[Template:About](/wiki/Template:About" \o "Template:About) [Template:Pp-move-indef](/wiki/Template:Pp-move-indef) [Template:Use dmy dates](/wiki/Template:Use_dmy_dates) [Template:Infobox country](/wiki/Template:Infobox_country) [Template:Coord](/wiki/Template:Coord)

**Lithuania** ([Template:IPAc-en](/wiki/Template:IPAc-en); [Template:Lang-lt](/wiki/Template:Lang-lt) [Template:IPA-lt](/wiki/Template:IPA-lt)), officially the **Republic of Lithuania** ([Template:Lang-lt](/wiki/Template:Lang-lt)), is a country in [Northern Europe](/wiki/Northern_Europe).[[1]](#cite_note-1) One of the three [Baltic states](/wiki/Baltic_states), it is situated along the southeastern shore of the [Baltic Sea](/wiki/Baltic_Sea), to the east of [Sweden](/wiki/Sweden) and [Denmark](/wiki/Denmark). It is bordered by [Latvia](/wiki/Latvia) to the north, [Belarus](/wiki/Belarus) to the east and south, [Poland](/wiki/Poland) to the south, and [Kaliningrad Oblast](/wiki/Kaliningrad_Oblast) (a [Russian](/wiki/Russia) [exclave](/wiki/Enclave_and_exclave)) to the southwest. Lithuania has an estimated population of 2.9 million people [Template:As of](/wiki/Template:As_of), and its capital and largest city is [Vilnius](/wiki/Vilnius). [Lithuanians](/wiki/Lithuanians) are a [Baltic people](/wiki/Baltic_people). The official language, [Lithuanian](/wiki/Lithuanian_language), along with [Latvian](/wiki/Latvian_language), are the only two living languages in the [Baltic branch](/wiki/Baltic_languages) of the [Indo-European](/wiki/Indo-European_languages) language family.

For centuries, the southeastern shores of the Baltic Sea were inhabited by various [Baltic tribes](/wiki/Balts). In the 1230s, the Lithuanian lands were united by [Mindaugas](/wiki/Mindaugas), the King of Lithuania, and the first unified Lithuanian state, the [Kingdom of Lithuania](/wiki/Kingdom_of_Lithuania), was created on 6 July 1253. During the 14th century, the [Grand Duchy of Lithuania](/wiki/Grand_Duchy_of_Lithuania) was the largest country in Europe; present-day Lithuania, Belarus, Ukraine, and parts of Poland and Russia were the territories of the Grand Duchy. With the [Lublin Union](/wiki/Lublin_Union) of 1569, Lithuania and Poland formed a voluntary two-state union, the [Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth](/wiki/Polish–Lithuanian_Commonwealth). The Commonwealth lasted more than two centuries, until neighboring countries [systematically dismantled](/wiki/Partitions_of_Poland) it from 1772–95, with the [Russian Empire](/wiki/Russian_Empire) annexing most of Lithuania's territory.

As [World War I](/wiki/World_War_I) neared its end, Lithuania's [Act of Independence](/wiki/Act_of_Independence_of_Lithuania) was signed on 16 February 1918, declaring the re-establishment of a sovereign State of Lithuania. Starting in 1940, Lithuania was occupied first by the [Soviet Union](/wiki/Soviet_occupation_of_the_Baltic_states_(1940)) and then by [Nazi Germany](/wiki/Occupation_of_Lithuania_by_Nazi_Germany). As World War II neared its end in 1944 and the Germans retreated, the [Soviet Union reoccupied Lithuania](/wiki/Soviet_occupation_of_the_Baltic_states_(1944)). On 11 March 1990, a year before the formal [dissolution of the Soviet Union](/wiki/Dissolution_of_the_Soviet_Union), Lithuania became the first [Soviet republic](/wiki/Republics_of_the_Soviet_Union) to declare itself independent, resulting in [the restoration of an independent State of Lithuania](/wiki/Act_of_the_Re-Establishment_of_the_State_of_Lithuania).

Lithuania is a member of the [European Union](/wiki/European_Union), the [Council of Europe](/wiki/Council_of_Europe), a full member of the [Schengen Agreement](/wiki/Schengen_Agreement) and [NATO](/wiki/NATO). It is also a member of the [Nordic Investment Bank](/wiki/Nordic_Investment_Bank), and part of [Nordic-Baltic](/wiki/NB8) cooperation of [Northern European](/wiki/Northern_Europe) countries. The United Nations [Human Development Index](/wiki/Human_Development_Index) lists Lithuania as a "very high human development" country. Lithuania has been among the fastest growing economies in the European Union and is ranked 20th in the world in the [Ease of Doing Business Index](/wiki/Ease_of_Doing_Business_Index). On 1 January 2015, Lithuania adopted the [euro](/wiki/Euro) as the official currency and became the 19th member of the [Eurozone](/wiki/Eurozone).

## Contents

* 1 History[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=1)]
  + 1.1 Prehistoric[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=2)]
  + 1.2 Medieval[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=3)]
  + 1.3 Modern[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=4)]
  + 1.4 20th and 21st centuries[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=5)]
    - 1.4.1 1939–41[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=6)]
    - 1.4.2 1941–44[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=7)]
    - 1.4.3 1944–91[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=8)]
    - 1.4.4 1991–present[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=9)]
* 2 Geography[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=10)]
  + 2.1 Climate[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=11)]
* 3 Politics[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=12)]
  + 3.1 Administrative divisions[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=13)]
  + 3.2 Foreign relations[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=14)]
  + 3.3 Military[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=15)]
* 4 Economy[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=16)]
* 5 Infrastructure[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=17)]
  + 5.1 Communication[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=18)]
  + 5.2 Transport[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=19)]
  + 5.3 Energy[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=20)]
* 6 Demographics[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=21)]
  + 6.1 Ethnic groups[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=22)]
  + 6.2 Urbanization[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=23)]
  + 6.3 Health[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=24)]
  + 6.4 Religion[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=25)]
  + 6.5 Education[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=26)]
* 7 Culture[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=27)]
  + 7.1 Lithuanian language[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=28)]
  + 7.2 Literature[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=29)]
  + 7.3 Arts and museums[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=30)]
  + 7.4 Music[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=31)]
  + 7.5 Cuisine[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=32)]
  + 7.6 Sports[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=33)]
* 8 International rankings[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=34)]
* 9 See also[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=35)]
* 10 References[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=36)]
* 11 External links[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=37)]

## History[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=1)]

[right|thumb|400px|Map showing changes in the territory of Lithuania from the 13th century to the present day.](/wiki/File:LithuaniaHistory.png) [Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article)

### Prehistoric[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=2)]

The first people settled in the territory of Lithuania after the [last glacial period](/wiki/Last_glacial_period) in the 10th millennium BC. Over a millennium, the [Indo-Europeans](/wiki/Indo-European_migrations), who arrived in the 3rd – 2nd millennium BC, mixed with the local population and formed various [Baltic tribes](/wiki/Baltic_tribes). The [first written mention](/wiki/Name_of_Lithuania) of Lithuania is found in a medieval German manuscript, the [*Annals of Quedlinburg*](/wiki/Annals_of_Quedlinburg), in an entry dated 9 March 1009.[[2]](#cite_note-2)

### Medieval[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=3)]

Initially inhabited by fragmented Baltic tribes, in the 1230s the Lithuanian lands were united by [Mindaugas](/wiki/Mindaugas), who was crowned as [King of Lithuania](/wiki/King_of_Lithuania) on 6 July 1253.[[3]](#cite_note-3) After his assassination in 1263, [pagan Lithuania](/wiki/Lithuanian_mythology) was a target of the [Christian crusades](/wiki/Northern_Crusades) of the [Teutonic Knights](/wiki/Teutonic_Knights) and the [Livonian Order](/wiki/Livonian_Order). Despite the devastating century-long struggle with the Orders, the [Grand Duchy of Lithuania](/wiki/Grand_Duchy_of_Lithuania) expanded rapidly, overtaking former Slavic principalities of [Kievan Rus'](/wiki/Kievan_Rus').

By the end of the 14th century, Lithuania was one of the largest countries in Europe and included present-day [Belarus](/wiki/Belarus), [Ukraine](/wiki/Ukraine), and parts of [Poland](/wiki/Poland) and [Russia](/wiki/Russia).[[4]](#cite_note-4) The geopolitical situation between the west and the east determined the multicultural and multi-confessional character of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. The ruling elite practised religious tolerance and [Chancery Slavonic](/wiki/Chancery_Slavonic) language was used as an auxiliary language to the [Latin](/wiki/Latin) for official documents. [thumb|](/wiki/File:Trakai-Troki.jpg)[Trakai Island Castle](/wiki/Trakai_Island_Castle) [thumb|](/wiki/File:Jan_Matejko,_Bitwa_pod_Grunwaldem.jpg)[Battle of Grunwald](/wiki/Battle_of_Grunwald) and [Vytautas the Great](/wiki/Vytautas_the_Great) in the centre

In 1385, the Grand Duke [Jogaila](/wiki/Jogaila) accepted Poland's offer to become its king. [Jogaila](/wiki/Jogaila) embarked on gradual [Christianization of Lithuania](/wiki/Christianization_of_Lithuania) and established a [personal union](/wiki/Personal_union) between Poland and Lithuania. It implied that Lithuania, the fiercely independent land, was one of the last [pagan](/wiki/Romuva_(religion)) areas of Europe to adopt Christianity.

After two civil wars, [Vytautas the Great](/wiki/Vytautas_the_Great) became the Grand Duke of Lithuania in 1392. During his reign, Lithuania reached the peak of its territorial expansion, centralization of the state began, and the [Lithuanian nobility](/wiki/Lithuanian_nobility) became increasingly prominent in state politics. In the great [Battle of the Vorskla River](/wiki/Battle_of_the_Vorskla_River) in 1399, the combined forces of [Tokhtamysh](/wiki/Tokhtamysh) and Vytautas were defeated by the [Mongols](/wiki/Golden_Horde). Thanks to close cooperation, the armies of Lithuania and Poland achieved a great victory over the Teutonic Knights in 1410 at the [Battle of Grunwald](/wiki/Battle_of_Grunwald), one of the largest battles of medieval Europe.[[5]](#cite_note-5)[[6]](#cite_note-6)[[7]](#cite_note-7) After the deaths of Jogaila and Vytautas, the Lithuanian nobility attempted to break the union between [Poland](/wiki/Poland) and Lithuania, independently selecting Grand Dukes from the [Jagiellon dynasty](/wiki/Jagiellon_dynasty). But, at the end of the 15th century, Lithuania was forced to seek a closer alliance with Poland when the growing power of the [Grand Duchy of Moscow](/wiki/Grand_Duchy_of_Moscow) threatened Lithuania's Russian principalities and sparked the [Muscovite–Lithuanian Wars](/wiki/Muscovite–Lithuanian_Wars) and the [Livonian War](/wiki/Livonian_War).

