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Fostering sustainable labour market integration of migrants: skills matching policies and instruments

2025

EMN STUDY

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More information about EMN activities in Lithuania: www.emn.lt.

Contact details:

European Migration Network National Contact Point in Lithuania

A. Jakšto str. 12, 4th floor

LT-01105, Vilnius

Email: emnlithuania@iom.int

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VILNIUS, 2025

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FACTSHEET

Lithuania's main driver of skills mismatching is language. Proficiency thresholds, especially in customer-facing and regulated settings, slow entry into jobs that match migrants' qualifications, and progression beyond introductory levels is uneven. The Employment Service offers Lithuanian courses to all third-country nationals with residence status, but stakeholders consistently note that provision should be tailored to distinct groups and occupations, delivered at multiple proficiency levels, and scheduled flexibly to combine with work and care. A second driver stems from differences between training and qualification systems: strict regulation in Lithuania often triggers compensatory requirements (bridging, adaptation periods, exams), which lengthen recognition timelines, particularly in regulated professions, and delay entry at the right skill level. Residence status that depends on employment adds pressure to prioritize quick re-employment over suitable re-entry, pushing many into survival jobs. Housing and childcare constraints, together with discrimination, stereotypes and the disadvantages associated with older age at arrival, further reinforce vertical overqualification and, to a lesser extent, horizontal mismatch.

As migrant numbers have increased over the past five years, migration has become a central topic on the policy agenda. Public attention to skills mismatch intensified with the arrival of the Ukrainian refugees, when strong societal support revealed systemic barriers and prompted some changes in areas such as licensing and language requirements. Despite these developments, policy responses documented in Sections 2–5 remain partial and uneven. Some instruments exist (experience-equivalence for non-regulated high-skill roles (including ICT), facilitation for Ukrainian healthcare professionals through temporary supervised practice and deferred language proof, a project to adapt VET pathways for third-country nationals, etc.); however, dedicated measures that target skills mismatch as such are limited. Recognition outcomes are strong on paper (around 94% approvals for recognizing professional experience as equivalent to higher education in 2019–2024), yet conversion into skill-level employment is inconsistent where separate licensing steps, employer practices and language progression are not aligned. Access to childcare and social assistance varies by legal status, kindergarten timing and waiting lists affect participation in training and work, and tight urban housing markets intersect with the geography of higher-skill jobs. Overall, progress is concentrated in specific sectors and statuses, while a system-wide approach to skills matching is not yet evident in Lithuania.

1.

Drivers of skills
mismatch

Question 1. Based on available literature and expert opinions, what are migrant-specific drivers for skills mismatches, i.e. drivers related to the composition of migrants in your country?

Driver	Explanation
Country of origin related drivers (e.g. lack of documentation of qualifications)	YES
Migrants from certain third countries may struggle to provide full documentation of their qualifications, particularly in cases of forced migration. According to the State Health Care Accreditation Agency (VASPVT), missing or incomplete documents are a recurring obstacle in the recognition process for healthcare professionals. The Study Quality Assessment Centre (SKVC) also notes that if applicants do not collect and submit all required documents, including legalized and translated versions, the recognition procedure is delayed. Although SKVC has a formal procedure for recognizing qualifications without complete documentation, in practice, such cases have not yet been applied. These documentation challenges often slow down recognition and can postpone entry into the labor market.	
Disparities in education system between country of origin and receiving country (e.g. strong vocational focus in receiving countries not present in countries of origin)	YES
The VASPVT highlighted that differences in training systems create major obstacles for third-country nationals. In Lithuania medical studies last 6 years, whereas in some third countries the duration is shorter. This leads to compensatory measures (additional studies, exams, adaptation periods). The recognition procedure itself usually takes about three months if all required documents are submitted, but compensatory requirements can considerably extend the timeframe. Statistics show that in 2022, when many Ukrainian professionals applied, 383 foreign qualifications were recognized (compared to only 25 in 2020), illustrating the scale of the challenge. ¹	
Disparities in skill requirements for specific professions between country of origin and receiving country	YES
Lithuania regulates medicine, teaching, nursing, engineering, law and other fields (Law No. X-1478 on the Recognition of Regulated Professional Qualifications). The national system is in principle favourable to third-country nationals: recognition of qualifications follows the same procedures and deadlines as for EU nationals, in line with Directive 2005/36/EC (amended by Directive 2013/55/EU). If a third-country national obtained qualifications in another EU Member State, the EU route applies identically. However, recognition of qualifications obtained in third countries requires Lithuanian authorities to assess the comparability of training length, curricula, and professional practice, often imposing compensatory measures such as an aptitude test or up to a three-year adaptation period (Article 61). Each accreditation institution applies its own procedures, and overall regulation remains strict. The Ministry of Economy and Innovation highlighted in interviews (2025) that these disparities between Lithuania's strict regulation and looser origin-country systems are a key driver of skills mismatch, making it difficult for migrants trained abroad to access their professions without requalification.	
Extent of regulated professions in country of origin as opposed to receiving country (i.e. regulations for the practice of certain professions)	N/A
No data on this.	
Age-related drivers (that in combination with migrant status interact on skills mismatch, e.g. age at time of arrival could impact skills mismatch, since younger migrants tend to have less difficulties in learning the language of the receiving country)	YES
Age at the time of arrival strongly shapes how migrants integrate into Lithuania's labour market and how quickly they reduce skills mismatches. Younger migrants generally acquire Lithuanian faster, adapt to education and training, and are more likely to pursue recognition of qualifications. Surveys on language learning show that although Lithuanian is perceived as difficult, younger learners are more motivated and successful in acquiring it, while older migrants often remain in Russian-speaking circles or rely on English to get by, limiting their opportunities. This creates a risk of long-term overqualification for those arriving mid-career, as they are less willing or able to invest in retraining or requalification. Caritas indicated during our interview that among participants of the integration program there are several of pension age, for whom learning Lithuanian is especially difficult – they struggle with memorising words and completing assignments. The same challenges are reported for asylum applicants. On the host society side, a 2025 survey found that attitudes towards migrants also vary by the age of local residents: younger Lithuanians are more open to diversity, while older age groups express significantly higher levels of rejection toward non-European migrants and minorities. This double effect (older migrants struggling more with adaptation, and older Lithuanians displaying stronger discriminatory attitudes) limits integration outcomes and reinforces skills mismatches.	

¹ Data provided by VASPVT.

