

# Institutional Strengthening and Support for HIV Prevention Activities

## TAMPEP

European Network for HIV/STI Prevention and Health Promotion among Migrant Sex Workers

### NATIONAL REPORT ON HIV AND SEX WORK

## LITHUANIA

This report was drawn from information provided by the organisation  
**Lithuanian AIDS Centre, Vilnius**

This report is part of a series of reports produced by TAMPEP as part of the above project.  
The series of reports include the following:

**European Overview of HIV and Sex Work mapping**  
**Bulgaria** National Report on HIV and Sex Work  
**Czech Republic** National Report on HIV and Sex Work  
**Germany** National Report on HIV and Sex Work  
**Lithuania** National Report on HIV and Sex Work  
**Poland** National Report on HIV and Sex Work  
**Romania** National Report on HIV and Sex Work  
**Ukraine** National Report on HIV and Sex Work  
**Gap Analysis of Service Provision to Sex Workers in Europe**  
**Skills/Training Audit and Good Practice Tools**

February 2007

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# 1 COUNTRY PROFILE

	2005 <sup>1</sup>
Population, total (millions)	3.4
Population growth (annual %)	-0.6
Life expectancy at birth, female (years)	77.8
Life expectancy at birth, male (years)	66.4
GNI/Gross National Income per capita, 2005	US\$ 7,050.00 <sup>2</sup>
Inflation, consumer prices (annual %)	2.7
Unemployment, total (% of total labour force)	9.6 <sup>3</sup>
Internet users (per 1,000 people)	282

## **Demography and Economy**<sup>4</sup>

Lithuania is an upper middle-income country with a gross national income per capita of US\$7,210 in 2005 (GNI, Atlas method). Its population of 3.4 million enjoys a high standard of living and the health indicators of its citizens are significantly better than those of most other countries in Central and Eastern Europe. These achievements are in no small part due to successful implementation of an ambitious economic agenda.

The country's GDP growth has averaged over 7.5% since 2001, with the result that Lithuania and the other Baltic States have had the fastest growing economies in Europe during this period. Lithuania's major exports are refined oil products (about one quarter of total exports) and machinery and equipment (12.7%), followed by the textile industry (9.4%). About 65% of the country's trade is with the European Union (EU). Its share of imports is lower mainly because of heavy dependence on mineral products from the CIS countries.

Some social indicators of Lithuania: the fertility rate (births per woman) is 1.3 and the infant mortality rate (per 1,000 live births) is 7.5.

Lithuania enjoys strong output growth, driven by domestic demand and improving exports. Unemployment has dropped sharply. Real GDP grew to 7.5% in 2005, broadly similar to the pace of the previous year but somewhat lower than its peak of over 10% in 2003. Domestic demand was the main driver of the economy in 2005, with double-digit contribution to GDP growth as households benefited from strong real wage growth and falling unemployment. Investment was supported by large inflows of EU funds. However, domestic demand growth slowed somewhat from the previous year while export growth picked up. Increasing investment following EU accession has offset declines in some industrial sectors.

The labour market is showing signs of overheating with a sharp decline in unemployment and post-accession emigration contributing to labour shortages and pushing up wages. The unemployment rate has declined steadily from 17.4% in 2001 to 6.4% in early 2006.

In June 2004, Lithuania joined the European Exchange Rate Mechanism-II (ERM II), showing its commitment to adopt the Euro upon EU accession. Prices and transactions with foreign countries have been liberalised, and trade has been reoriented to the EU. Privatisation is nearly complete, and almost all factors of production are privately owned. Foreign direct investment (FDI) from the EU member states, particularly the Nordic countries, is rising. However, despite remarkable progress over recent years, the country is still one of the poorest

<sup>1</sup> World Development Indicators (2006), [www.worldbank.org](http://www.worldbank.org)

<sup>2</sup> [www.siteresources.worldbank.org](http://www.siteresources.worldbank.org) / Atlas method

<sup>3</sup> [www.worldwide-tax.com](http://www.worldwide-tax.com)

<sup>4</sup> Infobase online, [www.economywatch.com](http://www.economywatch.com) and [www.worldbank.org](http://www.worldbank.org)

EU member states. At 52% of the EU average in purchasing power parity, it has to make substantial efforts towards income convergence with the rest of the EU.

