

- **Describe briefly the historical circumstances of the creation of this community in your country**

Most Lithuanians in Iceland are most appropriately designated as economic immigrants who are seeking better living conditions than are generally available in Lithuania. While the flow of immigration dates back to when Lithuania regained independence from the Soviet Union in 1990, most of those currently in Iceland began arriving after Lithuania joined the EU and Schengen agreement in the early 2000s.

- **Describe the current status of the community in your country**

Currently, Lithuanians comprise the second largest community of immigrants in Iceland, totaling more than 2000 people, of whom most are living in the capital area. Though many of those who move to Iceland already have higher qualifications, most of them are initially hired as unskilled laborers in the construction and service sectors. However, many of those who have lived in Iceland for some time have now either sought education in Iceland or had their prior education acknowledged, usually leading to better employment opportunities. A second generation of Lithuanian immigrants is currently emerging, characterized by bilingualism, high level of education and a corresponding higher employment status.

- **Define cultural specifics of dealing with community members (in general)**

Lithuanians are Catholic, hard-working, family-oriented and rather traditional in terms of gender relations. As other northern Europeans, they may come across as aloof and shy, but when friendship develops, they are very generous and hospitable. Additionally, they have many characteristics that may have developed during the Soviet occupation and the closeness with Russia. Generally speaking, they avoid direct eye contact, do not automatically smile or joke around, and are not inclined to appear cheerful to strangers. This, however, does not at all mean that they are sad or angry.

- **Define cultural specifics in the provision of health care to community members (with an emphasis on women)**

Lithuanians usually respect older people as well as people with authority and status, such as doctors. This respect can be expressed by being overly formal or even stiff. Lastly, they tend to understand promises quite literally, and can, therefore, be extremely disappointed if not kept. Men are unlikely to attend pregnancy check-ups or participate in sessions involving children as they consider it to be the woman's responsibility. Generally speaking, women are more open than men. However, it should be noted that Lithuanian society is currently changing very fast, and many younger men do not match this profile.

- **Determine the migrant language's specificities compared to the host country language**

Lithuanian is a complex Indo-European language closely related to ancient Sanskrit. It is a Baltic, not (as many Icelanders believe) a Slavic, language, which, though having been influenced by both Russian and Polish throughout the centuries, is only remotely related to them. There is a rather conspicuous generation gap in terms of language ability: most of those born before 1980 know Russian, but those born later may not; and while the latter group will tend to know good English, the former may not. Some, especially older generations, are more likely to know German than English. Generally, Lithuanians in Iceland make serious effort to learn Icelandic and many of those who have settled in Iceland have attended language courses and developed high-level proficiency.