Language proficiency of language of receiving country	YES
<p>Lithuanian is the official state language, and its use is mandated by the Law on the State Language. The Government Resolution No. 1688 On the Procedure for Determining and Applying State Language Proficiency Categories establishes a system of categories directly tied to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). Three categories are applied: the first corresponds to A2, the second to B1, and the third to at least B2 proficiency. The higher the position and level of responsibility, the higher the language requirements: customer service, trade and transport jobs require the first category; health, education and social services generally require the second; managerial, academic, legal and teaching positions demand the third. In practice, this means that migrants cannot access jobs corresponding to their qualifications without formal certification of Lithuanian proficiency. For example, according to the VASPVT, even when qualifications are recognised, not all applicants immediately obtain licences to practise, mainly due to insufficient Lithuanian language proficiency. For third-country nationals in healthcare, acquiring B2 Lithuanian usually takes at least one year of intensive study, and often several years if done part-time. In general, stakeholders widely agree that this is the single most important driver of labour market integration and skills mismatch in Lithuania.</p> <p>Most migrants in Lithuania come from former Soviet Union countries and can communicate in Russian. For many years, Russian functioned as an informal bridge language at workplaces, especially in construction, logistics, and manufacturing. Exemptions from Lithuanian proficiency requirements were introduced for beneficiaries of temporary protection from Ukraine (Art. 4 of the Government Resolution No. 1688), allowing them to be employed without meeting state language category requirements. However, with the number of Russian-speaking migrants increasing and a growing share of the younger Lithuanian population no longer fluent in Russian, the rules on the use of Lithuanian have been gradually tightened. A 2023 representative survey commissioned by LRT found that 80% of the Lithuanian population believe foreigners providing services should be able to speak Lithuanian. The 2024 amendments to the State Language Law, which applies from 2026, expand mandatory use of Lithuanian in consumer-facing services, further reinforcing the importance of Lithuanian proficiency as the primary condition for labour market integration. Surveys conducted by IOM Lithuania in 2025 confirm this picture: only about 10% of surveyed migrants reported good Lithuanian language skills, while 42.7% identified the language barrier as their main workplace challenge. Employers also highlighted the lack of Lithuanian proficiency as the biggest obstacle to integrating foreign employees. Taken together, these trends show that language has shifted from being a secondary factor mitigated by Russian to the central determinant of migrants' employability and risk of skills mismatch in Lithuania.</p>	
Length of stay (considering that, the longer a migrant lives in country the more the extent of skills mismatch tends to be reduced)	YES
<p>Longer residence in Lithuania reduces skills mismatches, as migrants improve their Lithuanian, gain local work experience, and navigate qualification recognition procedures. Newcomers, especially those with temporary protection or short-term permits, often take low-skilled "survival jobs" regardless of their qualifications. The Ministry of Economy and Innovation noted in interviews (2025) that many migrants see Lithuania mainly as a place to earn money or as a transit point to other EU Member States, rather than a place to settle. This reduces their motivation to learn the language or seek recognition of their qualifications, prolonging skills mismatches and limiting access to better jobs.</p>	
Limited information about the labour market/employers, migrants might exhibit in comparison to natives/locals	YES
<p>Labour market information in Lithuania is widely accessible online, with automated translation tools and institutional consultations ensuring equal access for migrants and locals. However, NGO observations suggest that in practice this driver remains relevant. According to Caritas, limited information about the labour market, as well as about other areas of social life, is one of the factors that hinder effective integration. Migrants often rely on distorted or superficial information, which does not provide a realistic picture of job opportunities or requirements. The Employment Service does not always succeed in helping foreign jobseekers enter the labour market effectively. Asylum seekers, in particular, are accustomed to accessing work in their countries of origin with minimal effort, whereas in Lithuania substantial initiative and investment of time is required to find employment.</p>	

Discrimination/stereotypes in public against (certain groups of) migrants (e.g. colour, ethnicity/origin, status)	YES
<p>Discrimination and stereotypes remain an important driver of skills mismatches in Lithuania. Public opinion surveys show that persistent negative discrimination and stereotypes remain a major barrier to migrants' full use of their skills in Lithuania.</p> <p>Eurobarometer 519 (2021) placed Lithuania among the most negative countries, with 60 percent of respondents seeing immigration from outside the EU as more of a problem than an opportunity, against an EU average of 31 percent. (It should be noted that the survey coincided with the Belarus-border crisis, when a sudden rise in irregular arrivals and highly negative media framing sharply amplified public hostility toward migrants).</p> <p>The 2024 Xenophobia in Lithuania survey, conducted by Spinter Research for the Office of the Equal Opportunities Ombudsperson, found that 71 percent of Lithuanians agreed immigrants help fill labour shortages, yet 44 percent believed they take jobs from locals and 57 percent saw them as a burden on the welfare system. More than one third thought immigrants worsen crime problems, and only 48 percent were comfortable with an immigrant as a manager, compared to 66 percent with an immigrant as a doctor. Housing attitudes reveal even deeper exclusion: only 9 percent would rent to a Roma person, while willingness was higher for Ukrainians (46 percent) but low for Muslims or black persons.</p> <p>The newest representative survey of societal attitudes in 2025, carried out by the LSMC Sociology Institute together with the NGO Diversity Development Group, shows that 59 percent of Lithuanians would not want Roma neighbours, 51 percent would not want Muslims, and 45 percent would not want Central Asian migrants as neighbours. Even in the workplace, 39 percent said they would not want to work alongside Russians, 32 percent with Central Asians, and 26 percent with Belarusians. These figures confirm that certain groups (Roma, Muslims, Central Asians, and increasingly Russians and Belarusians) face particularly strong rejection. Such attitudes translate into the labour market. IOM Lithuania's 2025 survey of foreign workers found that 59 percent felt their abilities and qualifications were undervalued, citing a lack of trust in foreign diplomas and negative assumptions, while 42.7 percent named the language barrier and related bias as the main challenges in the workplace. Taken together, these surveys highlight that discrimination and stereotypes – rooted in ethnicity, nationality, and status – continue to undermine integration and contribute directly to the persistence of skills mismatches.</p>	
Career gaps of migrants (e.g. due to migrant journey)	YES
<p>According to national data on the recognition of professional experience as equivalent to higher education qualifications², between 2019 and 2024, 94 percent of applications submitted by third-country nationals were formally recognised. Only a very small share of applications were rejected or discontinued. While this high recognition rate indicates that the procedure is formally open and accessible, NGO experience highlights a gap between recognition on paper and actual labour market outcomes. Caritas notes that in almost all cases migrants arriving in Lithuania must restart their careers from zero, regardless of their previous professional achievements. Even with recognition decisions, language requirements, professional licensing in regulated sectors, and employer scepticism about foreign qualifications mean that migrants often cannot continue their career trajectories at the level reached in their country of origin.</p>	
Other (please specify)	YES
<p>The SKVC has identified several additional barriers that contribute to skills mismatch for third-country nationals. First, a language barrier exists, as academic recognition procedures are carried out in Lithuanian or English, which may limit access for applicants without sufficient proficiency. Second, there is a lack of clear, centralised information: migrants often do not know which institutions are responsible for academic or professional recognition, creating confusion and delays. Finally, current procedures show limited flexibility in recognising informal and non-formal learning, meaning that practical skills acquired outside formal education may not be adequately valued.</p>	

² Ministry of the Economy and Innovation of the Republic of Lithuania. (2025). Statistical data on the recognition of professional experience of foreign nationals as equivalent to higher education qualifications. Open Data Portal. <https://data.gov.lt/datasets/1712/>

Question 2. Based on available literature and expert opinions, what are country-/ employer-specific drivers for skills mismatching of migrants in your country?