16% of the population lived below the national poverty line in 2003. Poverty is more widespread and severe in rural areas, where 57% of the poor live. More than half of disposable income in rural areas is spent on food. Moreover, the rural population is suffering from poorer access to public services, as reflected in lower educational attainment and health indicators.

Demography<sup>5</sup> - 83.5% of the Lithuanian population are ethnic Lithuanians who speak the Lithuanian language (one of the two surviving members of the Baltic language group), which is the official language of the state. Several sizeable minorities exist, such as Poles (6.7%), Russians (6.3%), and Belarusians (1.2%).

Poles are the largest minority, concentrated in Southeast Lithuania (the Vilnius region). Russians are the second largest minority, concentrated mostly in two cities; they constitute sizeable minorities in Vilnius (13%) and Klaipėda (20%) and a slim majority in the town of Visaginas (55%). About 3,000 Roma live in Lithuania, mostly in Vilnius, Kaunas, and Panevėžys. They are supported by the National Minority and Emigration Department.

Lithuania has Russians with ethnic passports, which means they are citizens of Lithuania but are nationals of Russia, which gives them permission to live in the country. They constitute an ethnic minority in Lithuanian society. Very few of them are represented among sex workers.

Due to Soviet occupation, most Lithuanians can communicate in Russian: according to a Eurostat poll about 80% can hold a conversation in the language. Nowadays, most Lithuanian schools teach English as a first foreign language, but students may also study German, or, in some schools, French. Schools where Russian and Polish are the primary languages of education exist in the areas populated by these minorities.

### **Situation of Women**

By January 2006 the female population exceeded the male one by about 230,000 (approx. 1,820 women for approx. 1,590 men). The total population consisted of 53.4% women, 1,145 females per 1,000 males.

Unemployment is a major problem in Lithuania, especially for women. The official labour exchange data are not relevant to real life. In addition to the official unemployment rate, there is hidden unemployment and informal employment. It is important to note that in Lithuania, the gap between survey data and labour exchange data on the unemployment rate is one of the widest in Europe. The real unemployment rate is at least two times higher than the official rate (approximately 20%).

Women's unemployment situation is worse than men's, especially for certain groups. For example, even official statistics show that among 30-49 year olds, 55.9% of women are unemployed and 50.2% of men; among 50-54 year olds, 11.9% of women are unemployed and 8.5% of men. Additionally, there are higher levels of education among unemployed women compared with men. For instance, women with a college or university education make up 24.4% of unemployment figures in comparison with 15.9% for men.

Discrimination against women in the labour market mainly takes the form of discrimination by age, difference in salary (men's salaries are 1.4 times higher than women's), inequality in management positions, and discrimination against young women returning from maternity

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<sup>5</sup> [www.statistikosdepartamentas.lt](http://www.statistikosdepartamentas.lt)  
[www.tspmi.vu.lt/files/mprojektai/finallithsecpapergalutinis.pdf](http://www.tspmi.vu.lt/files/mprojektai/finallithsecpapergalutinis.pdf)

leave. Although illegal, job advertisements allow for sex and age discrimination. Unfortunately, equal opportunities legislation does not prohibit discrimination by age.

Access to free re-training for the unemployed is very limited due to lack of funds and bad practice in terms of implementing the law with regard to supporting unemployed people, which is ambiguous. Very often, the labour exchange office requires in advance a three-part agreement between themselves, the future employer, and an unemployed person who needs training. The law does not strongly emphasise a need for this three-part agreement; however, the labour exchange office requires it for the unemployed to take free training courses relevant to current labour market demands, such as new information technology, accounting, business administration, etc. Because of existing age discrimination practices, it is nearly impossible to obtain this agreement in advance. This undemocratic restriction makes access to modern free courses impossible, even for unemployed women over 40 years old and those who have been unemployed for a long time (more than two years).

