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# ORGANISATION OF MIGRATION AND ASYLUM SYSTEM IN LITHUANIA OVERVIEW

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## INTRODUCTION

This document provides an overview of how asylum and migration policies are organised in the **Republic of Lithuania**, including the organisation of the institutional and regulatory context and framework for dealing with third-country nationals coming for the purpose of legal immigration or for international protection. It is based on the information provided by Lithuania in **February 2023**.



## OVERVIEW OF ORGANISATION OF LEGISLATIVE AND INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK

### THE INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT

The Ministry of the Interior (MI) is the main institution that forms the state policy in the area of migration as well as organises, coordinates, and controls its implementation. The Migration Department (MD), as an institution under MI, is responsible for the implementation of the state policy in the area of migration. Within the respective competencies, MD ensures the implementation of the procedures related to visas, immigration and asylum, Lithuanian citizenship, as well as issues travel documents, residence permits and other documents to foreigners and takes decisions regarding the voluntary return or expulsion of foreigners from Lithuania. Another institution under the MI is the State Border Guard Service (SBGS). It consists of the central headquarters, territorial and other divisions. SBGS protects the state's border, exercises

control of illegal immigration, conducts the initial asylum procedure, accommodates detained migrants, and carries out removals of foreigners from Lithuania.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) participates in the formation and implementation of visa policy and organises the strengthening of relations between Lithuania and the Lithuanians abroad. Visa services under the MFA issue Schengen and national visas, identity cards, passports, and other travel documents.

The Ministry of Social Security and Labour (MSSL) shapes labour migration policy and controls its implementation. MSSL submits proposals concerning the employment of foreigners in Lithuania, coordinates and supervises the provision of state support for the integration of the foreigners who received asylum in Lithuania and analyses foreigners' integration process. The institution under MSSL is the Employment Service. It issues work permits to foreigners and decides whether the employment of foreigners meets the needs of the Lithuanian labour market. Similarly, the Refugees Reception Center is another institution under MSSL and is responsible for the provision of temporary accommodation and social integration for foreigners who have been granted asylum and other vulnerable groups.

In Lithuania, international and non-governmental organisations also address migration issues. Notably, International Organization for Migration Vilnius Office (IOM Lithuania) pursues activities strengthening Ukrainian refugees' integration into Lithuanian society. Furthermore, IOM Lithuania functions as an EMN National Contact Point and implements the project "I Choose Lithuania" providing information to returning

migrants or foreigners who are thinking about moving to Lithuania.

Another international organization UN Refugee Agency in Lithuania has its [liaison office located in Vilnius](#) that advice migrants concerning asylum procedure and provides available assistance to asylum seekers and refugees.

Other examples of non-governmental organisations actively working in the migration area are [the Lithuanian Red Cross Society](#), [Caritas Lithuania](#), and [Diversity Development Group](#). Recently, following irregular migration flows at the Belarus-Lithuania border, a non-governmental organisation [Sienos Grupė](#) was formed to provide humanitarian assistance to migrants stranded at the Belarus-Lithuania border.

## THE LEGAL SYSTEM

[The Migration Policy Guidelines](#) are the main strategic document establishing the goals, principles and directions of the migration and asylum policy in Lithuania. The main areas outlined in the Guidelines are emigration and return migration, immigration, integration of foreigners, asylum, the fight against illegal migration, and international cooperation.

The central act regulating the issues related to the legal status of foreigners in Lithuania is [the Law on the Legal Status of Foreigners](#) (LLSF). The LLSF stipulates the conditions of entry and departure of foreigners, their stay and residence, asylum, integration, detention and expulsion, as well as regulates other related issues.

[The Law on Citizenship](#) stipulates the grounds of and procedure for acquiring and losing the citizenship of the Republic of Lithuania.

[The Law on the State Border and Protection Thereof](#) establishes the legal regulations of the state border and the frontier of Lithuania and regulates the activities of border crossing points.

Above mentioned legal acts are implemented by Government resolutions, orders of ministers, and orders of heads of institutions subordinate to the ministries. Any decision issued by an administrative authority can be brought with an administrative court both by Lithuanian and foreign citizens.

