



**Rita Zukauskiene**

**Active Civic Participation  
of Immigrants in  
Lithuania**

## **POLITIS – a European research project**

### **Project information**

POLITIS is short for a research project with the full title: Building Europe with New Citizens? An Inquiry into the Civic Participation of Naturalised Citizens and Foreign Residents in 25 Countries. The European Commission funds the project that mainly seeks to improve our understanding of different factors that promote or inhibit active civic participation of immigrants. A unique project construction is developed that includes workshops with foreign-born students who are recruited as discussants and interviewers. National experts in all 25 EU countries have prepared country reports on the contextual conditions and state of research concerning civic participation of immigrants. These reports can be downloaded from [www.uni-oldenburg.de/politis-europe](http://www.uni-oldenburg.de/politis-europe)

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## Abstract

The migration situation in Lithuania differs from most of other Central-East European countries. Until the late 1980s, international migration in Lithuania was both intensive and stable. Since the end of World War II, Lithuania underwent rapid and baseless, large-scale industrialisation, urbanisation and colonisation, related to the fact that in 1940 the Soviet Union occupied and annexed Lithuania. The migration of labour force formed the ethnic groups of the immigrants of the first generation. At that time, there were almost no migration relations with other foreign countries.

However, since 1989, as a result of political, social and economic changes in Lithuania, the migration situation started to change, with some migration flows even reversing their direction. Up to now, Lithuania has a negative migration balance. This trend has been prevailing in Lithuania for several years. The current flows of immigrants to Lithuania mainly consist of the following three categories of arriving persons: returning citizens (i.e., Lithuanians whose arrival is unlimited), reunion of family members (limited, although the priority is given to their arrivals) and migration on business (the number is not high). The majority of immigrants come from Russia and the CIS countries.

The number of illegal transit migrants and refugees are relatively low. Although initially none of the transit migrants intended to stay in Lithuania or find work in the country, some of them eventually try to seek refugee status with the intention of staying in Lithuania. The law provides for the granting of asylum and refugee status in accordance with the provisions of the U.N. Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol.

There is a legal and institutional framework at national level for putting into effect the principle of equal treatment and combating discrimination on the basis of racial and ethnic origin in Lithuania. The legal framework consists of the Constitution, the laws, Lithuania's obligations under international treaties, and explanations of the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Lithuania. Ethnic minorities receive fair treatment in Lithuania. Both citizens and permanent residents are equally supported by the state. Equal social benefits, health and social insurance, pensions, loans, subsidies for the education of children, maternity leave, and employment opportunities are equally available to all. Social, political, economic changes that took place ten years ago have influenced the situation of all ethnic groups (including both majority and minority groups) when choosing their strategies of acting in social sphere, adapting themselves to new requirements (citizenship, civic loyalty, knowledge of the state language, value changes, participation in the newly formed bodies, e.g. the private or non-governmental sector) in a more active or passive way or avoiding adaptation (emigration, segregation, life in closed communities).

Existence of the non-governmental sector is directly related to the development of civil society. The first NGOs (public organisations, associations, support and charity foundations, communities, religious or church organisations) of ethnic groups were founded in 1991-1992. Mostly, these organisations were established on the basis of one ethnicity. All nationalities are represented by NGOs, and their activities and cultural programmes are supported and funded by the Department of Ethnic Minorities and Emigrants under the Government of the Republic of Lithuania, and other NGO supporting budgetary foundations. Most NGOs restrict their activities on the grounds of interests and needs of a separate ethnic group, which leads to a relatively closed nature of ideology and activities of organisations focused on cultivation of ethnic consciousness, ethnic patriotism through organisation of cultural events that are traditional in their form and contents and addressed to quite passive elderly groups.

The government Department of National Minorities and Émigrés, established to deal with national minority affairs, implemented programs such as “Encouragement of the Cultural Activities of the National Minority Communities”, “The Roma Integration into Lithuania’s Society,” The Social Development of Eastern Lithuania”, and “The Formation and Implementation of the Policy on National Relations and Contacts of the State with Émigrés.”

It could be concluded that the international migration is far from being a homogeneous process and that the migration flows that affect Lithuania are undergoing different transformations.

The lack of new inflows of immigrants in Lithuania (numbers of immigrants still are very low) resulted in non-visible civic participation. From the review of the little existing material, studies and non-academic sources it appears that the main fields of civic participation are ethnic association and participation in legal and illegal labour market. Immigrants who arrived to Lithuania during the Soviet period currently are naturalized and consider themselves as Lithuanian citizens. Their civic participation is taking place in religious associations, in NOGs on ethnic basis, also as in political parties.

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## **Part I: Understanding the conditions for immigrant participation**

### ***1. Key events and demographic developments in the migration history of Lithuania***

#### 1.1 General conditions

Lithuania's location at the crossroads between East and West Europe has resulted in its complicated and turbulent history. Over the centuries its geopolitical situation changed frequently. Lithuania was an independent grand duchy in the Middle Ages. The state of Lithuania, founded in the 13th century, lost its independence several times and for long periods. In the 16th century, it united with Poland to form a commonwealth. During the partition of this commonwealth by Russia, Prussia and Austria in the 18th century, Lithuania was absorbed into the Russian empire. After the First World War, on 16 February 1918, the Lithuanian Council proclaimed the restoration of the Lithuanian state. The secret protocol of the Soviet-German frontier treaty in 1939 assigned the greater part of Lithuania to the Soviet sphere of influence and on 3 August 1940 Lithuania became a Soviet Socialist Republic of the USSR. On March 11, 1990, Lithuanian Supreme Soviet proclaimed independence. Lithuania is a member of the European Union, United Nations, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization Partnership for Peace. The Constitution divides state power among the legislative, executive and judicial branches. The president of the republic is the head of state. The legislative branch consists of a unicameral Parliament or *Seimas*. Courts are independent and subject only to the law.

Ten years of independence, marked not only by strengthening statehood but also by transition from a totalitarian to a democratic society and from a centrally planned to a market economy, have made great changes in the political, socio-economic, and cultural life of the country. They have also had a considerable impact on demographic behaviour. The transition to a market economy, the privatisation that started in Lithuania in the early 1990s, has essentially changed the economic structure and given rise to new economic phenomena such as unemployment, inflation, etc. However, last few years are characterised by the continued decrease in inflation, the growth of GDP, the increased foreign investment, relatively low and stable unemployment (9.8 percent at the end of 2003). Favourable changes in the balance of payments and privatisation reflect the transformation of the Lithuanian economy. In 2003, Lithuania had the fastest growing economy in Europe with 8.9% GDP. Privatisation of the large, state-owned utilities, particularly in the energy sector, is nearing completion. Foreign government and business support have helped in the transition from the old command economy to a market economy (Department of Statistics, 2001; CIA World Fact book, 2003). The Lithuanian economy is still undergoing major transformations.

#### 1.2 Population

In political and economic terms Lithuania is placed among the East European countries and was one of the republics of the former USSR. Lithuania borders on Latvia, Poland, Belarus and Russia (Kaliningrad region), and has a population of 3.7 million. At the beginning of 2001 the population was 3 692 600, a decrease of 5 900 compared with 1999. Substantial demographic changes started to become visible in 1990 when the population's growth rate fell to 0.76% and since 1992 the population has been decreasing. Population growth rate: -0.29% (2000 est.).

Lithuania is a multi-ethnic state, in which one ethnic group, Lithuanians, accounts for an overwhelming majority of the population. However, statistical data shows a change in the last decade in the ethnic composition of the population. The percentage of Lithuanians has increased from 79.6% in 1989 to 83.5% in 2001; the percentage of Poles has decreased from 7.0% to 6.7%, Russians from 9.4% to 6.3%. According to Lithuanian sociologists Natalija Kasatkina and Tadas Leoncikas (2003), Russians are the biggest and socially heterogeneous minority. Poles are the second biggest minority, but less socially heterogeneous. Jews, described as a non-territorial minority, present a Diaspora. The Roma minority is also a non-territorial minority, which keeps a prominent cultural distance and is characterized by limited social mobility. The official language is Lithuanian, but ethnic minorities have the right to use their language where they form a substantial part of the population.

Although legislation does not provide a definition of a “national minority”, it is generally accepted that a national minority is a group of residents of the Lithuania who identify themselves as belonging to a nationality other than Lithuanian. The 2001 Population and Housing Census recorded nationality (ethnic origin) as indicated by the respondent. Parents indicated the nationality of their children. In 2001, the size of population was 3.5 million and representatives of 115 nationalities lived in Lithuania, only 29 nationalities accounted for one hundred or more people. According to the data of the Census, Lithuanians accounted for 83.5% of the population, Poles made up 6.7%, Russians 6.3%, Belo Russians 1.2% and the Ukrainians 0.7%. Jews, Germans, Tatars, Latvians and the Roma people accounted for 0.2%, while 0.9% of the population did not indicate their nationality at all.

Table 1. Lithuanian Population by Nationality, 1923-2001 (per cent). *Data for 2001 from: Population by Sex, Age, Ethnicity and Religion. Statistics Lithuania, Vilnius 2002.*

Nationalities	1923	1959	1969	1979	1989	2001
Lithuanians	84.1	79.3	80.1	80.0	79.6	83.45
Poles	3.2	8.5	7.7	7.3	7.0	6.74
Russians	2.5	8.5	8.6	8.9	9.4	6.31
Byelarussians	0.2	1.1	1.5	1.7	1.7	1.23
Ukrainians	0.0	0.7	0.8	0.9	1.2	0.65
Tatars	0.04	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.09
Jews	7.6	0.9	0.8	0.4	0.3	0.12
Latvians	0.6	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.08
Roma	-	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.07
Germans	1.4	0.4	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.09
Armenians	-	-	-	-	-	0.04
Other	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.4	0.4	0.18
Not indicated	-	-	-	-	-	0.94

Table 2. Population by Ethnicity in 2001 (per cent). Source: *Population by Sex, Age, Ethnicity and Religion. Statistics Lithuania, Vilnius 2002*

	Vilnius city	Vilnius region	Kaunas city	Visaginas city	Salcininkai region
Lithuanians	57.8	22.4	92.9	15.0	10.4
Poles	18.7	61.3	0.4	8.6	79.5
Russians	14	8.4	4.4	52.4	5
Byelorussians	4.0	4.4	0.3	9.7	2.9
Ukrainians	1.3	0.7	0.5	5.3	0.6
Other	1.4	0.8	0.6	3.1	0.6
Not indicated	2.8	2	0.9	5.9	1.0
Total	100	100	100	100	100

### 1.3 Citizenship of the Republic of Lithuania

The Law on Citizenship of the Republic of Lithuania, adopted on September 17, 2002, came into effect on January 1, 2003. The law expanded the category of persons that have an inherent right for the citizenship of the Republic of Lithuania up to the fourth generation, and introduced a new citizenship institute – reservation of citizenship and the conditions for the simplified restoration of citizenship of the Republic of Lithuania for the persons that lost the citizenship of the Republic of Lithuania and that have an inherent right to the citizenship of the Republic of Lithuania.

In 2003 the Migration Department obtained the documents of 4,808 persons concerning the attainment, retention of right, implementation thereof, or loss of citizenship (up from 4,345 in 2002). In 2003 the department passed 2,081 resolutions over the citizenship (up from 1,398 in 2002), 129 resolutions on the retention of right to the citizenship, 93 resolutions over the citizenship upon determination that the issue of that person's citizenship was resolved in violation of requirements of the Law on Citizenship. The documents of 152 individuals were transferred to the Citizenship Group of office of President of the Republic of Lithuania for the reservation of citizenship. Moreover, 161 certificates evidencing the retained right to the citizenship were issued (replaced). Moreover, in 2003 the department submitted documents on 715 persons to the commission that had to produce recommendatory conclusions amid shortage of documents evidencing Lithuania's citizenship until June 15, 1940 or Lithuanian origin, citizenship of children and other disputable citizenship issues.

