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Is the grass really greener elsewhere?

MIC „Renkuosi Lietuva“



For the past two years, the number of Lithuanians returning has been increasing. In fact, there are more people coming back to Lithuania than leaving. In 2021, 23.7 thousand people returned to Lithuania, which is almost 4.5 thousand more than those, who left the country. Surveys reveal that 47% of Lithuanians living abroad are planning to return home in the future.

However, returning can be quite difficult and those who have lived abroad for longer often need help from specialists. For this reason, the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) Vilnius Office, and the Lithuanian Government have launched a project - "[I Choose Lithuania](#)", which provides support and information for returnees to ensure that the integration process is as easy as possible.

Motives to come back

Lithuanians living abroad are strongly influenced by homesickness and the desire to raise children in their home country. According to the survey conducted by "[I Choose Lithuania](#)", 76% of Lithuanians living abroad would like to return to Lithuania because of their family members and relatives living here.

"Connecting with relatives is a natural and common human need. Lithuanians living abroad often miss the opportunity to communicate in their mother tongue and maintain traditions. Young families with children often decide to return to ensure that the children do not forget the Lithuanian language and can be near their relatives," says Edita Urbanovic, head of the "[I Choose Lithuania](#)" project.

Life standards are improving

Many people who have left Lithuania are surprised when they return how much the country has changed in 5-10 years.

There is still a perception among people living abroad, that wages in Lithuania are much lower, even though salaries in Lithuania increase by more than 8% every year and are among the fastest-growing in

the European Union. Even though returnees' incomes are lower than before, the cost of living in Lithuania is also lower, so fears of a lower standard of living are often unjustified.

International companies are coming to Lithuania, and the working environment is changing for the better. In addition, currently in Lithuania, as in many other countries, there is a severe shortage of labour, which significantly changes the relations between employees and employers. Moreover, there is a lot of room for innovative ideas. Many professionals who used to live abroad are now building successful businesses in Lithuania. 1 out of 5 businesses set up in the regions is owned by the returnees.

Lithuania is also a great place to start a family – not only does it have a good quality public infrastructure, but there are also accessible social services. The length and conditions of parental leave in Lithuania stand out in the context of the rest of the world.

Parents returning with minors often worry about the successful adaptation of children, especially those, who do not speak Lithuanian. To allay this concern, Lithuania has compiled a list of schools that have experience in accepting returnees. There are almost 70 schools on the list that are willing to offer students an individual learning plan, additional Lithuanian lessons, psychological help, etc.

Finally, seniors often decide to return to Lithuania to enjoy quiet life here after earning a pension abroad and benefit from high-quality healthcare services, which are free for elders.

It is not easy to return

However, returning home is not as simple as booking a plane ticket. It can take time and effort to reintegrate back into your homeland, community and life, no matter whether you've been away for a year or 20 years.

"It is important to have realistic expectations of what your life will be like when you return. The first half of the year is crucial and it is very important to prepare before making the final decision to return. Once the preparations are complete, returning migrants can start enjoying what Lithuania has to offer. " - says Edita Urbanovic.

All information in one place

"I Choose Lithuania" offers consultations on returning to Lithuania. Counsellors have the expertise to advise on the first steps, the documents needed, tips and tricks to think about before returning and other questions. The project also offers psychological support to those who have doubts or emotional difficulties. Last year alone 12 thousand consultations were provided and 1 million people visited the website www.renkuosilietuva.lt.

Do you have any questions about returning to Lithuania? Do not hesitate to contact "I Choose Lithuania" by email renkuosilietuva@iom.int or just have a look at their website www.renkuosilietuva.lt.