All legal acts related to migration and asylum can be found [here](#).

As stated in [the Migration Policy Guidelines](#), Lithuania seeks to position itself as an attractive destination for migrants and, as such, promote the social and economic development of the country. Therefore, to capitalise on the benefits offered by migration, Lithuanian authorities not only try to attract willing-to-work foreigners but also aim to facilitate a successful integration policy allowing foreigners actively contribute to the strengthening of Lithuania by participating in its economic, social, and cultural life.



## INSTITUTIONAL CHART

*The most up to date Institutional Chart will be added in as an Annex.*

# Lithuania

## Main institutions in the area of migration 2022

### Ministry of Foreign Affairs

- Formulates and implements the position of the Republic of Lithuania on the common visa policy.
- Organises the strengthening of relations between Lithuania and the Lithuanians abroad.

### Visa Services

- Issue Schengen and national visas.
- Issue IDs and passports.

### Ministry of the Interior

- Formulates state policy in the area of migration, organises, coordinates and controls its implementation.
- In cases stipulated by legal acts, makes decisions regarding citizenship.

### Migration Department

- Organises the issue and renewal of passports, IDs, service passports, temporary certificates to the citizens of Lithuania.
- Organises the issue of and issues the documents attesting to the right to reinstate citizenship of Lithuania and certifying Lithuanian descent.
- Organises the issue of Schengen and national visas, certificates attesting to the right to reside in Lithuania, temporary residence permits, permits of a long-term resident of Lithuania to reside in the EU.
- Together with other state authorities, carries out resettlement of foreigners to Lithuania.
- In cases stipulated by legal acts, takes decisions on the issue of temporary residence permits in Lithuania, permits of a long-term resident of Lithuania to reside in the EU and foreigners' passports, organises procedure of taking of individuals' oath to the Republic of Lithuania.
- Within its remit, resolves the issues of the citizenship of the Republic of Lithuania.
- Within its remit, takes decisions of the issue of temporary residence permits in the Republic of Lithuania, permits of a long-term resident of the Republic of Lithuania to reside in the EU and foreigners' passports.
- Implements the asylum-granting procedure and takes relevant decisions, organises the implementation of decisions taken on asylum issues.
- Controls the stay and residence of foreigners in Lithuania.
- Takes decisions regarding the return or expulsion of foreigners from Lithuania, issues a temporary travel document.
- Grants the status of transferee, implements the procedures of transfers from other countries to Lithuania.
- Draws up and manages the national no-entry list.

### State Borders Guard Service

- Controls the stay and residence of foreigners in Lithuania.
- Receives and supports foreigners who have been detained and accommodated at the SBGS.
- Conducts the initial asylum procedure.
- Carries out removals of foreigners from Lithuania.
- Issues Schengen visas.
- Carries out control of the entry of persons into the Republic of Lithuania.
- Takes decisions on the refusal of admission of foreigners into the Republic of Lithuania.

### Ministry of Social Security and Labour

- Submits to the Government of Lithuania proposals regarding the labour market and support of employment, recruitment of foreigners.
- Coordinates and supervises the provision of state support for the integration of the foreigners who have been granted asylum in Lithuania.
- Analyses foreigners' integration processes, drafts and submits to the Government of Lithuania proposals concerning the integration of foreigners.



### Employment Service

- Issues work permits to foreigners.
- Takes decisions on conformity of a foreigner's employment to needs of the labour market of the Republic of Lithuania.

### Refugees Reception Center

- Provides temporary accommodation to asylum seekers, foreigners who have been granted asylum; unaccompanied minors; foreigners who have been relocated to the Republic of Lithuania; as well as former or current victims of trafficking in human beings who have been granted a reflection period during which they take a decision as to whether cooperate with the pretrial investigation body or court in the investigation of crimes related to trafficking in human beings.
- Implements the social integration of foreigners who have been granted asylum.

#### Legend:

-  Cooperation
-  Coordination
-  Other input