

OFFICIAL NAME: Republic of Lithuania

CAPITAL: Vilnius

SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT: Unitary Multiparty Republic

AREA: 65,301 Sq Km (25,213 Sq Mi)

ESTIMATED 2000 POPULATION: 3,861,400



LOCATION AND GEOGRAPHY: Lithuania is a former republic of the USSR. It is bound by the Baltic Sea to the west, Latvia to the north, Poland and the Kalinigrad Oblast of Russia to the southwest as well as Belarus to the south and east. Topographically, the country is part of the coastal rim of the Russian Plain with moraine and other glacial deposits. The country has two hilly regions, (1.) the Samogitian Hills to the west and (2.) the lake and bog filled hill country of the east. Both of these areas are separated by the Lithuanian Lowlands. The principal river is the Nemunas or Niemen River with its two main tributaries. Major Cities (pop. est.); Vilnius 584,400, Kaunas 423,900, Klaipeda 204,600 (1994). Land Use; forested 31%, pastures 7%, agricultural-cultivated 46%, other 16% (1993).

CLIMATE: Lithuania has a transitional climate between the maritime climate of West Europe and the continental climate of Russia. Winters are generally mild and summers are cooler along the coast with temperature extremes increasing inland. Average annual precipitation varies from 850 mm (34 inches) on the Baltic coastal hills to less than 600 mm (24 inches) in the central lowlands. Average temperature ranges are from -4 degrees Celsius (25 degrees Fahrenheit) in January to 17 degrees Celsius (63 degrees Fahrenheit) in July.

PEOPLE: The principal ethnic majority are the Lithuanians who account for 80% of the population while 9% are Russians and 7% are Poles. Other ethnic minorities include Ukrainians, Belarussians, Jews, Latvians, Tartars and Germans.

DEMOGRAPHIC/VITAL STATISTICS: Density; 58 persons per sq km (151 persons per sq mi) (1993). Urban-Rural; 68.5% urban, 31.5% rural (1993). Sex Distribution; 47.3% male, 52.7% female (1993). Life Expectancy at Birth; 65.3 years male, 76.1 years female (1991). Age Breakdown; 23% under 15, 23% 15 to 29, 21% 30 to 44, 17% 45 to 59, 11% 60 to 74, 5% 75 and over (1991). Birth Rate; 14.3 per 1,000 (1992). Death Rate; 11.0 per 1,000 (1992). Increase Rate; 3.3 per 1,000 (1992). Infant Mortality Rate; 16.5 per 1,000 live births (1992).

RELIGIONS: Mostly Christians, of which the majority are Roman Catholic while there are minorities of Evangelical Lutherans and Lutheran Reformists.

LANGUAGES: The official language is Lithuanian while Russian is also widely spoken and each ethnic minority also has its own language.

EDUCATION: Persons having attained: some primary 12.5%, primary 31.7%, some secondary 23.1%, secondary 25.0%, higher 7.7% (1979). Literacy; N/A.

MODERN HISTORY - WWII TO 1993: On Mar. 11, 1990 Lithuania declared its independence, although prior to independence its history was closely tied with that of the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). In Mar. 1953 Yosef Stalin died and was succeeded by Georgy Malenkov who was in turn forced to relinquish the party leadership to Nikita Khrushchev after a little over one week in power. In 1955 the Warsaw pact militarily aligned the Soviet Union with other communist countries and in Nov. 1956 the Soviet Red Army invaded Hungary to quell uprisings. In 1957 three communist ministers unsuccessfully attempted to depose Khrushchev which resulted in their expulsion from the central committee. In 1962 under Khrushchev's rule the USSR was involved in the Cuban Missile crisis and in the same year relations with China were broken off as a result of ideological differences. In Oct. 1964 Khrushchev was forced to retire and was succeeded by Leonid Brezhnev. In Aug. 1968 the Warsaw Pact forces led by the Red Army invaded Czechoslovakia to halt their Prague Spring reforms. In 1977 Breshnev was elected President. In Nov. 1982 Brezhnev died and was succeeded by Yuri Andropov, the former head of the KGB. Andropov introduced limited economic reforms and established an anti-corruption program. In Feb 1984 Andropov died and was succeeded by Konstantin Chernenko who in turn died on Mar. 10, 1985. On Mar. 11, 1985 Mikhail Gorbachev was elected as Chernenko's successor and Gorbachev embarked on a program which restructured the USSR's relations with the West. Gorbachev also established Glasnost (openness) as well as Perestroika (restructuring and reform). In Apr. 1986 a meltdown in the reactor of the Chernobyl nuclear power station in Ukraine sent radioactive fallout across northern Europe. In Dec. 1987 the USSR and USA signed the Treaty on Intermediate Nuclear Forces (INF). In Feb. 1988 a dispute erupted between Armenia and Azerbaijan over the enclave of Nagorno-Karabakh which resulted in mass demonstrations and strikes in the two republics. In Dec. 1988 an earthquake in Armenia killed some 50,000 people. In Apr. 1989 troops violently repressed demonstrations in Tbilisi, the capital of Georgia. In Dec. 1989 the Lithuanian Parliament adopted multiparty politics. In Jan. 1990 Gorbachev visited Lithuania and was met by some 250,000 pro-independence demonstrators. In Feb. 1990 some 18 people were killed in riots over housing discrimination in Tajikistan. In May 1990 Boris Yeltsin was elected President of the Russian Federation and on Nov. 1, 1990 launched a 500 day plan to give the Russian Republic a free market economy. In June 1990 Nakhichevan an Azerbaijani enclave bordering Iran declared its intention for a unification with Iran while a civil war was escalating between Azerbaijan and Armenia. In the same month around 150 people were killed during ethnic clashes in Kyrgyzstan. In Jan 1991 another 15 people were killed as the Red Army seized a television station in Lithuania while in Latvia the Soviet Black Berets killed 5 people in an attack on the ministry building. In the same month troops were being deployed in Ukraine, Georgia,