In accordance to The 2001 Population and Housing Census collected data on Citizenship, Citizens of the Republic of Lithuania accounted for 99% of the population, citizens of the other countries make up only 0.7% and those without citizenship 0.3% (Table 2). Overall, 659 persons had double citizenship (Kasatkina, Beresneviciute, 2004).

Remarkably, the 2001 Population and Housing Census recorded the highest specific weight of Lithuanians throughout the history of Lithuania. Poles, being the second minority, became the first one. Russians became the second minority, because of emigration, when the

decrease of the Lithuanian and Polish population was caused by decreasing natural increase of population. Ethnic specificity is characteristic to certain regions of Lithuania (Table 3). Lithuanians comprise a minority in the regions of Salcininkai, Vilnius, Svencionys and the town of Visaginas.

Table 3. Lithuanian Population by Citizenship. *Data for 2001 from: Population by Sex, Age, Ethnicity and Religion. Statistics Lithuania, Vilnius 2002.*

Citizens of	Percentages
Citizens of Republic of Lithuania	99
Citizens of Russian Federation	0.4
Citizens of other countries	0.2
Citizens without citizenship	0.3
Not indicated their citizenship	0.1

#### 1.4 Historical trends

The current ethnic composition of Lithuania has suffered great changes due to historical development. The main role in the process of formation of ethnic groups and communities in Lithuania is ascribed to migration. Considerable changes in the number of population began in 1940 and were related to the losses of the population due to the World War II. Also, this period covered the Holocaust, emigration of the Polish intelligentsia and Soviet deportations. Overall, in 1940-1958 Lithuania lost about one million people. The relative population losses in the Baltics in the 1940s were among the highest in the world. In the meantime, Lithuanian borders were open to a vast influx of Soviet immigrants Stankuniene, V. (1995a).

Since the end of World War II, Lithuania, also as other the two Baltic states underwent rapid and baseless, large-scale industrialisation, urbanisation and colonisation. The migration of labour force of other nationalities formed an ethnic group of the immigrants of the first generation. Large numbers of workers moved from the neighbouring Soviet republics to Lithuania. After the territorial annexation of Lithuania the USSR, the industrialisation has caused migration of workers from Ukraine, Byelorussia, Russia and Transcaucasia. Only incomplete migration statistics exist for the post-war period. Moreover, migration amongst the rural population was not registered at all until 1956. However, as the results of immigration research show, immigration intensity was highest in Estonia and Latvia and was noticeably lower in Lithuania (Zvidrins, 1997).

This period was characterised by weak contacts with Western countries and a constant increase in the population due to immigration from the republics of the former USSR (<http://web.inter.nl.net/users/Paul.Treanor/europlan.html#gigantism>). Soviet industrialisation policy accelerated Lithuanian urbanisation after 1950. The forced urbanisation and deliberate decisions influenced the distribution and migration trends of population. In Soviet Lithuania policies were determined at an all-union level, and implemented by massive resource transfers. This form of planning attracts considerable hatred, typified by the expression "Soviet gigantism". A fundamental trait in the spatial organisation of the USSR was the

gigantism of construction projects, of regional economic development programmes for the new regions, or of reconstruction of the older populated regions.

A survey of Lithuania, published in the USA at the height of the Cold War, shows the suspicion of Soviet policy. Industrialisation meant labour migration, weakening the national identity:

*"...the only solution is the migration of labourers into Lithuania from other republics of the Soviet Union, in particular from Soviet Russia.....Naturally, this mass influx of foreign elements into Lithuania will cause significant changes in its national structure and conceptual climate....With increasing vigour, Moscow is speeding up the industrialization of Lithuania and the other Baltic republics....By its haste to industrialize Lithuania, Moscow aims to unite Lithuania permanently to the Russian sphere in an economic union and to colonize Lithuania demographically...."* (Zunde, P. 1965).

The implementation of these giant projects resulted in a significant extension of the network of settlement, with the accompanying mass migration to certain regions. In Lithuania there are two Soviet mega-projects in rural areas: the Mazeikiai oil refinery, and the Ignalina nuclear plant, what resulted in Russian majority in the new town of Visaginas. Lithuania is highly urbanized, with 68 percent of the population living in urban areas.

This resulted that in addition to traditional nationalities of Lithuania, the ethnic variety was supplemented by various nationalities of the USSR. The first decades of the Soviet period (1945-1979) covered the industrialisation and centralisation of the Soviet economy. Due to the forced military and economic migration, groups of labour migrants (mainly the Russian speaking population) were coming to Lithuania up to 1988. Ethnic groups were formed as a result of the flows of labour migrants (specialists and qualified workers). Later on, tendencies of emigration of those persons with higher qualifications were pertinent to the first years of the independent state. Due to certain industrial developments, certain towns served as places of destination for immigrants, e.g. Visaginas and Vilnius. Lithuanians comprise a minority in the regions of Salcininkai, Vilnius, Svencionys and the town of Visaginas (where the Russian population comprises 52.4%, Lithuanians 15.0%, and Polish 8.6%).

The clear intention of the Soviet government was to dilute the Baltic populations and bolster pro-Soviet loyalties (Lieven, 1993, p.184). In all the Baltic states the numerically second largest nationality are the Russians. Their total in the Baltics at the end of the 1980s reached almost two million. The third largest ethnic group were the Poles (321,000 in 1989) who lived mainly in Lithuania (258,000). The number of Poles was slowly growing (Lieven, 1993). It should be noted, however that Lithuania's rates of immigration were considerably lower than to Latvia and Estonia (Table 4). After the war, Lithuania was less modernized and had a surplus of workforce. It is worth pointing out that the national partisans' resistance in Lithuania lasted longer than in Latvia and Estonia and was extremely fierce (Zvidrins, 1997).

Moreover, local Russians, in comparison with the other former Soviet Baltic Republics, were more adapted and more involved in the local cultural and linguistic environment. These statements could be supported by the data of the census in 1989 regarding bi-lingual level of the Russian population in former the Soviet Republics. In Lithuania, 37.8% of Russians could speak fluent in the language of the titular nation or treated it as their mother tongue, while in Latvia and Estonia these indicators were significantly lower: 22.4% and 15.15% respectively (Kasatkina, Beresneviciute, 2004).

Table 4. Dynamics of Russian Migrants to the Capital Cities of the Baltic Republics. *Source: Ruskije. Etnosociologicheskiye ocherki. M., Nauka, 1992. p. 49.*

Capital cities	Arrivals			Departures			Mechanical increase		
	1975	1980	1989	1975	1980	1989	1975	1980	1989
Vilnius	3,797	2,680	2,318	2,920	1,891	1,834	+877	+789	+484
Riga	17,768	12,391	7,447	13,431	10,165	7,344	+4,337	+2,226	+103
Tallinn	8,423	5,970	3,460	6,018	3,777	3,404	+2,405	+2,193	+56

### 1.5 Current flows of immigrants and emigrants

The migration situation in Lithuania differs from most of other Central-East European countries. Until the late 1980s, international migration in Lithuania was both intensive and stable. It was characterized by a constant increase in the population, due to immigration from the republics of the former USSR, amounting to net immigration of some 6,000 to 8,000 persons a year. At that time, there were almost no migration relations with other foreign countries. The proportion made up by the foreign-born population in 1989 was 10 percent in Lithuania and 26 percent in Latvia and Estonia.

However, since 1989, as a result of the far-reaching political, social and economic changes in Lithuania, the migration situation started to change, with some migration flows even reversing their direction (Sipaviciene, Kanopiene, 1999). The process of restoration of independent states has stimulated emigration (and re-emigration) of the population of non-titular nationalities from the Baltic States. Up to now, Lithuania has a negative migration balance (net migration is negative when the number of emigrants exceeds the number of immigrants). The level of emigration reached a peak in 1992, when emigration to the CIS (Commonwealth of Independent States) countries was 27 000 people. Most of the emigrants left for Russia, Ukraine or Belarus, i.e. the Republics that represented the major part of the net immigration in the past. Emigration was decreasing and net migration with the CIS countries was positive between 1997 and 1999. However, in 2000, 1 400 persons left for the CIS for permanent residence, which was twice as many as in 1999, and net migration became negative again. In 2000, 1 200 persons emigrated and 400 immigrated.

After the restoration of independence in 1991, there has been no active and massive immigration into the country for the last 10 years or effectively. On the contrary – many thousands of people left the country either together with the withdrawal of the Russian military forces or independently from this process because of other reasons (Table 5).

Table 5. The migration balance in Lithuania per 1000 inhabitants (Eurostat yearbook, 2004)

Year	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Rate	-2.9	-6.6	-6.5	-6,6	-6.5	-6.5	-6.3	-6.2	-5.9	-5.8	-0.7	-0.6

In accordance to *CIA World Fact book, December 2003*, Lithuania in accordance to migration rate was the 75th from 224 other countries, migration rate was negative, -0.14 migrant(s)/1,000 population (2003 est.).

In accordance to the Migration Department under the Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Lithuania, as of January 1, 2004, the population of the Republic of Lithuania totalled 3,445,700. The number of residents declined by 16,900 during 2003 owing to a significant negative natural population increase (-10,512 people) and migration processes (the number of people departing from the Republic of Lithuania exceeded the number of arriving individuals by 6,300). This trend has been prevailing in Lithuania for several years ([www.migracija.lt](http://www.migracija.lt)).

The flows of immigrants to Lithuania mainly consist of the following three categories of arriving persons: returning citizens (i.e., Lithuanians whose arrival is unlimited), reunion of family members (limited, although the priority is given to their arrivals) and migration on business (the number is not high). The majority of immigrants come from Russia and the CIS countries (Table 6).

Table 6. Main Nationalities in the Flows of Immigration, 1990-2000 (per cent) *Source: Population of Lithuania 1990-2000. LFSI. Demografiniu tyrimu centras. Vilnius, 2002. p. 79.*

	Lithuanians	Russians	Ukrainians	Byelarusians	Poles	Jews	Other
1990	23.1	42.7	13.8	7.5	10.2	0.9	1.8
1991	25.3	43.3	10.1	6.4	7.2	0.9	6.8
1992	34.1	40.2	7.9	6.6	5.4	0.6	5.3
1993	41.5	34.8	5.1	5.3	6.5	0.6	6.1
1994	33.1	35.6	6.1	7.7	5.9	1.0	10.6
1995	26.9	41.0	6.3	7.4	4.5	1.6	12.3
1996	33.4	35.7	7.9	5.1	4.8	0.6	12.7
1997	34.9	34.5	6.5	5.6	4.9	1.1	12.4
1998	31.9	33.6	6.9	6.9	4.9	0.8	15.1
1999	30.1	33.1	6.9	5.1	4.2	0.4	20.2
2000	44.1	21.6	4.9	2.0	4.6	0.5	22.4

Among the immigrants, Lithuanians and relatives of the former migrants, i.e. Russians, Byelorussians and Ukrainians, prevail. In 1993, Lithuanians comprised the majority among the immigrants and accounted for 41.5% and in 2000 – 44.1%. (Kasatkina, Breseneviciute, 2004). The analysis of applications submitted has revealed that the majority of arrivals to the Republic of Lithuania is related with family reunification (2,387) or pursue of commercial or other legal activities in Lithuania (1,066).

