**FINDINGS OF PRELIMINARY STUDY**

**“MANAGEMENT OF IMMIGRATION PROCESSES”**

25 May 2015 IT-4

The number of the issued residence permits for aliens entering Lithuania to study, work or for other purposes had increased on a yearly basis: during 2012 more than 12,000 residence permits were issued and during 2014 more than 18,000. The number of aliens who were granted asylum also increased: during 2012 124 aliens were granted asylum, whereas during 2014 – 176. The asylum was granted for one third of the applicants.

The main document, setting down the principles of Lithuanian immigration policy is the Migration Policy Guidelines approved by Government decision in 2014. The key objectives:

* to ensure the implementation of the skilled labour attracting policy that meets the needs of the country;
* to create the conditions for aliens to integrate in order to use potential benefits from immigration;
* to strengthen the process management by implementing the control measures in order to stop the illegal migration and to ensure execution of the international obligations of Lithuania in the area of human rights and civil liberties.

The audit analysed how these objectives are achieved.

**Audit findings:**

On the management of immigration processes

The coordination of the implementation of the objectives set out in the Migration Policy Guidelines is insufficient. In Lithuania 5 ministries and 14 institutions under ministries are responsible for the formation of the migration policy. However, there is no institution to coordinate the activities among the mentioned ministries and institutions; consequently, the coherent and effective policy implementation is not guaranteed.

On the residence permits

The process of issuing (modification) residence permits for aliens is too complicated, not always smooth and coherent. The process should be improved by ensuring the public security, the provision of quality services for aliens and by eliminating overlapping functions when receiving and assessing the residence permits’ applications.

On the asylum

The asylum system in Lithuania is not effective enough and not all the reception conditions for asylum seekers are guaranteed.

It is necessary to reform the accommodation for asylum seekers. Asylum seekers can be accommodated in both the Aliens Registration Centre and the Refugees Reception Centre. The first one is subordinate to the State Border Guard Service under the Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Lithuania; meanwhile, the Refugees Reception Centre operates under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour of the Republic of Lithuania. Due to the lack of coordination between ministries, the situation arises that there is not enough vacant premises in one and, consequently, the reception conditions worsen, whereas, in the other institution the infrastructure has not been fully utilised.

On the formation of the skilled labour attracting policy

In 2015 the amendments of the [Law on the Legal Status of Aliens](http://www3.lrs.lt/pls/inter3/dokpaieska.showdoc_l?p_id=356478) were adopted, setting up the more favourable reception conditions for particular alien categories. For example, more favourable conditions for issuing residence permits for highly skilled professionals and the list of cases when aliens intending to work in Lithuania are able to immediately bring their families were determined by law and the term for issuing residence permits was shortened. To assess how the mentioned national legislation is going to affect the immigration flows is too early. Consequently, the National Audit Office of Lithuania is going to monitor how the skilled labour attracting policy is being implemented – are the more favourable reception conditions created beneficial to the State and whether it results in trying to trespass the established procedures.

On the formation of the alien integration policy

The audit findings revealed that Lithuania did not have a long-term policy and any institution responsible for the formation of the alien integration policy, the lack of purposeful and coordinated activities among institutions responsible for aliens’ integration was also found. During the audit period, Action Plan for the Implementation of Aliens’ Integration Policy 2015–2017 was approved and planned to develop a National Strategy on Alien Integration. National Audit Office of Lithuania is going to monitor the conditions for the alien integration in order to use potential benefits from immigration.

In order to alleviate the shortcomings and after assessing the continuing changes while conducting the audit, the recommendations to the Government of the Republic of Lithuania were provided: on the optimisation of the process of issuing (modification) of residence permits; on the improvement of the process of granting asylum. The committees of the Parliament of the Republic of Lithuania were informed about the shortcomings and audit findings were presented to the Migration Commission created in the Parliament as well as to the representatives of the World Lithuanian Community.

National Audit Office of Lithuania is going to monitor how the recommendations are being implemented. National Audit Office of Lithuania expects that the parliamentary control by the Parliament of the Republic of Lithuania will assist in alleviating the shortcomings.

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