Security and Labor signed the Action Plan for 2022-2023 with the European Union Agency for Asylum. The Action Plan highlights the Agency's support for Lithuania and outlines measures designed to manage the irregular migration flows organized by the Belarusian regime.

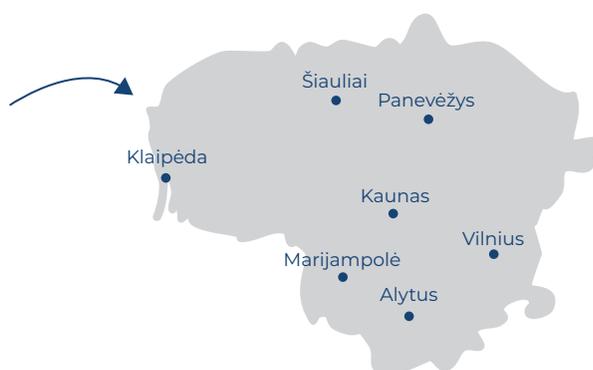
▶ Lithuanian, Latvian, and Estonian Ministries of the Interior signed a declaration concerning the fight against human trafficking across state borders. The declaration establishes the prerequisites and establishes a legal framework to facilitate more effective institutional cooperation in the

INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK

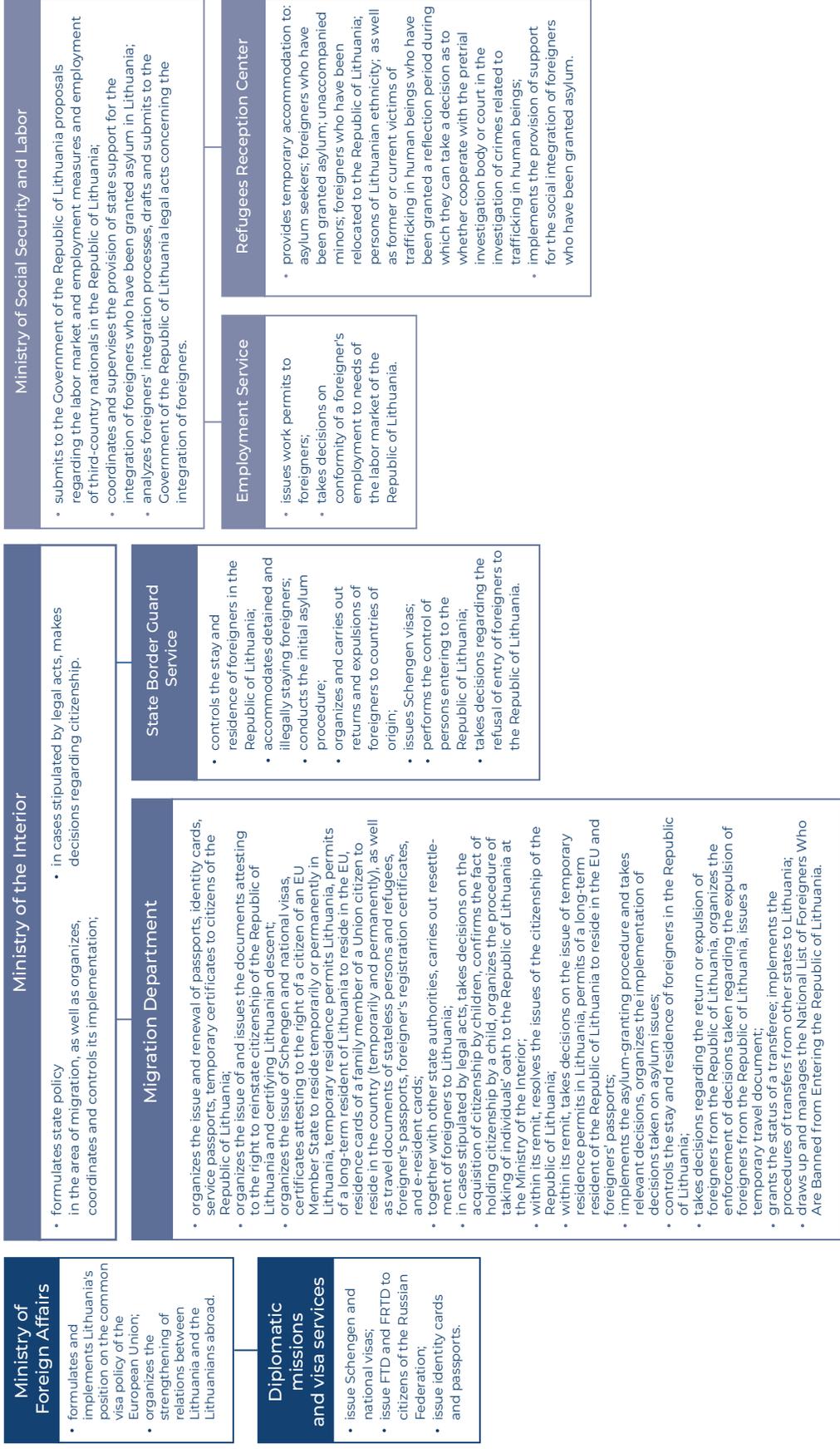
Main areas of work and achievements:

▶ Seven temporary registration centers were established by national authorities to ensure the efficient reception of Ukrainians who had to leave their homes due to the aggression by the Russian regime in Ukraine. The centers operated in Alytus, Kaunas, Klaipėda, Marijampolė, Panevėžys, Šiauliai, and Vilnius.

▶ An inter-institutional working group was established to assist the Migration Department in addressing issues related to the control of foreigners' presence and residence in Lithuania, such as assessing threats posed to national security by foreign nationals.



Key institutions in migration



This publication was prepared in cooperation with the Ministry of the Interior, the International Organization for Migration Vilnius Office (IOM Lithuania), and the European Migration Network (EMN) in Lithuania. The publication was prepared according to the 2022 Report on the Implementation of the Lithuanian Migration Policy Guidelines and Monitoring of Migration Processes. The Migration Policy Guidelines are the main strategic document establishing the goals, principles and directions of the migration and asylum policy in Lithuania.

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

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