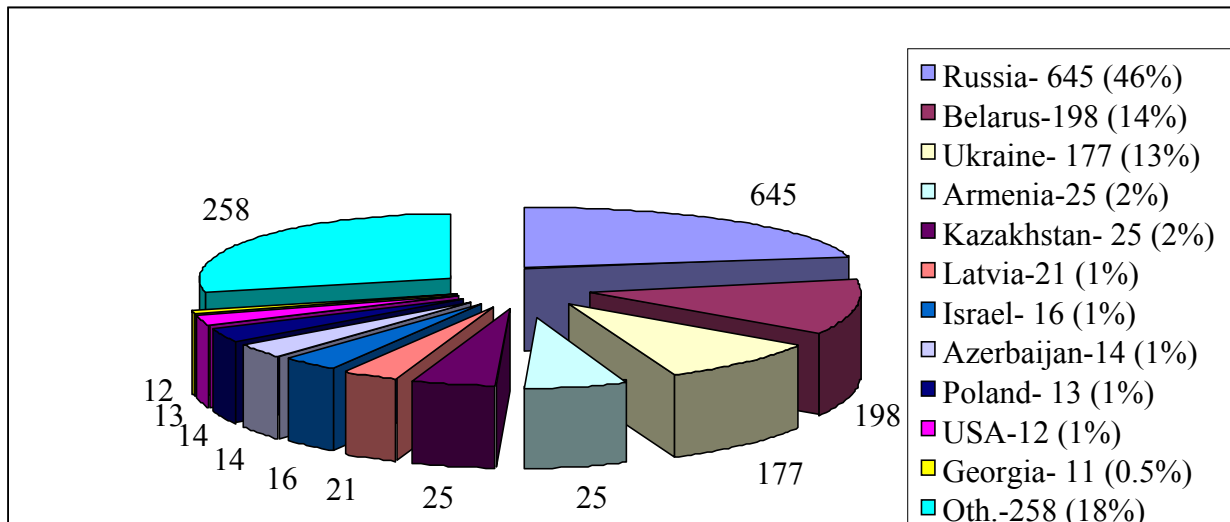


Fig. 1 Permits for permanent residence in the Lithuania issued to foreigners in 2003 (by citizenship). *Source: Migration Department under the Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Lithuania. Development and Trends of Migration Processes in the Republic of Lithuania in 2003, [www.migracija.lt](http://www.migracija.lt)*

Aliens, applying for refugee status, mainly claimed that they had been, or would be, persecuted in their country of origin due to their nationality or political convictions. Those who filed applications for temporary residence permits based their applications on the impossibility of their return to their country of origin due to such things as military action, humanitarian crisis, or neglect in their home state of human rights and fundamental freedoms. Grants of citizenship of Lithuania to persons who have previously been citizens of another country or who have been stateless consists from 825 (1997), 562 (1998), 567 (1999), 490 (2000), 507 (2001) (Eurostat yearbook, 2004).

In late 2003, citizens of European Union member states residing in the Republic of Lithuania on permanent basis comprised meagre 0.53 percent. Citizens of European Union member states residing in the Republic of Lithuania on temporary basis made up 19.2 percent (up from 15.4 percent in 2002) ([www.migracija.lt](http://www.migracija.lt)).

Table 7. Immigration to Lithuania by country of origin (excluding the former USSR) (in total numbers). *Source: Demographic yearbook 1992-1995.*

	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995
Africa					
Algeria	1				
Ethiopia	2				
Americas					
Canada	1	10	21	4	13
United States	7	59	60	28	45
Other American countries	3	5			
Asia					
Afghanistan	12	3			
Israel	20	18	1	11	25
Jordan	3				
Lebanon	4				3
Mongolia	73	19			
Europe					
Czech/Slovak republics*	87	3			2
Germany*	489	223	50	24	29
Hungary*	6	5	1	0	0
Poland	345	51	11	10	6
Scandinavian countries		3	1		2
United Kingdom	1	7	4	6	3
Other European countries	6	10	9	10	6
Oceania					
Australia		9	6	5	7
Countries not indicated		3	4	9	7
Total	1119	434	168	107	150

\* Includes Lithuanian nationals returning from active military service.

Table 8. Number of foreigners that resided in the Republic of Lithuania on permanent or temporary basis in 2003-2002 ([www.migracija.lt](http://www.migracija.lt)).

	On permanent basis		On temporary basis	
	2003	2002	2003	2002
Foreigners in total	27 905	25 109	4 833	5 361
Citizens of Russian Federation	12 425	11 36	1 051	1 300
Citizens of Republic of Belarus	2 007	1 758	578	589
Citizens of Ukraine	1 413	1 241	444	699
Stateless persons	7 917	9 033	N.A.	N.A.
Citizens of USA	N.A.	N.A.	289	321

## 1.6 Illegal transit migrants

The emergence and gradual increase in illegal migration for work in Lithuania can only be understood in the broader context of its development throughout the region, and particularly in the countries of the former USSR.

During the Soviet period, illegal migration of any kind (immigration, emigration or transit migration) in either Lithuania or any of the other countries of the former USSR was practically impossible. Surrounded by the *iron curtain*, on which the army acted as border guards and implemented a closed door migration policy, none of these countries were either easily accessible or attractive to migrants. Migration was regulated by special secret decrees, including Secret Decree No. 200 of the Ministry of the Interior of the USSR, supplemented by secret KGB instructions. In general, only immediate relatives were allowed to emigrate. Nor was immigration, or even repatriation, welcomed. A similar policy was applied to short-term foreign migration, with the aim of minimizing temporary foreign visits into and out of the country (Stankuniene, 1995a,b).

However, the collapse of the former USSR, the liberalization of migration policy and the considerable weakening of frontier controls led to the revival of traditional migration patterns. The first illegal transit migrants were apprehended in Lithuania only in 1992, when the operational service of the Border Police Department was first established. It is not therefore possible to state with any certainty that illegal transit migration did not occur previously. Indeed, it may have been happening for some time without being noticed. Since then, the transit migration (trafficking), particularly of Asians and Africans, has increased gradually and has come to account for a significant proportion of all illegal crossings of the Lithuanian border. Investigations have shown that very few Asian or African migrants who arrive in Lithuania intend to stay in the country and that their objective is mainly to reach Western Europe or the United States. The greatest recorded increase occurred in 1994 and 1995, before a slowdown in 1996. However, the official figures refer only to the illegal migrants who have been detected (Sipaviciene, Kanopiene, 1999).

Analysing current trends in illegal transit migrants, Krystyna Romaniszyn (1997, 2002) reports that the number of illegal transit migrants already apprehended when passing through Lithuania to the West is decreasing. Research point out that there has been a decrease in the number of illegal migrants apprehended which may indicate stabilization of transit movements through Lithuania on a certain level. In the year of highest apprehension, 1995, 7,289 illegal migrants were caught, while till August 1996 the number was 1,575. A steady grow of Sri-Lanka and Bangladeshi, rapid growth of Afghans followed by Indian, Pakistani and other Asian nationals detained in years 1992-1996 suggests numerous involvement of these nationals in the movement. The largest national group (27 per cent) apprehended in Lithuania in 1996 were the citizens of Sri Lanka (IOM, 1997). During the year of 2001, the border police detained 107 illegal immigrants (compared with 100 in 2000). Over the same period, the border police reported 998 illegal border crossings, compared with 1,101 in 2000. Illegal immigration from Afghanistan, India, and Sri Lanka during the year of 2001 increased.

Over the last few years, irregular immigration decreased dramatically due to improved border control, stricter laws against human smuggling, and more effective detention and return of migrants to their countries of origin..

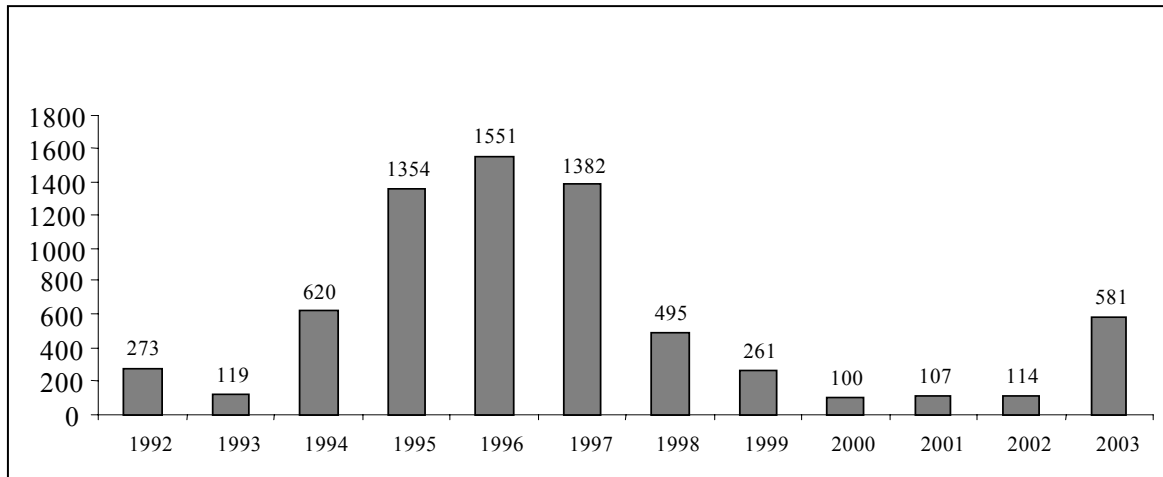


Fig. 2. Illegal migrants detained in Lithuania (1992 – 2003). *Source: The data of State Border Guard Service under the Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Lithuania. ([www.pasienis.lt](http://www.pasienis.lt)).*

In 2003, the officials of State Border Guard Service under the Ministry of the Interior detained a total of 581 illegal immigrants at the Lithuanian frontier. 281 detainees arrived from neighbouring countries (111 Russia's nationals, 92 Belarus citizens, 73 Latvian citizens and 5 Polish nationals), whereas 300 came from other states (48 citizens of Ukraine, 28 stateless persons, 27 Turkish nationals, 24 Pakistani nationals, 24 Indian citizens, 14 Chinese nationals). 259 of those individuals were detained while attempting to cross the state border of Lithuania illegally. 146 individuals attempted to enter the country with forged or somebody else's travel documents, whereas 176 resided in the country illegally on numerous reasons. Following the new criteria of assessment, Lithuanian border guards also detained 12 citizens of Israel, and an identical number of citizens of Moldova and Netherlands, which were treated as illegal immigrants.

### 1.7 Asylum and refugee status

Refugees are relatively new to Lithuania. Until 1997 refugee status had never been granted to anyone, and we did not have an asylum system. But now much has changed and foreigners are allowed to seek asylum in a humanitarian environment. Although initially none of the transit migrants intended to stay in Lithuania or find work in the country, after they have stayed for a certain length of time, and particularly when they realize that their prospects of reaching the industrialized countries are poor, some of them eventually try to seek refugee status with the intention of staying in Lithuania.

The law provides for the granting of asylum and refugee status in accordance with the provisions of the 1951 U.N. Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol. In 2000 the Parliament abolished the Council of Refugee Affairs and established the Vilnius Administrative Court to hear asylum appeals. The Court receives assistance from the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). The Government cooperates with the office of the UNHCR and other humanitarian organizations in assisting refugees.

In 2001, 425 persons (mostly from the Russian province of Chechnya and from Afghanistan) applied for asylum: 256 applied for refugee status and 169 for a residence permit on humanitarian grounds.

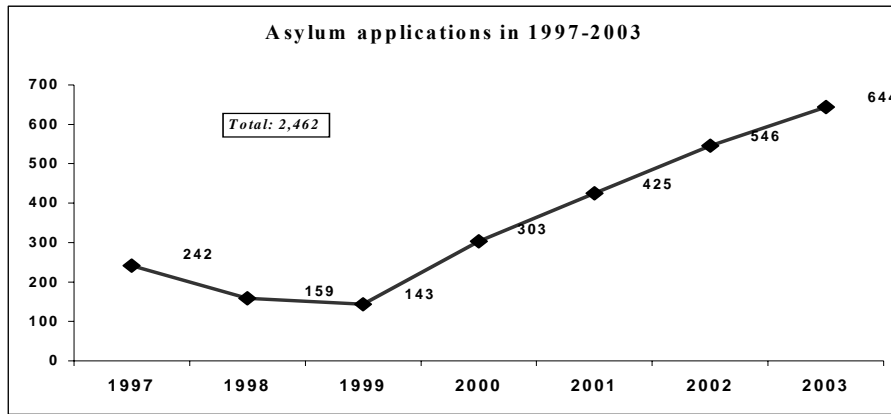


Fig. 3. Asylum applications (1997 – 2003) in Lithuania. *Source: Migration Department under the Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Lithuania. Development and Trends of Migration Processes in the Republic of Lithuania in 2003, [www.migracija.lt](http://www.migracija.lt)*

A refugee reception centre for asylum seekers in the town of Rukla housed 140 persons, including 64 children, at the end of 2001 (Country Reports on Human Rights Practices - 2001). A total of 644 applications for asylum in the Republic of Lithuania, including applications for the refugee status in the Republic of Lithuania, and applications for a permit for temporary residence in the country on humanitarian grounds were received in 2003.