Driver	Explanation
Economic and labour market conditions (e.g. economic recession, which might affect migrants' skills mismatch more than non-migrants)	YES
<p>Lithuania's labour market absorbs many migrants into sectors with the fastest hiring needs (transport, construction, logistics, and manufacturing). These positions rarely match migrants' education or professional background, creating vertical mismatches from the outset. Since 2025 the shortage list system has been abolished, but the single annual quota still channels newcomers into whatever vacancies employers can register most quickly. Once employed, migrants often remain in these roles because language and qualification recognition barriers slow re-entry into their original professions. The expansion of temporary work agency employment further reinforces this lock-in, as short-term contracts limit opportunities to demonstrate or develop higher-level skills. As a result, even in conditions of economic growth and stable unemployment, structural features of Lithuania's labour market keep many migrants in jobs below their qualifications, prolonging skills mismatches.</p>	
Structure of housing markets (e.g. housing policies with no rent caps, shortage of affordable housing in areas with available matching jobs for migrant population's profiles)	YES
<p>The structure of Lithuania's housing market is a significant driver of skills mismatches among migrants. Lithuania has one of the highest home-ownership rates in the OECD, with more than 90 percent of households owning their homes. This leaves a very thin rental market: fewer than 3 percent of households rent formally, of which only 0.8 percent are in the private sector and 1.6 percent in municipal or social housing. The OECD notes that informality dominates the private rental sector, with many agreements undocumented, preventing tenants from officially registering their residence or accessing housing support schemes. At the same time, social housing supply is small (about 39,700 units nationwide) and waiting lists are long. For migrants, these structural constraints create a double barrier: without registered addresses they face obstacles in employment registration, qualification recognition, or access to benefits, while limited housing supply in urban centres pushes them into informal, unstable accommodation.</p> <p>Affordability pressures have grown sharply in recent years, with rental prices rising fastest in Vilnius, Kaunas and Klaipėda, the cities where jobs requiring higher skills are concentrated. Construction costs have also increased, further restricting the supply of affordable housing. Moreover, according to Caritas, it can sometimes take a long time to find rental housing, especially for large migrant families. A widespread perception that landlords should not rent to families with children, often based on unfounded fears, further restricts access. Migrants therefore often accept survival jobs close to available housing instead of relocating for positions matching their qualifications. Disparities in treatment compound the problem: Ukrainians received temporary rental subsidies and relocation support in 2022–2023, but these programs ended in early 2024 and no equivalent support has been extended to other third-country nationals. As the OECD highlights, limited reach of housing support schemes and high regional disparities lock migrants into short-term or informal rentals, effectively reducing mobility and reinforcing skills mismatches in the labour market.</p>	
Limited accessibility/availability of social assistance	YES
<p>Limited access to social assistance is a driver of skills mismatches for third-country nationals (TCNs) in Lithuania. Entitlements and practical access vary widely depending on the migrant's legal status.</p> <p>Labour migrants and their family members generally do not have access to social assistance in their initial years of residence, as eligibility is linked to permanent or long-term residence. This means that they cannot rely on income support during unemployment or transition periods and are often pushed to accept low-skilled jobs in order to retain residence status. Language barriers further delay effective use of available services.</p> <p>Beneficiaries of temporary protection (Ukrainians) have had broader access to support compared to other groups of TCNs. They can work without labour market tests, access Employment Service support measures, receive school-related assistance for children, and become entitled to cash benefits such as child allowances, housing and utility compensations, one-time settlement allowances, and rent subsidies. However, this broader framework was temporary: in 2022–2023 targeted subsidies (e.g. rental support) were provided, but these programs expired in 2024 and were not extended.</p> <p>Beneficiaries of international protection (refugees, subsidiary protection) are entitled to social benefits on the same basis as Lithuanian nationals, including settlement payments, rent subsidies, children's allowances, and access to municipal social services. However, bureaucratic complexity, municipal capacity constraints, and language requirements still slow down their ability to use this support in practice.</p> <p>Asylum seekers are entitled only to very limited allowances during the asylum procedure. Caritas observes that they often take a long time to familiarise themselves with available support and struggle with searching for and working with information, which further delays access.</p> <p>Overall, the differentiated access across groups creates unequal conditions for integration. This reduces financial stability and increases the likelihood of accepting low-skilled employment, thereby reinforcing vertical skills mismatches.</p>	

Limited access to formal childcare (for migrants based on their status, as opposed to non-migrants)	YES
<p>Access to formal childcare is a significant factor shaping the ability of migrants to combine employment with language learning and retraining. In Lithuania, public kindergartens are relatively affordable, typically costing 50–60 EUR per month, while private alternatives range from 120 to 500 EUR, with partial municipal compensation available in some cities. In municipalities such as Vilnius District, fees are even lower (about 0.43 EUR per day)³, and partial reimbursements for meals or reductions in maintenance costs are available. Despite these subsidies, demand exceeds supply and waiting lists are long, particularly in urban centres where higher-skilled jobs are concentrated. Admission is regulated through a centralised application system with fixed deadlines; if parents miss the application date, their child may not receive a place and they must remain on a waiting list, sometimes for months. Migrant families face additional barriers, as access is linked to residence status, meaning only those with a national visa or temporary residence permit can enrol their children. Asylum seekers and migrants with more precarious status are excluded. Even where eligibility exists, bureaucratic procedures, language requirements, and lack of information may delay enrolment. According to Diversity Development Group and Caritas, these barriers disproportionately affect migrant women, especially those employed in lower-skilled positions despite higher qualifications.</p>	
Employer-specific conditions (e.g. no diversity and inclusion strategy from which particularly migrants would benefit from in terms of skills mismatch)	N/A
No data on this.	
Migration laws, policies, and practices (e.g. recognition processes of foreign qualifications, insecure status)	YES
<p>Lithuania's migration framework directly influences the extent of skills mismatch for third-country nationals. A key area is the recognition of foreign qualifications. Procedures are aligned with Directive 2005/36/EC (amended by Directive 2013/55/EU) and apply equally to EU and third-country nationals. However, the directive's system of automatic or general recognition applies only to qualifications obtained within the EU/EEA. For qualifications obtained in third countries, competent Lithuanian authorities must carry out a detailed case-by-case assessment of comparability in curriculum, duration, and professional practice. Where substantial differences are identified, they may impose compensatory measures such as an aptitude test or an adaptation period of up to three years (Law on the Recognition of Regulated Professional Qualifications). In practice this means that third-country nationals often face longer and more complex recognition procedures before they can access regulated professions such as medicine, nursing, law, engineering, or teaching.</p> <p>Another important factor is the legal dependency of residence status on employment. Third-country nationals holding a temporary residence permit on the basis of employment remain legally dependent on their employer. If the employment relationship ends, the migrant must apply to change employer within 3 months and, in some cases, complete the change within 6 months (Law on the Legal Status of Foreigners, Art. 44(7) and Art. 44¹(5), consolidated as of 2025-01-01). If this is not done, the Migration Department may revoke the residence permit. The current framework creates pressure to prioritise quick re-employment over finding jobs that match qualifications. This dependency provides incentives to migrants to accept available low-skilled work rather than risk losing their right to stay, thereby reinforcing vertical skills mismatches.</p> <p>Finally, the abolition of the shortage occupation list in 2025 simplified admission procedures but left in place a single annual quota system. Employers can register vacancies on a first-come basis, meaning that many migrants enter through jobs that are administratively easiest to access rather than those corresponding to their qualifications. Combined with language requirements and fragmented recognition procedures, this contributes to rapid but mismatched labour market entry and slows later progression into higher-skilled professions.</p>	
(Lack of) integration policies, and practices (e.g. no tailored, subsidized language trainings, no job guidance for migrants, no early facilitation of labour market access)⁴	YES
<p>According to Diversity Development Group, migrants employed in unskilled or semi-skilled jobs face particular difficulties in combining work with participation in available Lithuanian language courses. Opportunities to study the language free of charge remain limited, and existing courses are often scheduled in ways that are hard to reconcile with work or family responsibilities. These challenges are especially prevalent among refugee women from Ukraine, many of whom are employed in lower-skilled positions despite having higher qualifications and professional experience. Caregiving responsibilities, including childcare, further restrict their ability to attend classes or invest in retraining, prolonging their period of overqualification and reinforcing skills mismatches.</p>	

³ Vilnius District Municipality. (n.d.). Ikimokyklinis ir priešmokyklinis ugdymas [Pre-school and pre-primary education]. Vilnius District, Lithuania. <https://vrsa.lt/svietimas/ikimokyklinis-ir-priesmokyklinis-ugdymas/437>

⁴ See e.g. recommendations by PES Network to have an idea about labour market integration policies, https://employment-social-affairs.ec.europa.eu/news/pes-network-adopts-7-recommendations-guide-employment-services-assisting-refugees-and-persons-2023-07-07_en, last accessed 6 March 2025.

2.

National policies
in the EMN
Member and
Observer Countries
for promoting
sustainable labour
market integration
through countering
skills mismatch/
facilitating skills
matching

Question 3. Have there been policy debates on skills (mis-)matching of migrants in your country?

YES.

Since 2023, skills matching has emerged as a central theme in Lithuania's migration and integration debates, cutting across language policy, labor-market regulation, human capital utilization, and qualification recognition. Policymakers, social partners, and experts have grappled with how to balance the immediate need to fill vacancies with the longer-term objective of ensuring migrants can work at their qualification level. Four interrelated debates dominate this discussion. The first focuses on **Lithuanian-language proficiency** as both a civic obligation and a core employability skill, with disputes over whether stricter requirements risk reinforcing underskilling. The second concerns **labor-market governance**, shifting from shortage lists and labor-market tests to a single quota system, and whether this instrument adequately aligns inflows with actual skill needs. The third highlights persistent **underutilization of human capital**, especially among Ukrainian refugees, and the economic losses this generates when qualified professionals work in low-skill roles. The fourth addresses **recognition of foreign qualifications**, where reforms to simplify procedures for refugees confront regulatory and professional barriers that continue to block access to high-skill employment.

