

Lithuania



Population: 3,555,179

Population Growth Rate: -0.279%

Birth Rate: 9.11 births/1,000 population

Life Expectancy: *total population:* 74.9 years;
male: 69.98 years; *female:* 80.1 years

Literacy Rate: *total population:* 99.6%; *male:* 99.6%; *female:* 99.6%

Net Migration Rate: -0.72 migrant(s)/1,000 population

Unemployment Rate: 5.8%

Gross Domestic Product per Capita: \$17,700

Religions: Roman Catholic 79%, Russian Orthodox 4.1%, Protestant (including Lutheran and Evangelical Christian Baptist) 1.9%, other or unspecified 5.5%, none 9.5%

Languages: Lithuanian (official) 82%, Russian 8%, Polish 5.6%, other and unspecified 4.4%

Ethnic Groups: Lithuanian 83.4%, Polish 6.7%, Russian 6.3%, other or unspecified 3.6%

Capital: Vilnius¹

Trafficking Routes

Lithuania is an origin, transit, and destination country for trafficked persons. Destinations of women and children trafficked from Lithuania include Austria, Belgium, the Czech Republic, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, the Nordic countries, Poland, Russia, Spain, Turkey, Israel, the United Kingdom, and the United Arab Emirates. Recently, the main trafficking flows have shifted from Israel, Greece, the United Arab Emirates, and Turkey to the United Kingdom, Germany, Holland, France, and Sweden. The U.K. is widely considered the number one destination for human trafficking from Lithuania, followed by Germany, the Nordic countries, and the Netherlands.²

Women from Ukraine, Kaliningrad, Belarus, Latvia, and Lithuanian rural areas are brought to Lithuania's largest cities for later trafficking to Western Europe or for

¹ CIA, The World Factbook 2009, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/lh.html>.

² *Twenty-Five Lithuanian Women Freed from Sexual Slavery Abroad in 2008*, BALTIC NEWS SERVICE, June 19, 2009.

work in prostitution. Prior to Lithuania's European Union accession, Germany was considered to be the most significant receiving country.³

Factors That Contribute to Human Trafficking Infrastructure

There is a high level of unemployment and a lack of education among Lithuanian women and minors in prostitution and those who are trafficked in Lithuania. Poverty causes trafficking victims to look for any form of income and can leave them vulnerable to promises of high-paying jobs in Western Europe. Even those with jobs are paid very little, and women earn less than men. There is a strong organized criminal presence in Lithuania, as well as a deeply entrenched patriarchal culture that may facilitate the trafficking of women as commodities.⁴

Forms of Trafficking

The most common type of trafficking in human beings encountered by Lithuania is forced prostitution of women and children. They are deceived or forced into work under slavery conditions, deprived of their identity documents and freedom. Women and girls get into uncontrolled, illegal businesses, which subject them to physical and psychological coercion as well as regular violations of their rights. Women are trafficked for prostitution in Lithuania or are taken to foreign states.⁵

Social workers have confirmed the existence of child prostitution at the railway station of the capital city of Vilnius. Child prostitution also exists at the airport and at some hotels. The youngest girls are said to be only 11 or 12 years of age. There are reports of children in prostitution in brothels in Lithuania. It is estimated that 20 percent to 50 percent of people in prostitution in Lithuania could be minors.⁶

In 2007, the Lithuanian government claimed that the United Kingdom was the No. 1 destination for human trafficking from Lithuania, with girls as young as 14 being brought to the U.K. to work in brothels.⁷ In March 2009, Chief Superintendent Richard Martin of the London Metropolitan Police voiced his concern that, with the approaching 2012 Summer Olympic Games in London, the rate of human trafficking from Lithuania to the U.K. will increase even more. Martin also conveyed that, despite preventative measures, human trafficking from Lithuania to the U.K. is on the rise.⁸

³ Press Release, International Organization for Migration (IOM), Lithuania – Human Trafficking Increases since EU Accession, Oct. 28, 2005, available at: http://www.childtrafficking.org/cgi-bin/ct/main.sql?file=view_document.sql&TITLE=-1&AUTHOR=-1&THESAURO=-1&ORGANIZATION=-1&TOPIC=-1&GEOG=-1&YEAR=-1&LISTA=No&COUNTRY=-1&FULL_DETAIL=Yes&ID=2113.

⁴ VILANA PILINKAITE-SOTIROVIC, STOP VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN, STUDY OF LITHUANIAN NGOS ON VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN (Aug. 27, 2005), <http://www.stopvaw.org/Lithuania3.html>.

⁵ *Id.* at 4.

⁶ *Child protection from violence, exploitation and abuse*, UNICEF, (Mar. 12, 2007), http://www.unicef.org/protection/index_exploitation.html.

⁷ *Scotland Yard targets human traffickers*, THE GUARDIAN, (Mar. 7, 2007), <http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2007/mar/07/humanrights.ukcrime>.

⁸ *Human Trafficking from Lithuania Increases*, THE BALTIC TIMES, (Mar. 23, 2009), <http://www.baltictimes.com/news/articles/22571/>.