Unemployment benefits are very low (about €38 a month) and only last for six months. For a great many women, especially those over 45 years of age, single women, and the long-term unemployed, unemployment is not only a psychological problem; it is a matter of physical survival. The links between unemployment and psychological problems are often raised in discussion with unemployed and socially disadvantaged groups. Labour exchange offices usually organise only vocational training or retraining courses (long-term courses), but there is a great demand for short and even non-formal courses helping to increase self-esteem and obtain job-seeking skills. In situations of lack of funds, short-term courses can increase access to training and will be very effective.

As a consequence of unemployment, many women become active in the black market (informal employment). In such cases, they lose their rights to social security and health insurance. Overall, unemployment indicates patterns of the feminisation of poverty. We can say that unemployment became a type of social (structural) violence against women. Unfortunately, we do not have the appropriate research on all kinds of discrimination and violence against women in the labour market.

### **The EU Enlargement**

Lithuania, officially the Republic of Lithuania, is a country in northern Europe. The largest of the three Baltic States situated along the Baltic Sea, it shares borders with Latvia to the north, Belarus to the Southeast, and Poland and the Russian enclave of Kaliningrad to the Southwest.

Lithuania acceded to the European Union on 1 May 2004 and is a member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO). Since Lithuania's entry into the EU in May 2004, emigration has increased considerably, especially to the UK and Ireland.

Lithuania did not succeed in its bid to join the Euro-zone from January 2007, thus delaying its Euro adoption.

### **Migration**

Since achieving independence in the early 1990s, Lithuania has increasingly become a destination country for (undocumented) migrants from the east, at first from Southeast Asia, and now mainly from neighbouring CIS countries. Having become a member of the European Union and forming part of its eastern border, Lithuania has faced a number of important issues. Facilitated transit of Russian citizens from the main part of Russia to Kaliningrad also poses additional challenges for migration management. The integration of Lithuanian residents of non-Lithuanian ethnicity into Lithuanian society remains a priority, especially in

certain locations. Labour migration to and from Lithuania is also becoming an increasingly important issue.

Emigration has accounted for the loss of about 230,000 of Lithuania's inhabitants during 1990-2002. Of these about 73,000 emigrated to CIS countries and about 157,000 to other foreign countries.

As a result of political, economic and social changes, the volume, trends and forms of migration have experienced fundamental transformations. Legal migration has been replaced by undeclared migration, and permanent by temporary. At present the most common form is short-term migration of part of the family (parents without their children; one spouse), which mainly has an economic function without affecting basic relations. So-called irregular (or undocumented) migration both to and from Lithuania has also been gaining momentum.

Until recently, illegal and mass-scale international migration, mostly of the younger population, was typical for the country, and was mainly triggered by scarcity of jobs which could ensure at least a minimum standard of living; high unemployment, especially amongst young people; and broad regional differences in job supply.

International treaties and conventions, especially those protecting universal values and human rights, play an increasingly important role in the shaping of migration policy. In Lithuania, a course of migration processes and formation of migration policy are influenced by the Euro-integration processes.

By the end of 2003 it was forecast that up to 100,000 people would emigrate to Western European countries after Lithuania became a member of the EU. However by early 2005 about 400,000 people had left Lithuania looking for work. About 55% of them were women. By January 2006 Lithuania had around 3.4 million inhabitants<sup>6</sup>.

### **Female Labour Migration**

Migration flows are usually directed to the countries which declared free admission of job-seekers: Ireland is the main destination, but migrants also head to the UK, Germany, Spain, Denmark, Sweden, and Finland.

Usually, women work in hotels as chambermaids, as waitresses, as cleaners, in sex work and in agriculture. Many female medical workers (doctors and nurses) go to the above countries to work in hospitals because the demand is quite high.

As a rule, they go alone or with their husbands, while their children are left in Lithuania. They stay for half a year or a year, sometimes longer. Those who decide to leave the country permanently usually take their children with them.