### Modern[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=4)]

The [Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth](/wiki/Polish–Lithuanian_Commonwealth) was created in 1569. As a member of the Commonwealth, Lithuania retained its institutions, including a separate army, currency, and statutory laws.[[8]](#cite_note-8) Eventually [Polonization](/wiki/Polonization) affected all aspects of Lithuanian life: politics, language, culture, and national identity. From the mid-16th to the mid-17th centuries, culture, arts, and education flourished, fueled by the [Renaissance](/wiki/Renaissance) and the [Protestant Reformation](/wiki/Protestant_Reformation). From 1573, the Kings of Poland and Grand Dukes of Lithuania were [elected by the nobility](/wiki/Free_election_(Polish_throne)), who were granted ever increasing [Golden Liberties](/wiki/Golden_Liberty). These liberties, especially the [*liberum veto*](/wiki/Liberum_veto), led to anarchy and the eventual dissolution of the state.

During the [Northern Wars](/wiki/Northern_Wars) (1655–1661), the Lithuanian territory and economy were devastated by the [Swedish](/wiki/Swedish_Empire) army. Before it could fully recover, Lithuania was ravaged during the [Great Northern War](/wiki/Great_Northern_War) (1700–1721). The war, [a plague](/wiki/The_plague_during_the_Great_Northern_War), and [a famine](/wiki/Great_Frost_of_1709) caused the deaths of approximately 40% of the country's population.[[9]](#cite_note-9) Foreign powers, especially Russia, became dominant in the domestic politics of the Commonwealth. Numerous factions among the nobility used the Golden Liberties to prevent any reforms. Eventually, [the Commonwealth was partitioned](/wiki/Partitions_of_Poland) in 1772, 1792, and 1795 by the [Russian Empire](/wiki/Russian_Empire), [Prussia](/wiki/Prussia), and [Habsburg Austria](/wiki/Habsburg_Austria).

The largest area of Lithuanian territory became part of the Russian Empire. After unsuccessful [uprisings in 1831](/wiki/November_Uprising) and [1863](/wiki/January_Uprising), the Tsarist authorities implemented a number of [Russification](/wiki/Russification) policies. They [banned the Lithuanian press](/wiki/Lithuanian_press_ban), closed cultural and educational institutions, and made Lithuania part of a new administrative region called [Northwestern Krai](/wiki/Northwestern_Krai). The Russification failed owing to an extensive network of [book smugglers](/wiki/Book_smuggler) and secret Lithuanian home schooling.

After the [Russo-Turkish War (1877–1878)](/wiki/Russo-Turkish_War_(1877–1878)), when German diplomats assigned what were seen as Russian spoils of war to Turkey, the relationship between Russia and the [German Empire](/wiki/German_Empire) became complicated. The Russian Empire resumed the construction of fortresses at its western borders for defence against a potential invasion from Germany in the West. On 7 July 1879 the [Russian Emperor Alexander II](/wiki/Alexander_II_of_Russia) approved of a proposal from the Russian military leadership to build the largest "first-class" defensive structure in the entire state – the [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) [Kaunas Fortress](/wiki/Kaunas_Fortress).[[10]](#cite_note-10) Large numbers of Lithuanians went to the United States in 1867–1868 after a [famine](/wiki/Famine).[[11]](#cite_note-11) A [Lithuanian National Revival](/wiki/Lithuanian_National_Revival) laid the foundations of the modern Lithuanian nation and independent Lithuania.

### 20th and 21st centuries[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=5)]

[thumb|The original 20 members of the](/wiki/File:Signatarai.Signatories_of_Lithuania.jpg) [Council of Lithuania](/wiki/Council_of_Lithuania) after signing the [Act of Independence of Lithuania](/wiki/Act_of_Independence_of_Lithuania), 16 February 1918.

During [World War I](/wiki/World_War_I), the [Council of Lithuania](/wiki/Council_of_Lithuania) (*Lietuvos Taryba*) declared the [independence of Lithuania](/wiki/Act_of_Independence_of_Lithuania) and the re-establishment of the Lithuanian State on 16 February 1918. Lithuania's foreign policy was dominated by territorial disputes with Poland and Germany. The [Vilnius Region](/wiki/Vilnius_Region) and [Vilnius](/wiki/Vilnius), the historical capital of Lithuania (and so designated in the Constitution of Lithuania), were seized by the Polish army during [Żeligowski's Mutiny](/wiki/Żeligowski's_Mutiny) in October 1920 and incorporated two years later in to Poland. For 19 years [Kaunas](/wiki/Kaunas) became the [temporary capital of Lithuania](/wiki/Temporary_capital_of_Lithuania). The Polish control over Vilnius was greatly resented by Lithuania; there were no diplomatic relations between the two states for most of the period between the two World Wars.

Acquired during the [Klaipėda Revolt](/wiki/Klaipėda_Revolt) of 1923, the [Klaipėda Region](/wiki/Klaipėda_Region) (German: [Memelland](/wiki/Memelland)) was ceded to [Germany](/wiki/Nazi_Germany) after a [German ultimatum](/wiki/1939_German_ultimatum_to_Lithuania) in March 1939. During the interwar period, the domestic affairs of Lithuania were controlled by the authoritarian President, [Antanas Smetona](/wiki/Antanas_Smetona) and his party, the [Lithuanian Nationalist Union](/wiki/Lithuanian_Nationalist_Union), who came to power after the [coup d'état of 1926](/wiki/1926_Lithuanian_coup_d'état).

#### 1939–41[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=6)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) The Soviet Union returned Vilnius to Lithuania after the Soviet invasion of Eastern Poland in September 1939.[[12]](#cite_note-12) In June 1940, the [Soviet Union occupied and annexed Lithuania](/wiki/Occupation_and_annexation_of_the_Baltic_states_by_the_Soviet_Union_(1940)) in accordance to the secret protocols of [Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact](/wiki/Molotov–Ribbentrop_Pact).[[13]](#cite_note-13)[[14]](#cite_note-14) The occupation was followed by mass arrests and deportations with Lithuania having 34,000 citizens removed. According to a Lithuanian government official, this was the start of a planned removal of 700,000 from Lithuania.<ref name=PBBG/>[Template:Rp](/wiki/Template:Rp)

#### 1941–44[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=7)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) A year later [the Soviet Union was attacked](/wiki/Operation_Barbarossa) by [Nazi Germany](/wiki/Nazi_Germany), leading to the [Nazi occupation of Lithuania](/wiki/Occupation_of_Lithuania_by_Nazi_Germany). The Germans and their collaborators[[15]](#cite_note-15)[Template:Rp](/wiki/Template:Rp) started the killings immediately, in Lithuania, by 1 December 1941, over 120,000 Lithuanian Jews had been killed.<ref name=PBBG/>[Template:Rp](/wiki/Template:Rp)

During the occupation, the Germans rounded up and murdered intellectuals, army officers, [Romani people](/wiki/Romani_people) and around 190,000 [Jews of Lithuania](/wiki/Jews_of_Lithuania)[[16]](#cite_note-16) (91–95% of the pre-war Jewish community) during [the Holocaust](/wiki/The_Holocaust_in_Lithuania).

10 of the 25 Lithuanian police battalions, working with the Nazi [Einsatzkommando](/wiki/Einsatzkommando), were involved in mass killings, they were thought to have executed 78,000 individuals.<ref name=PBBG/>[Template:Rp](/wiki/Template:Rp)

Lithuanian partisans did exist, very few supported the communists. The Lithuanian army soldiers, who had been put into the [29th Rifle Corps](/wiki/16th_Rifle_Division_(Soviet_Union)) of the Red army deserted or surrendered to the Germans in June 1941, resulting in the Lithuanian unit being disbanded in August 1941.

#### 1944–91[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=8)]

[thumb|Monument in](/wiki/File:N._Vilnia,_paminklas_tremtiniams.JPG) [Naujoji Vilnia](/wiki/Naujoji_Vilnia) in memory of the [Soviet deportations from Lithuania](/wiki/Soviet_deportations_from_Lithuania). After the retreat of the [German armed forces](/wiki/Wehrmacht), the [Soviets re-established the annexation of Lithuania in 1944](/wiki/Occupation_and_annexation_of_the_Baltic_states_by_the_Soviet_Union_(1944)). Under border changes promulgated at the [Potsdam Conference](/wiki/Potsdam_Conference) in 1945, the former German [Memelland](/wiki/Memelland), with its Baltic port [Memel](/wiki/Klaipėda) (Lithuanian: [Klaipėda](/wiki/Klaipėda)), was again transferred to Lithuania, or as it was after 1945 the Lithuanian SSR. Most German residents of the area had fled in the final months of World War II.

The Soviets engaged in massive [deportations of Lithuanians](/wiki/Soviet_deportations_from_Lithuania) to [Siberia](/wiki/Siberia),<ref name=küng1999>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)</ref> complete nationalisation and collectivisation and general [sovietization](/wiki/Sovietization) of everyday life. From 1944 to 1952 approximately 100,000 [Lithuanian partisans](/wiki/Lithuanian_partisans) fought a guerrilla war against the Soviet system. An estimated 30,000 partisans and their supporters were killed, and many more were arrested and deported to [Siberian](/wiki/Siberia) [gulags](/wiki/Gulag). It is estimated that Lithuania lost 780,000 people during World War II.[[17]](#cite_note-17) The advent of [*perestroika*](/wiki/Perestroika) and [*glasnost*](/wiki/Glasnost) in the late 1980s allowed the establishment of [Sąjūdis](/wiki/Sąjūdis), an anti-Communist independence movement. After a landslide victory in elections to the [Supreme Soviet](/wiki/Supreme_Soviet_of_the_Lithuanian_SSR), members of Sąjūdis [proclaimed Lithuania's independence](/wiki/Act_of_the_Re-Establishment_of_the_State_of_Lithuania) on 11 March 1990, becoming the first Soviet republic to do so. The Soviet Union attempted to suppress the secession by imposing an economic blockade. Soviet troops attacked the [Vilnius TV Tower](/wiki/Vilnius_TV_Tower), killing [14 Lithuanian civilians](/wiki/January_Events_(Lithuania)) and wounding 600 others on the night of 13 January 1991 ([January Events](/wiki/January_Events)).[[18]](#cite_note-18)[[19]](#cite_note-19) On 31 July 1991 [Soviet](/wiki/Soviet_Union) [paramilitaries](/wiki/Paramilitary) killed seven Lithuanian border guards on the Belarusian border in what became known as the [Medininkai Massacre](/wiki/Medininkai_Massacre).

