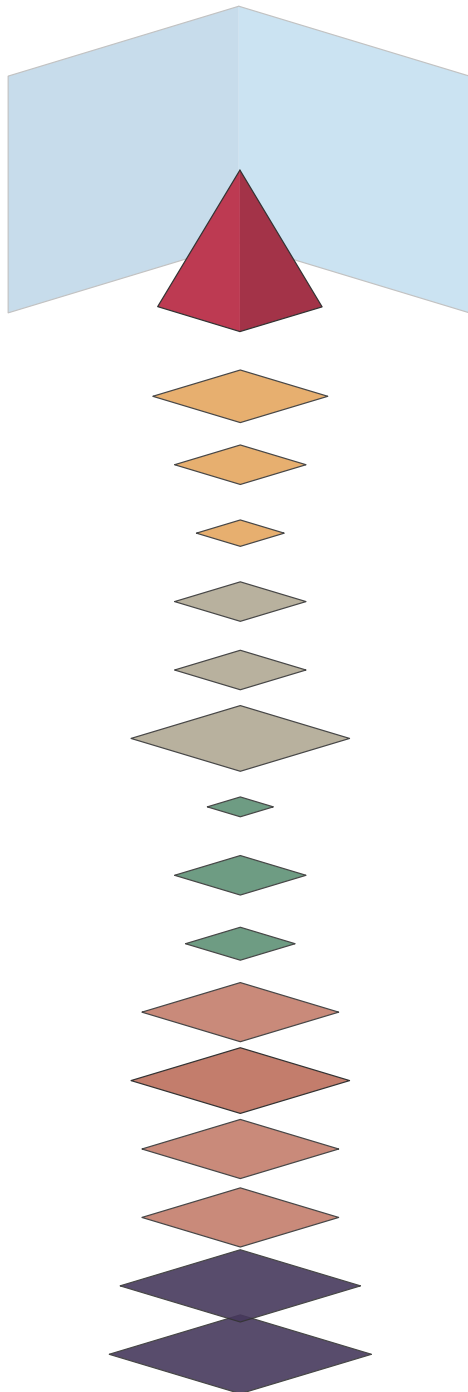


LITHUANIA



3.90

CRIMINALITY SCORE

156th of 193 countries

35th of 44 European countries

4th of 8 Northern European countries



CRIMINAL MARKETS

3.80

HUMAN TRAFFICKING	4.00
HUMAN SMUGGLING	3.00
EXTORTION & PROTECTION RACKETEERING	2.00
ARMS TRAFFICKING	3.00
TRADE IN COUNTERFEIT GOODS	3.00
ILLICIT TRADE IN EXCISABLE GOODS	5.00
FLORA CRIMES	1.50
FAUNA CRIMES	3.00
NON-RENEWABLE RESOURCE CRIMES	2.50
HEROIN TRADE	4.50
COCAINE TRADE	5.00
CANNABIS TRADE	4.50
SYNTHETIC DRUG TRADE	4.50
CYBER-DEPENDENT CRIMES	5.50
FINANCIAL CRIMES	6.00



CRIMINAL ACTORS

4.00

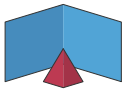
MAFIA-STYLE GROUPS	4.00
CRIMINAL NETWORKS	4.50
STATE-EMBEDDED ACTORS	4.00
FOREIGN ACTORS	4.00
PRIVATE SECTOR ACTORS	3.50