The first policy debate focuses on **language as a core employability skill** and precondition for appropriate job matching. In 2024, the Seimas amended the State Language Law so that, from 1 January 2026, information about goods and services must be provided in Lithuanian. In practice this means businesses must ensure consumer-facing communication and direct service are in Lithuanian at a government-set proficiency level, with product labels, signage and other public notices also covered.⁵ Supporters present the change as protecting consumers' right to be served in the state language, while critics warn that, absent a major expansion of language training, it risks excluding newcomers from front-of-house roles and reinforcing underskilling. The requirement interacts with long-standing government rules that tie Lithuanian-language proficiency categories to job functions: roles with more complex communication and document-drafting responsibilities are assigned higher categories, which in practice raises barriers for foreign professionals to work at their qualification level until they certify their Lithuanian. These issues moved to the center of public debate with the large inflow of Ukrainians in 2022–2023, many of whom entered lower-skill service jobs despite higher qualifications. The government's initial response was to suspend the language requirement for Ukrainians, a derogation that was extended again in July 2025, even as ministers emphasized growing pressure for linguistic integration over time. Together, these dynamics mean that stricter Lithuanian-language rules for customer-facing work can push migrants into back-office or lower-skill positions until they reach the required level, deepening skills underuse unless training and testing capacity scale accordingly.

⁵ Valstybinė kalbos inspekcija. (2025, April 14). Valstybinės kalbos inspekcijos 2024 metų veiklos ataskaita [State Language Inspectorate 2024 Annual Activity Report]. Vilnius, Lithuania. <https://vki.lrv.lt/public/canonical/1745567649/923/VKI%202024%20M.%20VEIKLOS%20ATASKAIT%D0%90%20%281%29.pdf>

The second policy debate centers on **how to align migrant labor inflows with Lithuania's skill needs**. Until 2024, this was managed primarily through shortage-occupation lists and the labor-market test, with the Employment Service assessing whether vacancies could be filled domestically before approving recruitment from abroad. In tripartite dialogue, employers routinely pressed for broader shortage lists to ease recruitment into sectors like manufacturing, construction, and logistics, while unions raised concerns about job quality, segmentation, and the concentration of migrants in low-skill roles.⁶ The government positioned these tools as mechanisms to reduce skills mismatches by steering third-country nationals into occupations with verified demand and funding re-/up-skilling to close gaps.

Since 2025, however, Lithuania has abandoned shortage lists and the labor-market test, replacing them with a single annual quota for third-country nationals. For 2025 the ceiling was set at 24,830 permits.⁷ Employers stressed that the figure was too low given that, in 2023, more than 22,000 first residence permits were already issued for work purposes and demand for additional labor was concentrated in construction, transport, and manufacturing. Employment Service data show that over 40 percent of recruited migrants in 2023 worked as drivers, loaders, or construction laborers (roles below the qualification level of many) while vacancies in skilled trades, engineering, and health care remained difficult to fill. Employer organizations argued that an overly restrictive quota risks leaving high-value vacancies unfilled, reducing productivity and slowing sectoral growth. Trade unions countered that simply enlarging inflows without safeguards could entrench segmentation, with migrants disproportionately channeled into low-wage jobs and downward occupational mobility.

Policy actors now frame the quota system itself as a skills-matching instrument: a macro-level cap that must be complemented by targeted measures to align skills with demand. These include active labor market policies, sector-specific re-/up-skilling, and accessible Lithuanian-language training. Without such measures, the risk remains that highly qualified migrants will continue to work below their skill level, generating losses both for them individually and for the economy through wasted human capital and persistent vacancy bottlenecks in high-skill sectors.

The third policy debate concerns the **underutilization of migrants' human capital** and how this constrains growth. Central Bank monitoring in 2024 highlighted distinct integration profiles across migrant groups, showing that many are concentrated in medium- and low-skill occupations despite holding higher qualifications.⁸ This points to widespread overqualification and skills underuse, often rooted in language barriers, difficulties with credential recognition, and limited pathways into regulated professions. Policymakers and researchers frame the consequences in terms of lower wages and slower career progression for migrants, and, at the macro level, lost productivity and slower GDP growth for the economy.⁹

⁶ Užimtumo tarnyba prie Lietuvos Respublikos socialinės apsaugos ir darbo ministerijos. (2024, March 21). Trišalės tarybos prie Užimtumo tarnybos posėdžio protokolas [Minutes of the meeting of the Tripartite Council under the Employment Service]. Vilnius, Lithuania. <https://uzt.lt/data/public/uploads/2024/04/trisales-tarybos-protokolas-2024-03-21-s0403.pdf>

⁷ Government of the Republic of Lithuania. (2024, November 29). Dėl užsieniečių, dirbančių pagal darbo sutartį, skaičiaus 2025 metais [On the number of foreigners employed under labor contracts in 2025] (Resolution No. 1161). Vilnius, Lithuania. Retrieved from <https://e-seimas.lrs.lt>

⁸ Lietuvos bankas. (2024, March). Lietuvos ekonomikos apžvalga: 2024 m. kovas [Lithuanian Economic Review: March 2024]. Kaunas, Lithuania. https://www.lb.lt/uploads/publications/docs/45535_fdb5d916315b4db85028265ed448b683.pdf

⁹ Strata (Strategic Analysis Centre). (2024). 2023 Lietuvos žmoginio kapitalo būklė [2023 State of Lithuania's Human Capital]. Vilnius, Lithuania. <https://strata.gov.lt/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/2023Lietuvoszmogiskjokapitalobukle.pdf>

The issue became especially visible with the arrival of Ukrainian refugees after 2022. Surveys and media reports show that doctors, engineers, and teachers often ended up working as cleaners, drivers, or shop assistants because they could not yet meet Lithuanian-language requirements or navigate recognition procedures.¹⁰ While the government granted Ukrainians temporary exemptions from strict language rules and simplified some access to employment, these measures largely directed them into lower-skill service roles where labor demand was immediate. Experts and civil-society organizations have repeatedly warned that such underutilization is not sustainable: without better **recognition of qualifications**, more intensive language training, and targeted integration into high-skill professions, both the individuals and the Lithuanian economy suffer long-term losses.¹¹ In this sense, the debate complements but also differs from the quota discussion. The central concern here is not simply how many workers are admitted to Lithuania, but whether their skills are used at the level for which they are trained.

The fourth policy has been the **recognition of qualifications**, which is tightly linked to the broader skills-matching agenda. The recognition of foreign qualifications has long been a structural issue in Lithuania, but it became particularly visible after 2022 with the arrival of large numbers of Ukrainians. Many came with higher education degrees and professional experience in medicine, education, or engineering but faced barriers to working in these professions. Two main challenges have dominated the policy debate: 1) administrative complexity and documentation requirements; and 2) professional regulation and access to labor markets.

First, Lithuania's recognition system is overseen by the SKVC. Before 2022, the process was often lengthy and required full documentary evidence of previous studies. Refugees frequently lacked complete records, leading to stalled applications. The debate focused on whether flexibility could be introduced without compromising standards. In late 2023, SKVC issued updated guidance for cases where documentation is missing, allowing recognition based on partial evidence or alternative verification.¹² This was framed as essential for refugees fleeing war zones.

However, even with SKVC recognition, many professions (e.g., doctors, nurses, teachers, architects) are subject to additional licensing by sectoral authorities. In 2022–2024, public discussions intensified around Ukrainian doctors and teachers working in low-skill jobs due to licensing and language requirements. Media reports and expert commentary stressed that Lithuania was wasting human capital by not integrating these professionals into their fields. The Ministry of Education, Science and Sport and the Ministry of Health faced pressure to create faster, simplified routes for regulated professions, especially in light of staff shortages in healthcare and education. SKVC reported work in 2024–2025 on developing streamlined recognition pathways for refugees and those lacking full documentation.¹³

¹⁰ LRT. (2024, February 16). "Ekspertė apie ukrainiečius Lietuvoje: gydytojai neturi dirbti valytojais ar pavežėjais" [Expert on Ukrainians in Lithuania: Doctors should not have to work as cleaners or drivers]. Retrieved from <https://www.lrt.lt/naujienos/lietuvoje/2/2262478/eksperte-apie-ukrainiecius-lietuvoje-gydytojai-neturi-dirbti-valytojais-ar-pavezejais>

¹¹ IOM Lithuania. (2024, October). *Adaptation and Integration of Ukrainian migrants in Lithuania* [Thematic brief]. Retrieved from IOM Lithuania website.