Armenia and Moldova. In Mar. 1991 pro-Yeltsin demonstrators held a mass rally. On Aug. 18, 1991 as Gorbachev was vacationing in the Crimea, the Politburo hard liners attempted a coup to remove Gorbachev from power through the declaration of a State of Emergency under the control of a State Committee. Almost immediately republic leaders declared the emergency committee illegal as well as unconstitutional and began to barricade their parliaments as troops and tanks were deployed throughout the republics. By Aug. 20 senior officers had refused to order their troops to use force against the civilians and on Aug. 21, 1991 the coup collapsed as troops were ordered to return to their barracks. Immediately following the unsuccessful coup many republics suspended or purged the communist party and on Sept. 5, 1991 after 3 days of debate the 74 years of centralized communist control came to an end. On Sept. 6, 1991 Lithuania regained its full independence after 51 years of Soviet domination. On Sept. 17 Lithuania joined the UN and the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) on Oct. 15, 1991. In Oct. and Nov. 1992 the communist Lithuanian Democratic Labor Party (LDLP) led by Algirdas Brazauskas won both rounds of elections gaining a clear majority over its main opposition the nationalist Lithuanian Reform Movement (Sajudis). The LDLP announced that it intended forming a coalition government, not wanting to be held solely responsible for the country's economic situation and that it intended developing a better relationship with Russia and slower reforms in moving to a market economy. On Feb. 14, 1993 Algirdas Brazauskas won Presidential elections and appointed Adolfas Slezevicius as Prime Minister. On May 1, 1993 following the defeat of the Sajudis organization in 1992 elections the Homeland Union was established. On May 14, 1993 Lithuania was accepted as a member of the Council of Europe and on June 25, 1993 the government introduced its new currency, the Lita. On August 31, 1993 the withdrawal of Russian troops from its territory was completed. Also in 1993 market economy reforms were slow with the government's new regulations for privatization of state enterprises impeding the whole process.

CURRENCY: The official currency is the Litas (L) (plural; Litai) divided into 100 Centai.

ECONOMY: Gross National Product; USD \$4,891,000,000 (1993). Public Debt; USD \$163,500,000 (1993). Imports; USD \$2,210,000,000 (1994). Exports; USD \$1,892,000,000 (1994). Tourism Receipts; N/A. Balance of Trade; N/A. Economically Active Population; 1,741,000 or 46.8% of total population (1994). Unemployed; 3.8% (1994).

MAIN TRADING PARTNERS: Its main trading partners are the CIS.

MAIN PRIMARY PRODUCTS: Barley, Fish, Flax, Legumes, Livestock, Potatoes, Rye, Sugar Beets, Timber, Wheat.

MAJOR INDUSTRIES: Agriculture, Chemicals, Dairy Farming, Deep Sea Fishing, Electrical and Electronic Equipment, Machines, Shoes, Sugar Milling, Textiles, Wood Working.

MAIN EXPORTS: Dairy Products, Electrical and Electronic, Equipment, Machine Tools, Refrigerators and Washing Machines.

TRANSPORT: Railroads; route length 2,996 km (1,862 mi) (1992), passenger-km 2,740,000,000 (1,703,000,000 passenger-mi) (1992), cargo ton-km 11,337,000,000 (7,765,000,000 short ton-mi) (1992). Roads; length 44,500 km (27,651 mi) (1991). Vehicles; cars 565,320 (1992), trucks and buses 92,056 (1992). Merchant Marine; vessels 52 (1992), deadweight tonnage 373,911 (1992). Air Transport; passenger-km 917,000,000 (569,797,000 passenger-mi) (1992), cargo ton-km 5,253,000 (3,598,000 short ton-mi) (1992).

COMMUNICATIONS: Daily Newspapers; total of 18 with a total circulation of 836,000 (1992). Radio; receivers 1,420,000 (1994). Television; receivers 1,400,000 (1994). Telephones; units 858,500 (1993).

MILITARY: 8,900 (1995) total active duty personnel with 93.3% army, 3.9% navy and 2.8% air force while military expenditure accounts for N/A of the Gross National Product (GNP).