

Lithuania



Emigration continues to dominate migration movements in Lithuania, despite some signs that this is gradually slowing down and immigration increasing.

Recorded emigration in 2006 was around 12 600. Based on surveys carried out in 2006 and 2007 which showed that around 60% of emigrants are undeclared, the Lithuanian Statistical Department estimates total emigration for 2006 as 27 800. Both declared and undeclared emigration has declined since 2005 (by 19% for declared and 58% for undeclared) despite the fact that in 2006 six additional EU countries opened their labour markets to Lithuanian citizens. The main destination country remains the United Kingdom, followed by Ireland, Germany and Spain. Although relatively lower than in the neighbouring Baltic countries Estonia and Latvia (where they amount to 4% and 10% of GDP, respectively), migrant remittances reached 614 million Euros in 2006 representing 2.6% of Lithuania's GDP.

The large emigration flows – population losses due to net emigration since 1990 amount to an estimated 10% of the population – have strongly impacted the Lithuanian labour market. Shortages in unqualified labour in the construction, transport and garment industries are increasingly evident. Survey data shows that highly skilled non-manual employees and skilled workers form almost 40% of emigration outflow. As a consequence, some areas of the labour market are already experiencing shortages of scientists, engineers, medical professionals and IT specialists. This “brain drain” is causing increasing concern in Lithuania.

In light of this, a new Economic migration regulation strategy was adopted by the Government in April 2007, aiming at reducing net migration to zero by 2012. The focus of the strategy is to encourage return migration to Lithuania. Policies planned include maintaining contacts with and providing information about employment, study and business opportunities to Lithuanians and Lithuanian organisations abroad and to prepare a programme for Lithuanians abroad looking for jobs in Lithuania.

Other initiatives include preparing new policy measures facilitating the immigration requirements for qualified labour migrants from third countries.

One of the consequences of current migration patterns is family separation. A survey carried out in 2007 by the Office of Ombudsman on Children's Rights found that 5% of all Lithuanian children under 18 have at least one parent living abroad. In response to this concern, in June 2007 a simplified procedure for children temporarily departing abroad came into force. According to this ruling, only one parent is now required to give certified permission for their child's departure whereas previously permission from both parents was required. Another decree in May 2007 set up rules for foster care for children upon the parent's departure from Lithuania.

Labour migration appears to be on the rise. One indication of this is the number of work permits issued to non-EU nationals, a figure that has increased more than three-fold between 2004 and 2006. The foreign labour force employed in Lithuania originates mainly from Belarus, followed by Ukraine. Taken together, nationals of these two countries account for almost 70% of all work permits issued in 2006.

Until the end of 2006, it was difficult for nationals of non-EU countries to obtain a work permit in Lithuania. In 2006, the Lithuanian government simplified the procedures of issuing work and residence permits for immigrants in shortage professions. These were detailed in a decree by the Minister of Social Security and Labour in July 2007. It is expected that these changes will result in a further significant increase in labour migration in 2007.

Return migration is also increasing and accounts for 70% of inward migration. In 2006, almost 5 000 Lithuanian nationals returned from abroad, almost three times the number of those in 2003. The majority of Lithuanian nationals in 2006 returned from other EU member states, mostly from the United Kingdom.

For further information...

www.migracija.lt/index.php?-484440258

www.pasienis.lt/lit/English

www.socmin.lt/index.php?-846611483

www.ldb.lt/LDB_Site/index.htm

Flow data on foreigners

Migration flows (foreigners) <i>National definition</i>	1995	2000	2005	2006	Average		Level ('000)																																	
					1995-2000	2001-2006	2006																																	
<i>Per 1 000 inhabitants</i>																																								
Inflows	0.6	0.7	..	0.9	2.2																																	
Outflows	7.1	6.2	4.5	2.1	6.9	3.1	7.1																																	
Migration inflows (foreigners) by type <i>Permit based statistics (standardised)</i>	Thousands		% distribution		Inflows of top 10 nationalities as a % of total inflows of foreigners <table border="1"> <caption>Inflows of top 10 nationalities as a % of total inflows of foreigners</caption> <thead> <tr> <th>Nationality</th> <th>2001-2005 annual average</th> <th>2006</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Belarus</td> <td>69.9</td> <td>79.2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Russian Federation</td> <td>..</td> <td>69.9</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Ukraine</td> <td>..</td> <td>..</td> </tr> <tr> <td>United States</td> <td>..</td> <td>..</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Germany</td> <td>..</td> <td>..</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Latvia</td> <td>..</td> <td>..</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Poland</td> <td>..</td> <td>..</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Israel</td> <td>..</td> <td>..</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Spain</td> <td>..</td> <td>..</td> </tr> <tr> <td>United Kingdom</td> <td>..</td> <td>..</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>			Nationality	2001-2005 annual average	2006	Belarus	69.9	79.2	Russian Federation	..	69.9	Ukraine	United States	Germany	Latvia	Poland	Israel	Spain	United Kingdom
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Spain																																						
United Kingdom																																						
Work																																				
Family (incl. accompanying family)																																				
Humanitarian																																				
Free movements																																				
Others																																				
Total																																				
Temporary migration	2000	2005	2006	Annual average 2000-2006																																				
<i>Thousands</i>																																								
International students																																				
Trainees																																				
Working holiday makers																																				
Seasonal workers																																				
Intra-company transfers																																				
Other temporary workers																																				
Inflows of asylum seekers	1995	2000	2005	2006	Average		Level ('000)																																	
<i>Per 1 000 inhabitants</i>	..	0.1	-	-	1995-2000	2001-2006	2006																																	
					-	0.1	0.1																																	

Macroeconomic, demographic and labour market indicators

Macroeconomic indicators	1995	2000	2005	2006	Average		Level
					1995-2000	2001-2006	2006
Real GDP (growth, %)	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
GDP/capita (growth, %) – level in US Dollars	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Employment (growth, %) – level in thousands	..	-4.8	2.9	1.5	..	2.1	1 476
Unemployment (% of labour force)	..	16.4	8.3	5.6	14.4	11.3	..
Components of population growth	1995	2000	2005	2006	Average		Level ('000)
<i>Per 1 000 inhabitants</i>							
Total	-7.7	-7.1	-6.5	-5.4	-7.3	-5.0	..
Natural increase	-1.1	-1.3	-3.9	-4.0	-1.1	-3.3	..
Net migration	-6.6	-5.8	-2.6	-1.4	-6.3	-1.7	..
Total population	1995	2000	2005	2006	Average		Level ('000)
<i>(Annual growth %)</i>							
Native-born	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Foreign-born	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
National	..	..	-0.7	-1.1	..	-0.6	3 352
Foreign	..	..	7.9	8.3	..	3.3	33
Naturalisations	1995	2000	2005	2006	Average		Level
<i>As a percentage of foreign population</i>							
	..	..	1.4	1.4	..	1.6	467

Notes and sources are at the beginning of the Chapter.

StatLink <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/434356160388>