

**LLP- Grundtvig Multilateral Project FORWARD**

**FORWARD. Competence portfolio and pedagogical tools to identify, recognize, validate and improve the competences acquired by migrant women in formal, non-formal and informal learning contexts**

**National Report on qualitative Research in LITHUANIA**  
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## **INTRODUCTION: THE CURRENT EMPLOYMENT SITUATION OF MIGRANT WOMEN IN LITHUANIA**

Lithuania has very low level of immigrant inhabitants. In 2011, the share of immigrants in total population was 29.6 thous., or 0.91 %. The majority of migrants (about 70 %) are from the states formed after dissolution of the Soviet Union (Armenia, Belarus, Georgia, Russia, Ukraine) (Migration Department, 2011).

Immigrants in Lithuania may apply for:

- temporary residence permit;
- permanent residence permit;
- asylum, i.e. for refugee status, subsidiary protection or temporary protection.

Granting of asylum in the Republic of Lithuania means issuing a residence permit (permanent or temporary) in the Republic of Lithuania and providing social assistance to an foreigner who has been granted asylum. A foreigner who is granted refugee status is issued permanent residence permit, while a foreigner who is granted subsidiary protection – temporary residence permit (after one year such permit may be renewed if the grounds for granting asylum remained). After asylum is granted a social integration programme is applied to this person according to the laws of the Republic of Lithuania.

The asylum seekers usually live in Foreigners Registration Centre (Pabrade). The Centre is managed by the State Border Guard Service. The FRC is capable of accommodating 500 foreigners at a time, including 300 illegal immigrants and 200 asylum applicants. The FRC is the only facility in Lithuania providing, upon court decisions, temporary domicile to foreigners who illegally entered or stayed in Lithuania and also accommodates asylum applicants. Furthermore, the FRC is responsible for transferring those foreigners, who have been granted temporary asylum in Lithuania, to the Refugee Reception Centre in Rukla.

The Refugees Reception Center is a budgetary institution for the temporary stay, providing the social services, designed for the organizing and the implementing of the social integration of the foreigners granted asylum, to accommodate temporary the unaccompanied minors during the processing of the application for asylum in the Republic of Lithuania. The objectives of the Refugees Reception Center:

- to seek after the effective providing of the special social services for the foreigners living in the Center;
- to secure the effective support of the state for the foreigners granted asylum, participating in the social integration program in the municipalities.

- to organize and to implement the social integration of the foreigners granted asylum in the Republic of Lithuania in the municipalities.

The support for the integration in the Center is provided until 8 months. If during the determined time the foreigners have not prepared for the integration in the municipality because of the objective reasons, the duration can be prolonged until 12 months. If the foreigners granted asylum belong to the vulnerable groups – unaccompanied minors, pregnant women, tortured people, people with mental disorder, people of the retirement age, disabled people, not full families with minors, this period can be extended by their request until 18 months. The support for unaccompanied minors respecting the vbest interests of the child can be extended until they get 18. In the unforeseen situations the support can be continued longer in the center.

Due to small numbers of immigrants, there are no big-scale national projects on inclusson of migrants to the labour market, in the Refugees Reception Centre there are offered various cources, including Lithuanian (state) language, and the basics of the Constitution.

## INTERVIEWS WITH MIGRANT WOMEN IN LITHUANIA

For the FORWARD project, 16 women from different countries were interviewed mostly at the public places: cafe's (L3, L6, L9, L10, L11), the Home of National Communities (1), Shelter for Battered Women in Vilnius (L4), Refugees Reception Centre in Rukla (L7, L8) and Foreigners Registration Centre in Pabrade (L12, L13, L14, L15). Only 2 interviews were recorded at interviewees home (L1 and L2), but no other adult persons were present there. The FORWARD interview guideline was used. Interviews lasted from 32 to 60 minutes. The majority of interviews were accomplished in Russian language, only 2 (L6 and L8) - in Lithuanian.

The main objective of the interviews was to reveal formally, non-formally and informally acquired competences, which could help to increase employability of the migrants.

### TABLE OF THE INTERVIEWEES

Interviewee	Year of birth	Ethnicity	Religion	Country of origin	Citizenship at present	Duration of stay in Lithuania
L1	1972	Chechen	Muslim	Chechnya	Russian	2
L2	1971	Chechen	Muslim	Chechnya	Russian	6
L3	1969	Russian	Orthodox	Russia	Russian	12
L4	1982	Russian	Orthodox	Russia	Russian	7
L5	1974	Russian	Orthodox	Ukraine	Russian	9 months
L6	1951	Estonian	Lutheran	Estonia	Estonian	35
L7	1975	Chechen	Muslim	Chechnya	Russian	10
L8	1985	Chechen	Muslim	Chechnya	Russian	4
L9	1976	Russian	Orthodox	Russian	Russian	9
L10	1983	Russian	Orthodox	Russian	Russian	6
L11	1974	Latvian	Catholic	Latvia	Latvian	10
L12	1957	Byelorussian	Orthodox	Belarus	Byelorussian	3 months

