



MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
OF THE REPUBLIC OF LITHUANIA

Diaspora policy in Lithuania: building bridges and new connections



GLOBAL LITHUANIA

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GLOBAL LITHUANIA



... is it a magician's hat for solving all problems?



... or a network of motivated people building a better Lithuania?



GLOBAL LITHUANIA

GLOBAL LITHUANIA framework = connecting with members of the global Lithuanian community through ideas and projects

EMIGRATION OF LITHUANIANS

Threat, challenge or opportunity?

EMIGRATION

- **GLOBAL LITHUANIAN DIASPORA - 1.3m** (300,000 have Lithuanian citizenship)
- 372,000 left between 2000 and 2013: ~30% to the UK, ~10% to the Ireland, ~10% to the U.S.

PUBLIC PERCEPTION

- In public discourse, **emigration** has been often depicted **as a threat**.

GOVERNMENT PERCEPTION

- **Emigration is a challenge, which can be transformed into an opportunity.**
- Realization of "diaspora capital" for the benefit of Lithuania.

GLOBAL LITHUANIA

- **The idea of Global Lithuania** - no matter where Lithuanians reside, they have the ability to maintain close ties with Lithuania and to contribute to the country's development.

LESSONS LEARNED

Successful Lithuanian diaspora policy depends on:

- The “**Global Lithuania**” programme 2011-2019 and its interagency action plan, which is updated annually.
- Implementation of the inter-agency plan **by 13 institutions** (6 ministries, **7** subordinate agencies). While programme **activities and goals** are planned **concurrently**, each agency allocates funding for programme implementation from existing budgetary resources.
- Effective coordination among Government institutions is key for optimizing scarce resources.
- **MFA engagement**, as the coordinating body, **with public, private and NGO sector partners** to launch and implement initiatives, which strengthen State-diaspora ties.
- Support and involvement at the political level of Government.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAMME

MFA COORDINATES THE GLOBAL LITHUANIA PROGRAM



PARTNERS:

- DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS OF THE REPUBLIC OF LITHUANIA
- LITHUANIAN COMMUNITIES ABROAD
- NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS (NGO)

MFA ENCOURAGES DIVERSIFYING FUNDING SOURCES

TARGET AUDIENCES ABROAD

- Professionals and entrepreneurs
- Lithuanian communities and organizations
- Youth

PROFESSIONALS

Select Government initiatives:

- Annual **World Lithuanian Economic Forum**, which brings together leading international and local economic players across a range of industries;
- Dissemination of information about the investment climate and trade opportunities in Lithuania (Invest Lithuania and Enterprise Lithuania)

Government sponsored events and activities:

- Global Lithuanian Leaders. This NGO acts as a non-profit platform for Lithuania-connected international professionals that are interested in building global opportunities for the Lithuanian economy;
- Global Lithuania awards;
- “Migrating birds”, music festival “Returns”, film program “Lithuanians abroad”, success stories featured on TV, print and social media.

LITHUANIAN DIASPORA ORGANIZATIONS

- Support for community life and activities abroad, particularly those that promote Lithuania, its culture and language investment and trade, tourism, scientific and other cooperation.
- **41 registered Lithuanian communities abroad** are connected under an umbrella organization – the Lithuanian World Community.
- Annual funding for:
 - About 100 Lithuanian community projects;
 - About 100 projects, events and activities planned by **Lithuanian diplomatic missions** in partnership with the diaspora:
 - World Lithuanian events – song festivals, sport games, economic fora, academic conferences.
- Institutional framework created to promote dialogue with the Lithuanian World Community at the parliamentary and governmental level. Representatives meet twice a year in mixed Commissions.

YOUTH

- 22 Lithuanian Youth Association affiliates worldwide comprise the World Lithuanian Youth Association, which cooperates with the MFA and other government institutions.
- **Support for Lithuanian – language education:**
 - Close to 200 Lithuanian Saturday or Sunday schools with 8000 students operate abroad - 9 fully accredited secondary schools.
- **Internships and mentoring programs:**
 - *Create for Lithuania*”: 1-year public sector placement program for young junior professionals from abroad (3 and 4 – month rotations)
 - „LT Big Brother” professional mentorship program
 - *Internships for North American students of Lithuanian heritage*
- These programs are very popular among youth and often are a stepping stone to their relocation or reintegration in Lithuania.

EVIDENCE – BASED POLICY

- **Regular annual surveys conducted amongst the diaspora**
- **2013 survey results:**
 - an absolute majority (72%) of Lithuanians living abroad believe that there are no communication obstacles with Lithuania and its institutions;
 - 89% of Lithuanians abroad follow Lithuanian news, however, the majority (3/4) of them do not participate in Lithuanian life;
 - an absolute majority (79%) of Lithuanians abroad want to maintain their Lithuanian identity.
- MFA cooperates with diaspora experts in academia, who conduct studies on our behalf.
- The MFA presents their finding and recommendations annually at press briefings and/or roundtable discussions.
- The Department of Statistics is collecting data about Lithuanians abroad, which will be published at the end of this year.



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Thank you for your attention!