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<sup>6</sup> [www.statistikosdepartamentas.lt](http://www.statistikosdepartamentas.lt)

## 2 PROSTITUTION MAPPING

### Overview of sex industry<sup>7</sup>

Country	Major Group	Nationalities	Work Places
Bulgaria	90% Bulgarians	Migrants from Russia, Romania, Ukraine, Moldova, and Turkish Roma	55% indoor
Czech Republic	65% Czechs	Migrants mainly from Slovakia and Bulgaria	70% indoor, 10% highways and border area
Germany	60% migrants	55% CEE, 20% Asia, 15% Latin America, 10% Africa. A total of 38 different nationalities	80% indoor
Lithuania	85% Lithuanians	Migrants from Belarus, Russia and Ukraine	70% indoor
Poland	70% Polish	Migrants from Ukraine, Russia, Belarus, Bulgaria, Moldova, Romania	70% indoor, 30% outdoor
Romania	95% Romanians	Migrants from Moldova and Turkish Roma	55% street, 15% highways and border area
Ukraine	90% Ukrainians	Moldova and Russia	80% street

### Structure

- Distribution of sex workers across sectors: 34% in apartments, 24% on the streets, 15% in clubs and bars, 15% massage parlours, 6% escorting, 6% on highways and roads.
- Gender: 95% female, 4% male, 1% transgender.
- Number of sex workers: according to LAC, there are about 1,700 female sex workers and 80 male. During the summer this can rise to about 3,000 female sex workers.
- Level of migrant sex workers: 15% migrants, 85% Lithuanians.
- Origin of migrant sex workers: 100% from Eastern Europe.
- Main countries of origin: Ukraine, Belarus and Russia.
- According to the Ministry of Interior, annual gains from the illegal sex industry are around 50 million litas (about €14 million), and from trafficking in human beings around 200 million litas (about €57 million).

There are no national data on sex work across Lithuania. The present situation can be partly estimated by qualitative and quantitative data accumulated by the *Lithuanian AIDS Centre/LAC* in Vilnius and the police.

According to LAC data, there are about 1,000 sex workers in the capital Vilnius, 400 in the harbour town of Klaipeda, and 350 in Kaunas, the second largest city in Lithuania.

The number of sex workers has significantly decreased since Lithuania joined the EU in 2004. A great number of them left for Western European countries because of opportunities for greater income. Many go just for a short while, like students, teachers, etc., or for very specific reasons such as buying a house. Apparently the criminalisation of sex work did not influence the emigration.

The number of migrant sex workers has also decreased because many women from Eastern European countries, mostly Ukraine, Russia and Belarus, go directly to the West without staying and working temporarily in Lithuania, but also because of stricter (border) controls and greater risks of deportation.

<sup>7</sup> TAMPEP VII, 2006

LAC also observed increased local migration. Women from different Lithuanian counties and districts have started coming to work in Vilnius, the capital, and other large cities in Lithuania, in order to replace those who have left for the West.

### **Female sex workers**

Sociological research carried out by the *Lithuanian AIDS Centre* and data from TAMPEP questionnaires demonstrated a higher awareness among sex workers regarding HIV/STI transmission and the necessity of practising safer sex at work. Most sex workers seem to use condoms while working, and an increase in condom use was noted. Among drug-using sex workers, however, there has been a dramatic increase in the habit of using non-sterile injecting equipment, especially among those working on the street.

Some street-based sex workers report cases of violence from clients. Sex workers do not usually seek help from the police regarding violence because they are afraid of getting a police record themselves.

### **Transgender and male sex workers**

Information for and about male and transgender sex workers is rather scarce in Lithuania. Sometimes ads for male sex workers may be found in the daily newspaper but no concrete data are available.

### **Ethnic minorities**

According to research carried out by the *Lithuanian AIDS Centre*, sex workers working in flats and escort services in the capital, Vilnius, are composed of: 55% Lithuanians, 15% Poles, 13% Belarusians, 10% local Russians, 5% Ukrainians and 2% Roma.

The structure of the local street-based sex workers is different: they are composed of 35% Lithuanians, 25% Russians, 20% Poles, and 20% are Belarusians, Ukrainians, and Roma.

### **Vulnerability and Self-Determination**

The main vulnerability factors for both national and migrant sex workers are:

- Violence
- Lack of medical care
- Lack of social care

About 85% of national sex workers work for pimps and drug dealers. They keep about 30% of their earnings for themselves. Almost all migrant sex workers have pimps, and keep only about 20% of what they earn for themselves.