L13	1985	Byelorussian	Orthodox	Belarus	Byelorussian	4 months
L14	1968	Uzbek	Muslim	Kyrkhyzstan	Kirkhiz	1
L15	1960	Kirkhiz	Muslim	Kyrkhyzstan	Kirkhiz	10 months

According to the interviewed 15 migrant women, they were from 7 different countries: Chechnya (4), Belarus (2), Estonia (1), Kyrkhyzstan (2), Latvia (1), Russia (4), and Ukraine (1). Chechen women named their country Chechnya, although independence of this country is not recognized internationally, it is regarded as the part of Russia. Therefore 9 interviewed migrants held Russian citizenship. Other women held following citizenship: Byelorussian (2), Kirkhiz (2), Estonian (1), and Latvian (1). No one of interviewees had Lithuanian citizenship.

Interviewees were of 7 nationalities: Russian (5), Chechen (4), Byelorussian (2), Estonian (1), Kirkhiz (1), Latvian (1), and Uzbek (1).

The age of interviewees was between 27 and 61 years. 7 women confessed Russian Orthodox, 6 –Muslim, 1 – Catholic, and 1 – Lutheran religion.

The duration of stay in Lithuania of migrant women was from 3 months to 35 years, but 10 of them stayed in Lithuania from 1 to 12 years.

## **MIGRATION PROCESS**

### **DECISION TO EMIGRATE**

Decision to emigrate is different due to the reasons of emigration, which could be divided to 3 groups:

1. “Love migrants”, women who married to Lithuanian man and decided to move to his country (L4, L6, L9, L10, L11).
  - *“Love brought me to Lithuania, as well as many women, who are coming to live here with their husbands” (L6);*
2. Migrants from war or political prosecution regions, looking for safety or escaping from problems (political, in their countries could be regarded as “criminal”) (L1, L2, L7, L8, L12, L13, L14).
  - *“Situation in our country forced us. Wish you or not – you have to leave. My husband had to leave. He decided as the head of the family. All relatives understood situation” (L1);*
3. Migrants for economical or other personal reasons (L3, L5):
  - *“I divorced, and moved to Lithuania because I had relatives here” (L3)*
  - *“My husband was offered the job, and I did not wish him to leave us for 2 years, and he did not wish to leave us...” (L5).*

Thus, decisions were made by the migrant woman herself or by both with a husband. Only one woman (L1) told that the decision was taken by husband as the head of family. Another interviewee noted that *“Although my husband is the head of the family, but decision we took together”* (L5).

#### **COUNTRIES OF TRANSIT**

8 women migrated directly to Lithuania. Two lived for some time in Moscow (Russia), and 5 women experienced deportation from other countries to Lithuania. One of them some years ago came to Lithuania, but later on illegally migrated to Belgium, and after one year was deported back to Lithuania. One was deported from Switzerland to Lithuania because of having Lithuanian visa, two were deported from Latvia and Russia due to relatives living in Lithuania. One interviewee passed the whole asylum seeker procedure since 2002. She lived in Foreigners Registration Centre in Pabrade, got asylum, after that lived in Refugees Reception Centre in Rukla, passed integration programme, family lived for until 2007 in Lithuania, but did not manage to establish, migrated to the Netherlands, but in 2011 were sent back to Lithuania. Lived again in FRC, and now lives in RRC in Rukla.

#### **COMPETENCES GAINED BY MIGRATION**

Informants argued that they got nothing from the process of migration itself, especially those who were deported from other countries. It is possible that too short time passed from these events, and disappointment did not allow envisage any positive sides of the process of migration. Two women were talking about competences acquired in Lithuania: familiarization with new culture, Constitution, learning new language.

#### **FAMILY AND HOUSEHOLD**

##### **FAMILY AND HOUSEHOLD IN LITHUANIA**

Most of the interviewees were living with their husbands and children and no other family members in their household. “Love migrants” are more or less established, except of one who is in the process of divorce, and lives in the Shelter for battered women. Two of women live in Refugees Reception Centre in Rukla (one is single), four (after deportation) in Foreigners Registration Centre in Pabrade, the rest in flats for rent. Almost all complained for bad financial situation.

##### **FAMILY IN COUNTRY OF ORIGIN**

The relatives of women coming from war regions are often spread all over Europe, although some left in countries of origin. Relatives of women who came to Lithuania because of marriage or economic/personal reasons, are often in their country of origin.