On 4 February 1991, [Iceland](/wiki/Iceland) became the first country to recognise Lithuania's independence. After the [Soviet August Coup](/wiki/1991_Soviet_coup_d'état_attempt), independent Lithuania received wide official recognition and joined the United Nations on 17 September 1991.

#### 1991–present[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=9)]

The last Soviet troops left Lithuania on 31 August 1993[[20]](#cite_note-20) – even earlier than they departed from [East Germany](/wiki/East_Germany). Lithuania, seeking closer ties with the West, applied for [NATO](/wiki/NATO) membership in 1994. After a transition from a [planned economy](/wiki/Planned_economy) to a [free market](/wiki/Free_market) one, Lithuania became a full member of NATO and the [European Union](/wiki/European_Union) in the spring of 2004 and a member of the [Schengen Agreement](/wiki/Schengen_Agreement) on 21 December 2007.

## Geography[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=10)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) [thumb|left|The Geographic Centre of Europe is in Lithuania](/wiki/File:Lithuania_Centre_of_Europe.jpg)

Lithuania is located in [Northern Europe](/wiki/Northern_Europe). It covers an area of [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert).[[21]](#cite_note-21) The country lies between latitudes [53°](/wiki/53rd_parallel_north) and [57° N](/wiki/57th_parallel_north), and mostly between longitudes [21°](/wiki/21st_meridian_east) and [27° E](/wiki/27th_meridian_east) (part of the [Curonian Spit](/wiki/Curonian_Spit) lies west of 21°). It has around [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) of sandy coastline, of which only about [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) face the open [Baltic Sea](/wiki/Baltic_Sea) and which is the shortest among the [Baltic Sea countries](/wiki/Baltic_Sea_countries); the rest of the coast is sheltered by the Curonian sand peninsula. Lithuania's major [warm-water port](/wiki/Warm-water_port), [Klaipėda](/wiki/Klaipėda), lies at the narrow mouth of the [Curonian Lagoon](/wiki/Curonian_Lagoon) (Lithuanian: *Kuršių marios*), a shallow lagoon extending south to [Kaliningrad](/wiki/Kaliningrad). The main and largest river, the [Nemunas River](/wiki/Nemunas_River), and some of its tributaries carry international shipping.

[thumb|225px|The Nemunas (Nieman) River between Lithuania and Russia's](/wiki/File:Memel_R..JPG) [Kaliningrad Oblast](/wiki/Kaliningrad_Oblast). Lithuania lies at the edge of [North European Plain](/wiki/North_European_Plain). Its landscape has been smoothed by the glaciers of the [last ice age](/wiki/Last_glacial_period). Lithuania's terrain is an alternation of moderate lowlands and highlands; its maximum elevation is [Aukštojas Hill](/wiki/Aukštojas_Hill) at [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) in the eastern part of the country. The terrain features [numerous lakes](/wiki/List_of_lakes_in_Lithuania), [Lake Vištytis](/wiki/Lake_Vištytis) for example, and wetlands; a mixed forest zone covers nearly 33% of the country.

After a re-estimation of the boundaries of the [continent](/wiki/Continent) of Europe in 1989, Jean-George Affholder, a scientist at the [Institut Géographique National](/wiki/Institut_géographique_national_(France)) (French National Geographic Institute) determined that the Geographic [Centre of Europe](/wiki/Centre_of_Europe) is located at [Template:Coord](/wiki/Template:Coord).[[22]](#cite_note-22) The method used for calculating this point was that of the [centre of gravity](/wiki/Centre_of_gravity) of the [geometrical figure](/wiki/Geography_of_Europe) of Europe. This point is located in Lithuania, specifically [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) north of its capital city, [Vilnius](/wiki/Vilnius).

### Climate[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=11)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) [thumb|right|](/wiki/File:Lithuania_Ladakalnis.jpg)[Aukštaitija National Park](/wiki/Aukštaitija_National_Park) [thumb|left|Sand dunes of](/wiki/File:Nidos_kopos.jpg) [Curonian Spit](/wiki/Curonian_Spit) ([UNESCO World Heritage Site](/wiki/UNESCO_World_Heritage_Site)) Lithuania's climate, which ranges between [maritime](/wiki/Maritime_climate) and [continental](/wiki/Continental_climate), is relatively mild. Average temperatures on the coast are [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) in January and [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) in July. In Vilnius the average temperatures are [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) in January and [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) in July. During the summer, [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) is common during the day while [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) is common at night; in the past, temperatures have reached as high as [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert). Some winters can be very cold. [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) occurs almost every winter. Winter extremes are [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) in coastal areas and [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) in the east of Lithuania.

The average annual precipitation is [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) on the coast, [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) in the Samogitia highlands and [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) in the eastern part of the country. Snow occurs every year, it can snow from October to April. In some years sleet can fall in September or May. The growing season lasts 202 days in the western part of the country and 169 days in the eastern part. Severe storms are rare in the eastern part of Lithuania but common in the coastal areas.

The longest measured temperature records from the Baltic area cover about 250 years. The data show that there were warm periods during the latter half of the 18th century, and that the 19th century was a relatively cool period. An early 20th century warming culminated in the 1930s, followed by a smaller cooling that lasted until the 1960s. A warming trend has persisted since then.[[23]](#cite_note-23) Lithuania experienced a drought in 2002, causing forest and [peat](/wiki/Peat) bog fires.[[24]](#cite_note-24) The country suffered along with the rest of Northwestern Europe during a heat wave in the summer of 2006. [Template:Clear](/wiki/Template:Clear)

[Template:Weather box](/wiki/Template:Weather_box)

## Politics[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=12)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) [thumb|left|](/wiki/File:2009_m._Respublikos_Prezidento_rinkimai_Dalia_grybauskaitė_00.jpg)[Dalia Grybauskaitė](/wiki/Dalia_Grybauskaitė) has been the President of Lithuania since 12 July 2009. Since Lithuania declared the restoration of its independence on 11 March 1990, it has maintained strong democratic traditions. In the first general elections after the independence on 25 October 1992, 56.75% of the total number of voters supported the [new constitution](/wiki/Constitution_of_Lithuania).[[25]](#cite_note-25) There were intense debates concerning the constitution, especially the role of the president. A [separate referendum](/wiki/Referenda_in_Lithuania) was held on 23 May 1992 to gauge public opinion on the matter and 41% of all the eligible voters supported the restoration of the [President of Lithuania](/wiki/President_of_Lithuania).[[25]](#cite_note-25) According to the explanation of Constitutional Court of Lithuania on 10 January 1998, the Republic of Lithuania is a parliamentary republic with some attributes of a semi-presidential system.[[26]](#cite_note-26) The Lithuanian [head of state](/wiki/Head_of_state) is the President, elected directly for a five-year term and serving a maximum of two terms. The post of president is quite ceremonial; main policy functions include foreign affairs and national security. The president is also the [commander-in-chief](/wiki/Commander-in-chief) of the military. The President also appoints the [Prime Minister](/wiki/Prime_Minister_of_Lithuania) and, on the latter's nomination, the rest of the cabinet, as well as a number of other top civil servants and the judges for all courts. [thumb|](/wiki/File:Seimas_litauensparlament.jpg)[Seimas](/wiki/Seimas) — (Parliament of Lithuania)

The current Lithuanian head of state, [Dalia Grybauskaitė](/wiki/Dalia_Grybauskaitė) was [elected on 17 May 2009](/wiki/Lithuanian_presidential_election,_2009), becoming the first female President in the country's history and the second female head of state in the Baltic States after [Latvia](/wiki/Latvia) elected their first female political leader in 1999.[[27]](#cite_note-27) Dalia Grybauskaitė was [re-elected for a second term in 2014](/wiki/Lithuanian_presidential_election,_2014).

The judges of the [Constitutional Court](/wiki/Constitutional_Court_of_Lithuania) (*Konstitucinis Teismas*), who serve nine-year terms, are appointed by the President (three judges), the Chairman of the Seimas (three judges), and the Chairman of the Supreme Court (three judges). The [unicameral](/wiki/Unicameral) Lithuanian parliament, the [Seimas](/wiki/Seimas), has 141 members who are elected to four-year terms. 71 of the members of this legislative body are elected in single member constituencies, and the other 70 are elected in a nationwide vote by [proportional representation](/wiki/Proportional_representation). A party must receive at least 5% of the national vote to be eligible for any of the 70 national seats in the Seimas.

### Administrative divisions[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=13)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) [Template:See also](/wiki/Template:See_also) [Template:Map of Counties of Lithuania](/wiki/Template:Map_of_Counties_of_Lithuania) The current administrative division was established in 1994 and modified in 2000 to meet the requirements of the European Union. Lithuania has a three-tier administrative division: the country is divided into [10 counties](/wiki/Counties_of_Lithuania) (Lithuanian: singular – *apskritis*, plural – *apskritys*) that are further subdivided into [60 municipalities](/wiki/Municipalities_of_Lithuania) (Lithuanian: singular – *savivaldybė*, plural – *savivaldybės*) which consist of over 500 [elderships](/wiki/Elderships_of_Lithuania) (Lithuanian: singular – *seniūnija*, plural – *seniūnijos*).