¹² Studijų kokybės vertinimo centras (SKVC). (2023). Metodinės rekomendacijos užsieniečių kvalifikacijų pripažinimo procedūroms [Methodical recommendations for the recognition of foreign qualifications procedures]. Vilnius, Lithuania. Retrieved from <https://skvc.lrv.lt>

¹³ Studijų kokybės vertinimo centras (SKVC). (2024). *Veiklos planas 2024–2025 m.* [Action plan 2024–2025]. Vilnius, Lithuania. Retrieved from <https://skvc.lrv.lt>

Question 4. Does your country have policies and instruments in place to counter skills mismatching and/or promote skills matching?

Policy/instrument	Driver(s) for skills mismatch addressed	Describe form(s) of mismatch targeted if any/if possible (vertical, horizontal, both)	Target group of the policy/instrument	Beneficiaries of the policy/instrument in case policies are targeted
<p>Employment Service Lithuanian-language courses for foreigners (since 2022; expanded 2023–2024). State-funded courses offered to employed and unemployed foreigners; participation increased sharply in 2023–2024. Effect: improves language proficiency needed to access jobs at the right level.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Language proficiency • Limited access to work-compatible training 	Vertical	Jobseekers	TCNs (labor migrants; family reunification; beneficiaries of temporary/international protection, where eligible)
<p>Employment Service introduced a dedicated information channel in Ukrainian to support beneficiaries of temporary protection.</p> <p>Migrants receive support from the Employment Service under the same system as citizens, as defined in the Law on Employment. At the same time, targeted elements were developed to improve accessibility for migrants. The official Employment Service website includes dedicated information sections for foreigners, available not only in Lithuanian but also translated into Ukrainian, English, German and Russian, ensuring accessibility for migrants. In addition, the Employment Service job-search portal enables users to view job advertisements with translations into Ukrainian and English. Employers can also indicate when a vacancy is suitable for Ukrainians by ticking the box “Ukrainians may also work”.</p> <p>Since the start of the war on 24 February 2022, the Employment Service has hired Ukrainian nationals to strengthen information provision, communication with Ukrainian clients and service delivery.</p> <p>In addition to individual consultations with an employment counsellor, migrants are strongly encouraged to use the support of career specialists. “Karjeras Tau” (https://karjerastau.lt/about), a unit of the Employment Service, offers career counselling services to both registered and non-registered clients. These services include CV preparation, interview coaching, assessment of career development opportunities, and individual career counselling. The unit also cooperates with schools, youth organisations and companies to provide comprehensive career counselling to migrants.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Language proficiency • Fragmented information • Career breaks • Differences between the education systems in the country of origin and the destination country 	Both	Jobseekers	TCNs (labor migrants; family reunification; beneficiaries of temporary/international protection, where eligible)

<p>Recognition of professional experience as equivalent to higher education (Gov. Resolution No. 211, amended 2022)¹⁴. Employers may obtain a confirmation that a candidate's professional experience (general rule 5+ years; 3 years within last 7 for ICT roles) is equivalent to a higher-education qualification for non-regulated professions; confirmation is issued by the Ministry of the Economy and Innovation for a specific vacancy. Effect: removes degree barriers and shortens time-to-hire in high-skill roles.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognition/ credential barriers • Employer hiring frictions 	Vertical	Employers; jobseekers; responsible institutions	Labor migrants (TCNs), esp. ICT specialists/ ICT service managers; other TCNs in non-regulated high-skill roles
<p>"Increasing access to VET for third-country nationals" (project code PROF-ŠMSM-P-001, 2025–2028)¹⁵ National project led by KPMPC, funded by the Swiss–Lithuanian Cooperation Program. Delivers a methodological guide for VET schools, two staff upskilling programs, trains ~190 teachers/staff, creates 10 adapted non-formal VET programs (5 piloted), and aims to retrain/upgrade 50 TCNs, linking provision to actual needs and improving matching.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VET not adapted to migrant learners • Limited staff capacity • Lack of tailored non-formal programs • Weak link between training offer and TCN demand 	Both	Institutions	TCNs; VET providers; employers in receiving sectors
<p>The Employment Service may refer registered unemployed persons to public VET schools and short-term training aligned with labour market needs, delivered in cooperation with training providers. Migrants may likewise be referred to VET schools or short-term labour-market-relevant training programmes financed by the Employment Service as part of active labour market policy (ALMP/ADRP) measures and implemented with training institutions. From 24 February 2022 to 1 September 2025, more than 600 Ukrainian nationals participated in Employment Service-supported vocational training programmes; data are reported for Ukrainians as they currently constitute the largest migrant group in Lithuania. Since March 2025, participation in Employment Service-financed vocational training measures has been subject to new formal and specific selection criteria set out in the Procedure Description for the application of ALMP measures approved by the Director of the Employment Service under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour (Order No. V-197 of 4 July 2022¹⁶).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Career breaks • Differences between the education systems in the country of origin and the destination country • Differences between the country of origin and the destination country in the skill requirements for specific occupations. 	Both	Jobseekers	Eligible third-country nationals
<p>The Reception and Integration Agency provides job-search assistance, career guidance and counselling to beneficiaries of international protection at an early stage of integration.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Career breaks • Language barriers • Gender-related 	Vertical (primarily), with some horizontal support via career guidance	Jobseekers	Beneficiaries of temporary/ international protection

¹⁴ Government of the Republic of Lithuania. (2017, March 22). Resolution No. 211 "On approving the procedure for recognizing professional experience as equivalent to a higher education qualification and issuing the confirming document" (as amended). State Register of Legal Acts (e-TAR). <https://www.e-tar.lt/portal/lt/legalAct/3b4978d012b911e79800e8266c1e5d1b/asr>

¹⁵ <https://kpmpc.lrv.lt/lt/projektai-6222/vykdomi-projektai-6223/projektas-profesinio-mokymo-prieinamumo-treciuju-saliu-pilieciams-didiniamas-projekto-kodas-nr-prof-smsm-p-001-2025-2028/>

¹⁶ Government of the Republic of Lithuania. (2022, July 4). Order No. V-197 "On the approval of the Procedure Description for the application of active labor market policy measures" (as amended). State Register of Legal Acts (e-TAR). <https://www.e-tar.lt/portal/lt/legalAct/2f5d9b60fb9711ec8fa7d02a65c371ad/asr>

<p>Facilitated recognition and licensing pathway for displaced healthcare professionals from Ukraine (implemented by the State Accreditation Service for Healthcare Activities under the Ministry of Health, VASPVT). VASPVT introduced an accelerated timeline for professional qualification recognition decisions (one month instead of the standard three months). In addition, amendments to the licensing rules (Minister of Health Order No. V-448, in force since 10 May 2025¹⁷) allow this group to submit proof that they have started learning Lithuanian at the application stage and to provide the Lithuanian-language certificate later, within three calendar years from the date the licence is issued. This extended the earlier practice where the language requirement had to be met within two years.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Language barriers • Differences in destination-country regulatory requirements for practising in a regulated profession • The scale of regulated professions in the destination country 	<p>Primarily vertical mismatch (working below qualification level), and also horizontal mismatch where the person would otherwise be pushed into a different occupation due to licensing barriers.</p>	<p>Jobseekers Competent authority/licensing institution</p>	<p>Displaced persons from Ukraine</p>
<p>IOM Lithuania - Migration Information Center (MiCenter)¹⁸: a one-stop, free service offering legal advice, career guidance, psychosocial support, and a centralized Lithuanian-language learning hub (web + hotline + in-person/online). MiCenter is funded by the EU Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF 2021–2027) with national co-financing, implemented by IOM Lithuania in cooperation with the Ministry of Social Security and Labor; project code PMIF-2.01-V-01-01 (2024–2025). Launched in 2023, in 2024 provided 8,940 consultations to third-country nationals.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fragmented information • Language barriers • Legal/administrative obstacles • Weak job-search guidance 	<p>Vertical (primarily), with some horizontal support via career guidance</p>	<p>Jobseekers</p>	<p>Third-country nationals (labor migrants; family reunification); beneficiaries of temporary and international protection; other sub-groups as relevant</p>