#### **FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE**

Almost all interviewees does not support their relatives left in countries of origin. On the contrary, interviewees from war regions get support from relatives spread in Europe. One “love migrant” supports mother left in Ukraine, because she can not survive getting small pension.

#### **EDUCATION**

##### **EDUCATION IN COUNTRY OF ORIGIN**

All interviewees were quite well educated in their countries of origin. The lowest level – 8 grades, and the highest – higher and post-graduate (in music). Only two did not graduate from secondary schools, other had secondary, college or university education. War or migration inferred into education of some migrants, therefore they did not finish their studies. Only one woman complained that her certificate of sewer had burnt in the war region. Anyway, women did not complain for problems with recognition of their formal education.

##### **EDUCATION IN LITHUANIA**

None of migrant women used Lithuanian system of education. Only two had finished courses of Lithuanian language, one studies at such courses at present. Only two women were extremely active in attending various courses and acquiring certificates. One of them was attending courses organized by employer and additionally courses of English language, another one – got certificates in massage, florism, distribution of cosmetics, even divination. The majority of women coming from war regions did not get education any in Lithuania, lived mostly giving birth for children and nurturing them.

##### **FURTHER EDUCATION**

Only one woman told about clear desire to be trained medical school, which she did not graduate because of war and brothers will. She was complaining that she has opportunity to be trained only in professions which she do not like:

*“Here, in Rukla, there are courses of Lithuanian language. After that we are sent to Labour Exchange – if we learn language. But I did not start to study. There is no possibility to study at university, to graduate from medicine. There are courses of sewing or cooking, but I did not like such job. I would like to attend medical school. <...> Yes, at present I learn Lithuanian.” (L7).*

Other women were speaking about plans to learn Lithuanian and other languages, to acquire

professions, but plans were not very clear. They were speaking in such terms as “*if there was possibility...*” (L3), “*I would like to, but do not know – what...*” (L12), and similarly.

Some of women stressed out that it is not necessary to be trained, some of professions you can learn yourself: “*We, women, learn sewing ourselves, it happened to me to be the head of sewing factory*” (L15).

## **COMPUTER SKILLS**

Only three women do not use computer at all. The rest of them use computer and the internet. Three of women use Skype. Only two have certificates, others are self educated, or with assistance of the husband or a friend. Only one use computer at work. All but three migrant women use computer for personal purposes (watching movies, reading books, banking), but mainly – to keep relations with relatives in other European countries.

## **LANGUAGE SKILLS**

### **FIRST (NATIVE) LANGUAGE**

Women reported that their native language is Russian (5), Chechen (4), Byelorussian (2), Estonian (1), Kirghiz (1), Latvian (1), and Uzbekh (1). As all of them are coming from region of the former Soviet Union, all of them speak fluently or almost fluently Russian.

### **OTHER LANGUAGE SKILLS**

Interviewees did not report about knowing many other languages, except few of them. One woman of Russian origin reported knowing fluently Lithuanian, English and Ukrainian, on the average level – German, and on everyday life level – French and Spanish. Migrant from Estonia fluently know Lithuanian and Russian languages, on the average level – English and Finnish. Migrant from Latvia fluently know Lithuanian and English, on the average level – Russian and Spanish.

### **LITHUNIAN LANGUAGE SKILLS**

Only one woman (recently deported to Lithuania) reported that they did not know Lithuanian language at all. Six women speak Lithuanian fluently, and the rest of them, understand and some of them could use it on everyday level. The majority of interviewees stress the fact that children learn at school Lithuanian easily, and speak this language fluently. The facts that in Lithuania

live quite big Russian national minority group<sup>1</sup> and that the majority of Lithuanians over 30 years of age speak Russian fluently or almost fluently does not facilitate learning Lithuanian:

- *“I attended Lithuanian language courses several times. But, you know...it happened to work in Russian environment. <...> Family members also does not help in learning Lithuanian, they say several words, and swich again to Russian” (L3)*

#### **LANGUAGE USED IN EVERYDAY LIFE**

The majority of migrant women use their natve languages at home. In mixed families they use Lithuanian and Russian, only the migrant of Estonian origin reported that their family language is Lithuanian (L6). Inside Kirghiz (L15) family they use Russian also. Who does not know Lithuanian fluently communicate with Lithuanians in two languages:

- *“In a work place or neighbours could speak to me Lithuanian, but I answer them in Russian” ( L3)*

#### **LIHUANIAN LANGUAGE SKILLS AND EMPLOYABILITY**

All migrant women recognize that knowledge of Lithuanian language is useful. Some of them aregue, that knowledge of Lithuanian language, and especially having certificate is crucial in finding job:

- *“Knowing of language helps in finding job, if you have a paper, everywhere they ask for it” (L10);*
- *“In Lithuania... without Lithuanian language... no way. It is clear that it is easier for me, because the majority here understand Russian, but searching for a job Lithuanian is necessary” (L 9).*