### **Impact of recent legislation**

Following the approval of the new law which criminalises both sex workers and their clients, no major changes took place in the national prostitution scene, especially with regard to the percentage of those working on the streets. It seems the police are not very keen on pursuing sex workers and their clients in order to fine them. For many people the new law is considered a sort of “joke”... for the hypocrisy it represents. In order to “prove” sex work, sometimes the police organise raids on apartments. Recently a series of articles was printed in newspapers discussing certain “cooperation” between the police and some sex workers. In exchange for

turning a blind eye, some policemen receive a sum of money or sex workers' services for free. Due to those articles, a number of policemen were displaced and/or are awaiting trial. If they are found guilty, they will lose their jobs.

Due to the change in policy and attitude, sex workers are seen as "victims" of prostitution in the majority of information materials available.

### **Routes into and out of sex work**

Into sex work - Sex workers, in particular those based on the streets, work in the sex industry due to difficult economic conditions and unemployment. Expert opinion is that causes of prostitution are not always solely of an economic nature. Sexual violence and coercion experienced in childhood often push girls towards sex work. Use of alcohol, beginning at an early age for children in dysfunctional families, is also an important contributing factor. Sex work is closely related to drug addiction. Sex workers often start using drugs ("otherwise it's not possible to work"), and, vice-versa, drug users become sex workers (otherwise it's not possible to get money for drugs).

Out of sex work – The international programme EQUAL "*Integration and reintegration into working society 2005-2007*" supports those who wish to leave the sex industry. The following organisations participate in this programme:

- *Lithuanian AIDS Centre (GO)*
- *Klaipeda Social and Psychological Support Centre (NGO)*
- *Mother and Child Pension in Vilnius (GO)*
- *Missing People Families Support Centre in Vilnius (NGO)*
- *Caritas*

### **Mobility**

Data from the authorities show that the majority of migrant sex workers come from Belarus, Russia and Ukraine, though the flow has decreased recently. Migrants make up about 15% of those involved in female sex work in Lithuania.

Migration of Lithuanians to Western European countries has increased. More than 10% of the entire population migrated to the West since the EU enlargement: about 400,000 from a total population of over 3 million. Of those who migrated, about 45% were men and 55% women<sup>8</sup>.

About 60% of national sex workers have already worked in another country. The main destination countries were and still are: Germany, the UK, Austria, Norway, France, Italy, Israel, Japan, Ireland, Belgium, Spain and the Netherlands.

About 30% of migrant sex workers have already worked before going to Lithuania, mainly in their own home countries: Russia, Belarus and Ukraine.

About 30% have worked in another Lithuanian town. Apart from Vilnius, they have also worked in Klaipeda, Kaunas and Marijampole.

The main reasons for mobility are:

- Higher earnings elsewhere
- Trafficking in women
- Looking for a better life through marriage

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<sup>8</sup> [www.statistikosdepartamentas.lt](http://www.statistikosdepartamentas.lt)

## **3 SERVICES**

### **Access to Health Care Services**

As sex work is illegal in Lithuania, there are no compulsory health tests. No medical services at public health institutions are anonymous.

Only 4 organisations - 3 in Vilnius and 1 in Klaipeda - provide anonymous and free services for sex workers.

National sex workers with social insurance have access to all medical services in polyclinics and maternity centres. Undocumented migrants and those who are not socially insured may access private medical institutions and pay for contraceptives, gynaecological care, mental health care, dental and ophthalmic care.

Social and legal services are only accessible for migrant sex workers and for victims of human trafficking, if they admit to having been trafficked and if they agree to abstain from working in the sex industry in the future.

### **Services provided**

The *Lithuanian AIDS Centre* offers HIV/STI-related care and needle exchange free of charge. It is the only centre offering voluntary, anonymous and free of charge medical care for uninsured and/or undocumented migrant sex workers. It offers the following services: HIV prevention and health promotion information and advice, condoms and safer sex supplies, drug harm reduction information and advice, needle exchange, STI testing, STI treatment, HIV counselling and testing, and gynaecological care. The *AIDS Centre* is however unable to provide free HIV treatment due to strict state regulations and shortage of resources. Drug treatment and rehabilitation is only accessible to uninsured migrants for a fee. There are only two organisations – LAC and Caritas – offering free of charge treatment for uninsured drug users. There are plans to build a special centre for the rehabilitation of drug users, but there is no funding available to date. Another problem faced is where to locate the centre because of protests from people living nearby.