¹⁷ Ministry of Health of the Republic of Lithuania. (2025, May 9). Order No. V-448 "On amending Order No. V-2824 of 4 December 2020 'On the approval of the Rules for Licensing the Practice of Healthcare Professionals and the Description of Requirements for Continuing Professional Development of Healthcare Professionals'". State Register of Legal Acts (e-TAR), No. 2025-08346 (in force since May 10, 2025). <https://www.e-tar.lt/portal/lt/legalAct/c8b5cfb62cb011f08fdabd4950271e2c>

¹⁸ International Organization for Migration (IOM) Lithuania. (n.d.). Migration Information Center (MiCenter) [Information and services for migrants]. Vilnius, Lithuania. <https://lithuania.iom.int/migration-information-center-micenter>

Question 5. Are there any initiatives to counter skills mismatching and/or promote skills matching implemented by interest organisations, employer associations or NGOs?

Initiative	Driver(s) addressed	Form(s) of mismatch	Target group
Project “ Increasing access to VET for third-country nationals ” (PROF-ŠMSM-P-001, 2025–2028) addresses gaps in Lithuania’s VET system that emerged due to rapid geopolitical and migration changes, including the fact that VET is traditionally delivered only in Lithuanian and institutions and teachers have limited experience working with learners who do not speak Lithuanian. The project aims to increase the accessibility and inclusiveness of VET for third-country nationals by developing and piloting methodological and practical tools, adapting VET content, and strengthening institutional capacity so that VET providers can deliver quality training and related services that support labour market integration. It is implemented by the Qualifications and VET Development Centre (KPMPC) and funded by the Second Swiss Contribution and the state budget of the Republic of Lithuania.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Language proficiency • Stereotypes • Limited labour market information 	Both	Vocational education and training (VET) institutions; institutions and organisations responsible for planning and implementing VET policy or supporting the integration of third-country nationals; third-country nationals; employers; and associated employer organisations/ structures
Validation of work-acquired competences in the transport sector (KPMPC and Lithuanian Carriers’ Association, 2021-2023). ¹⁹ The partnership developed a methodology, occupation profiles (e.g., long-distance driver, freight forwarder, logistics specialist, warehouse worker, customs broker), trained assessors and ran pilot assessments, creating a route to recognize on-the-job skills and match workers to appropriate roles.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employers’ uncertainty about foreign experience • Lack of recognition for work-based skills 	Vertical	Third-country nationals in transport/logistics
Caritas Foreigners’ Integration Program (ongoing). ²⁰ NGO services including employment counselling/job mediation and Lithuanian language courses, helping migrants navigate the labor market and move into roles closer to their skills.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fragmented information • Weak job-search support • Language barriers 	Vertical	Refugees, asylum seekers, other TCNs (incl. women with caregiving duties)
“Towards a Professional Path” (Diversity Development Group, 2022-2023). ²¹ NGO program for educated migrants combines mentoring, language exam preparation, guidance on recognition and job search, and links to companies; the pilot aimed for 50 participants with employment or self-employment outcomes, tackling underemployment among qualified migrants.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fragmented information • Weak job-search support • Language/licensing navigation 	Vertical	Higher-skilled third-country nationals
Refugee Fellowship Initiative (UNHCR, Lithuanian Diversity Charter and Lithuanian Red Cross, with employers, 2023). ²² Paid fellowships place professionals with refugee background into Lithuanian companies (e.g., Vinted), providing a structured pathway to rebuild careers and prove skills to employers and thereby directly improving job matches.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employer hesitancy • Lack of local references/experience • Entry barriers to skilled roles 	Vertical	Beneficiaries of international protection (refugees)

¹⁹ Qualifications and Vocational Education and Training Development Centre (KPMPC). (n.d.). Development of a Subsystem for the Assessment and Recognition of Qualifications Acquired in the Work of Specialists in the Transport Sector. Vilnius, Lithuania. <https://kpmpc.lrv.lt/en/development-of-a-subsystem-for-the-assessment-and-recognition-of-qualifications-acquired-in-the-work-of-specialists-in-the-transport-sector/>

²⁰ Vilnius Archdiocese Caritas. (n.d.). Foreigners Integration Centre [Užsieniečių integracijos centras]. Vilnius, Lithuania. <https://vilnius.caritas.lt/pagalbos-centrai/uzsienieciu-integracijos-centras/>

²¹ Diversity Development Group. (2023). Towards a professional path. <https://ubc.net/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/DDG-presentation-Towards.pdf>

²² United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). (2023). Refugee Fellowship Initiative in Lithuania provides professionals forced to flee with a key to the local labour market. <https://www.unhcr.org/nordic-and-baltic/news/refugee-fellowship-initiative-lithuania-provides-professionals-forced-flee-key>

3.

Skills matching
challenges

Question 6. Does your country face any challenges in addressing skill mismatching of migrants?

Until recently, skills mismatch among migrants **has not been perceived as a significant policy problem** in Lithuania. This is largely due to the structure of labor migration: the absolute majority of labor migrants entered under annual quotas, essentially in response to specific employer needs, while targeted policies were designed to attract highly qualified workers. Both of these mechanisms limited the visibility of skills mismatching and reduced its perceived urgency. As a result, one of the main challenges in Lithuania is precisely that skills mismatch is not seen as a policy issue, and consequently there are no comprehensive measures that directly address it.

At the same time, stakeholder experience shows that mismatches do occur in practice. According to the Study Quality Assessment Centre (SKVC)²³, the main **obstacles in recognizing the qualifications of third-country nationals** include: insufficient cooperation from applicants in collecting and providing the necessary documentation (translations, legalizations, etc.), which prolongs the procedure; language barriers, as recognition is conducted in Lithuanian and English, limiting access for those without strong knowledge of these languages; and lack of clear, multilingual information about where and how to apply for recognition. In addition, rigid rules make it difficult to combine the formal recognition of qualifications with the assessment of competences gained through non-formal or informal learning. While formal qualifications are a prerequisite, SKVC highlights the need for additional testing or alternative assessments to confirm professional competences. The current system therefore does not fully capture the skills of migrants, leaving many underemployed despite their prior achievements.

SKVC also notes that improving digitalization and simplifying procedures, creating a **multilingual online platform for information and applications**, and making conditions more flexible for recognizing competences gained through non-formal learning would ease the process. In the longer term, possibilities for automatic recognition of certain qualifications based on bilateral agreements could also reduce mismatches.

Another challenge concerns the **absence of a clear, nationwide pathway for low-skilled third-country nationals** (or those without, or unable to prove, formal qualifications) once a residence permit is issued. There is no standardized referral from status issuance to counselling and orientation that would guide a person toward recognized education or a qualification-granting provider. Responsibilities are fragmented across the Migration Department, the Employment Service, municipalities, NGOs and VET institutions, and information is dispersed and rarely multilingual. As a result, newly arrived permit holders often navigate the system alone, remain in low-skilled jobs or inactivity while trying to piece together language courses, recognition options and training places, and lose time before enrolling in programs that lead to recognized qualifications. The 2025 analysis prepared for the Qualifications and VET Development Centre reaches the same conclusion and calls for a coordinated, multilingual, one-stop pathway linking status, skills assessment, guidance and timely enrolment.²⁴

²³ Study Quality Assessment Centre [SKVC], personal communication, 2025

²⁴ Efektyvaus valdymo sprendimų centras. (April 2025). Analysis on determining the content needs of inclusion measures for third-country nationals [Report; in Lithuanian]. Vilnius: Qualifications and VET Development Centre (KPMPC). https://kpmpc.lrv.lt/public/canonical/1747821986/12503/Analize%20del%20treciju%20saliu%20piliociu%20itrauktis_KPMPC.pdf

Question 7. What are the underlying causes for these challenges? Please explain.