But some regard that it is not always necessary: *“The majority of Lithuanians speak Russian – understand” (L7).*

#### **WORK EXPERIENCE**

#### **CURRENT EMPLOYMENT SITUATION**

Employment of interviewees differed being subject of ethnicity (and religion) of migrants. Chechen and Uzbekh women did not work and did not want to. They took care of babies, and are housewives. Economic migrants have their own business. Out of love migrants, at the moment only one had job, one was expecting to start work in few days, one was unemployed, and one - a housewife. Four women asylum seekers and living in Foreigners Registration Centre did not have right to work yet. At the moment of the interview all women had social

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<sup>1</sup> According to the Department of Statistics in 2011 Russians comprise 5.4 % of inhabitants. There are Russian secondary schools also.

insurance<sup>2</sup>.

### **EXPERIENCE WITH PAID WORK**

Although the majority of interviewees do not work at present, only two of them never worked in the past. Jobs, as a rule, did not need higher education: shop assistant, seamstress, cook, hairdresser, house painter. Few have experience of own business, two of them has their own businesses in Lithuania:

- *“I worked in my country as bookkeeper <...>, my husband bought a petrol station, then worked there. <...> I opened hairdresser’s shop just after arrival. In fact I migrated because I had to whom to go [aunt], otherwise I would not dare. I knew that we with daughter will have incomes” (L3).*
- *“...I combined pedagogical activities with [piano playing] concerts. <...> I would like to do this in Lithuania, and I succeed, and concerts – here to organize is simpler [than in Moscow]” (L5).*

### **JOB-SEEKING IN LITHUANIA**

Interviewees did not have lot of experience in seeking job in Lithuania. As it was mentioned earlier, the majority of interviewees appeared to be housewives in Lithuania. Who came to Lithuania as love migrants, have the same experience as Lithuanian women. One find job immediately, and work in the same field (archives) up to now. Another one had family business with her husband, when business bankrupted, but it was easy to found jobs:

- *I worked legally and illegally, worked as volunteer also. Most often I was looking for a job on the Internet. Sometimes friends recommended...” (L4).*

One interviewee found job offer at pizzeria, but she did not dare to try get this job because of pure Lithuanian language skills.

### **UNPAID EMPLOYMENT AND FAMILY WORK**

All interviewees repeated that they do all household chores, putting stress on “*as all women*” (L4, L7, L9, L10, L11, L12, L13, L14, L15 ) – cleaning house, cooking, washing and ironing, etc. The only one woman (piano player) told that they share household chores with her husband. And she was the single one who told that she would like to do something (like music education) to community, but do not know how to start this activity. Other women do not take part in any community activities. None of interviewees was interested in politics either.

### **COMPETENCES GAINED BY WORK**

The majority of migrant women underrate their competences acquired in work places, they use

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<sup>2</sup> In Lithuania all citizen and resident women who are pregnant or having babies under 3 years of age are insured by the state.

them at home:

- *“I can sew for myself, can do paperchanging of walls”* (L1).
- *“I cut hair of my husband and son myself”* (L2)
- *“When I worked at cleaner’s <...> dresses are of various quality <...> you have to know what detergents to use”* (L3)
- *“I can make injections, even to veins, a lot of people can’t”* (L7)
- *“I learnt sewing much better”* (L12).

One of migrants, on the contrary thin that she can use competence gained at home, telling that she *“prepares tasty food, and could work as a cook”* (L9). Four interviewees mentioned communication with various people skills, and only one noted that she learned many languages.

#### **CAREER AND LEARNING ASPIRATION**

Only one interviewee was near pension age, so she was not talking about career. Almost all housewives having small children would like work in future, but their aspirations were not very high: *“seamstress or wall paperchanger”* (L1), *“shop assistant”* (L2), *“shop assistant at small shop”* (L3), *“at factory where bread or cookies are produced, or at any factory”* (L7), *“cook (to bake pizzas)”* (L8), *“cook”* (L9), *“seamstress”* (L12), *“seamstress or nanny”* (L13). Some were more ambitious, one of them wished to work in logistic enterprice, another one – to get the job of economist, or to open caffe of national dishes (Kirkhiz). One of migrants having own business would like only to own business but work herself as shop assistant (L3), another one – would like to expand business and hire another person to organize her concerts and do all technical work. One of interviewees told openly:

- *“I do not get any job in Lithuania because living in Lithuania I could not maintain neither myself nor children. [Monthly] salary 1200 LT [348 EUR]<sup>3</sup>. I calculated that after paying for kindergarten and housing only 200 LT [58 EUR] remain for food. We are here in Lithuania only because it is safe country, I like Vilnius very much. I like logistic and IT technologies. My contract with German entreprice is what I wish and like. There I have career prospects”* (L4).