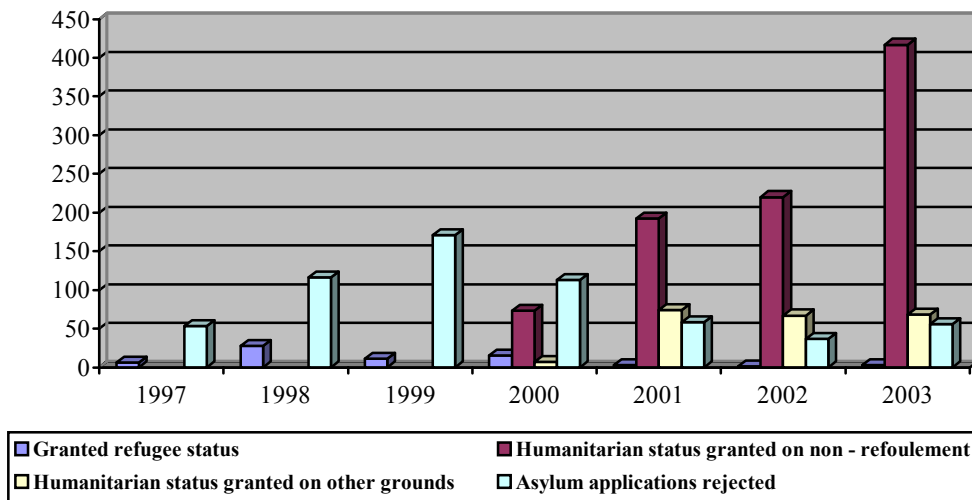


Fig. 4. Development and Trends of Migration Processes (1997 – 2003) in Lithuania. *Source: Migration Department under the Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Lithuania. Development and Trends of Migration Processes in the Republic of Lithuania in 2003, [www.migracija.lt](http://www.migracija.lt)*

## 2. Major issues discussed with relation to immigration

Lithuania is a fairly homogeneous country and not an overtly xenophobic one. Lithuanians do not suffer from the degree of ethnic and cultural tension, or discrimination against migrants. However, the danger can be found among public attitudes towards the

refugees and asylum seekers who trickle across our borders. The mainstream media is slow to change, they often look for negative stories only. They focus on so-called illegal migration, on those people entering the country clandestinely and without papers, and on criminality among migrants. Lithuanians usually hear negative things, and a common concept of a refugee often is someone who had come to cause trouble.

One of major concerns of the media in 1997-1999 was illegal immigration. Publications described growing public anxiety about illegal immigration, mainly that flowing across the Belarusian border with Poland. Concerns were further fuelled by occasional riots at the Refugee Detention Centre in Pabrade, 50 kilometres north of Vilnius. In late September, 1997 a ring of illegal immigrant traffickers was uncovered, apparently well connected to the administration of the Refugee Detention Centre. In July 1997, Parliament passed an amendment to the Criminal Code, increasing the punishment for trafficking in illegal immigrants. On a first offence, a trafficker can be sentenced from five to ten years in jail.

The Public opinion and Market research company "Sprinter tyrimai" (in 2003) has made the public opinion research asking the question "What is the most frightening about Europe entering the EU". Responds show that the main disadvantages are: increase of the prices (55%), increase of competition (19%), the flow of the immigrants (9%). Both young and old generations are worried about the influx of immigrants. Some people wondered if they would lose their jobs to foreigners who would work for next to nothing.

Publications in 2001 described that Members of the Polish Parliament criticized the Government over alleged discrimination against the Polish minority (e.g., in school exams and the spelling of names). There were calls in 2001, mostly from the Polish community, for the resignation of the Education Minister after he made public remarks that were interpreted to mean that foreign language instruction in schools would cease. The Government subsequently confirmed that there was no intention of ending current instruction in the languages of ethnic minorities.

The main information sources about the human rights situation in Lithuania are the mass media, particularly television. Approx. 30% of people use television as the primary source of information in Lithuania. The latest polls conducted in 2001 show that Lithuanian citizens rely on the mass media as their most significant source of information. Indeed, 61.5 % of the Lithuanian public trusts the Lithuanian mass media, 'the fourth estate of the realm', more than any other institution except the Church (68.3 % of Lithuanians trust the Church most). Lithuanian government laws and regulations affect all aspects of media production. The media law prohibits the distribution of information that "incite[s] war, national, racial and religious enmity." The most important agencies of media self-regulation in Lithuania are the Ethics Commission, the Radio and Television Commission, the Council of Lithuanian National Radio and Television and the Foundation for the Support of Press, Radio and Television. The members of these organizations are appointed by the media industry and various public non-political organizations. The legal provisions, however, do not guarantee compliance. The difference between normative laws and the everyday reality of the mass media is obvious. Although the media are not subject to any political censorship, they are highly competitive and politicised. Often political and commercial alliances are made to control media outlets and intervene in the formation of public knowledge.

Much attention of the media was devoted to the fact that many non-ethnic Lithuanian public sector employees were required to attain a functional knowledge of Lithuanian within several years, although the authorities have been granting liberal extensions of the time frame in which this competence is to be achieved. However, there is no documented evidence or reports in the press of job dismissals based on the language law.

As to Lithuanian media portrayals of ethnic minorities, there have been very few studies on this topic over the last ten years in Lithuania.

The Lithuanian sociologists Beresnevičiute and Nausėdienė (1999) analysed the representations of ethnic groups in the discourse of the Lithuanian mass media. According to this study, newspapers portray national minorities as unintegrated into society, as criminals, and as socially insecure or "exotic" groups, therefore reinforcing racial and ethnic stereotypes. Mass media not only spread but also strengthen negative stereotypes of ethnic minorities. The analyses of the main Lithuanian press revealed the fact that ethnic minorities are treated as separate part of Lithuanian society. Beresnevičiute (1999) emphasized that stereotypical attitudes toward minorities threaten to develop social distances between different ethnic groups. These stereotypes impede the integration of the minority communities into the Lithuanian society and reduce their possibility to solve their problems on equal basis with other social groups.

Analyzing the representations of legal migrants in the media, it could be referred to the issues on ethnic minorities only, because the legal immigrants are basically non-existent (very few). In the case of ethnic minorities, Tereskinas (2003) examined the representations of four ethnic groups, Russians, Poles, Roma people and Jews, living in Lithuania, by the largest Lithuanian daily *Lietuvos rytas* from November 27, 2000, to May 9, 2001. *Lietuvos rytas* carried a total of 88 news stories and articles that mentioned Lithuanian Russians, Poles, Jews and Roma people. Most stories touched upon the subject of Jews and the Holocaust in Lithuania (37), Lithuanian Russians attracted 22 reports, Poles, 10, and Romans. There were a total of 22 stories about the people of Russian ethnicity living in Lithuania published in LR (*Lietuvos rytas*) during the period of November 27, 2000, to May 9, 2001. Of those, 7 deal with active Lithuanian-Russian politicians, 9 with crimes, 4 with culture and education and 2 with historical justice. During the sampled week, there was no mention of Lithuanian Russians, Poles, Jews and Romans in the primetime news. Only one story related to a Jewish criminal was broadcast in the newsmagazine "Sroves" (Trends), and the comedy show "ZbTV" featured the main character of the Polish origin named Zbigniewas (Tereskinas, 2003).

Many publications in Lithuania are especially devoted to Polish ethnic community, among them a recent publication of the Government Department for Statistics of the Republic of Lithuania (Lenkai: 1995). Vilnius/Warsaw. This official publication states that more than a half of the Poles speak the Lithuanian language fluently and only 8 percent cannot speak it at all. The education level of Poles is lower than that of Lithuanians and their age structure is older. According to the above-mentioned source, 52 percent of Polish parents want their children to attend Lithuanian schools, 44 percent would like them to attend Polish schools and classes and 4 percent would prefer training in the Russian language (Zvidrins, 1997). From these representations, Poles emerge as a self-conscious national minority that requires special status and rights (Tereskinas, 2003).

The sociological research was carried out by a research group of *Centre for Civil Initiatives* (V.Beresnevičiute, G.Kiaulakis, G.Milasius, I.Nausėdienė, and D.Stakenaitė) in 1998. The research aimed to reveal the image of national minorities in the Lithuanian press by applying content analysis method. It covered the three main and most read dailies ("*Lietuvos Aidas*," "*Lietuvos Rytas*" and "*Respublika*"). Analysis of the empirical data on Lithuanian mass media revealed that first of all, communities of the Poles, Jews, Russians and Gypsies are more often mentioned than the others (Beresnevičiute, Nausėdienė, 1999). Texts on national minorities frequently portray them as groups whose are not integrated into the life of the society, as criminals, socially unprotected (secure) or "exotic" groups, and all the problems related to the members of these groups are presented as related to their nationality

and are over politicised. For example, in all three dailies Gypsies are depicted as a criminal, socially unsecured community, of whom the state and the society on the whole should take care. The Polish community is presented as the only one ethnic group of Lithuania that is clearly and publicly defined and it defines itself as national minority, and which constantly insists on demands such as "special status" and "rights of minority." In the texts about Poles trends towards "separate" education and distinction between the Polish and the state language can be disclosed. The Russian ethnic group is presented as the most integrated ethnic community bound by close cultural ties, and as distinct since its "problems" are not considered to be specific for a national minority (Beresnevičiute, Nausėdiene, 1999). As noted by Beresnevičiute, (1999), there is a danger that the above mentioned matters constitute stereotypical attitudes towards the "others," perceive them as strangers, and develop social distances between different ethnic groups. Moreover, they provide favourable background for the development, dissemination and sometimes even the creation of different stereotypes. These stereotypes hinder the integration of the minority communities into the Lithuanian society, and reduce their possibilities to solve their problems on their own, on equal basis with other social groups.

### ***3. Institutional setting framing immigrant participation***

#### **3.1 Restrictive conditions:**

In its report on minority rights in 10 European Union candidate states, the Open Society Institute stated that Lithuania does not have a comprehensive anti-discrimination law that expressly prohibits discrimination in specific areas of public activity.

Many non-ethnic Lithuanian public sector employees were required to attain a functional knowledge of Lithuanian within several years, although the authorities have been granting liberal extensions of the time frame in which this is to be achieved. During the first 6 months of 1997, 2,484 persons applied for citizenship. Citizenship was granted to 952 of them, based in part on their Lithuanian language ability. There is no documented evidence of job dismissals based on the language law. As of August, 1999 314 persons took a language test for acquiring citizenship and 298 persons passed the test successfully. During the first half of the year, 354 persons were naturalized (compared with 550 in 1998). In the first half of the year 2001, 252 persons took the language portion of the citizenship test, and 221 persons passed. From January to August, 2001, 307 persons were naturalized (about the same number as in previous years).

There is no documented evidence of job dismissals based on the language law. The authorities have indicated that the intent of the law is to apply moral incentives to learn Lithuanian as the official language of the State; they have asserted that no one would be dismissed solely because of an inability to meet the language requirements. Until the 2002, the rights of immigrants and refugees in Lithuania constituted a new and rapidly developing area of law. Because legislation in this area was recent, no mechanism had yet been created in 2002, that would facilitate the implementation of all the provisions. Asylum seekers in Lithuania had a limited time in which to lodge a complaint against a decision denying them refugee status. Although theoretically they had seven days in which to lodge an appeal, during this time they could nonetheless face deportation. Stamp duties and the lack of available interpreters also contributed to the effective denial of an asylum seekers right of appeal.