Government Responses

In Lithuania, a new criminal code, “Trafficking in People,” which criminalizes trafficking in human beings, went into effect in May 2003.⁹ The criminal code defines “trafficking in human beings” as “selling, acquiring, or in any other way alienating a person.” Trafficking in human beings is in the category of felonies according to the Criminal Code of the Republic of Lithuania, Article 147. Under recent amendments to the penal code, the maximum punishment for trafficking in human beings was raised from 8 to 12 years. The prison punishment for trafficking in preteen children was increased from 10 to 15 years.¹⁰ The administrative law prohibits “engagement in prostitution.”¹¹ The offense is punishable by a fine. A subsequent offense is punishable by detention for up to 30 days.¹²

Nongovernmental and International Organization Responses

Caritas Europa (CE), a European confederation of 48 development and social service organizations, has dedicated part of its work to activities aimed at combating human trafficking. Specifically, the pilot project COATNET (Catholic Organizations Against Trafficking in Women) has encouraged member organizations to consider the problem of trafficking of women and measures to combat it. Women who are victims of trafficking often seek the help of CE migration services, services for homeless people, general counseling services, and services available at the parish level. CE member organizations aim to assist women who are victims of trafficking by protecting them from criminalization, discrimination, and victimization.¹³

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) is not currently running any programs in Lithuania, but is available to assist trafficking victims return home, and updates the media and public on trafficking in the country.¹⁴

Multilateral Initiatives

The Lithuanian government and the Home Office of the United Kingdom have coordinated on several projects designed to prevent and disrupt human trafficking, as the United Kingdom is regarded as the No. 1 destination for human trafficking from

⁹ Article 149. In addition, the new Criminal Code imposes imprisonment for up to 4 years for profiting monetarily from prostitution or pimping; imprisonment for 2 to 8 years for profiting monetarily from prostitution or pimping of a minor or for engaging, organizing, or heading prostitution activities involving a minor; imprisonment for up to 6 years for organizing or heading prostitution rings or transporting a person for the purpose of prostitution; imprisonment for 3 years for engaging in prostitution; imprisonment for 2 to 7 years for forcing individuals into prostitution by coercion or fraud or for engaging a minor in prostitution; and imprisonment for 2 to 10 years for engaging in the trade in children.

¹⁰ *Fighting Against Trafficking in Human Beings Remains Priority in Lithuania*, LIETUVOS RESPUBLIKOS, VIDĀUS REIKALŲ MINISTERIJA, (Aug. 10, 2005), http://www.vrm.lt/index.php?id=131&backPID=278&pS=1122843600&pL=2678399&arc=1&tt_news=626&.

¹¹ Penal Code of the Republic of Lithuania, art. 182.1.

¹² *Id.* at 12, art. 182.1.

¹³ Caritas Europa, <http://www.caritas-europa.org/code/en/default.asp> (last visited Feb. 24, 2010).

¹⁴ IOM, *Lithuania*, <http://www.iom.int/jahia/Jahia/lithuania> (last visited July 1, 2010).

Lithuania. One such plan, the London-based Poppy Project, provides support and accommodation for women who were trafficked, mainly from Lithuania.¹⁵ In 2006, the British Foreign & Commonwealth Office funded a project to return and reintegrate Lithuanian victims of human trafficking back into Lithuania.¹⁶

In October 2007, the Lithuanian government hosted a conference in Vilnius on Trafficking in Human Beings: Challenges and Solutions. The conference was jointly organized by the Lithuanian government, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime in the framework of the United Nations Global Initiative to Fight Human Trafficking. It focused on the roles of the media, the business community, and educational institutions in preventing human trafficking.¹⁷

The Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS) is an international regional organization focusing on intensified cooperation among countries in the Baltic Sea region. The council has 12 members, including Lithuania. At the Sixth Baltic Sea States Summit in Reykjavik on June 8, 2006, “the heads of government welcomed the initiative and the consideration within the CBSS to integrate the successful work of the Nordic Baltic Task Force Against Trafficking in Human Beings into the CBSS framework, with the objective of fostering actions and enhancing cooperation to combat such trafficking in the Baltic Sea region and its near vicinity.” In contrast to the previous Nordic Baltic Task Force Against Trafficking in Human Beings, the Task Force Against Trafficking in Human Beings (TF-THB) provides an encircled regional area by including Germany, Poland, and Russia into the network. The aim of the regional political forum is to achieve a greater unity between the CBSS member states and other partners by means of favorable and equitable economic development and secure democracy.¹⁸

¹⁵ *Sex Slavery Widespread in England*, BBC, Mar. 19, 2007, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/england/6459369.stm.

¹⁶ People Trafficking, *supra* note 7.

¹⁷ Mr. Staislovas Liutkevicius Secretary of the Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Lithuania, Statement at the Vienna Forum to Fight Human Trafficking, Feb. 13, 2008, *available at*: www.ungift.org/docs/ungift/pdf/vf/statements/Lithuania.pdf.

¹⁸ Council of the Baltic Sea States, *Task Force against Trafficking in Human Beings with focus on adults*, <http://www.cbss.org/Civil-Security-and-the-Human-Dimension/the-task-force-against-trafficking-in-human-beings-with-focus-on-adults> (last visited Feb. 24, 2010).