The [county governors](/wiki/County_governor_(Lithuania)) (Lithuanian: *apskrities viršininkas*) institution and county administrations have been dissolved in 2010.[[28]](#cite_note-28) Municipalities are the most important administrative unit. Some municipalities are historically called "district municipalities", and thus are often shortened to "district"; others are called "city municipalities", sometimes shortened to "city". Each municipality has its own elected government. In the past, the election of municipality councils occurred once every three years, but it now takes place every four years. The council appoints [elders](/wiki/Elder_(administrative_title)) to govern the elderships. Mayors are elected directly since 2015, being appointed by the council before that.[[29]](#cite_note-29) Elderships, numbering over 500, are the smallest units and do not play a role in national politics. They provide necessary public services close to their homes; for example, in rural areas the elderships register births and deaths. They are most active in the social sector: they identify needy individuals or families and distribute welfare or organise other forms of relief.[[30]](#cite_note-30) While the elderships have a potential of becoming a source of local initiative to tackle rural problems, complaints are made that elderships have no real power and receive too little attention.[[31]](#cite_note-31)

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **County** | **Area (km2)** | **Population(thousands) in 2014**[**[32]**](#cite_note-32) | **Nominal GDP billions EUR in 2014**[**[32]**](#cite_note-32) | **Nominal GDP per capita EUR in 2014**[**[32]**](#cite_note-32) |
| [Alytus County](/wiki/Alytus_County) | 5,425 | 148.8 | 1.2 | 8,200 |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| [Kaunas County](/wiki/Kaunas_County) | 8,089 | 585.1 | 7.2 | 12,300 |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| [Klaipėda County](/wiki/Klaipėda_County) | 5,209 | 328.2 | 4.3 | 13,100 |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| [Marijampolė County](/wiki/Marijampolė_County) | 4,463 | 152.9 | 1.2 | 7,800 |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| [Panevėžys County](/wiki/Panevėžys_County) | 7,881 | 237.1 | 2.2 | 9,100 |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| [Šiauliai County](/wiki/Šiauliai_County) | 8,540 | 283.7 | 2.6 | 9,100 |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| [Tauragė County](/wiki/Tauragė_County) | 4,411 | 103.9 | 0.7 | 7,000 |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| [Telšiai County](/wiki/Telšiai_County) | 4,350 | 144.5 | 1.4 | 9,200 |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| [Utena County](/wiki/Utena_County) | 7,201 | 141.4 | 1.2 | 8,100 |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| [Vilnius County](/wiki/Vilnius_County) | 9,729 | 806.8 | 14.7 | 18,100 |

### Foreign relations[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=14)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) [thumb|left|Lithuania is a](/wiki/File:Institutions_europeennes_IMG_4300.jpg) [member of the European Union](/wiki/Member_State_of_the_European_Union)

Lithuania became a member of the United Nations on 18 September 1991, and is a signatory to a number of its organizations and other international agreements. It is also a member of the [European Union](/wiki/European_Union), the [Council of Europe](/wiki/Council_of_Europe), [Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe](/wiki/Organization_for_Security_and_Cooperation_in_Europe), [NATO](/wiki/NATO) and its adjunct North Atlantic Coordinating Council. Lithuania gained membership in the [World Trade Organization](/wiki/World_Trade_Organization) on 31 May 2001. It also seeks membership in the OECD and other Western organizations.

Lithuania has established diplomatic relations with 149 countries.[[33]](#cite_note-33) In 2011, Lithuania hosted the [Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe](/wiki/Organization_for_Security_and_Co-operation_in_Europe) Ministerial Council Meeting. In 2013, Lithuania assumed the role of the [Presidency of the European Union](/wiki/Presidency_of_the_Council_of_the_European_Union). [thumb|right|The stamp is dedicated to Lithuania's presidency of the European Union. Post of Lithuania, 2013.](/wiki/File:Lithuania_presidency_EU_stamp_2013.jpg) Lithuania is also an active member in the cooperation among Northern Europe countries. Lithuania is a member of Baltic Council, since its establishment in 1993. Baltic Council is a permanent organisation of international cooperation, located in [Tallinn](/wiki/Tallinn). It operates through the [Baltic Assembly](/wiki/Baltic_Assembly) and Baltic Council of Ministers.

Lithuania also cooperates with Nordic and the two other Baltic countries through [NB8](/wiki/NB8) cooperation format. The similar format, called NB6 unites Nordic and Baltic countries members of EU. The main goal of NB6 cooperation is to discuss and agree on positions before presenting them in the Council of the European Union and the meetings of the EU Foreign Affairs Ministers.

The [Council of the Baltic Sea States](/wiki/Council_of_the_Baltic_Sea_States) (CBSS) was established in 1992 in [Copenhagen](/wiki/Copenhagen) as an informal regional political forum, which main aim is to promote integration process and to affiliate close contacts between the countries of the region. The members of CBSS are Iceland, Sweden, Denmark, Norway, Finland, Germany, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Poland, Russia and European Commission. The observer states are Belarus, France, Italy, Netherlands, Romania, Slovakia, Spain, United States, United Kingdom, and Ukraine. [thumb|left|Lithuania was recently a member of the](/wiki/File:Barack_Obama_chairs_a_United_Nations_Security_Council_meeting.jpg) [United Nations Security Council](/wiki/United_Nations_Security_Council) The cooperation between the [Nordic Council of Ministers](/wiki/Nordic_Council) and Lithuania is a political cooperation through which experience exchange contributes to realization of joint goals. One of its most important functions is to discover new trends and new possibilities for joint cooperation. The information office aims to represent [Nordic](/wiki/Nordic_countries) concepts and demonstrate Nordic cooperation in Lithuania.

Lithuania, together with other two Baltic countries, is also a member of [Nordic Investment Bank (NIB)](/wiki/Nordic_Investment_Bank) and cooperates in NORDPLUS programme committed to education.

Baltic Development Forum (BDF) is an independent nonprofit organization that unites large companies, cities, business associations, and institutions in the Baltic Sea region. In 2010 the 12th Summit of the BDF was held in Vilnius.[[34]](#cite_note-34) During the second half of 2013, Lithuania held the rotating [Presidency of the Council of the European Union](/wiki/Presidency_of_the_Council_of_the_European_Union). In 2013, Lithuania was elected to [United Nations Security Council](/wiki/United_Nations_Security_Council) for a two-year term.[[35]](#cite_note-35) Lithuania is the first [Baltic states](/wiki/Baltic_states) country to be elected to such post.

### Military[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=15)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) [thumb|left|upright|Soldier of the](/wiki/File:LT_KASP_mokymai.jpg) [Lithuanian National Defence Volunteer Forces](/wiki/Lithuanian_National_Defence_Volunteer_Forces) The Lithuanian Armed Forces is the name for the unified armed forces of [Lithuanian Land Force](/wiki/Lithuanian_Land_Force), [Lithuanian Air Force](/wiki/Lithuanian_Air_Force), [Lithuanian Naval Force](/wiki/Lithuanian_Naval_Force), [Lithuanian Special Operations Force](/wiki/Lithuanian_Special_Operations_Force) and other units: Logistics Command, Training and Doctrine Command, Headquarters Battalion, [Military Police](/wiki/Military_Police_(Lithuania)). Directly subordinated to the [Chief of Defence](/wiki/Chief_of_Defence) are the [Special Operations Forces](/wiki/Special_Operations_Forces) and Military Police. The Reserve Forces are under command of the [Lithuanian National Defence Volunteer Forces](/wiki/Lithuanian_National_Defence_Volunteer_Forces).

The Lithuanian Armed Forces consist of some 15,000 active personnel, which may be supported by [reserve forces](/wiki/Reserve_forces).[[36]](#cite_note-36) Compulsory [conscription](/wiki/Conscription) ended in 2008 but was reintroduced in 2015.[[37]](#cite_note-37) The Lithuanian Armed Forces currently have deployed personnel on international missions in Afghanistan, Kosovo, Mali and Somalia.[[38]](#cite_note-38)[thumb|right|Lithuanian soldiers on the international](/wiki/File:LT_KASP_PAG4.jpg) [NATO](/wiki/NATO) mission in [Afghanistan](/wiki/Afghanistan) In March 2004, Lithuania became a full member of the [NATO](/wiki/NATO). Since then, [fighter jets](/wiki/Fighter_jets) of NATO members are deployed in [Zokniai airport](/wiki/Zokniai_airport) and [provide safety for the Baltic airspace](/wiki/Baltic_Air_Policing).

Since the summer of 2005 Lithuania has been part of the [International Security Assistance Force](/wiki/International_Security_Assistance_Force) in Afghanistan (ISAF), leading a [Provincial Reconstruction Team](/wiki/Provincial_Reconstruction_Team) (PRT) in the town of [Chaghcharan](/wiki/Chaghcharan) in the province of [Ghor](/wiki/Ghor). The PRT includes personnel from [Denmark](/wiki/Denmark), Iceland and USA. There are also [special operation forces](/wiki/Lithuanian_Special_Operations_Force) units in Afghanistan. They are placed in [Kandahar](/wiki/Kandahar) province. Since joining international operations in 1994 Lithuania has lost two soldiers. 1st Lt. Normundas Valteris fell in [Bosnia](/wiki/Bosnia), as his patrol vehicle drove over a mine. Sgt. Arūnas Jarmalavičius was fatally wounded during an attack on the camp of his Provincial Reconstruction Team in [Afghanistan](/wiki/Afghanistan).[[39]](#cite_note-39) The Lithuanian National Defence Policy aims to guarantee the preservation of the [independence](/wiki/Independence) and [sovereignty](/wiki/Sovereignty) of the state, the [integrity](/wiki/Integrity) of its land, territorial waters, airspace and its constitutional order. At the moment the main strategic goals is to be able to defend the country's interests and maintain the armed forces which would be ready to contribute, cooperate and participate with the other armed forces of NATO and European Union member states, and also increase their further capability to participate in NATO missions.[[40]](#cite_note-40) The [defence ministry](/wiki/Ministry_of_Defense_of_the_Republic_of_Lithuania) is responsible for combat forces, [search and rescue](/wiki/Search_and_rescue), and intelligence operations. The 5,000 [border guards](/wiki/State_Border_Guard_Service_(Lithuania)) fall under the [Interior Ministry's](/wiki/Interior_Ministry) supervision and are responsible for border protection, passport and customs duties, and share responsibility with the [navy](/wiki/Lithuanian_Naval_Force) for [smuggling](/wiki/Smuggling) and drug trafficking interdiction. A special security department handles VIP protection and [communications security](/wiki/Communications_security).

## Economy[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=16)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) [thumb|left|300px|Graphical depiction of Lithuania's product exports in 28 color-coded categories.](/wiki/File:Lithuania_treemap.png) Lithuanian GDP experienced very high real growth rates in the decade before 2009, peaking at 11.1% in 2007. As a result, the country was often termed as a [Baltic Tiger](/wiki/Baltic_Tiger). However, 2009 marked a dramatic decline in GDP at −14.9% attributed to overheating of the economy. The economy resumed growth in the following years at a lower but more sustainable pace, driven by domestic demand and exports rather than housing and financial bubbles.[[41]](#cite_note-41) The unemployment rate was 9.1% in the third quarter of 2014, down from 17.8% in 2010.[thumb|upright|](/wiki/File:Swedbank_Headquarters_Vilnius.png)[Swedbank](/wiki/Swedbank) headquarters in [Vilnius](/wiki/Vilnius) [thumb|Lithuania is part of a monetary union, the](/wiki/File:BlueEurozone.svg) [eurozone](/wiki/Eurozone) (dark blue), and of the [EU single market](/wiki/Internal_Market_(European_Union)). Lithuania has a [flat tax](/wiki/Flat_tax) rate rather than a [progressive scheme](/wiki/Graduated_tax). According to Eurostat,[[42]](#cite_note-42) the personal income tax (15%) and corporate tax (15%) rates in Lithuania are among the lowest in the EU. The country has the lowest implicit rate of tax on capital (9.8%) in the EU. Lithuania also has the lowest overall taxation as a percentage of GDP (27.2) in the European Union[[42]](#cite_note-42) Lithuanian income levels are somewhat lower than in older EU Member States but higher than in most new EU Member States that have joined in the last decade. According to [Eurostat](/wiki/Eurostat) data, Lithuanian GDP per capita(PPP) stood at 74% of the EU average in 2013.[[43]](#cite_note-43) Structurally, there is a gradual but consistent shift towards a knowledge-based economy with special emphasis on [biotechnology](/wiki/Biotechnology) (industrial and diagnostic). The major biotechnology companies and laser manufacturers ([Ekspla](/wiki/Ekspla), Šviesos Konversija) of the Baltics are concentrated in Lithuania. Also [mechatronics](/wiki/Mechatronics) and information technology (IT) are seen as prospective [knowledge-based economy](/wiki/Knowledge-based_economy) directions.