## 3.2 Encouraging conditions

### *3.2.1 Legal basis*

The legal and institutional framework for putting into effect the principle of equal treatment and combating discrimination on the basis of racial and ethnic origin consists of the Constitution, the laws, Lithuania's obligations under international treaties, and explanations of the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Lithuania.

The Lithuanian Socialist Soviet Republic adopted already on 29 November 1989 a Citizenship Law which introduced the so-called "zero-option" for acquiring Lithuanian citizenship. This law allowed all members of national minorities living permanently in Lithuania to apply for Lithuanian citizenship, regardless of nationality and without any language requirements. The law remained in effect until 4 November 1991. During this period 87% of those who were not already granted citizenship according to the 1940 variant, granted citizenship (Sipaviciene, Kanopiene, 1999).

On July 4, 1995 the Law on the Status of Refugees of the Republic of Lithuania was adopted. On January 21, 1997 the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania ratified the 1951 Convention and the 1967 Protocol on the Status of Refugees. In 1997 the Law on Refugee Status came into effect, allowing for the first formal grant of refugee status to qualified applicants, in accordance with the provisions of the 1951 U.N. Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol. The 1998 Law on Legal State of Aliens came into effect on July 1.

On July 1, 1999 the Law on the Legal Status of Aliens of the Republic of Lithuania came into force and replaced previous legislation including the Law on the Legal Status of Aliens of the Republic of Lithuania, the Law on Immigration of the Republic of Lithuania and the Law on Emigration of the Republic of Lithuania. The new law laid the foundation for a uniform asylum system. In 2002 the only ground for prohibiting the entry of an asylum seeker to Lithuania (prior to 2000, 10 grounds existed), was if a person sought to enter Lithuania from a "safe third country."

The principle of equal treatment of Ethnic Minorities is addressed by a number of Lithuanian laws. For example, Article 3 of the Law on Presidential Elections states: "Any direct or indirect abridgement of a citizen of the Republic of Lithuania's right to vote on the grounds of their sex, race, nationality, language, descent, social status, religion, convictions, or views shall be prohibited." Article 2 of the Law on the Employment Contract stipulates as one of the principles of legal regulation of labour relations, "equality for all employees, regardless of their sex, race, nationality, citizenship, political convictions, religious beliefs, or any other factors which do not affect their professional qualifications." The Penal Code provides for a sentence of from 2 to 10 years' imprisonment for the incitement of racial or national hatred or incitement of violence against foreigners. This law has been used to discourage racial and national hatred, such as in the newspaper *Lietuvos Aidas* case.

Responsibility for national policy on developing and implementing harmonious relations between various national groups lies with the Department of National Minorities and Lithuanians Living Abroad under the Government of the Republic of Lithuania. The Department's policies are aimed at guaranteeing the possibility for the national minorities of Lithuania to preserve their identity, stimulate their participation in the public political and cultural life of the country, foster their civic awareness, tolerance, contribute to the mutual understanding and trust among people of different nationalities, strengthen respect for the culture, customs, traditions and religion of different national groups of Lithuania, and eliminate causes of discord on the basis of national origin.

To support the cultures of ethnic minorities, and to design and execute national policy towards them, the Department of National Minorities and Émigrés for the Government of the

Republic of Lithuania was established in 1990. The Department cooperates with the national communities and their organizations in Lithuania. The House of National Communities and the Council of National Communities function within the framework of the Department. By 2000, 19 different nationalities residing in Lithuania established their own non-governmental organizations. The most active national and ethnic minority organizations include the Russian Cultural Centre, the Lithuanian Russian Community, the Union of Lithuanian Poles, the Jewish Community of Lithuania, and the Association of Lithuanian Roma. It should be mentioned that in 1998 the Roma Information Bureau was opened. It oversees social, cultural and educational issues of Roma people.

In the Representative population survey, May 2002 on Human rights in Lithuania: year 2002 participated 1044 of respondents from target group (18+ years population in Lithuania). The respondents mentioned three rights, which, in the respondents opinion, receive sufficient attention: the rights of ethnic minorities: 46,8% sufficient attention and 9,9% insufficient, the rights of migrants, refugees: 28,8% sufficient and 16,2% insufficient attention, the rights of suspects, accused, imprisoned persons: 26,9% sufficient and 24,0% insufficient attention. People favourably evaluated the work of two institutions protecting ensuring the human rights in Lithuania: the mass media (58,4% evaluated favourably and 9,4% unfavourably) and NGOs (24,4% evaluated favourably and 14,2% unfavourably) ([www3.lrs.lt/owa-bin/owarepl/inter/owa/U0075489.doc](http://www3.lrs.lt/owa-bin/owarepl/inter/owa/U0075489.doc)).

### *3.2.2 Integration into society of new immigrants*

The absence of huge numbers of new immigrants and specifics of settlement of those few who come to Lithuania serves as a precondition that there is no specific migration-issue-based opposition provoked in the local communities. Massive immigration is not typical to Lithuania at all and if immigration takes place then the flow of persons entering the country is normally directed to the capital city Vilnius or a few other biggest cities, which offer better economic and social opportunities.

The prevailing opinion in Lithuania is that it is a transit country for clandestine migrants. The self-image of transit country fosters efforts to combat transit, but detracts attention from integration. Some part of the "transit" gets asylum and stays - if not by choice then by chance, and need integration assistance. Transit country image implies strengthening policing in order to create "transit-unfriendly" effect, but neglects the data that majority of migrants never chose their track in advance (Leoncikas, 1999).

As was stated in Annual report of H.E. Algirdas Brazauskas, President of the Republic of Lithuania in 1996, the essence and objective of ethnic policy of the Republic of Lithuania is to ensure best possible conditions for the development of Lithuanians and other nations residing in Lithuania. Over the ages the realities of our country have developed an understanding that ethnic minorities constitute an inseparable part of the Lithuanian state and, consequently, ensuring the progress and cultural continuity of not only Lithuanians, but also of all nations residing here is one of the objectives of Lithuania's restored statehood.

The Lithuanian Red Cross (LRC) has been active from the outset in protecting the rights of asylum seekers and providing them with social assistance. Red Cross lawyers counsel and represent them. Red Cross welfare staff work to integrate them. Red Cross Youth programmes foster the social integration of children. Since 1996, the Lithuanian Red Cross has been providing humanitarian assistance to asylum seekers and refugees accommodated in the Centre for the Registration of Foreigners in Pabrade and in the Refugee Reception Centre in Rukla. Depending on resources the Lithuanian Red Cross provides the inmates of the two Centres and refugees those are granted refugee or humanitarian status with baby food,

medicine, hygienic items, clothes, books, newspapers, school necessities and toys. Special attention is paid to the most vulnerable groups of refugees, such as pregnant women, children, traumatized, disabled people. Since 1998, young volunteers of LRC actively have been participating in the socialisation and integration programme for the refugee children. The children participate in various social gatherings and joint summer camps of refugee and Lithuanian children where they have the possibility of becoming familiar with Lithuanian culture and life style.

### *3.2.3 Integration into society of ethnic minorities*

Ethnic minorities receive fair treatment in Lithuania. Both citizens and permanent residents are equally supported by the state. Equal social benefits, health and social insurance, pensions, loans, subsidies for the education of children, maternity leave, and employment opportunities are equally available to all. Education is offered in the native languages. 69 schools in Russian, 73- in Polish, 1- Belorussian, 1- Jewish, 1- German and 29 - mixed language schools (29 - Russian-Lithuanian, 11 - Polish-Lithuanian, 28 Russian-Polish, 1 - Belorussian-Russian and 10 - Lithuanian-Russian-Polish). All schools except one private Russian school are owned by State. 27 Sunday schools in 9 languages are available. Broadcasting for radio and television programmes are transmitted in nine languages and newspapers in seven minority languages (43 in total) are run with government support.

National minorities publish 41 periodical in their language – 35 newspapers and 6 magazines. 31 of them are published in Russian, 7 in Polish, 1 in Belorussian and 2 in German. The State radio broadcasts one hour daily in Russian and Polish. There are weekly editions in Ukrainian and Belorussian. There is a daily news edition in Russian on the State television. Private regional television companies broadcast news and other programmes in Russian, Polish and Belorussian. However, as Nina Mackevič emphasized in her paper “Russian Press in the View of Marginalization,” newspapers in Russian, for instance, are written in bad Russian; they depend on the information from the press of Russia and largely the reviews of this press. The same may be said about other minority press.

However, being the largest ethnic minority, the Russians never thought of themselves as a minority during the Soviet period. Even now, there is a dominance of the Russian environment and language in many settlements. This language is often used also by non-Russians, and many children of Belarusian, Ukrainian or Jewish ethnicity attend schools where lessons are taught in Russian. The Russian communities maintain close contacts with their Russian homeland. Not surprisingly, ethnic Russians make up a larger part of those with relatives in Russia, resulting in the fact that many political events in this country have a direct resonance in the Baltics. However, the extensive emigration of Russians from the Baltic states has aggravated their own national identity issue and has tended to stimulate their ethnic consolidation. At the same time, their large size and the recent history of the Russian-speaking communities’ dominance has created a certain inertia and reluctance on the part of Russians to adapt to the local cultural communities. At present, the former so-called ‘Russian towns’ and ‘Russian zones’ are the most problematic from the point of view of integration Blaschke (1992, p. 88).

In this respect Jochen Blaschke, analysing the situation in the new states within the former USSR (outside Russia), wrote, “the Russian part of the population is trying forcibly to safeguard its privileges thereby separating the territories it occupies from the rest of the new state. One reason for the severity of these conflicts may be that the territories are relatively homogeneous ethnically. Blaschke (1992, p. 88) also concluded that “it would likewise be sensible to use development projects to encourage the new states to adapt a minority-friendly policy.” The second largest non-titular ethnic group are Poles. Besides, very large

concentrations of Poles are only to be found in some cities and rural areas: in the Salcininku and Vilnius districts, partly also in the Traku district and the city of Vilnius in Lithuania.

With the view to comprehensive integration of the ethnic minority of Gypsies retaining distinctive language, culture and ethnical identity, into the society of Lithuania, the Gypsies Integration Programme has been drafted in March 2000. The Programme is based on both international and national legislation and practice in foreign countries, and covers issues related to education, health, employment and social issues protecting survival of national identity.

In 2001, there were approximately 200 non-governmental organisations of national minorities in Lithuania, representing 19 different ethnic communities. 17 of the communities were represented at the Council of National Communities by the Department of National Minorities and Lithuanians Living Abroad which holds regular consultations with the President of the Republic. There are three political parties specifically representing the interests of national minorities. National minorities have access to the state television. They are able to cultivate their cultures by other means also. A number of Government programmes are aimed at facilitating the integration of national minorities into Lithuanian society as well as retaining their national and cultural identity (Baranovas, 2001).

In Vilnius, the Department maintains a House of National Communities where various organisations of national communities can avail themselves of the premises for their cultural and educational activities. The Department of National Minorities may accept and consider complaints within the field of its competence. However, it is not authorised to impose administrative sanctions. In order to better protect the rights of victims of discrimination through non-judicial procedures, issues concerning discrimination on the basis of ethnic and racial origin should be added to the mandate of the Ombudsman for Equal Opportunities of Women and Men.

During the 11 years of its existence, the Department of National Minorities and Lithuanians Living Abroad has been able to effectively deal with the issues faced by the minority communities in Lithuania. It contributed to the fact that Lithuania is able to successfully integrate most of the ethnic communities into the society, while maintaining their own national and cultural identity. In Lithuania in 2002, 213 schools operated in a language other than Lithuanian. There were 68 Russian-language schools, 74 Polish-language schools, one Belarusian-language school, with some of these schools also offering instruction through Lithuanian. Forty-nine minority language periodicals were published and 225 national minority organizations were operating. The special programmes are preparing by the Ministry of Education and Science for bilingual pupils in the schools in which the language of instruction is Lithuanian (Moskvina, 2004).