Abortions are charged for in all cases – both for national and migrant sex workers, except in cases of medical necessity and threat to health.

Because only about 15% of sex workers are migrants, services do not work with translators or cultural mediators. Most of the services' staff however have basic knowledge of Russian.

### **Strategies for reaching sex workers**

The main means of contacting sex workers are outreach work, peer education and through the distribution of informational materials. Outreach work is however the most effective strategy for contacting sex workers, as well as for gathering information about them.

The *Lithuanian AIDS Centre* does outreach work around bus and railway stations, on streets and in bars. Contact is also done when sex workers visit the Centre. The *Association of HIV Affected Women* carries out outreach work in Vilnius streets, bars, saunas, hotels, massage parlours, clubs, and at three railway and bus stations. They also make contact with sex workers in their day centre, *Demetra*.

## **Barriers to access of services**

The main barriers to migrant sex workers' access to services are:

- Lack of information about the existence of services
- Lack of social/health insurance
- Lack of money
- Fear of detention if undocumented
- Language problems
- Administrative legal persecution and discrimination of sex workers
- Concentration of available services in Vilnius

## **Services for victims of trafficking**

About 20 organisations in Lithuania provide services for victims of trafficking in women.

Those with the longest experience are the organisations *Missing People Families Support Centre* and *IOM/International Organisation for Migration (Vilnius Office)*. Several NGOs and GOs have also been involved with this issue, such as the *Lithuanian Caritas* and the *Women's Crisis Centres*.

Support to women victims of human trafficking is also available in other Lithuanian cities: Kaunas, Klaipeda, and Alytus. However, it should be noted that services differ from one another. Some are oriented towards preventing trafficking and spreading information among the population about the threats of working abroad, including in the sex industry. Others only provide information to victims and their families. Still others help those who returned to integrate into society by offering social and psychological support.

Medical and social support, including shelters, is available at the *Missing People Families Support Centre* in Vilnius, at the *Vilnius Mother and Child Pension*, and at the *Klaipeda Social and Psychological Support Centre*. The *Lithuanian AIDS Centre* is able to provide professional medical consultations, testing and treatment, as well as psychological and social support.

# **4 GOOD PRACTICE**

## **Reducing vulnerability**

National sex workers with social insurance have access to all medical services in polyclinics and maternity centres. If they are not socially insured, they can access private medical institutions and get contraception, gynaecological care, mental health care, dental and ophthalmic care for a fee. HIV-related care, needle exchange, and STI care are available free of charge at the *Lithuanian AIDS Centre*.

The following services are available to uninsured and/or undocumented migrant sex workers on a voluntary, anonymous and free of charge basis: HIV prevention and health promotion information and advice, condoms and safer sex supplies, drug harm reduction information and advice, needle exchange, STI testing, STI treatment, HIV counselling and testing, gynaecological care. All this is offered by the *Lithuanian AIDS Centre*.

### **Improving access to services**

Up to 18 organisations in Lithuania provide services to trafficking victims. Those operating longest are the *Missing People Families Support Centre* and the *International Organisation for Migration* (Vilnius Office).

More recently, several other NGOs and GOs have become involved in this work, such as *Lithuanian Caritas*, and *Women's Crisis Centres*. They took action as a result of the *Programme for the Control and Prevention of Trafficking in Human Beings and Prostitution* for 2005-2008, adopted by the Lithuanian Government. This programme encourages the support of projects of both governmental and non-governmental organisations, their aim being "to lend social support and promote reintegration of victims of forced prostitution". This reintegration means, among other things, the provision of vocational training in order to facilitate social inclusion. However, this is only possible under one condition: if the person agrees to leave sex work.