Challenge	Group this challenge (mostly affects migrants; elderly migrants; etc.)	Form(s) of mismatch (vertical, horizontal, both)	Underlying cause for this challenge
Skills mismatch has not been perceived as a policy problem in Lithuania. Therefore, no dedicated programs or initiatives exist to address it.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All migrant groups 	Both	Structure of labor migration (employer-driven quotas, targeted high-skilled migration policies) and lack of political or institutional prioritization of skills mismatch.
No clear national post-permit pathway for low-skilled or undocumented-qualification TCNs (guidance, referral, timely enrolment).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Low-skilled TCNs TCNs unable to prove qualifications Newly arrived permit holders 	Vertical	Fragmented responsibilities (Migration Dept., Employment Service, municipalities, NGOs, VET providers); lack of coordinated, multilingual referral and early skills assessment; dispersed information and eligibility constraints (per KPMP analysis).
Limited accessibility of vocational education and training (VET) for third-country nationals, as VET provision is traditionally delivered only in Lithuanian and institutions/teachers have limited experience and tools to train learners who do not speak Lithuanian, which delays upskilling/reskilling and prolongs employment below qualification level.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Third-country nationals, especially newly arrived migrants and those with limited Lithuanian proficiency 	Both	The VET system has historically been designed for permanent residents and Lithuanian-language delivery; rapid geopolitical and migration changes exposed insufficient institutional capacity, limited teacher competences for culturally/linguistically diverse groups, and the need to adapt training content and delivery modalities for third-country nationals.
Insufficient cooperation in qualification recognition procedures: applicants often lack or cannot provide required documentation (translations, legalization), which delays decisions (SKVC, 2025).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Labor migrants Persons arriving via family reunification 	Vertical	Strict legal requirements for complete documentation; limited applicant knowledge of procedures.
Language barriers in qualification recognition, as SKVC provides services in Lithuanian and English only (SKVC, 2025).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All migrant groups, especially older migrants and those without English skills 	Vertical	Lack of Lithuanian/English proficiency; no tailored linguistic support in recognition procedures.
Access to Employment Service-financed training measures may be constrained by formal eligibility/selection requirements, which can delay or limit timely participation in upskilling/reskilling pathways that would enable better skills matching.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Registered unemployed migrants and other legally staying TCNs seeking referral to training through the Employment Service 	Both	Since March 2025, participation in ALMP/ADRP measures has been subject to new formal and specific selection criteria set out in the Procedure Description for the application of ALMP measures (Order No. V-197, as amended ²⁵).
Lack of clear, multilingual, centralized information on recognition procedures (SKVC, 2025).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All groups, especially newly arrived migrants 	Both	Fragmented institutional responsibilities; no one-stop platform; low information outreach.
Rigid separation between formal qualification recognition and assessment of non-formal or informal competences (SKVC, 2025).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Labor migrants Refugees with interrupted studies 	Both	Legal framework prioritizes formal qualifications; no systemic validation of skills gained through work or informal learning.

²⁵ Employment Service under the Ministry of Social Security and Labor of the Republic of Lithuania. (2022, July 4). Order No. V-197 "On the approval of the Procedure Description for the application of active labor market policy measures" (consolidated version in force from December 18, 2025; in force since July 5, 2022). State Register of Legal Acts (e-TAR), No. 2022-14604. <https://www.e-tar.lt/portal/lt/legalAct/2f5d9b60fb9711ec8fa7d02a65c371ad/asr>

Difficulties in combining work with language training, especially for women with caregiving duties (Diversity Development Group, Caritas 2025).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Female migrants • Beneficiaries of temporary protection • Family members of labor migrants 	Vertical	Limited free courses; inflexible schedules; childcare barriers.
Lack of access to childcare due to residence status requirements and long waiting lists (Caritas, 2025).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Female migrants • Asylum seekers • Family members of labor migrants 	Vertical	Eligibility linked to residence status; limited municipal capacity; missed application deadlines.
Limited or delayed access to social assistance benefits depending on status (SADM, Caritas, 2025).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asylum seekers • Labor migrants; family reunification migrants 	Vertical	Legal restrictions tied to migration status; lack of awareness; bureaucratic delays.

4.

Skills matching
lessons learned &
good practices

Question 8. Are there any good and implemented practices to counter the identified challenges or to counter skills mismatching and/or promote skills matching for migrants in your country that have been identified by your country?

Good practice	Cause(s)/challenges addressed	Form(s) of mismatch (vertical, horizontal, both)	Target group (labour migrants from third country, beneficiaries of international protection, beneficiaries of temporary protection; third country nationals that arrived via family reunification; others: female migrants; elderly migrants; etc.)
<p>Fast-track measures for Ukrainian healthcare professionals: temporary supervised practice/adaptation, simplified initial document requirements, deferred state-language certification, and expedited licensing by the health regulator. This allowed qualified clinicians to enter appropriate roles while completing language learning. Effect: faster transition into skill-level jobs and reduced time in survival work. (Information source: health regulator communications and government measures, 2022–2024.)^{26 27}</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Licensing delays • strict documentation requirements • immediate language certificate barriers • limited pathways to supervised practice 	Vertical	Beneficiaries of temporary protection (Ukrainians); approach is replicable for other third-country nationals in regulated professions.
<p>Professional experience treated as equivalent to higher education for high-skilled roles (incl. ICT). Lithuania's scheme (Government Resolution No. 211²⁸) lets employers obtain a confirmation that a candidate's 5+ years of experience (or 3 years within the last 7 for ICT service managers/ ICT specialists) is equivalent to a higher-education qualification, for non-regulated professions. The confirmation is issued by the Ministry of the Economy and Innovation at employer request, tied to the specific vacancy, with a typical decision within ~1 month. Effect: removes degree barriers for experienced candidates (especially in ICT), shortens time-to-hire, and helps fill high-skill vacancies with appropriately skilled third-country nationals.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Degree requirements blocking experienced candidates • Slow recognition pathways • Employers' difficulty filling high-skill ICT roles 	Vertical	Third-country national ICT specialists/ ICT service managers; more broadly, high-skilled third-country nationals in non-regulated professions.

²⁶ State Accreditation Service for Health Care Activities under the Ministry of Health (VASPVT). (2022). Ukrainian medical staff employment conditions in Lithuania are facilitated. <https://vaspvt.lrv.lt/en/news2/ukrainian-medical-staff-employment-conditions-in-lithuania-are-facilitated/>

²⁷ State Accreditation Service for Health Care Activities under the Ministry of Health (VASPVT). (2022). Lankstesni reikalavimai specialistams iš Ukrainos [More flexible requirements for specialists from Ukraine]. <https://vaspvt.lrv.lt/lt/naujienos/lankstesni-reikalavimai-specialistams-is-ukrainos/>

²⁸ Government of the Republic of Lithuania. (2017, March 22). Resolution No. 211 "On approving the procedure for recognizing professional experience as equivalent to a higher education qualification and issuing the confirming document" (as amended). State Register of Legal Acts (e-TAR). <https://www.e-tar.lt/portal/lt/legalAct/3b4978d012b911e79800e8266c1e5d1b/asr>

Question 9. Are there any lessons learned (i.e. insights that are not necessarily put into practice yet, but are important to consider for future policymaking) regarding effective measures to skills mismatching of migrants and/or promote skills matching for migrant groups?

Although skills mismatch has not been a policy priority in Lithuania, several lessons emerge from practice.

1. Language support must be flexible and work compatible. Migrants often cannot attend fixed-schedule courses; a “no-one-size-fits-all” model is needed (evening/weekend cohorts, blended learning, employer-linked classes, childcare cover). Provision also needs to vary by learner profile and goal (beginners, higher-skilled learners, low-literacy learners, and those preparing for specific occupations). State-funded KPMPC materials²⁹ already outline such modular tracks (e.g., separate modules for A1 beginners, fast-track routes for higher-competence learners, distance/self-learning, and Lithuanian integrated with professional skills) and a delivery concept that explicitly calls for differentiated teaching by target group. Cedefop likewise reports³⁰ that Lithuania’s 2021 framework recommended VET providers offer Lithuanian courses linked to learners’ professional field, reinforcing pathway-specific provision.