Social integration of recognized refugees into local communities is probably the most sensitive element of Lithuanian asylum system. The Order on Social Integration of Refugees was approved by the Government in February 1998, and it was just some years ago that the first refugees have settled in some districts of Lithuania. Working in partnership with the Government (namely with the Ministry of Social Security and Labour) in this context, the Lithuanian Red Cross is implementing social integration assistance program by helping the refugees to find accommodation, employment, learn the Lithuanian language, establish new social contacts. The Lithuanian Red Cross also helps them by paying one-off cash benefits, providing some of the necessities of life such as furniture, clothes, hygiene products, etc.

Since 1999, the LRC has been implementing projects intended to activate the cultural and social initiatives of the inmates of the Rukla and Pabradė Centres. Depending on resources the LRC social workers and volunteers arranging various events to foster

intercultural communication and to introduce the inmates to the culture and traditions of Lithuania. In fact, they also try to stimulate the inmates' own initiative to hold their own national events, to propagate their own ethnic culture (songs, dances, music, applied arts), to engage in such activities as sports, reading, painting, gardening, etc. The aim of these initiatives is to improve the social and psychological atmosphere in the Centres, to alleviate the depression and apathy of the asylum seekers (<http://www.redcross.lt/pabegeliaien2.html>)

## **Part II: Active Civic Participation of Third Country immigrants**

Social, political, economic changes that took place ten years ago have influenced the situation of all ethnic groups (including both majority and minority groups) when choosing their strategies of acting in social sphere, adapting themselves to new requirements (citizenship, civic loyalty, knowledge of the state language, value changes, participation in the newly formed bodies, e.g. the private or non-governmental sector) in a more active or passive way or avoiding adaptation (emigration, segregation, life in closed communities).

During the first decade of the Independence of the Republic of Lithuania, many steps have been taken to ensure the civic integration of representatives of Lithuania's ethnic groups. The passed laws, defined the legal mechanisms and ratified international conventions and treaties provided citizens with bunches of rights and created favourable conditions for social life and personal expression. Although legally defined mechanisms are crucial to the development of civic society, they are not sufficient for social development and social relations in society and the issue of ethnic processes, as a social challenge, still has not yet been overcome (e.g. negative attitudes, issues of ethnic pureness, symbolic and real cleavages in the labour market, the public sector, treatment in the mass media, etc.).

Participation of minority groups in political, economic and social institutes of the state could be a reflection of their integration into society and to its political or civic infrastructure. The outcome of successful integration and adaptation of the majority of population of different ethnic groups is social participation in full, participation in the constructing and reconstructing of social reality or in the production and reproduction of social life. More or less active participation in social life can take different shapes, nature and quality and is one of the most important factors of social integration.

### ***1. Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) of National Minorities***

Existence of the non-governmental sector is directly related to the development of civil society. The first NGOs (public organisations, associations, support and charity foundations, communities, religious or church organisations, etc.) of ethnic groups were founded in 1991-1992, their number comprised 64. From the beginning of their activities, organisations were established on the basis of one ethnicity. However, NGOs of ethnic groups does not mean their active position, activity in social, cultural and other fields. Despite the high number of ethnic organisations, the numbers of their members are relatively low (Kasatkina, Leoncikas, 2003).

All nationalities are represented by NGOs, and their activities and cultural programmes are supported and funded by the Department of Ethnic Minorities and Emigrants under the Government of the Republic of Lithuania, and other NGO supporting budgetary foundations. In 2002, 266 non-governmental organizations representing up to 20 ethnic communities were operating in Lithuania, including 62 Russian, 52 Polish, 32 German, 26 Jewish, 21 Belorussian, 13 Roma, 32 German, 5 Greek, 12 Tatar and other organisations.

Rumanians, Estonians, Georgians, Karaites, Hungarians and Koreans also have their organisations, at least one organisation per each of these minorities. The majority (80%) of these organisations is of a cultural nature. Very few deal with issues of education (5% of all organisations), charity (nearly 4%) or uniting representatives of different professional groups (nearly 3%). About 3% of all organisations of ethnic groups deal with social issues, fewer are related to sports activities or religious activities. Although this cannot be reduced only to formally registered organisations and bodies. On the other hand, the same applies to NGOs of ethnic groups, i.e. they do not necessarily mean civil society or its values, ideology

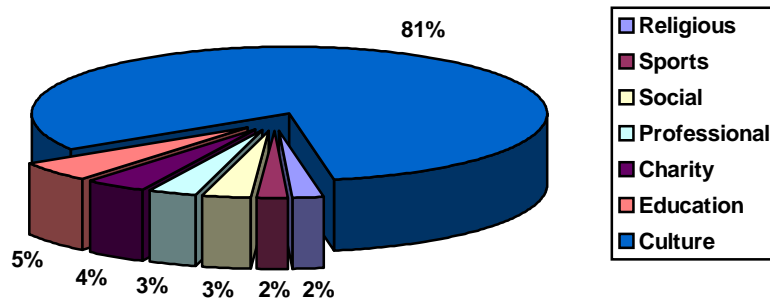


Figure 5. Distributing of NGOs of Ethnic Minorities by the Nature of Activities (Kasatkina, Leoncikias, 2003).

The data of several research suggest that the main motivation to take part in the activities of ethnic NGOs is related to close relations with people of the same ethnic origin. The core problem lies in the tendencies of formation of NGOs for the purposes of uniting people for common activities only on the grounds of ethnic virtues. Otherwise, leaders and activists of such organisations could deal with a much wider social circle of people than their nationality (ethnic origin). For example, a pilot research carried out in Lithuania in January 2003 by the representatives of the *Institute for Social Research* (Kasatkina, Beresnevičiute, 2004) addressed to leaders of ethnic NGOs and included questions about activities, aims, membership and support for their organisations. Respondents represented a great variety of ethnic groups of Lithuania (Russian, Polish, Greek, Belorussian, Ukrainians, Uzbek, Tadjik). The research findings revealed that these NGOs restrict their activities on the grounds of interests and needs of a separate ethnic group, which leads to a relatively closed nature of ideology and activities of organisations focused on cultivation of ethnic consciousness, ethnic patriotism through organisation of cultural events that are traditional in their form and contents and addressed to quite passive elderly groups. Such organisations are distinct in their ethnocentric evaluation of their ethnicity, culture and tradition and in monoethnic membership. Relations of representatives of these organizations are determined by their ethnicity, whereas the values of civic society are of low significance in the framework of ideology and activities. This could lead to certain separatism or ethnic exclusion, although other approaches and perspectives should be taken into account. Overall, such NGOs do not operate as agents for protection of human rights and interests of minorities, but merely as bodies for cultural cultivation and self-help groups, providing emotional support, information, advice and practical aid, publicity and education, fund raising, etc (Kasatkina, Beresnevičiute, 2004).

## ***2. Participation in labour market***

The employment rate between Lithuanians, Russians, Poles and other nationalities does not vary very much. However unemployment rate of ethnic minorities is higher than average unemployment rate in Lithuania. This situation is compounded by the fact that national minorities concentrate in a few regions.

There are several examples of successful business of people of other nationality than Lithuanian (mostly Russians), whose business, private life and “phenomenon” are widely covered in the mass media. The majority of mono-ethnic work relations are observed in small businesses, such as shops, barber’s shops, repair shops, garages, taxi companies, etc. In most cases these enterprises are organised on the basis of family or primary relations. Mono-ethnic environments at the place of work are mostly found in areas where population of respective nationalities is concentrated: Russians and Tartars in Vilnius and Visaginas; Poles in Salcininkai and Jews in Vilnius and Klaipeda. Communication and relations with Lithuanians in business is closely related to the status in the case of Jews and Russians, i.e. the higher the status, the more relations with Lithuanians respondents maintain. This also suggests that groups with a higher social status include higher proportions of Lithuanians. As far as Russians are concerned, education plays an important role. It is important to note that, according to the research data, in business and professional environment open and ethnically diverse relations prevail.

Besides, the same research (Kasatkina, Leoncikas, 2003) on the adaptation of ethnic groups in Lithuania has analysed data on income and changes of the social status. The data of the survey show that there are no statistically significant differences in income levels among ethnic groups. However, when comparing self-assessment of changes in the social status among different ethnic groups, a conclusion could be made that non-Lithuanians tend to assess their social status as getting worse than that of Lithuanians. This leads to a conclusion (Beresneviciute, <http://www.iccv.ro/romana/conf/conf.sibiu.2003>) that the assessment is not related to the level of income, but rather to social or symbolic cleavages in the social structure. These considerations are closely related to assumptions provided by a professional psychologist (An interview made on 25 April 2003, in Vilnius) of a career portal providing agency services to employers looking for staff and jobseekers (Beresneviciute, <http://www.iccv.ro/romana/conf/conf.sibiu.2003>). This online career portal operates in all the Baltic States and is quite popular as provides with a possibility to save all information about a jobseeker anonymously. The majority of applicants are young people, graduating students and representatives of the most employable group, i.e. persons up to 35 years old. Overall, the following issues could be mentioned. People of the non-Lithuanian origin who apply to this portal comprise a significant proportion of all applicants. However, in the words of the respondent, if there are 5 candidates to one position and one of them is Russian or Polish, the probability of the latter to be chosen is not equal to 1/5 and is lower. If there are candidates, one Russian (or Polish or other nationality) and one Lithuanian, probably the Lithuanian will be chosen. The most vulnerable and sensitive positions in terms of social categories are those of management and leaders: ethnicity plays its role in the case of direct relations, i.e. relationship with the external world. The most valuable and successful candidate could be described as a young Lithuanian man, aged 27–35, in contrast to disadvantaged women, senior citizens or non-Lithuanians. Consequently, this leads to a conclusion that the employer reflects generally prevailing attitudes, which could be defined as traditional, conservative and intolerant, sometimes even stereotyping.

Several observations on the private sector imply that a mono-ethnic model is characteristic to small scale, small size enterprises in Lithuania, and activities of ethnic groups in different economic niches could be observed (Beresneviciute, 1999).

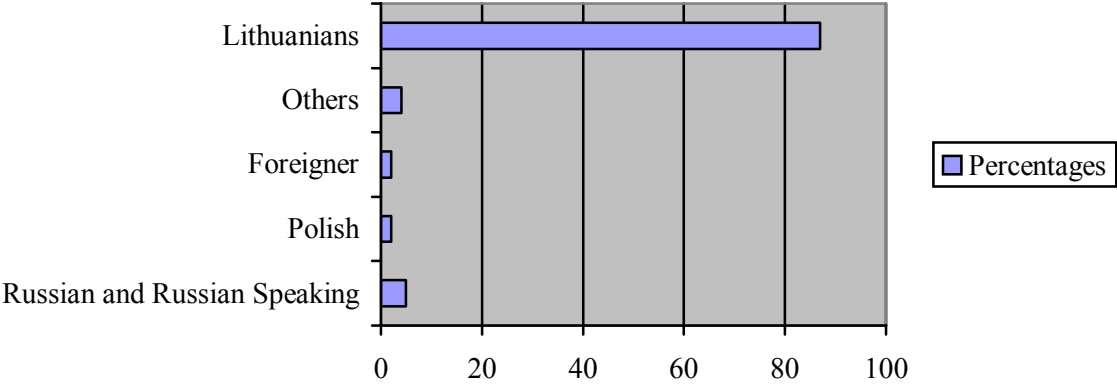


Figure 6. Executives by Implied Nationality in the Biggest Companies by Sales and Services (Kasatkina, Beresneviciute, 2004).