In 2009, [Barclays](/wiki/Barclays) established Technology Centre Lithuania – one of four strategic engineering centres supporting the Barclays [Retail Banking](/wiki/Retail_Banking) businesses across the globe.[[44]](#cite_note-44) In 2011, [Western Union](/wiki/Western_Union) officially opened their new European Regional Operating Centre in Vilnius.[[45]](#cite_note-45) The stated position of the Lithuanian government is that the focus of Lithuanian economy is high added-value products and services.[[46]](#cite_note-46) Among other international companies operating in Lithuania are: [PricewaterhouseCoopers](/wiki/PricewaterhouseCoopers), [Ernst & Young](/wiki/Ernst_&_Young), [Societe Generale](/wiki/Societe_Generale), [UniCredit](/wiki/UniCredit), [Thermo Fisher Scientific](/wiki/Thermo_Fisher_Scientific), [Phillip Morris](/wiki/Philip_Morris_International), [Kraft Foods](/wiki/Kraft_Foods), [Mars](/wiki/Mars,_Incorporated), [Marks & Spencer](/wiki/Marks_&_Spencer), [GlaxoSmithKline](/wiki/GlaxoSmithKline), [United Colors of Benetton](/wiki/United_Colors_of_Benetton), [Deichmann](/wiki/Heinrich_Deichmann-Schuhe_GmbH), [Statoil](/wiki/Statoil), [Neste Oil](/wiki/Neste_Oil), [Lukoil](/wiki/Lukoil), [Tele2](/wiki/Tele2), [Hesburger](/wiki/Hesburger) and [Modern Times Group](/wiki/Modern_Times_Group). [TeliaSonera](/wiki/TeliaSonera), [ICA](/wiki/ICA_AB) and [Carlsberg](/wiki/Carlsberg_Group) respectively own local telecommunications company [Omnitel](/wiki/Omnitel), retailer [Rimi](/wiki/Rimi_Baltic) and beer breweries ([Švyturys](/wiki/Švyturys), [Kalnapilis](/wiki/Kalnapilis) and Utenos Alus). Lithuanian banking sector is dominated by the Scandinavian banks: [Swedbank](/wiki/Swedbank), [SEB](/wiki/Skandinaviska_Enskilda_Banken), [Nordea](/wiki/Nordea), [Danske Bank](/wiki/Danske_Bank), [DNB ASA](/wiki/DNB_ASA).

Among the biggest private owned Lithuanian companies are: [ORLEN Lietuva](/wiki/ORLEN_Lietuva), [Maxima Group](/wiki/Maxima_Group), [Achema](/wiki/Achema) Group, Lukoil Baltija, Linas Agro Group, Indorama Polymers Europe, Palink, Sanitex.[[47]](#cite_note-47) Corporate tax rate in Lithuania is 15% and 5% for small businesses. The government offers special incentives for investments into the high-technology sectors and high value-added products. Most of the trade Lithuania conducts is within the European Union and Russia.

The [litas](/wiki/Lithuanian_litas) was the national currency until 2015, when it was replaced by the euro at the rate of EUR 1.00 = LTL 3.45280.<ref name=iso4217news2014>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)</ref> Litas had been pegged to the euro at this rate since 2 February 2002.[[48]](#cite_note-48)

## Infrastructure[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=17)]

### Communication[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=18)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) According to the [Speedtest.net](/wiki/Speedtest.net) website, as of 30 October 2011 Lithuania ranks first in the world by the internet upload [speed](/wiki/Internet_speed) and download speed, schools and corporations ignored.[[49]](#cite_note-49)[[50]](#cite_note-50) The high speeds are largely due to the fact that Lithuania has the EU's and Europe's most available [FTTH](/wiki/FTTH) network. According to a yearly study published by the FTTH Council Europe in 2013,[[51]](#cite_note-51) the country has connected 100% of households to the FTTH network. 31% of these households are subscribers to this network at the time of publishing. Lithuania has thus Europe's most available fibre network and also has the highest FTTH penetration. [Sweden](/wiki/Sweden) has the next highest FTTH penetration with 23%.

### Transport[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=19)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) [thumb|left|Major highways in Lithuania](/wiki/File:Lithuania-roads-(E).png) [thumb|right|Construction of the](/wiki/File:Nutiesti_pirmieji_Rail_baltica_bėgiai.JPG) [dual-gauge](/wiki/Dual-gauge) railway track in Lithuania ([Rail Baltica](/wiki/Rail_Baltica) project) The country boasts a well-developed modern infrastructure of railways, airports and four-lane highways. Lithuania has an extensive network of motorways. The best known motorways are [A1](/wiki/A1_highway_(Lithuania)), connecting Vilnius with Klaipėda via Kaunas, as well as [A2](/wiki/A2_highway_(Lithuania)), connecting Vilnius and [Panevėžys](/wiki/Panevėžys). One of the most used is the [European route E67](/wiki/European_route_E67) highway running from [Warsaw](/wiki/Warsaw) to [Tallinn](/wiki/Tallinn), via [Kaunas](/wiki/Kaunas) and [Riga](/wiki/Riga).

The [Port of Klaipėda](/wiki/Port_of_Klaipėda) is the only commercial port in Lithuania. In a record year for the port, in 2011 45.5 million tons of cargo were handled (including [Būtingė oil terminal](/wiki/Būtingė_oil_terminal) figures), making it one of the biggest in the [Baltic Sea](/wiki/Baltic_Sea).[[52]](#cite_note-52) [Vilnius International Airport](/wiki/Vilnius_International_Airport) is the largest airport. It served 2.9 million passengers in 2014.[[53]](#cite_note-53) Other international airports include [Kaunas International Airport](/wiki/Kaunas_Airport), [Palanga International Airport](/wiki/Palanga_International_Airport) and [Šiauliai International Airport](/wiki/Šiauliai_International_Airport).

Lithuania received its first railway connection in the middle of the 19th century, when the [Warsaw – Saint Petersburg Railway](/wiki/Warsaw_–_Saint_Petersburg_Railway) was constructed. It included a stretch from [Daugavpils](/wiki/Daugavpils) via Vilnius and Kaunas to Virbalis. The first and only still operating in the [Baltic states](/wiki/Baltic_states) [Kaunas Railway Tunnel](/wiki/Kaunas_Railway_Tunnel) was completed in 1860. [Lithuanian Railways'](/wiki/Lithuanian_Railways) main network consists of [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) of [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) [broad gauge](/wiki/Broad_gauge) railway of which [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) are electrified. They also operate [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) of [standard gauge](/wiki/Standard_gauge) lines. The Trans-European standard gauge [Rail Baltica](/wiki/Rail_Baltica) railway, linking [Helsinki](/wiki/Helsinki)–[Tallinn](/wiki/Tallinn)–[Riga](/wiki/Riga)–[Kaunas](/wiki/Kaunas)–[Warsaw](/wiki/Warsaw) and continuing on to Berlin is under construction.

### Energy[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=20)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) [Ignalina Nuclear Power Plant](/wiki/Ignalina_Nuclear_Power_Plant) was a Soviet-era nuclear station. Unit No. 1 was closed in December 2004, as a condition of Lithuania's entry into the European Union; the plant is similar to the [Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant](/wiki/Chernobyl_Nuclear_Power_Plant) in its lack of a robust containment structure. The remaining unit, [Template:As of](/wiki/Template:As_of), supplied about 70% of Lithuania's electrical demand.[[54]](#cite_note-54)Unit No. 2 was closed down on 31 December 2009. Proposals have been made to construct another – [Visaginas Nuclear Power Plant](/wiki/Visaginas_Nuclear_Power_Plant) in Lithuania.[[55]](#cite_note-55) However, a non-binding referendum held in October 2012 clouded the prospects for the Visaginas project, as the 63% of voters said no to new nuclear power plant.[[56]](#cite_note-56) The country's main primary source of electrical power is [Elektrėnai Power Plant](/wiki/Elektrėnai_Power_Plant). Other primary sources of Lithuania's electrical power are [Kruonis Pumped Storage Plant](/wiki/Kruonis_Pumped_Storage_Plant) and [Kaunas Hydroelectric Power Plant](/wiki/Kaunas_Hydroelectric_Power_Plant). [Kruonis Pumped Storage Plant](/wiki/Kruonis_Pumped_Storage_Plant) is the only in the Baltic states power plant to be used for regulation of the power system’s operation with generating capacity of 900 MW for at least 12 hours.[[57]](#cite_note-57) [Template:As of](/wiki/Template:As_of), 63% of electrical power was imported.[[58]](#cite_note-58)

## Demographics[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=21)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) [thumb|300px|Population of Lithuania (in millions), 1950–2010](/wiki/File:Population_of_Lithuania.PNG) Since the Neolithic period the native inhabitants of the Lithuanian territory have not been replaced by any other ethnic group, so there is a high probability that the inhabitants of present-day Lithuania have preserved the genetic composition of their forebears relatively undisturbed by the major demographic movements,[[59]](#cite_note-59) although without being actually isolated from them.[[60]](#cite_note-60) The Lithuanian population appears to be relatively homogeneous, without apparent genetic differences among ethnic subgroups.[[61]](#cite_note-61) A 2004 analysis of [MtDNA](/wiki/MtDNA) in the Lithuanian population revealed that Lithuanians are close to the [Slavic](/wiki/Slavic_languages) and [Finno-Ugric](/wiki/Finno-Ugric_languages) speaking populations of Northern and Eastern Europe. [Y-chromosome](/wiki/Y_chromosome) SNP [haplogroup](/wiki/Haplogroup) analysis showed Lithuanians to be closest to [Latvians](/wiki/Latvians) and [Estonians](/wiki/Estonians).[[62]](#cite_note-62) According to 2014 estimates, the age structure of the population was as follows: 0–14 years, 13.5% (male 243,001/female 230,674); 15–64 years: 69.5% (male 1,200,196/female 1,235,300); 65 years and over: 16.8% (male 207,222/female 389,345).[[63]](#cite_note-63) The median age was 41.2 years (male: 38.5, female: 43.7).[[64]](#cite_note-64) Lithuania has a [sub-replacement fertility rate](/wiki/Sub-replacement_fertility_rate): the [total fertility rate](/wiki/Total_fertility_rate) (TFR) in Lithuania is 1.29 children born/woman (2014 estimates), one of the lowest in the world.[[65]](#cite_note-65)[Template:As of](/wiki/Template:As_of), 29.5% of births were to unmarried women.[[66]](#cite_note-66) The [age at first marriage](/wiki/Age_at_first_marriage) in 2013 was 27 years for women and 29.3 years for men.[[67]](#cite_note-67)