Although the Employment Service has offered Lithuanian courses to employed and unemployed foreigners since 2022 and expanded provision in 2023–2024, progression beyond introductory levels needs to be available through the Employment Service and municipal providers as well, not only via NGOs and universities, with clear pathways that continue past A1/A2 and can be taken part-time or online.

Efforts, such as by IOM Lithuania’s MiCenter (<https://micenter.lt/lt/lietuviu-kalbos-mokymasis>), to centralise information about Lithuanian courses are a good step because they reduce fragmented information.

Forthcoming national-language obligations (effective 2026) raise the bar for employability. They should be paired with expanded, subsidised, and modular language provision so requirements do not unintentionally deepen mismatch.

2. Improve the recognition process itself (information and digitalisation). Applicants struggle with what to submit and where. A single multilingual online entry point with clear pathways for academic vs. professional recognition, live status tracking, and document checklists would reduce delays. SKVC already runs e-services and guidance that can anchor such a hub.

²⁹ Qualifications and VET Development Centre (KPMPC). (2021). Lithuanian language teaching/learning program for third-country nationals [in Lithuanian]. Vilnius: KPMPC. (Project “Kalbos mokymasis – sėkmingos socialinės integracijos dalis,” No. PMIF-2.1.9-V-01-001). <https://www.kpmc.lt/kpmc/kalbos-mokymasis-sekmingos-socialines-integracijos-dalis/>

³⁰ ReferNet Lithuania; Cedefop (2022). Lithuania: promoting language learning for faster integration of migrants and refugees. National news on VET

3. Recognize skills gained outside formal education. The emerging practice of vocational schools and colleges recognizing qualifications earned abroad provides momentum for a clear system that assesses and certifies work-based competences and links them to employer demand and, where relevant, professional licensing requirements. Validated pilots in the transport sector show that competence-based assessment of work-acquired skills is feasible in Lithuania when supported by standardized methods, trained assessors and clear occupation profiles³¹; scaling this model would help translate prior experience into recognized competences and jobs.

4. Post-recognition bridging is essential. Formal recognition alone does not deliver sector access. Create funded bridging courses, supervised practice/mentoring, and fast lanes to licensing (particularly in regulated fields like health and teaching) so that positive recognition decisions convert into actual jobs. Lithuania already piloted facilitation for Ukrainian medical staff and this approach (temporary supervised practice and expedited licensing) can be adapted more broadly.

5. Targeted, evidence-based vocational pathways help convert migrant skills into matching jobs. The 2025 KPMP analysis for the project “Increasing access to VET for third-country nationals” sets out a practical blueprint: select providers using clear two-stage criteria, including the ability to deliver programs from a baseline list of 10 priority VET programs and to operate where third-country nationals actually live (major cities such as Vilnius, Kaunas, Klaipėda, Šiauliai); define distinct learner sub-groups and tailor content and delivery; and embed ongoing monitoring to guide decisions.³² In interviews with the Ministry of the Economy and Innovation, the same emphasis on differentiation was highlighted – support should be designed for specific groups and occupations, for example Lithuanian language courses tailored to nurses. This approach links provision to local demand and learner profiles, improving matching while the foreign-resident share remains sizable.

³¹ Ministry of Education, Science and Sport, Qualifications and VET Development Centre (KPMP). (2023). Development of a subsystem for the assessment and recognition of competences acquired in the work of transport sector specialists [Project brief; Erasmus+ KA220-VET No. 2021-1-LT01-KA220-VET-000032965]. Vilnius: KPMP. <https://kmpc.lrv.lt/lt/projektai-6222/igvendinti-projektai-6224/transporto-sektorius-specialistu-darbineje-veikloje-igyjamu-kompetenciju-vertinimo-ir-pripazinimo-posistemės-sukurimas/>

³² Efektyvaus valdymo sprendimų centras. (April 2025). Analysis on determining the content needs of inclusion measures for third-country nationals [Report; in Lithuanian]. Vilnius: Qualifications and VET Development Centre (KPMP). https://kmpc.lrv.lt/public/canonical/1747821986/12503/Analyze%20del%20trečiuju%20saliu%20piliėciu%20itraukties_KPMP.pdf

5.

Conclusions

What are the main drivers for skills mismatching of migrants in your country?

Main drivers. Skills mismatching among migrants in Lithuania is shaped first and foremost by Lithuanian-language proficiency requirements, which slow access to jobs at the right qualification level, and which are now more salient given tighter rules for customer-facing work from 2026. Procedural hurdles in recognizing foreign learning and experience, and separate licensing in regulated professions, interrupt career continuity and keep many in lower-skill roles despite positive recognition outcomes. The structure of labor migration (historically employer-driven quotas and targeted high-skill admission) has muted the perceived urgency of mismatch and left it largely outside the policy agenda. Uneven access to childcare and social assistance by status, tight and informal rental markets in cities where higher-skill jobs concentrate, fragmented labor-market information and guidance, discrimination faced by some groups, and factors linked to age at arrival and length of stay further reinforce vertical (overqualification) and, to a lesser extent, horizontal (field) mismatches.

How do the policies in your country respond to the phenomenon of skills mismatch of migrants and/or promote skills matching?

Policy response. Lithuania has instruments that touch parts of the problem but no dedicated strategy for migrant skills matching. Positive examples include treating professional experience as equivalent to higher education for non-regulated high-skill roles (notably ICT), fast-track measures that enabled Ukrainian health professionals to enter supervised practice while completing language requirements, state-funded Lithuanian courses via the Employment Service, and the MiCenter “one-stop” for information, legal help and referrals. In VET, a national project is building capacity to adapt programs for third-country nationals. Yet gaps remain: recognition and licensing are only loosely connected to actual hiring pathways; language provision beyond A1/A2 is not consistently available in work-compatible formats; there is no clear national referral from residence-permit issuance to early skills assessment, counselling and timely enrolment; and responsibilities are fragmented across institutions. As a result, measures reduce symptoms locally but do not systematically convert migrants’ prior skills into jobs at the right level.

What are your country’s lessons learned, good practices, and challenges in regard to tackling skills mismatching/promoting sustainable labour market integration of migrants through skills matching?

Lessons, good practices, and remaining challenges. Practice points to several takeaways. First, language support needs to be flexible, modular and differentiated by learner profile and occupation (e.g., profession-specific tracks), with clear progression beyond introductory levels and delivery that can be combined with work and care duties. Second, recognition alone is insufficient; outcomes improve when post-recognition support measures (bridging modules, supervised practice, mentoring and clear routes to licensing) are in place so positive decisions lead to real jobs. Third, recognizing competences gained outside formal education through structured, standards-based assessment helps mid-career entrants avoid “starting from zero”; pilots in the transport sector show feasibility and provide a template for other fields. Fourth, information and processes should be simplified and digital, with a multilingual, single-entry point that clarifies academic vs. professional recognition and tracks applications. Finally, a coordinated, nationwide post-permit pathway that links status, early skills screening, guidance and fast enrolment, and connects to employers would address the current fragmentation. The good practices identified demonstrate workable elements; however, the central challenge is scaling and mainstreaming them across sectors and migrant groups so that skills matching becomes an explicit policy objective rather than a by-product of admission and integration systems.

EMN is a network composed of migration experts which aims to collect, analyse and provide up-to-date, objective, reliable and comparable information on migration and asylum. By the decree of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania International Organization for Migration Vilnius Office acts as the national coordinator for the EMN activities in Lithuania.

The EMN National Contact Point (NCP) in Lithuania is composed of representatives from the Ministry of the Interior, the Migration Department, the State Border Guard Service as well as the International Organization for Migration (IOM) Vilnius Office which acts as the national coordinator for the EMN activities in Lithuania. EMN NCP in Lithuania also collaborates with other entities from governmental as well as non-governmental institutions working in the area of migration.