## **5 LEGAL FRAMEWORK**

### **Migration**

Lithuania is the most potent example of the growing migration problem associated with the break-up of the USSR in 1991. It is strategically located between the Russian Federation and Belarus, with a large number of irregular migrants from these countries on one side, and the countries of Western Europe - the final destination of most of these migrants - on the other. Following the break-up of the Soviet Union, the character and trends of migration processes changed entirely. Annexed by the Russian Empire in 1795, independent from 1918 to 1940, Lithuania was subjected to a "Russification" policy and remained a Soviet Republic until 1990 when Vilnius declared its independence. Before 1990, many immigrants came from the former Soviet Union. After 1990, a great number of inhabitants started to leave the country. According to the law, only close relatives (parents, children and spouses) of citizens of the Republic of Lithuania may immigrate into Lithuania, i.e. reside there on a permanent basis. The annual immigration quota, confirmed by the Parliament of the Republic of Lithuania, the Seimas, is 2,500 persons.

In January 1997, in order to deal with the increasing number of illegal migrants, the government approved regulations on expulsion of aliens and established a "Foreigners' Registration Centre" in Pabrade, approximately 30 miles from Vilnius. Illegal migrants are screened in Pabrade, receive medical attention, and are given an opportunity to file a request for political asylum. Those found eligible to be considered for asylum are transferred to another facility in Rukla, near the city of Kaunas.

The Republic of Lithuania ratified the 1951 Geneva Convention and the 1967 New York Protocol on 21 January 1997. The Lithuanian Refugee Law was adopted on 4 July 1997. The Refugee Law and the Convention entered into force on 27 July 1997; the first two asylum seekers were granted refugee status on 3 September 1997. In November 1997, the Seimas restricted the Refugee Law. In 2004 the quota system was eliminated<sup>9</sup>.

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<sup>9</sup> [www.lrs.lt](http://www.lrs.lt)

## **Sex Work**

According to Lithuanian legislation, sex work is not a crime. It is an administrative offence, outside the penal code. However, it is an administrative offence subject to a fine (article 182 §1 of the Code of Violations of Administrative Law). The practice of sex work or payment for sexual services incurs fines from 300 Lt (about €87.00) to 500 Lt (about €145.00).

Pimping is criminalised and punishable by a custodial sentence ranging from three to five years, or a fine (part 3 of article 239 of the Lithuanian Criminal Code).

It is also a criminal offence to force persons into prostitution, such as juveniles, as well as to involve persons in prostitution by way of blackmail, deceit, and/or use of physical or psychological pressure. These crimes are punishable by a custodial sentence ranging from three to seven years.

In recent years there have been less than 20 cases of pandering per year (the number of administrative cases for prostitution varies greatly).

Prostitution businesses incur an administrative fine according to the Code of Administrative Violations of Law of Lithuania, article 182/1.

## **Trafficking in Women**

Presently the Government has provided a package of amendments of the Penal Code to the Parliament, proposing to tighten up the penal responsibility for trafficking in human beings, establishing the sanction from minimum imprisonment of 2 years to maximum imprisonment of up to 12 years, along with a proposal to punish trafficking in children with imprisonment from 3 to 15 years.

84 cases of trafficking in human beings were brought to court from 1999 to 2005. 34 persons have been convicted. 7 cases were brought to court in 2006. A number of cases were also brought to court against persons who benefited from or were involved in prostitution.

The Government has approved the *Programme for the Prevention and Control of Human Trafficking and Prostitution* for 2005-2008, with a budget of 5.7 million Litass (about €1,650 million). This programme provides an estimation of the extent of human trafficking and prostitution in Lithuania, and information about the necessary activities the police must undertake to combat trafficking in women. The programme also foresees the development of a support system specifically for victims of human trafficking in Lithuania. It will finance NGOs in order to offer social services, such as vocational training for alternative employment for victims of trafficking. However, victims must cease their involvement in sex work and if they continue to work in the sex industry, support will be discontinued.

Some NGOs however also include non-trafficked sex workers in these programmes in order to be able to extend support to this group also. Due to this procedure, the number of victims of trafficking has been very [artificially?] high in Lithuania.

Apart from the *Programme for the Prevention and Control of Human Trafficking and Prostitution*, the Lithuanian government cooperates with foreign embassies and consulates for a more effective approach regarding support for victims of trafficking. It also mobilises international cooperation, especially within the Baltic region, in order to fight organised crime involved in human trafficking.

Lithuania signed the Palermo Protocol in April 2002 and ratified it in June 2003<sup>10</sup>.