### Ethnic groups[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=22)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) [Template:Bar box](/wiki/Template:Bar_box) Ethnic Lithuanians make up about five-sixths of the country's population and Lithuania has the most homogenous population in the Baltic States. According to the 2011 census, the population of Lithuania stands at 3,043,400, 84% of whom are ethnic [Lithuanians](/wiki/Lithuanian_people) who speak [Lithuanian](/wiki/Lithuanian_language), which is the official language of the country. Several sizable minorities exist, such as [Poles](/wiki/Poles) (6.6%), [Russians](/wiki/Russians) (5.8%), [Belarusians](/wiki/Belarusians) (1.2%) and [Ukrainians](/wiki/Ukrainians) (0.5%).[[68]](#cite_note-68) Poles are the largest minority, concentrated in southeast Lithuania (the [Vilnius region](/wiki/Vilnius_region)). Russians are the second largest minority, concentrated mostly in two cities. They constitute sizeable minorities in [Vilnius](/wiki/Vilnius) (14%) and [Klaipėda](/wiki/Klaipėda) (28%), and a majority in the town of [Visaginas](/wiki/Visaginas) (52%).[[69]](#cite_note-69) About 3,000 [Roma](/wiki/Romani_people) live in Lithuania, mostly in Vilnius, [Kaunas](/wiki/Kaunas) and Panevėžys; their organizations are supported by the National Minority and Emigration Department.[[70]](#cite_note-70) For centuries a small [Tatar](/wiki/Lipka_Tatars) community has flourished in Lithuania.[[71]](#cite_note-71) The official language is [Lithuanian](/wiki/Lithuanian_language). Other languages, such as Russian, [Polish](/wiki/Polish_language), [Belarusian](/wiki/Belarusian_language) and [Ukrainian](/wiki/Ukrainian_language), are spoken in the larger cities, in the [Šalčininkai District Municipality](/wiki/Šalčininkai_District_Municipality) and the [Vilnius District Municipality](/wiki/Vilnius_District_Municipality). [Yiddish](/wiki/Yiddish) is spoken by members of the tiny remaining [Jewish community](/wiki/History_of_the_Jews_in_Lithuania) in Lithuania. According to the [Lithuanian population census of 2001](/wiki/Lithuanian_population_census_of_2001), about 84% of the country's population speak Lithuanian as their native language, 8% are native speakers of Russian and 6% of Polish. According to the [Eurobarometer](/wiki/Eurobarometer) survey conducted in 2012, 80% of Lithuanians can speak Russian and 38% can speak English. Most Lithuanian schools teach English as the first foreign language, but students may also study German, or, in some schools, French or Russian. Schools where Russian or Polish are the primary languages of education exist in the areas populated by these minorities.

### Urbanization[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=23)]

[Template:See also](/wiki/Template:See_also) There has been a steady [movement of population to the cities](/wiki/Urbanization) since the 1990s, encouraged by the planning of regional centres, such as [Alytus](/wiki/Alytus), [Marijampolė](/wiki/Marijampolė), [Utena](/wiki/Utena), [Plungė](/wiki/Plungė), and [Mažeikiai](/wiki/Mažeikiai). By the early 21st century, about two-thirds of the total population lived in urban areas. [Template:As of](/wiki/Template:As_of), 66.5% of the total population lives in urban areas.[[63]](#cite_note-63) The largest city is [Vilnius](/wiki/Vilnius), followed by [Kaunas](/wiki/Kaunas), [Klaipėda](/wiki/Klaipėda), [Šiauliai](/wiki/Šiauliai), and [Panevėžys](/wiki/Panevėžys). [Template:Largest cities of Lithuania](/wiki/Template:Largest_cities_of_Lithuania) [Template:Clear](/wiki/Template:Clear)

### Health[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=24)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) [Template:As of](/wiki/Template:As_of) Lithuanian [life expectancy](/wiki/Life_expectancy) at birth was 70.7 years for males and 80.7 for females, and the [infant mortality](/wiki/Infant_mortality) rate was 6.2 per 1,000 births.[[63]](#cite_note-63) The annual population growth rate increased by 0.3% in 2007. At 30.4 people per 100,000,[[72]](#cite_note-72) Lithuania has seen a dramatic rise in suicides in the post-Soviet years, and now records the third highest suicide rate in the world. Lithuania also has the highest [homicide](/wiki/Homicide) rate in the EU.[[73]](#cite_note-73)

### Religion[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=25)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) [thumb|left|](/wiki/File:Hill-of-crosses-siauliai.jpg)[Hill of Crosses](/wiki/Hill_of_Crosses) near [Šiauliai](/wiki/Šiauliai) As per the 2011 census, 77.2% of Lithuanians belonged to the Roman Catholic Church.[[74]](#cite_note-74) The Church has been the majority denomination since the [Christianisation of Lithuania](/wiki/Christianisation_of_Lithuania) at the end of the 14th century. Some priests actively led the resistance against the Communist regime (symbolised by the [Hill of Crosses](/wiki/Hill_of_Crosses)). [Template:Bar box](/wiki/Template:Bar_box)

In the first half of the 20th century, the [Lutheran](/wiki/Lutheranism) Protestant church had around 200,000 members, 9% of the total population, mostly Protestant Lithuanians and ethnic Germans from the former Memel Territory, but it has declined since 1945 with the removal of the German population. Small Protestant communities are dispersed throughout the northern and western parts of the country. Believers and clergy suffered greatly during the Soviet occupation, with many killed, tortured or deported to Siberia. Various Protestant churches have established missions in Lithuania since 1990.[[75]](#cite_note-75) 4.1% are [Orthodox](/wiki/Eastern_Orthodox_Church) (mainly among the Russian minority), 0.8% are Protestant and 6.1% have [no religion](/wiki/Irreligion).

Lithuania was historically home to a significant [Jewish community](/wiki/History_of_the_Jews_in_Lithuania) and was an important center of Jewish scholarship and culture from the 18th century until the eve of World War II. Prior to the war, the Jewish population, outside of the Vilnius region (which was then in Poland), numbered about 160,000. In September 1939, tens of thousands of Polish Jews became Lithuanian subjects when the Soviets transferred the Vilnius region (of the former Polish state) to Lithuania and additional Jewish refugees arrived in Lithuania during the period prior to June 1941. Of the approximately 220,000 Jews who lived in the Republic of Lithuania in June 1941, almost all were [entirely annihilated](/wiki/Holocaust_in_Lithuania) during [the Holocaust](/wiki/The_Holocaust).[[76]](#cite_note-76)[[77]](#cite_note-77) The community numbered about 4,000 at the end of 2009.[[78]](#cite_note-78)[Template:Triple image](/wiki/Template:Triple_image)

According to the most recent [Eurobarometer Poll](/wiki/Eurobarometer) 2005,[[79]](#cite_note-79) 49% of Lithuanian citizens responded that "they believe there is a God", 36% answered that "they believe there is some sort of [spirit](/wiki/Spirit) or [life force](/wiki/Energy_(spirituality))", and 12% said that "they do not believe there is any sort of [spirit](/wiki/Spirit), god, or [life force](/wiki/Energy_(spirituality))".

### Education[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=26)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) [thumb|upright|](/wiki/File:GreatCourtyard.jpg)[Vilnius University](/wiki/Vilnius_University), one of the oldest universities in Eastern and Central Europe The first documented school in Lithuania was established in 1387 at [Vilnius Cathedral](/wiki/Vilnius_Cathedral).[[80]](#cite_note-80) The school network was influenced by the [Christianization of Lithuania](/wiki/Christianization_of_Lithuania). Several types of schools were present in medieval Lithuania – cathedral schools, where pupils were prepared for [priesthood](/wiki/Priests); parish schools, offering elementary education; and home schools dedicated to educating the children of the [Lithuanian nobility](/wiki/Lithuanian_nobility). Before [Vilnius University](/wiki/Vilnius_University) was established in 1579, Lithuanians seeking higher education attended universities in foreign cities, including [Kraków](/wiki/Kraków), [Prague](/wiki/Prague), and [Leipzig](/wiki/Leipzig), among others.[[80]](#cite_note-80) During the [Interbellum](/wiki/Interwar_period) a [national university](/wiki/National_university) – [Vytautas Magnus University](/wiki/Vytautas_Magnus_University) was founded in Kaunas.