The main obstacle to the above mentioned issues and difficulties lies in the lack of self-consciousness, conscious citizenship. Civil organisations, bodies and unions, independent public organisations, religious communities, etc. are based on horizontal ties and have common motives that make them to act together. These are not organisations that have strong external aims (i.e. business making).

Their objectives cover very broad issues focusing mainly on the improvement of their coexistence. The involvement of minority representatives in civil society activities is of crucial importance, since today there is a danger of another form of new exclusiveness: those whose are not organised or do not manage to organise themselves are likely to stay "out of the game," and constitute the periphery of the society (Beresneviciute, 1999).

**3.Active participation in politics**

Since the restoration of independence, there have always been several Russians elected to Parliament of the Republic of Lithuania or to the Municipal Councils. The Poles have been very active in the political life of the country as well.

From the beginning of the Restoration of Lithuania’s Independence, transition from a one party communist state to a multi-party system has begun. Political parties, along with others organisations, can be intermediate channels in the framework of the civil society, provide citizens with opportunities for the expression of their views, opinions, demands, interests. A mixed majoritarian-proportional electoral system has been introduced in Lithuania since 1991. All parties needed 4% of total votes to enter the Parliament of Lithuania (further Seimas), except for political organisations representing ethnic minorities. After the amendments to the Law in 1996, the threshold for a single party was increased to 5% and for an inter-party coalition to 7%. The special threshold of 2% for ethnic minority parties was abolished. These changes reflected a desire to tighten the circle of electoral competition around a small set of competitors, the increased threshold for inter-party coalitions has almost

eliminated opportunities of smaller parties to compete with their bigger competitors. The Law on Local Elections to the Municipal Councils, passed by the Seimas in 1994, adopted proportional representation, with parties as the only entities able to nominate candidates. A 4% threshold was set for entry into local self-government bodies.

The Polish minority was the first to form a political organisation and in 1992 the Polish Union was registered (in the Seimas of 1990, it had 8 representatives, in 1992 4 representatives). In 1994, it was transformed to the Polish Election Action that took part in the elections of 1996 and had 2 representatives in the Seimas (as well as in the Seimas of 2000). In 2002, a new Polish political party was registered, the Lithuania's Polish People Party, which was successful only in the municipal elections.

As to political organisations of Russians, in 1996, the Union of Lithuanian Citizens was registered, later it was transformed into the Alliance of National Minorities, the candidates of which participated in the elections but the party had no representatives in the Seimas. Also, the Union of Lithuanian Russians was registered in 1995, but it did not have any representatives in the Seimas until 2000 (3 MPs). In 2002, a new Political Party Russian Alliance Union was registered in Klaipeda and took part in the municipal elections.

The survey carried out in 1996 by the *Canadian Human Rights Fund* established that among all the Eastern and Central European states, Austria, Hungary and Lithuania have the best ethnic minorities record. In these countries the rights of ethnic minorities are guaranteed by the Constitution and special laws, appropriate bodies have been set up within the executive branch on the governmental level, and public institutions of ethnic communities are functioning on a permanent basis, offering consultations to various state departments on national relations and ethnic minorities issues. In the Republic of Lithuania the rights of Lithuanian and foreign nationals (including stateless persons), ethnic, linguistic and religious minorities are safeguarded by the Constitution and bilateral and multilateral agreements between states. Political agreements with Russia, Belarus, the Ukraine, Poland contain special articles which lay down the rights and duties of ethnic minorities. These agreement are equally applicable both to the ethnic minorities of those countries residing in Lithuania and to Lithuanian ethnic minorities abroad.

The government Department of National Minorities and Émigrés, established to deal with national minority affairs, implemented programs such as “Encouragement of the Cultural Activities of the National Minority Communities”, “The Roma Integration into Lithuania's Society,” “The Social Development of Eastern Lithuania”, “Support to the Communities of Lithuanians Abroad”, and “The Formation and Implementation of the Policy on National Relations and Contacts of the State with Émigrés.” Minority communities were represented not only in the cultural life but also in the political life of the State. Perhaps more interesting and stimulating than findings on the intention to vote, however, are the negative correlations between civic knowledge and engagement found in many of the countries. For example, in Lithuania, students demonstrate low levels of civic knowledge, but their readiness to participate in political and social activities is high (Torney, Oppenheim, Farnen, 1975).

In 2002, the elections to the Municipality Councils took place with the participation of four parties of national minorities: the Lithuanian Polish election action received 50 mandates (this accounted for 3.2% of the total mandates), the Lithuanian Russian Union – 11, the Political Party Russian Ally – three, the Lithuanian Polish National Party – one mandate. At the end of 2002, the list of political parties and organisations of the Republic of Lithuania included 37 bodies, among which 5 were of ethnic minorities, the membership of which rates from 500 to 1,000.

The Seimas of the Independent State of Lithuania since 1990 has always had representatives of ethnic minorities, although the proportion of them is nearly two times lower than the ethnic composition of the State. On the other hand, it is possible to claim, that between 1990 and 2000 Seimas elections, opportunities for the representatives of ethnic minorities to be elected and receive a seat have decreased. If in the Seimas of 1990, representatives of ethnic groups accounted for 14 % (19 seats), in the Seimas of 2000-2004 they account for 10 % (14 seats). In 1992, as well as in 1996 Lithuania's Parliament was becoming more and more homogeneous by nationality – in every new parliament there were less representatives of ethnic minorities. The number of parliamentarians of the Polish nationality most significantly decreased in 1996 (from 8 in 1992 to 3 in 1996), and of the Russian nationality in 1992. The number of Lithuanians slightly increased in 1992, compared to 1990, and remained similar in 1996. The researchers accept that a mixed system of election has reduced the opportunities of national minorities living in geographically concentrated areas to win the ballots in single-mandate electoral districts. Also, one of possible interpretations of the changing proportions in the last elections could be the fact of changing strategies for participation in elections, i.e. from trying to compete in small parties to forming inter-party coalitions and integrating members of ethnic minorities into other existing political parties (Beresneviciute, 1999, 2003).

The Russian electorate is mostly spread in the larger cities of Lithuania and usually comprises a small part in the whole number of the electorate. There are a few constituencies where Russian electors would have enough votes to support their candidate, especially when the turnout in the elections is around 50%. Therefore, representatives of Russian political parties succeeded entering the Seimas in coalition with the other major political parties that are left-wing in most cases (or Russians are included in the lists of other parties). In case of the Polish minority, the situation is different. The electorate of the Polish political parties is compact in terms of territory and is quite stable. In every Seimas, the Polish Election Action has several mandates. On the other hand, cases and examples of several “Lithuanian” districts where non-Lithuanians were elected (in Siauliai, Kaunas, Kedainiai) indicate that candidates were supported not only by people of their ethnicity or other non-Lithuanians, but also by a significant part of the Lithuanian electorate. These are examples that cross the ethnic borders. The implication could be that in further perspective, personal features and qualification of a candidate, as well as his/her preparation for electioneering, would be a more important factor than ethnicity. (Beresneviciute, <http://www.iccv.ro/romana/conf/conf.sibiu.2003>).

Political parties are the main players in politics, which form the government and are responsible for its politics, therefore, participation of ethnic minorities in the highest administration bodies is a significant factor in representing their interests. For example, during two terms of office of the Seimas, three parliamentary committees (in Seimas 2000, 14 committees are formed) and one parliamentary commission have been headed by the MP of non-Lithuanian origin. On the municipal level, the minority parties receive much more support than on the national level and are mainly represented in the localities, which are densely populated by ethnic groups, mainly Russians (cities of Vilnius, Klaipeda, Visaginas) and Poles (the Eastern part of Lithuania, regions of Vilnius, Salcininkai, Svencionys, etc.).

The absence of minority parties in parliament or other electoral bodies does not necessarily mean that minority interests are not represented. Members of minorities may pursue minority interests being members of general political parties. If this approach works and minority interests are respected, it may be considered as a positive sign to the end that political preferences are no longer following ethnic or linguistic boundaries. Particular interests of minorities may also be reflected in the structure of a party or parliamentary group, for instance, if these parties nominate a minority spokesperson. However, this perspective is

not characteristic to the Lithuanian political field. There is no doubt that the situation in the political sphere is determined by a broader context of society, which is currently dominated by the perspective of the majority.

On the whole, minorities cannot be said to have achieved effective representation in national parliamentary or governmental structures. Higher posts taken by non-Lithuanians (e.g., ministers, vice-ministers, head of departments) are rare cases and could be treated as exceptions rather than a common rule. On the other hand, those who do achieve higher positions, allegedly choose not to identify themselves openly with other nationality. Ethnicity is as if denied or negated, certain symbolic domination of the dominant nationality is expressed by the existing pressure for public denial, hiding or invisibilisation of the ethnicity, other than the nominal nationality, could be treated as internalisation of dominant rules and a certain price to pay of being included in the system of public sphere.

#### **4. Concluding remarks on studies, books, journal articles**

There are several (not many) studies and journal articles, in addition to country reports where immigration issues are analysed. For example, immigration issues and problems related to ethnic minorities are analysed in Country Reports on Human Rights Practices. Vida Beresnevičiūtė analysed the role of civil society in promoting ethnic and religious tolerance in Lithuania, chapter based on this analysis is published in the book, "The Role Of Civil Society in Promoting Ethnic and Religious Tolerance in Central, South Eastern and Eastern Europe (Stiftung Fur Liberale Politic: Harald P. Klein, 1999). Beresneviciute and Nausediene, conducted a study of major Lithuanian newspapers concerning the representation of national minorities and émigrés of Lithuania. Their findings were published in "New Currents: East European Arts, Politics & Humanities", at the University of Michigan, USA in 2002. Natalija Kasatkina and Tadas Leončikas published the book "*The Adaptation of Ethnic Groups in Lithuania: Context and Process*" (in Lithuanian), in 2003. Algis Krupavičius analysed the political and civic participation, the findings are published in 1993. Comparative analysis was done by Lieven in 1993, he published a book "The Baltic Revolution. Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania and the path to independence".

Research findings are presented to scientific community, as for example, Kasatkina and Beresnevičiūtė presented a paper "Ethnic Structure, Inequality and Governance of the Public Sector in Lithuania" at the international conference in Riga, in 2004. Tadas Leoncikis presented a paper "Emerging Immigration and Integration Regimes in Lithuania and Poland" in the EUROFOR-Conference No.27, in Granada, in 1999, etc. Demographic development in the countries of transition was presented in the book edited by V.Stankuniene, P.Eglite, V.Kanopiene, in 1999. Sipaviciene and Tureikyte in 2000 published a book on trends, current state, and problems of illegal migration in Lithuania. Immigration, employment and illegal foreign labour in Lithuania were analysed by A. Sipaviciene and V. Kanopiene.

#### Prominent examples of immigrants

**Victor Uspakich**, the leader of the populist "Work (Darbo) Party", which became the largest block in the Lithuanian Parliament in 2004, was born on July 24, 1959 in Urdoma settlement, Arkhangelsk Region, North of Russia. (<http://www.vaitasassociates.com/politics.htm>). After completing the middle school in Urdoma, in 1976 he started working for the "Northern Lights" state oil and gas lines construction company. After completing two years of army service, he returned back to work as a welder for the "Northern Lights". As the construction work carried him all across the Soviet Union, the family did not have a permanent home and lived at the sites on construction in trailers

In 1985 he was sent to then Soviet Lithuanian Republic to work on gas pipeline project in Panevezis area. In 1987 he was appointed to take charge of gas line extension project to city of Kedainiai. After Lithuania's declaration of independence he remained in Lithuania and became Lithuanian citizen. In 1990 he started his first business, a private (closed) stock company "Efektas", which in 1993 became part of closed stock company "Vikonda " conglomerate. Until 1996 Uspaskich served as the director of that firm and then took the title of the President of "Vikonda". In 2000 "Vikonda" operated several merchandising outlets and had about 4000 employees. 1997– 2003 he was the President of the Lithuanian Business Employers' Confederation. In 2000 he was elected to the Parliament (Seimas) from Kedainiai district and became a member of ruling coalition by joining the "Social Liberal Party" faction. He was awarded chairmanship of the Economics Committee of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania. However, he Resigned in 2003, and in October 2003 he split from Social Liberals and began organizing his own "Work (Darbo) Party".