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<sup>10</sup> [www.unodc.org/](http://www.unodc.org/) United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime/ Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime.

## **Law Enforcement**

Since May 2005 a legal amendment allows fines for both sex workers and their clients. In accordance with this landmark amendment, repeated arrest for the above crime incurs a fine of 750 litas (about €217,00), or the offender is detained for 30 days, following proof of buying or selling sexual services.

No conclusions regarding the efficiency or inefficiency of the new law have been drawn, and it is not yet clear how it will influence the sex industry in Lithuania. There is also a moral dimension to the policy, especially regarding clients. Many clients are ashamed of visiting sex workers and their fear of people finding out is greater than their fear of the fine.

In 2006, the Ministry of Interior Affairs registered and made public the information that 277 female sex workers and 4 male clients had been penalised.

## **Drug use**

Lithuania has a drug control and drug use prevention policy. Punitive measures are taken against producers of illegal drugs and psychotropic substances, as well as against those who negotiate with them, profit from them, keep and make use of them.

In 2006, about 70% of street-based sex workers were drug users, compared with about 15% of those working indoors<sup>11</sup>.

## **HIV/AIDS**

In 2006 the *Lithuania AIDS Centre* diagnosed 100 new cases of HIV infection (78 males and 22 females).

All in all there are 1,200 registered persons living with HIV in Lithuania: 1,044 males and 156 females, among them 16 sex workers (10.2 %)<sup>12</sup>.

# **6 ORGANISATION**

## **Lithuanian AIDS Centre**

Nugaletojun St. 14 D  
2016 Vilnius  
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Mail: sveta@aids.lt  
www.aids.lt

The *Lithuanian AIDS Centre* is a governmental organisation established in 1989.

The *AIDS Centre* includes the following departments: laboratory, dispensing unit along with anonymous testing site, public education unit, drug users' social rehabilitation department, and the *Social Ailments Consultation Site*. The *AIDS Centre* also operates the AIDS Hotline.

Responsibilities of the *AIDS Centre* are: public education, laboratory testing (the laboratory is a reference point, being the only one in Lithuania performing confirmatory tests), anonymous testing and counselling, epidemiology surveillance and data evaluation, social rehabilitation of drug users, launching of AIDS prevention programmes.

<sup>11</sup> Survey conducted in Vilnius in 2006 with 200 sex workers, 100 indoor- and 100 outdoor-based sex workers.

<sup>12</sup> www.aids.lt

The *AIDS Centre* develops and distributes a wide range of educational information material including flyers, leaflets, posters, and an electronic monthly bulletin. It translates and adapts both audio and video materials, which are available at the *Public Education and Information Centre* and nationally distributed under request.

The *AIDS Centre* organises conferences, training courses, discussions, exhibitions on HIV, drug use and prevention of infectious diseases. It collaborates with the media in order to distribute all kinds of important and urgent information obtained through various channels, both national and international.

The *AIDS Centre* staff lecture throughout the country to different audiences: students, teachers, medical workers, journalists, etc. It publishes articles by experts in both national and local newspapers, and develops radio broadcasts and television spots.

The prevention of HIV among vulnerable groups is a priority for the *AIDS Centre* and other stakeholders. The *AIDS Centre* introduced innovative initiatives, such as meeting points for sex workers and injecting drug users. In 1998 the *Social Ailments Consultation Site* was established, and in 2005, the *Women's Health Room*. Through the Site located at Vilnius railway station, sex workers obtain access to anonymous testing, treatment, condoms and psychological support. The *AIDS Centre* operates its own anonymous facility that provides services to sex workers. Up to now about 400 female street-based sex workers have used the services of the *Women's Health Room*.

Between January and August 2006, 56 sex workers visited the service, and a further 76 accessed consultations, counselling and referrals through outreach activities. Of a total of 132 sex workers, 48 were Vilnius residents, 79 came from other Lithuanian cities, and 5 were foreigners, from Belarus.

Distribution of sex workers by age: 51 were between 18 and 25, 45 between 25 and 30, and 36 were 30 and older. Work places: 80 of them worked on the streets, 22 in hotels, 14 in flats, 13 in cafes and bars, and 3 in striptease clubs. Of the total, 47 were injecting drug users.