The [Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania](/wiki/Ministry_of_Education_and_Science_of_the_Republic_of_Lithuania) proposes national educational policies and goals. These are sent to the Seimas for ratification. Laws govern long-term educational strategy along with general laws on standards for higher education, vocational training, law and science, adult education, and special education.[[81]](#cite_note-81) County administrators, municipal administrators, and school founders (including non-governmental organizations, religious organizations, and individuals) are responsible for implementing these policies.[[81]](#cite_note-81) By constitutional mandate, ten years of formal enrollment in an educational institution is mandatory, ending at age 16.[[82]](#cite_note-82)[thumb|right|](/wiki/File:Raudones_pilis_pavasari.jpg)[Raudonė](/wiki/Raudonė) Basic School, located in [Raudonė Castle](/wiki/Raudonė_Castle) 14.7% of the 2014 state budget was allocated to education expenses.[[83]](#cite_note-83) Primary and secondary schools receive funding from the state via their municipal or county administrations. The [Constitution of Lithuania](/wiki/Constitution_of_Lithuania) guarantees tuition-free attendance at public institutions of higher education for students deemed 'good'; the number of such students has varied over the past decade, with 53.5% exempted from tuition fees in 2014.[[84]](#cite_note-84) The [World Bank](/wiki/World_Bank) designates the literacy rate of Lithuanian persons aged 15 years and older as 100% [[85]](#cite_note-85) and, according to [Eurostat](/wiki/Eurostat) Lithuania leads among other countries of [EU](/wiki/European_Union) by people with secondary education (93.3%).[[86]](#cite_note-86) [Template:As of](/wiki/Template:As_of), 34% of the population aged 25 to 64 had completed tertiary education; 59.1% had completed upper secondary and post-secondary (non-tertiary) education.[[87]](#cite_note-87) According to *Invest in Lithuania*, Lithuania has twice as many people with higher education than the [EU-15](/wiki/EU-15) average and the proportion is the highest in the Baltic. Also, 90% of Lithuanians speak at least one foreign language and half of the population speaks two foreign languages, mostly Russian and English.[[88]](#cite_note-88) As with other [Baltic](/wiki/Baltic_states) nations, in particular [Latvia](/wiki/Latvia), the large volume of higher education graduates within the country, coupled with the high rate of spoken second languages is contributing to an education [brain drain](/wiki/Brain_drain). Many Lithuanians are choosing to emigrate seeking higher earning employment and studies throughout Europe. Since their inclusion into the European Union in 2004, Lithuania's population has fallen by approximately 180,000 people.[[89]](#cite_note-89)[[90]](#cite_note-90) [Template:As of](/wiki/Template:As_of), there were 15 public universities in Lithuania, 6 private institutions, 16 public colleges, and 11 private colleges.[[91]](#cite_note-91) [Vilnius University](/wiki/Vilnius_University) is one of the [oldest universities in Northern Europe](/wiki/List_of_oldest_universities_in_continuous_operation) and the largest [university in Lithuania](/wiki/List_of_universities_in_Lithuania). [Kaunas University of Technology](/wiki/Kaunas_University_of_Technology) is the largest technical university in the Baltic States and the 2nd largest university in Lithuania. Other universities include [Lithuanian University of Health Sciences](/wiki/Lithuanian_University_of_Health_Sciences), [Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre](/wiki/Lithuanian_Academy_of_Music_and_Theatre), [Lithuanian University of Educology](/wiki/Lithuanian_University_of_Educology), [Vytautas Magnus University](/wiki/Vytautas_Magnus_University), [Mykolas Romeris University](/wiki/Mykolas_Romeris_University), [Lithuanian Academy of Physical Education](/wiki/Lithuanian_Academy_of_Physical_Education), [Vilnius Gediminas Technical University](/wiki/Vilnius_Gediminas_Technical_University), [The General Jonas Zemaitis Military Academy of Lithuania](/wiki/General_Jonas_Zemaitis_Military_Academy_of_Lithuania), [Klaipėda University](/wiki/Klaipėda_University), [Lithuanian Veterinary Academy](/wiki/Lithuanian_Veterinary_Academy), [Lithuanian University of Agriculture](/wiki/Lithuanian_University_of_Agriculture), [Šiauliai University](/wiki/Šiauliai_University), [Vilnius Academy of Art](/wiki/Vilnius_Academy_of_Art), and [LCC International University](/wiki/LCC_International_University).

## Culture[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=27)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article)

### Lithuanian language[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=28)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) The [Lithuanian language](/wiki/Lithuanian_language) (*lietuvių kalba*) is the official state language of Lithuania and is recognized as one of the [official languages](/wiki/Official_language) of the [European Union](/wiki/European_Union). There are about 2.96 million native Lithuanian speakers in Lithuania and about 0.2 million abroad.

Lithuanian is a [Baltic language](/wiki/Baltic_languages), closely related to [Latvian](/wiki/Latvian_language), although they are not [mutually intelligible](/wiki/Mutual_intelligibility). It is written in an adapted version of the [Roman script](/wiki/Latin_alphabet). Lithuanian is believed to be the [linguistically most conservative](/wiki/Conservative_(language)) living [Indo-European tongue](/wiki/Indo-European_languages), retaining many features of [Proto Indo-European](/wiki/Proto_Indo-European_language).[[92]](#cite_note-92)

### Literature[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=29)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) [thumb|upright|The first Lithuanian](/wiki/File:Mazvydo_katekizmas.jpg) [printed](/wiki/Printing) book [*Catechism of Martynas Mažvydas*](/wiki/Catechism_of_Martynas_Mažvydas) (1547, Königsberg) There is a great deal of Lithuanian literature written in [Latin](/wiki/Latin), the main scholarly language of the Middle Ages. The edicts of the Lithuanian King [Mindaugas](/wiki/Mindaugas) is the prime example of the literature of this kind. The [Letters of Gediminas](/wiki/Letters_of_Gediminas) are another crucial heritage of the Lithuanian Latin writings.

Lithuanian literary works in the [Lithuanian language](/wiki/Lithuanian_language) started being first published in the 16th century. In 1547 [Martynas Mažvydas](/wiki/Martynas_Mažvydas) compiled and published the first printed Lithuanian book *The Simple Words of Catechism*, which marks the beginning of printed Lithuanian literature. He was followed by [Mikalojus Daukša](/wiki/Mikalojus_Daukša) with *Katechizmas*. In the 16th and 17th centuries, as in the whole Christian Europe, Lithuanian literature was primarily religious.

The evolution of the old (14th–18th century) Lithuanian literature ends with [Kristijonas Donelaitis](/wiki/Kristijonas_Donelaitis), one of the most prominent authors of the [Age of Enlightenment](/wiki/Age_of_Enlightenment). Donelaitis' poem [*The Seasons*](/wiki/The_Seasons_(poem)) is a landmark of the Lithuanian fiction literature.[[93]](#cite_note-93) With a mix of [Classicism](/wiki/Classicism), [Sentimentalism](/wiki/Sentimentalism_(literature)) and [Romanticism](/wiki/Romanticism), the Lithuanian literature of the first half of the 19th century is represented by [Maironis](/wiki/Maironis), [Antanas Baranauskas](/wiki/Antanas_Baranauskas), [Simonas Daukantas](/wiki/Simonas_Daukantas) and [Simonas Stanevičius](/wiki/Simonas_Stanevičius).[[93]](#cite_note-93) During the Tsarist annexation of Lithuania in the 19th century, the [Lithuanian press ban](/wiki/Lithuanian_press_ban) was implemented, which led to the formation of the [Knygnešiai](/wiki/Knygnešiai) (Book smugglers) movement. This movement is thought to be the very reason the Lithuanian language and literature survived until today.

20th-century Lithuanian literature is represented by [Juozas Tumas-Vaižgantas](/wiki/Juozas_Tumas-Vaižgantas), [Antanas Vienuolis](/wiki/Antanas_Vienuolis), [Bernardas Brazdžionis](/wiki/Bernardas_Brazdžionis), [Vytautas Mačernis](/wiki/Vytautas_Mačernis) and [Justinas Marcinkevičius](/wiki/Justinas_Marcinkevičius).

### Arts and museums[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=30)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) [thumb|upright|](/wiki/File:Jonas_Mekas.jpg)[Jonas Mekas](/wiki/Jonas_Mekas) is regarded as godfather of American [avant-garde cinema](/wiki/Avant-garde_cinema) The [Lithuanian Art Museum](/wiki/Lithuanian_Art_Museum) was founded in 1933 and is the largest museum of art conservation and display in Lithuania.[[94]](#cite_note-94) Among other important museums is the [Palanga Amber Museum](/wiki/Palanga_Amber_Museum), where [amber](/wiki/Amber) pieces comprise a major part of the collection.

Perhaps the most renowned figure in Lithuania's art community was the composer [Mikalojus Konstantinas Čiurlionis](/wiki/Mikalojus_Konstantinas_Čiurlionis) (1875–1911), an internationally renowned musician. The [2420 Čiurlionis](/wiki/2420_Čiurlionis) [asteroid](/wiki/Asteroid), identified in 1975, honors his achievements. The [M. K. Čiurlionis National Art Museum](/wiki/M._K._Čiurlionis_National_Art_Museum), as well as the only military museum in Lithuania, [Vytautas the Great War Museum](/wiki/Vytautas_the_Great_War_Museum), are located in Kaunas.

### Music[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=31)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) Lithuanian folk music belongs to [Baltic](/wiki/Baltic_languages) music branch which is connected with [neolithic](/wiki/Neolithic) [corded ware](/wiki/Corded_ware) culture. Two instrument cultures meet in the areas inhabited by Lithuanians: stringed ([kanklių](/wiki/Kantele)) and wind instrument cultures. Lithuanian folk music is archaic, mostly used for ritual purposes, containing elements of [paganism](/wiki/Paganism) faith. There are three ancient styles of singing in Lithuania connected with ethnographical regions: [monophony](/wiki/Monophony), [heterophony](/wiki/Heterophony) and [polyphony](/wiki/Polyphony). Folk song genres: Sutartinės, Wedding Songs, War-Historical Time Songs, Calendar Cycle and Ritual Songs and Work Songs.

[Mikalojus Konstantinas Čiurlionis](/wiki/Mikalojus_Konstantinas_Čiurlionis) is the most renowned Lithuanian painter and composer. During his short life he created about 200 pieces of music. His works have had profound influence on modern Lithuanian culture. His [symphonic poems](/wiki/Symphonic_poem) *In the Forest* (*Miške*) and *The Sea* (*Jūra*) were performed only [posthumously](/wiki/Posthumous_work).

[Vytautas Miškinis](/wiki/Vytautas_Miškinis) (born 1954) is a professor, composer and choir director of the famous Lithuanian boys' choir [Ąžuoliukas](/wiki/Ąžuoliukas). He is very popular in Lithuania and abroad. He has written over 400 secular and about 160 religious works.

In Lithuania [choral music](/wiki/Choral_music) is very important. [Vilnius](/wiki/Vilnius) is the only city with three choirs laureates (Brevis, Jauna Muzika and Chamber Choir of the Conservatoire) at the [European Grand Prix for Choral Singing](/wiki/European_Grand_Prix_for_Choral_Singing). There is a long-standing tradition of the Lithuanian Song and Dance Festival (Dainų Šventė). The first one took place in [Kaunas](/wiki/Kaunas) in 1924. Since 1990, the festival has been organised every four years and summons roughly 30,000 singers and folk dancers of various professional levels and age groups from across the country. In 2008, Lithuanian Song and Dance Festival together with its [Latvian](/wiki/Latvian_Song_and_Dance_Festival) and [Estonian](/wiki/Estonian_Song_Festival) versions was inscribed as [UNESCO](/wiki/UNESCO) [Masterpiece of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity](/wiki/Masterpieces_of_the_Oral_and_Intangible_Heritage_of_Humanity).

[Marijonas Mikutavičius](/wiki/Marijonas_Mikutavičius) is famous for creating unofficial Lithuania sport anthem "Trys milijonai" ([Template:Lang-en](/wiki/Template:Lang-en)).[[95]](#cite_note-95)

### Cuisine[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=32)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) [thumb|*Cepelinai*, a](/wiki/File:Cepelinai_Sauce.JPG) [potato](/wiki/Potato)-based dumpling dish characteristic of [Lithuanian cuisine](/wiki/Lithuanian_cuisine) Lithuanian cuisine features the products suited to the cool and [moist](/wiki/Maritime_climate) [northern climate](/wiki/Continental_climate) of Lithuania: [barley](/wiki/Barley), [potatoes](/wiki/Potato), [rye](/wiki/Rye), [beets](/wiki/Beet), greens, berries, and [mushrooms](/wiki/Mushroom) are locally grown, and dairy products are one of its specialties. Since it shares its climate and agricultural practices with Northern Europe, Lithuanian cuisine has some similarities to [Scandinavian cuisine](/wiki/Scandinavian_cuisine). Nevertheless, it has its own distinguishing features, which were formed by a variety of influences during the country's long and difficult history.