#### **NEEDS AND REQUIREMENTS FOR EMPLOYMENT**

The most important requirement named by several interviewees was Lithuanian language. One interviewee mentioned lack of work experience, another one – current economic crisis. Others at present or have job or are not looking for.

#### **DISCRIMINATION AGAINST MIGRANT WOMEN**

All interviewees insited that they never experienced discrimination because of being migrant, religion or ethnicity (none of them weared veil). One woman reported that she experienced discrimination because of age, another one told about sexual harassment:

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<sup>3</sup> Interviewee mentions 1.5 bigger salary than the minimum wage, which is 800 LTL (232 EUR).

- *“I gave my CV, but they did not want to take it. I insisted to meet foreman. He came and his first question was ‘How old are you?’ I told 42. And he told me that they employ only from 25 to 35...” (L3).*
- *“Once sister told me that she found job for me, we went to food processing manufactory, I went there, but the headmaster was a man, and he told me, that if you wish to get job, you have to sleep with me, and I pay as much as you wish. I told him, do you think I am foolish, I escaped from there, but since then I am afraid to seek for a job” (L8).*

Both, age discrimination and sexual harassment are forbidden by Laws: the Law on Equal Opportunities and the Law on Equal Opportunities between Women and Men. Usually employers do not dare speak openly like it was quoted. This could be rather discrimination because of being migrant, which supposes that they will not make complaints.

## **SETTLEMENT, LIFE AND CULTURE IN LITHUANIA AS A HOST COUNTRY**

### **DIFFICULTIES IN LITHUANIA**

Interviewees who were married to Lithuanian men did not name initial difficulties. Economic migrants had difficulties with changing migration laws, new environment, new language, new culture, even different food. But as told one of them *“...the Internet helps <...> and Vilnius is not as big as Moscow, here is much easier to orient yourselves” (L5).*

As described earlier, asylum seekers have to live initially in Foreigners Registration Centre and after getting it – in Refugee Reception Centre. All migrants complaint about conditions in Foreigners Registration Centre. During asylum seeking procedure migrants do not have right to work, they get very small pocket money, and catering is common for all. Muslim women complaint that food was unsavoury, and often dishes with pork meet were served. According to women who at the time of interview lived in this Centre they proposed to assist voluntarily in kitchen, but were not allowed. It is possible that sanitary norms could restrict presence of people in the kitchen, but serving pork meat to muslims – it is discrimination.

After settling in Lithuania the main experienced problems – lack of finances. The majority of former asylum seekers have relatives scattered around the Europe, they are sending money and helping to survive. Sometimes somebody from families goes to relatives, brings clothes and other things.

Few interviewees mentioned low level of knowledge of Lithuanian language.

All resident interviewees stressed that they does not have social problems: they have social insurance, and can use free of charge medical services on the same rights as citizens. They can not vote in Parliamentary elections, but do not feel need in that. Also they can travel to Schengen countries:

- *“I have social insurance. I can use everything – except of voting. But I did not need it too much. Daughter also can’t vote because of Russian citizenship. You can travel within*

*Shengen Countries, but to UK you have to get visa” (L3)*

#### **RECOGNITION OF EDUCATION AND CERTIFICATES IN LITHUANIA**

The majority of interviewees do not have certificates (did not finish education) or did not try to use their certificates from their own countries. Sometimes they even did not try to do steps for recognition:

- *“Diploma was not recognized. Russian diploma in technology is not recognized in Lithuania. In principle may be recognized, but you have to go somewhere, to check if it meets requirements here, to translate it, etc. I did not do this.” (L3).*

#### **KNOWLEDGE OF LITHUANIAN CULTURE**

As all interviewees were from the regions of former Soviet Union, there are some cultural similarities which allow easier to adopt in new cultural environment. Muslim women were satisfied that nobody forces them to change religion or do not allow to celebrate their days. Some interviewees put stress on similarities of culture, and few on differences:

- *“Differences are. We Chechens are very neat, we like order very much, and you see Lithuanians... they don't wash themselves... , I wash myself three times per day. <...> in my country underage girls never have sexual relations, except if they are married, but here I see that it is not so important for young girls. I see how they are kissing on the streets and think that in Chechnya they would be killed” (L8);*
- *“Estonians are doing everything more precise, they think over everything, the taste of Estonians is more subtle. <...> For example, cafes: in Estonia they wish to be different, In Lithuania cafes are very uniform” (L6);*
- *“Lithuanians lack activity. No rallies, people do not defend their rights.” (L3).*

Cultural differences do not interfere in family life. The majority of families are uniform in ethnicity or at least in religion (Muslims or Christians):

- *“My husband is Lithuanian only according to the passport. His father is Ukrainian, and mother – Russian. There were no cultural clashes in family. We are Christians, we are loyal to national celebrations, and celebrate our days.” (L4).*