The Lithuanian Labour Party, led by Viktor Uspaskich, won 39 seats of the 141 seats in the 2004 Seimas. Elections. While it is now the largest party, it is not granted to lead the country's next government. A coalition of parties form the new government and keep Prime Minister Algirdas Brazauskas in office. After the elections, December 7, 2004, V. Uspaskich was appointed as the Minister of Economy of the 13th Government of the Republic of Lithuania by Presidential Decree.

**Yuri Borisov**. On 6th April, the Lithuanian Parliament voted narrowly to impeach President Rolandas Paksas and remove him from office with immediate effect. This vote followed a ruling by the country's Constitutional Court that Mr Paksas had violated his oath and threatened the constitutional order and national security on 3 counts. The basis of the impeachment was Mr Paksas's association with an ethnic Russian businessman, Yuri Borisov. Borisov, an ethnic Russian, was the most important financial supporter of embattled President Rolandas Paksas during his presidential campaign, and later was granted Lithuanian citizenship at the president's request, sparking controversy and impeachment proceedings against Paksas. The court ruled that the Migration Department based its January 9 decision too heavily on the State Security Department declaration of Borisov as persona non grata, and stated that his expulsion order should be reviewed. "I think that the people of Lithuania can breath easier again since justice, nevertheless, exists," Borisov said of the ruling. "If the court had made another decision, I would have thought that this is not a law-based, but a police state."

### **Part III: Conclusions**

Immigrants who arrived to Lithuania during the Soviet period currently are naturalized and consider themselves as Lithuanian citizens. Their civic participation is taking place in religious associations, in NOGs on ethnic basis, also as in political parties.

The lack of new inflows of immigrants in Lithuania (numbers of immigrants still are very low) result in non-visible civic participation. From the review of the little existing material, studies and non-academic sources it appears that the main fields of civic participation are ethnic association and participation in legal and illegal labour market. Only one example of direct political engagement was found in the case of the Russian businessmen Viktor Uspaskich, appointed Minister of Economy of the 13th Government of the Republic of Lithuania in 2004.

Since the end of World War II, Lithuania underwent rapid and baseless, large-scale industrialisation, urbanisation and colonisation. The migration of labour force of other

nationalities formed an ethnic group of the immigrants of the first generation. Large numbers of workers moved from the neighbouring Soviet republics to Lithuania. After the territorial annexation of Lithuania to the USSR, the industrialisation has caused migration of workers from Ukraine, Byelorussia, Russia and Transcaucasia.

The largest ethnic is Russians. Even now, there is a dominance of the Russian environment and language in many settlements. However, the extensive emigration of Russians from the Baltic states has aggravated their own national identity issue and has tended to stimulate their ethnic consolidation. At the same time, their large size and the recent history of the Russian-speaking communities' dominance has created a certain inertia and reluctance on the part of Russians to adapt to the local cultural communities. At present, the former so-called 'Russian towns' and 'Russian zones' are the most problematic from the point of view of integration. As to political organisations of Russians, the Union of Lithuanian Russians was registered in 1995, but it did not have any representatives in the Seimas until 2000 (3 MPs). In 2002, a new Political Party Russian Alliance Union was registered in Klaipeda and took part in the municipal elections. The second largest non-titular ethnic group are Poles.

Traditions and development of Eastern European nationalism, as well as the post-Soviet experience (including peculiarities of communist nationalism) are among the key determinants in the case of Lithuania. The monoethnic structure of Lithuania does not ensure avoidance of dimensions of ethnic polarisation, fragmentation and to some extent even encourages it. Up to now, Lithuania has a negative migration balance. In the current situation, interests of ethnic communities (including both the majority and minorities) have not yet shifted from symbolic, cultural and psychological spheres (preservation of cultural values and group identity, enshrine of customs, traditions, etc.) to the civic, social and economic spheres.

Unfortunately, there are no studies on immigrants' relations with mainstream society organisations on which one could base a comparison.

Civil organisations, bodies and unions, independent public organisations, religious communities, etc. are based on horizontal ties and have common motives that make them to act together. These are not organisations that have strong external aims (i.e. business making). Their objectives cover very broad issues focusing mainly on the improvement of their coexistence. The involvement of minority representatives in civil society activities is of crucial importance, since today there is a danger of another form of new exclusiveness: those whose are not organised or do not manage to organise themselves are likely to stay "out of the game," and constitute the periphery of the society (Beresneviciute, 1999).

Results of social research indicate that a mono-ethnic model is characteristic to small scale, small size enterprises in Lithuania. In 2000–2001, a survey *The Adaptation of Ethnic Groups in Lithuania: Context and Process* (Kasatkina, Leoncikas, 2003) was carried out concerning different ethnic groups of Lithuania (Lithuanians, Russians, Poles, Jews, Tatars and other) and their strategies of adaptation to new social conditions. The research data indicate that an absolute majority of non-Lithuanians have primary relations with Lithuanians. This should lead to a premise that this factor makes adaptation or at least identification with Lithuanian society easier. There are no differences between Poles and Russians, although they are differently represented in the mass media.

The data of the same research have revealed that nearly half of Russian and Polish respondents (44–45%) work in ethnically homogeneous environment, among Jews this accounts for 30%, Tartars – 23% (in most cases within the same ethnic group). The impact of ethnic relations in work relations is universally suppressed, though presumably significant. Although all conditions are favourable for structural assimilation in Lithuania (avoiding

ethnic division or dissociation on the level of secondary relations), on certain levels, social spheres and ethnic segments do overlap. The majority of mono-ethnic work relations are observed in small businesses, such as shops, barber's shops, repair shops, garages, taxi companies, etc. In most cases these enterprises are organised on the basis of family or primary relations. Mono-ethnic environments at the place of work are mostly found in areas where population of respective nationalities is concentrated. The findings where ethnical aspects of NGOs and membership in political parties were investigated, indicate that many of the activities and organisation among ethnical minorities in Lithuania focus around ethnic or religious associations. The political parties have the name of the minority in their title, for example, Political Party Russian Alliance Union. Moreover, even many of the associations of Lithuanian returnees have the name of the country of emigration as it is the case of the Lithuanian - American Association, the Friends of Australia Association or the Maltese - Canadian Association (M.C.A.).

After the restoration of independence in 1991, there has been no active and massive immigration into the country for the last 10 years or effectively. Many thousands of people left the country either together with the withdrawal of the Russian military forces or independently from this process because of other reasons. Thus, there has been almost no influx of migrants from other countries. Subsequently, there is effectively no new migrant community in Lithuania at all. However, in the short future the situation could change, and Lithuanian society have to develop the new policy and to find ways how to integrate new immigrants and to ensure their active civic participation

Social research indicates existing social differences among the ethnic groups. Shortly presented material reveals certain differences in participation of ethnic groups' in political, social and economic spheres of society, however, only specific representative research could reveal the existing differences among the ethnic groups in the distribution of social prestige, power, status of an individual in the social structure of Lithuania's contemporary society.

Next, as the immigration as now is rather new phenomena in Lithuania, no research so far was conducted analysing the civic participation of new emigrants and their involvement into social and political life. Therefore, future studies are needed.

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## Annex - Mapping of Research Competences in the countries under research

The general lack of research in the field of current trends of immigration to Lithuania, and in the field of immigrants' civic participation and civic participation in particular, is a clear indication that currently these issues are not the subject of research within national research institutions. Mostly, researchers are concerned with problems of ethnical minorities. In the list of institutions we included those that conduct research in the areas of migration, national minorities and immigration issues.

### *Research institutions*

#### Research institution 1

**Lithuanian Institute of Philosophy and Sociology**, Address: Saltoniškių 58, 2600, Vilnius, Lithuania, Tel./fax: 75 18 98, E-mail: [lfsi@ktl.mii.lt](mailto:lfsi@ktl.mii.lt), Director: Dr Vaclovas Bagdonavičius  
Internet home page: [http://neris.mii.lt/LFSI/index\\_liet./index\\_liet.htm](http://neris.mii.lt/LFSI/index_liet./index_liet.htm)

The main state-supported goals of the Institute are: Investigation of the history of philosophic, sociological and legal thought of Lithuania; Investigation of contemporary philosophy and ethics; Sociological research of socio-economic and political development of the society and of the processes of Lithuania's integration into the European Union; Research of the demographic development and population policy in Lithuania.

Trend 1: The history of philosophic, sociological and legal thought of Lithuania

Trend 2: Contemporary philosophy and ethic

Trend 3: Sociological aspects of socioeconomic and political development of the society and of the processes of Lithuania's integration into the European Union:

- Social dynamism and its ranges
- Changes of group and mass consciousness in contemporary Lithuania
- Citizenship and its expression in social structure
- Specifics of political preferences and economic attitudes of the Lithuanian population
- Ethnosocium: specifics of formation: Ethnical and cultural peculiarities of the groups of Lithuanian population, Monitoring of socio-economic development of eastern Lithuania (in the context of the EU), Russians in Lithuania: culture and identity.

**Trend 4: Demographic development and population policy of Lithuania**

- Family and fertility: family life course
- Population ageing
- Population policy
- Dynamics and causes of mortality in the Baltic countries
- International migration.

### Research institution 2

Mykolas Romeris University, Faculty of Social Work, Department of Social Policy.  
Valakupiu 5, LT-10101 Vilnius, Lithuania, +370 5 274 0605

Directions of scientific research (V.Stankuniene, M.Baublyte V.Kanopiene S.Mikulioniene)

- Resocialization of marginal groups
- Human Development (Equal gender opportunities, Employment, Demographic ageing, Changes of family)
- Poverty and social exclusion in transitional period (socio-economic and demographic aspects)
- Social Integration in Europe (comparative analysis of social policy)

### Government institution 1

#### **Migration Department under the Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Lithuania**

Director A. Gavėnas(+370 5) 271 7235, <http://www.migracija.lt/MDEN/defaulte.htm>

#### Tasks of the Migration Department

- ensure the implementation of the state policy in the fields of migration and citizenship;
- declaration/registration of the residence place;
- visas;
- granting asylum and refugee the status;
- legal status of foreigners in the Republic of Lithuania.
- take care of implementation and security of new identity documents and the compliance thereof with the European Union standards;
- organize the issuance of identity documents to citizens of the Republic of Lithuania, citizens of any other foreign states and stateless persons;
- analyze migration processes and execute control over them;
- make preparation of the drafts of legal acts.

#### Programmes implemented by the Migration Department

- Programme for the development of identity documents;
- Programme on migration processes control;
- National action plan in the field of asylum.

*Leading scholars who have published books and/ or journal articles in the field.*

**A. Sipaviciene**, from Vilnius University, Department of Sociology, Didlaukio g. 47 2057 Vilnius, Lithuania

**Books**

Sipaviciene A. (1995). International migration in Lithuania: Causes, consequences, strategy, Vilnius.

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Kanopienė V. (1997). Demografija: pagrindinės sąvokos ir rodikliai. Vilnius.

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Kanopiene, V. Tureikytė, D. (2003). Lithuanian women in politics: representation and attitudes. - "Handbook Women's political participation in Europe" (B.Hoecker, G.Fuchs (eds.), Opladen: Leske and Budrich, 2003.

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*Publications:*

Vida Beresnevičiūtė, “The Role of Civil Society in Promoting Ethnic and Religious Tolerance in Lithuania,” in Julianna Matrai, ed., *The Role Of Civil Society in Promoting Ethnic and Religious Tolerance in Central, South Eastern and Eastern Europe* (Stiftung Fur Liberale Politic: Harald P. Klein, 1999), p. 42-45.

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Endnote

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