Because of their common heritage, Lithuanians, Poles, and [Ashkenazi Jews](/wiki/Ashkenazi_Jews) share many dishes and beverages. Namely, similar versions of: dumplings (koldūnai, kreplach or [pierogi](/wiki/Pierogi)), doughnuts spurgos or (pączki), and blynai crêpes ([blintzes](/wiki/Blintzes)). [German traditions](/wiki/German_cuisine) also influenced Lithuanian cuisine, introducing pork and potato dishes, such as potato pudding (kugelis or kugel) and potato sausages (vėdarai), as well as the baroque tree cake known as [Šakotis](/wiki/Šakotis). The most exotic of all the influences is Eastern (Karaite) cuisine, and the dishes kibinai and čeburekai are popular in Lithuania. Torte Napoleon was introduced during [Napoleon's](/wiki/Napoleon) passage through Lithuania in the 19th century.

### Sports[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=33)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) [thumb|](/wiki/File:La_selección_de_Lituania_celebra_su_tercer_puesto_en_el_Mundial_de_baloncesto_2010.jpg)[Lithuania men's national basketball team](/wiki/Lithuania_men's_national_basketball_team) is ranked 3rd worldwide in [FIBA Rankings](/wiki/FIBA_Rankings). [thumb|left|upright|](/wiki/File:Rūta_Meilutytė_portrait.jpg)[Rūta Meilutytė](/wiki/Rūta_Meilutytė) – [Olympic](/wiki/Swimming_at_the_Summer_Olympics), multiple [World](/wiki/FINA_World_Aquatics_Championships) and [European](/wiki/European_Short_Course_Swimming_Championships) champion. Basketball is the national sport of Lithuania. The [Lithuania national basketball team](/wiki/Lithuania_men's_national_basketball_team) has had significant success in international basketball events, having won the [EuroBasket](/wiki/EuroBasket) on three occasions ([1937](/wiki/Eurobasket_1937), [1939](/wiki/Eurobasket_1939) and [2003](/wiki/Eurobasket_2003)), as well a total of 8 other medals in the Eurobasket, the [World Championships](/wiki/FIBA_World_Championship) and the [Olympic Games](/wiki/Basketball_at_the_Summer_Olympics). Lithuania hosted the Eurobasket in 1939 and [2011](/wiki/Eurobasket_2011). The historic Lithuanian basketball team [BC Žalgiris](/wiki/BC_Žalgiris), from Kaunas, won the European basketball league [Euroleague](/wiki/Euroleague) in 1999. Lithuania has produced a number of [NBA](/wiki/National_Basketball_Association) players, including [Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame](/wiki/Naismith_Memorial_Basketball_Hall_of_Fame) inductees [Arvydas Sabonis](/wiki/Arvydas_Sabonis) and [Šarūnas Marčiulionis](/wiki/Šarūnas_Marčiulionis)[[96]](#cite_note-96) and current NBA players [Donatas Motiejūnas](/wiki/Donatas_Motiejūnas) and [Jonas Valančiūnas](/wiki/Jonas_Valančiūnas).[[97]](#cite_note-97) Lithuania has won a total of [21 medals at the Olympic Games](/wiki/Lithuania_at_the_Olympics), including 6 gold medals in [athletics](/wiki/Sport_of_athletics), [modern pentathlon](/wiki/Modern_pentathlon), [shooting](/wiki/Shooting_sport), and [swimming](/wiki/Swimming_(sport)). Numerous other Lithuanians won Olympic medals representing Soviet Union. [Discuss thrower](/wiki/Discus_throw) [Virgilijus Alekna](/wiki/Virgilijus_Alekna) is the most successful Olympic athlete of independent Lithuania, having won gold medals in the [2000 Sydney](/wiki/2000_Sydney_Olympics) and [2004 Athens](/wiki/2004_Athens) games, as well as a bronze in [2008 Beijing](/wiki/2008_Beijing) Olympics and numerous [World Championship](/wiki/IAAF_World_Championships_in_Athletics) medals. More recently, the gold medal won by a then 15-year-old swimmer [Rūta Meilutytė](/wiki/Rūta_Meilutytė) at the [2012 Summer Olympics](/wiki/2012_Summer_Olympics) in London sparked a rise in popularity for the sport in Lithuania. [thumb|Druskininkai](/wiki/File:Snow_Arena.JPG) [Snow Arena](/wiki/Snow_Arena)

Lithuania has produced prominent athletes in athletics, modern pentathlon, [road](/wiki/Road_cycling) and [track cycling](/wiki/Track_cycling), [chess](/wiki/Chess), [rowing](/wiki/Rowing), [aerobatics](/wiki/Aerobatics), [strongman](/wiki/World's_Strongest_Man), [wrestling](/wiki/Wrestling), [boxing](/wiki/Boxing), [mixed martial arts](/wiki/Mixed_martial_arts), [Kyokushin Karate](/wiki/Kyokushin) and other sports.

Few Lithuanian athletes have found success in [winter sports](/wiki/Winter_Sport), although facilities are provided by several ice rinks and skiing slopes, including [Snow Arena](/wiki/Snow_Arena), the first indoor ski slope in the [Baltics](/wiki/Baltics).[[98]](#cite_note-98)

## International rankings[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=34)]

The following are links to international rankings of Lithuania from selected research institutes and foundations including economic output and various composite indices.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Index** | **Rank** | **Countries reviewed** |
| [Human Development Index](/wiki/Human_Development_Index) 2015 | 37th | 187 |
| [Corruption Perceptions Index](/wiki/Corruption_Perceptions_Index) 2015 | 32nd | 175 |
| [Index of Economic Freedom](/wiki/Index_of_Economic_Freedom) 2015 | 15th | 167 |
| [Globalization Index](/wiki/Globalization_Index) 2015 | 35th | 207 |
| [Global Peace Index](/wiki/Global_Peace_Index) 2016 | 37th | 163 |
| [Privacy International](/wiki/Privacy_International) Yearly Privacy ranking of countries, 2007 | 34th | 45 |
| [Reporters Without Borders](/wiki/Reporters_Without_Borders) [Press Freedom Index](/wiki/Press_Freedom_Index) 2016 | 35th | 180 |
| [Networked Readiness Index](/wiki/Networked_Readiness_Index) 2015[[99]](#cite_note-99)| 31st | 148 |  |
| [Legatum Prosperity Index](/wiki/Legatum_Prosperity_Index) 2015[[100]](#cite_note-100) | 41st | 142 |
| [EF English Proficiency Index](/wiki/EF_English_Proficiency_Index) 2015[[101]](#cite_note-101)| 26th | 70 |  |
|  |  |  |

## See also[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=35)]

* [Index of Lithuania-related articles](/wiki/Index_of_Lithuania-related_articles)
* [List of Lithuanians](/wiki/List_of_Lithuanians)
* [Outline of Lithuania](/wiki/Outline_of_Lithuania)

## References[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=36)]

[Template:Reflist](/wiki/Template:Reflist)

## External links[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=37)]

[Template:Sister project links](/wiki/Template:Sister_project_links)

Government

* [The Lithuanian President](http://www.president.lt/en) – Official site of the President of the Republic of Lithuania
* [The Lithuanian Parliament](http://www3.lrs.lt/pls/inter/w5_home.home?p_kalb_id=2) – Official site of the Parliament of the Republic of Lithuania
* [The Lithuanian Government](http://www.lrv.lt/en) – Official site of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania
* [Chief of State and Cabinet Members](https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/world-leaders-1/world-leaders-l/lithuania.html)
* [Statistics Lithuania](http://www.stat.gov.lt/en/) – Official site of Department of Statistics to the Government of Lithuania

General information

* [Template:CIA World Factbook link](/wiki/Template:CIA_World_Factbook_link)
* [Lithuania](http://ucblibraries.colorado.edu/govpubs/for/lithuania.htm) from *UCB Libraries GovPubs*
* [Template:Dmoz](/wiki/Template:Dmoz)
* [Lithuania](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-17536867) from the [BBC News](/wiki/BBC_News)
* [Template:Wikiatlas](/wiki/Template:Wikiatlas)
* [Template:Osmrelation-inline](/wiki/Template:Osmrelation-inline)
* [Lietuva.lt/en](http://lietuva.lt/en) – Lithuanian internet gates
* [Key Development Forecasts for Lithuania](http://www.ifs.du.edu/ifs/frm_CountryProfile.aspx?Country=LT) from [International Futures](/wiki/International_Futures)
* [Heraldry](http://www.ngw.nl/heraldrywiki/index.php?title=Lithuania) of Lithuania

Travel

* [Lithuanian State Department of Tourism](http://www.tourism.lt/en)
* [Travel Channel movie about Lithuanian – "Essential Lithuania 2010"](http://uzlietuva.lt/video/NXBB48O5XWAM/Essential-Lithuania-2010)
* [www.travel.lt](http://www.travel.lt/index.php?lang=2) – The Official Lithuanian Travel Guide

[Template:Geographic location](/wiki/Template:Geographic_location) [Template:Lithuania topics](/wiki/Template:Lithuania_topics) [Template:Navboxes](/wiki/Template:Navboxes) [Template:Navboxes](/wiki/Template:Navboxes) [Template:Navboxes](/wiki/Template:Navboxes) [Template:Portal bar](/wiki/Template:Portal_bar)

[Template:Authority control](/wiki/Template:Authority_control)

[Category:Lithuania](/wiki/Category:Lithuania) [\*](/wiki/Category:Baltic_states) [Category:Countries in Europe](/wiki/Category:Countries_in_Europe) [Category:Liberal democracies](/wiki/Category:Liberal_democracies) [Category:Member states of NATO](/wiki/Category:Member_states_of_NATO) [Category:Member states of the Council of Europe](/wiki/Category:Member_states_of_the_Council_of_Europe) [Category:Member states of the European Union](/wiki/Category:Member_states_of_the_European_Union) [Category:Member states of the Union for the Mediterranean](/wiki/Category:Member_states_of_the_Union_for_the_Mediterranean) [Category:Member states of the United Nations](/wiki/Category:Member_states_of_the_United_Nations) [Category:Northern Europe](/wiki/Category:Northern_Europe) [Category:Republics](/wiki/Category:Republics) [Category:States and territories established in 1918](/wiki/Category:States_and_territories_established_in_1918) [Category:States and territories established in 1990](/wiki/Category:States_and_territories_established_in_1990)