

Lithuania



Lithuania was the first of the former Soviet republics to declare itself independent on March 11, 1990, but it was more than a year before the Soviet Union recognized the declaration. Russian troops withdrew from Lithuania in 1993, and the country began a market economy. It joined the EU and NATO in 2004.

Lithuania borders the Baltic Sea between Latvia and Russia and occupies about 65,000 sq km. Lithuania's climate ranges from maritime to continental. Its fertile lowlands are dotted with an abundance of small lakes. Peat, arable land, and amber are among its natural resources.

The Republic of Lithuania is a parliamentary democracy headquartered in the capital city of Vilnius. It has 10 counties. The economy of Lithuania has been helped by foreign government and business investment as it transitions to a market economy. Its biggest trade partner has traditionally been Russia, but it is slowly moving more of its trade business to the West. About 80% of businesses have undergone privatization and unemployment dropped from 11% in 2003 to 5.3% in 2005.

Among Lithuania's industries are: metal-cutting machine tools, electric motors, television sets, refrigerators and freezers, petroleum refining, shipbuilding, furniture making, textiles, food processing, fertilizers, agricultural machinery, optical equipment, electronic components, computers, and amber jewelry. It exports mostly mineral products, textiles and clothing, machinery and equipment, chemicals, wood and foodstuffs to Russia and Latvia equally, as well as to Germany, France, Estonia, Poland, Sweden, the US, UK, and Denmark. It imports mineral products, machinery and equipment, transport equipment, chemicals, textiles and clothing, and metals from Russia, Germany and Poland mainly.