#### **KNOWLEDGE OF THE RIGHTS OF MIGRANTS IN LITHUANIA**

Those interviewees who underwent asylum seeking procedure told us, that they were well informed about all rights (asylum seekers and residents) in both centres: Foreigners Registration Centre and Refugees Reception Centre. But, on the contrary, women who currently live in Foreigners Registration Centre, complained that they do not get any information about their rights. Some of interviewees were not seeking any information, some told that it would be good to have on the Internet sites more information about social rights in Russian language (as it is in the Banks), admitting that in private sector of labour market there the laws could be broken. If

they need more information than can find on the internet, interviewees are asking for help their husbands or friends.

## **FOCUS GROUPS WITH PROFESSIONALS**

As a part of the research activities, a focus group with professionals was organised at WIIC office on 13<sup>th</sup> of June. Focus group lasted 1 hour 20 minutes and gathered 10 professionals that work with migrant women. Focus group contained of two kinds of professionals: ones that represented state institutions and those who represented non – formal educators and non governmental organisations that work directly with migrant woman as target group. Professionals that participated in focus group represented these institutions:

- Migration department in Lithuania;
- Ministry of Social security and Labour;
- Shelter for battered women in Vilnius;
- International Labour Organisation biuro in Vilnius (ILO);
- National Institute For Social Integration;
- Lithuanian Samaritan society.

One facilitator from the research team conducted the focus group with professionals. In the beginning of the focus group facilitator introduced the project and the aim of the research.

This section of the report is based on knowledge and experience of the professionals that participated in the focus group, opinions are really valuable, because these people work directly with migration process and facilitates services for migrant women. Their experience allows further analysis of situation of migrant women in Lithuania as well as their competence and employability issues.

## **STATUS OF MIGRANT WOMEN**

According to the experts most migrants that come to Lithuania are from former Soviet Union countries: Russia, Ukraine and Belarus<sup>4</sup>. Sometimes statistics depends on one or another project done by private companies due to which many migrant from one country come to Lithuania (e.g One big shopping centre “Ozas” in Vilnius was built by many contraction workers that came from Turkey, specifically for this job).

Matters regarding foreigners living and working in Lithuania are regulated by the Law on the Legal Status of Aliens<sup>5</sup> and other legal documents issued by the Ministry of Social Security and Labour of the Republic of Lithuania. A foreigner who intends to work in the

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<sup>4</sup> Exact data about the country of origin of all migrants that come to Lithuania can be found in the webpage of Department of Statistics of Lithuania. Link: <http://www.stat.gov.lt/lt/news/view/?id=9060>

<sup>5</sup> LR Law on the Legal Status of Aliens. Link: [http://www3.lrs.lt/pls/inter3/dokpaieska.showdoc\\_l?p\\_id=356478](http://www3.lrs.lt/pls/inter3/dokpaieska.showdoc_l?p_id=356478)

Republic of Lithuania must obtain a work permit before entering the Republic of Lithuania. A work permit may be issued to a foreigner if there is no specialist in Lithuania meeting the employer's qualification requirements. Aforementioned law also defines main causes for coming to Lithuania, there are 13 causes according to which alien can get permanent residence pass to permanently live in Lithuania (e.g reunion of the family and etc). According to professionals, main reasons for coming to Lithuania are studies, work or legal activity (e.g establishment of a company). Vast majority of migrants come to work to Lithuania. According to the chief of Migration department, we should focus more on intergration of migrant women that come to our country due to reunion of a family or other circumstances rather than work, because those who come to Lithuania to work are able to integrate into society faster than those who do not have any job or other activities.

All professionals agreed that most vulnerable target group of their work are migrant women that come to Lithuania with their husband or other family members that already have a job here, because those women usually have lack of language and social skills, they usually take care of a household and do not know how or do not want to integrate into the society. It's hard for these women, because they sometimes lack not only social skills but competences needed in finding a job as well.

According to professionals, main difficulties that migrant women face in Lithuania are:

- *not knowing Lithuanian language.* Firstly, there is lack of information on free lithuanian language courses (usually they are done as an activity on some project, or in migrant communities). Secondly, most of the courses are not free of charge and women usually do not have money to finish courses;
- *under aged children which should be taking care of regularly.* Due to the fact that rarely migrant women have resources needed to higher a nanny or to let children in the kindergarden they are obliged to take care of the children all day long while husband is working and have no opportunity to seek integration (learn language, socialize and find a job);
- *lack of information on migration process and their rights in the country.* This is one of the biggest problems. All the information prepared for migrants are put in the webpages of public institutions and usually is hard to understand and written in the manner "for professionals", this information is not user friendly due to several reasons: migrant women when come to Lithuania do not know these websites, it is quite hard to find information on them even for Lithuanians when needed. So as migrant women come to Lithuania they do not have basic, easy to follow, step by step information about: migration process, how and where to apply for help in finding a job, what about health services and etc. Some bits of this information are put into flyers and released usually by NGO's in Lithuania that has projects connected to migrants as target groups. Main problem is that when these projects come to an end, there are no more flyers to distribute. So according to professionals, government institutions should be responsible for preparing and distributing this vital information or as we may call "Survival guide" for migrants that come to Lithuania.
- *Negative attitude towards migrants in Lithuania.* According to resent research "Attitudes of EU members states towards migrants" Lithuania is in the last position, which means that here people have very low tolerance on migrants. This attitude is one of the main obstacle for successful integration, because no matter how much

individual efforts migrant women would give, she would still probably experience separation from society.

Furthermore, professionals gave their point on legal regulation of migration processes and integration of migrants.

### **Laws that regulate migration process in general:**

- *If a person is EU citizen:*

Matters regarding citizens of the European Union living and working in Lithuania are regulated by the European Union Citizen Act. A foreign national, who is a citizen of one of the Member States of the European Union, European Economic Area and the Swiss Confederation (hereafter referred to as citizens of the European Union) may arrive and stay in the Republic of Lithuania for up to 3 months within a 6 month period starting from the day of his arrival in the Republic of Lithuania. Citizens of the European Union who wish to stay longer than three months or have already been in Lithuania for longer than three months have to register with the Migration Department. Temporary residence permits are issued for periods of up to five years. Information on the residence of EU Member State Nationals in the Republic of Lithuania is available at the website of the Department of Migration under the Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Lithuania.

- *If a person is not an EU citizen:*

Matters regarding foreigners living and working in Lithuania are regulated by the Law on the Legal Status of Aliens and other legal documents issued by the Ministry of Social Security and Labour of the Republic of Lithuania.

A foreigner who intends to work in the Republic of Lithuania must obtain a work permit before entering the Republic of Lithuania. A work permit may be issued to a foreigner if there is no specialist in Lithuania meeting the employer's qualification requirements.

### **Laws that regulate integration process of migrants:**

Unfortunately there is no specific law in Lithuania that would regulate this important issue. Despite that, basic norms for integration are incorporated in general laws. Firstly in the Law on the Legal Status of Aliens, other laws that regulate migration issues, in acts passed by Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour and Ministry of Interior affairs. The main problem that migrants rarely know about these laws and their rights.

Main problem that concern not only integration but all problems that migrants are facing is that Lithuania have no migration policy, guidelines or etc. There are migration policy guidelines passed in 2008 and Migration department suggest to follow those guidelines. Main problem is that in Lithuania we do not have migration policy that would be relevant to present situation. All migration policy is aimed at regulating emigration rates and completely forgetting immigration issues. This is why even professionals could not tell which public institution is responsible for migrant integration and which institution manage other institutions working in this field.

## COMPETENCES OF MIGRANT WOMEN

According to the experts women that come from former Soviet Union countries have very similar competences, they usually have some degree and are quite educated. Women that has most competences are usually those who have migrated to several countries, they are able to adapt and integrate faster than those, for whom migration is a new process. For finding a job in Lithuania most migrant women lack language and legal knowledge, social skills to communicate, diploma or certificate that would show their education. Most important problem is that these women lack information on where to apply if they want to find a job.

Lithuanian Labour Exchange<sup>6</sup> offer variety of programs aimed at helping to find a job for immigrants and integrate them in the labour market of Lithuania, but this information usually do not reach people that are in the biggest need. Other problem is lack of self - confidence and fear of rejection in asking help to find a job. This problem could be solved in highering more foreigners from the countries that we have the biggest number of migrants. In this way migrants would be more confident in sharing their problems with an official of their nationality.

Sometimes migrant women do not know where to go to get their formal competences recognized and can not use it in finding a job. Different professions are regulated by Ministry of Economy in Lithuania. If migrant women wants to get her formal competences agnolged she should apply to the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education.<sup>7</sup>The main function of the Centre is to assist HEI to assure quality and to constantly improve it. The Centre fulfils this function through: assessment of the quality of higher education, assessment of the qualifications concerning higher education, provision of information on higher education systems and qualifications recognition.

If migrant women is a doctor, lawyer, social worker she should apply to different ministries according to profession to get her degree recognized (e.g lawyer – to Ministry of Justice, doctor – to Ministry of Health and etc). Also, if migrant women has some unformal competences gained in non formal learning or in the process of migration she can definitely use them in finding a job in Lithuania, but everything depends n the employer and if he/she recognises those competences as valuable in the job that is proposed.

In general,we can not claim that we developed the whole training system for migrants in Lithuania. Aas for the system of validation, recognition and certification of non-formally acquired competences in Lithuania according to the proffesionals it does not exist or if yes they are not aware of it. Despite what was mentioned, definitely some programs and courses existfor migrants exist. E.g. migrants can learn lithauanian language in Adult Education Centre in Vilnius. What concerns learning Lithuanian at the national level nothing is organized according to the professionals. Main question raised in the focus group is what

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<sup>6</sup> Website address: <http://www.ldb.lt/en/Information/Pages/default.aspx>

<sup>7</sup> Website address: <http://www.enqa.eu/agencydet.lasso?id=83>

institution should be responsible for these questions. In the Ministry of Economy some time ago there was a department responsible for the management of issues connected with immigration, but it was shut. Now in Lithuania there is no one institution that coordinates immigration questions.

Knowledge of Lithuanian language could definitely help in finding a job in this country, so does the informal competences. But there are some issues in using informal competences for finding a job. Social workers claim that many migrant women have competences that they gained in taking care of the households, e.g. sewing. But they do not recommend for migrant women to go to work in sewing factories, because due to experience they are very used there, have very low wages and have to work unlimited hours. So migrant women should be very careful in choosing if they can use only informal competences.

When migrant women come to Lithuania some of them feel the need to socialize in the community. Participation in the community activities usually depends on the nationality, some migrant communities as Turkish and Russian are very active and are providing activities for their members, others like Chinese community are very close and they do not have many activities. E.g. Turkish community is organising free Lithuanian language seminars for Turkish people that migrate to Lithuania so in these courses migrants get knowledge on Lithuanian language and culture.

## **EMPLOYABILITY**

Main competences that migrant women should acquire to be employable in Lithuania:

- Lithuanian language;
- Formal degree, or some informal competences.

In order to increase employability and social inclusion of migrant women these steps should be taken:

- Preparation and distribution of clear and concentrated information on how to start living in Lithuania (migration process, job finding process, education recognition, health issues and etc.);
- Creation of National migration policy.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

The majority of immigrants to Lithuania are coming from former Soviet Union regions. There are three groups of reasons for migration: safety (from war or political prosecution regions), economic, and love.

Economic and love migrants much easier integrate into Lithuanian labour market and adopt themselves in Lithuanian culture. Asylum seekers have to wait for residence permit living in Foreigners Registration Centre and undergo integration procedure in Refugees Reception Centre. Usually they have much more difficulties, but they usually prefer not seek for a job, but being housewife and give birth for children.

The interviewees did not point out having big difficulties in the labour market. About half of them never tried to get a job. All are telling that they would like to learn (or better learn) Lithuanian language which could facilitate finding a job, but do not take any activities.

Only one interviewee told about her plans to emigrate to Western Europe, others did not say, but you can feel their wish, when they complain for bad financial situation and tell about support from relatives who live in Western Europe.

Cultural similarities of migrants with local inhabitants, as well as knowledge of Russian language by both groups on one hand facilitate adoption of migrants in new environment, but on another hand prevents from learning of Lithuanian language which is necessary in the labour market.

Professionals who work with migrants, were much more concerned with employability of migrant women than they themselves. Professionals named clearly what migrants lack: knowledge of Lithuanian language, and user-friendly information. Concerning the labour market, the information on recognition education certificates could be crucial. Professionals were also more concerned about the discrimination of migrant women than they themselves.

The main trend of future work with migrants should be preparation and distribution of user friendly information, especially on recognition of education certificates and free Lithuanian language courses.

## SWOT ANALYSIS

<p><b>Strenghts</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Knowing different languages</li> <li>- Knowing different cultures</li> <li>- Personal will to make changes</li> <li>- Being able to adapt to different environments</li> </ul>	<p><b>Weaknesses</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Not knowing the language</li> <li>- Different cultural environment</li> <li>- Lack of education</li> <li>- Lack of social skills</li> <li>- Lack of sence of security</li> <li>- Lack of job skills</li> <li>- Not knowing one's rights and possibilities</li> <li>- Orientation only to one's comunity</li> <li>- Negative attitude towards migrants from lithuanians.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Opportunities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To get free lessons of native language</li> <li>- Ability to partcipate in comunity projects</li> <li>- Ability to use IT in order to communicate with family and reneue social skills</li> <li>- Ability to participate in trainings organized by Labour Market of Lithuania</li> <li>- Ability to get your diploma recognized.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Threats</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- No opportunity to apply competences gained in Lithuania labour market</li> <li>- Not knowing where to find needed information</li> <li>- Foudn information can be too difficult to understand</li> <li>- Not knowing local labour law, threat of forced and illegal labour.</li> <li>- Isolation</li> <li>- Dissapointment in goals that were not achieved.</li> </ul>

## LITERATURE

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