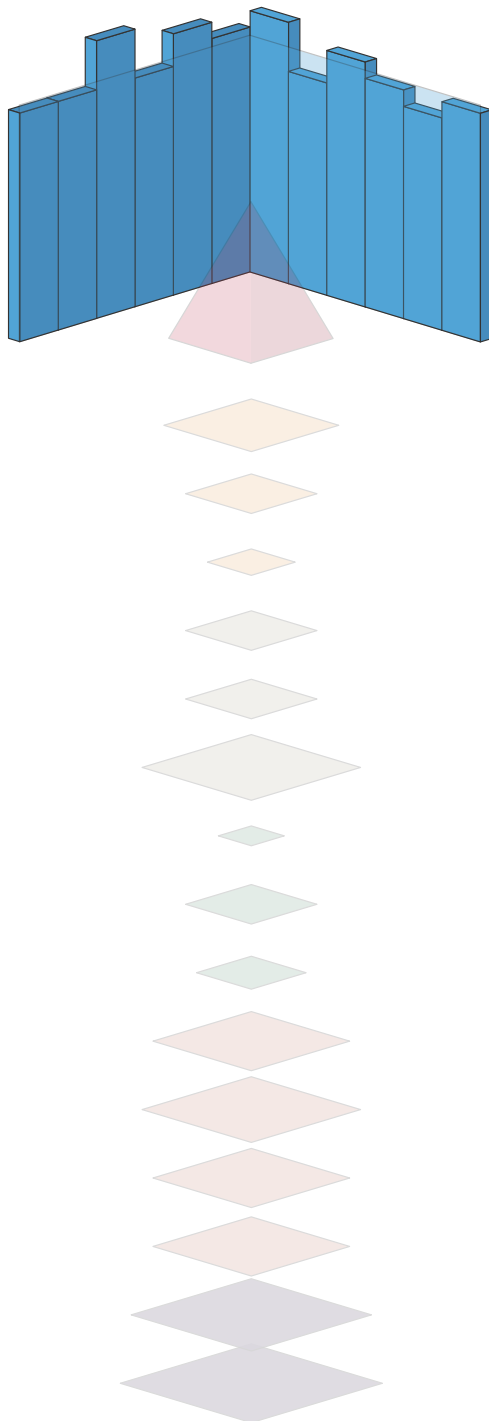
7.29

RESILIENCE SCORE





LITHUANIA



7.29

RESILIENCE SCORE

22nd of 193 countries

16th of 44 European countries

8th of 8 Northern European countries

POLITICAL LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE	7.00
GOVERNMENT TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY	7.00
INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION	8.50
NATIONAL POLICIES AND LAWS	7.00
JUDICIAL SYSTEM AND DETENTION	8.00
LAW ENFORCEMENT	7.50
TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY	8.00
ANTI-MONEY LAUNDERING	6.50
ECONOMIC REGULATORY CAPACITY	7.50
VICTIM AND WITNESS SUPPORT	7.00
PREVENTION	6.50
NON-STATE ACTORS	7.00



3.90

CRIMINALITY SCORE



CRIMINAL MARKETS 3.80



CRIMINAL ACTORS 4.00



CRIMINALITY

CRIMINAL MARKETS

PEOPLE

Despite it being a relatively small country with most relevant anti-trafficking measures in place, Lithuania still serves as an origin and transit country for human trafficking; and increasingly as a destination country. Lithuanian citizens are mostly trafficked within other European countries for purposes such as prostitution, fictitious marriages and forced labour. The UK, Spain and Germany are prominent destination markets for Lithuanian trafficking victims, with a growing number of male victims being targeted for forced labour. Within Lithuania, foreign nationals (particularly from Eastern Europe outside the EU) are exploited in the labour market. While there are indications of potential corruption among law enforcement officials, such as police officers or border guards who may be involved in facilitating human trafficking activities, the specific practices remain unclear. As a transit country for trafficking, victims from various Eastern European countries (including Russia and Belarus) have been observed passing through Lithuania en route to Western Europe. The ongoing Russia-Ukraine war has further contributed to a growing number of instances where refugees from both countries have become victims of exploitation.

With regards to human smuggling operations, Lithuania primarily functions as a transit country for individuals en route to Western Europe. Such operations are present but exert minimal influence over Lithuanian society. Smuggled individuals typically enter Lithuania from Belarus or Latvia, following routes that span countries like Afghanistan, Russia and Belarus. They pass through Lithuania, Poland or Latvia before reaching their final destination. Criminal networks associated with Russia reportedly organize and maintain these smuggling routes. In recent years, smuggling activities have intensified amid the Polish/Lithuanian-Belarusian border crisis, and the Russia-Ukraine war. Belarusian travel companies have also facilitated the transportation of people to the border, including Belarusian citizens and individuals from Asia, Africa and the Middle East. Lithuania's increased role as a transit country has led the EU to propose a blacklist to identify and track smugglers caught crossing the Belarusian border.

Extortion practices are allegedly prevalent within refugee and migration camps in Lithuania. In a few cases, victims were extorted for basic amenities, such as showers and the use of toilets. Perpetrators usually intimidate victims using threats of physical violence, especially in cases where victims refuse to pay money demanded.

TRADE

Arms trafficking in Lithuania often involves the diversion of illegally assembled and modified firearms. In recent years, the majority of seized firearms were models that had been altered by criminals to fire live ammunition. Stringent regulations may have reduced the availability of such weapons, but there is still existing technical knowledge and experience in firearm conversion. Illicit firearms are known to be sold online and delivered by postal and courier services. The ongoing war in Ukraine has also led to an increase in the purchase of legal arms among Lithuanians, potentially creating a risk of individuals turning to illicit sources due to limited supplies from authorized retailers.

Counterfeit goods constitute a relatively small criminal market in Lithuania. During the COVID-19 pandemic, however, there was an increase in the prevalence of these products, including counterfeit foodstuff. European authorities, in collaboration with local police, have conducted checks and seizures of counterfeit products – not only in Lithuania but also in other EU member states. Recent studies have revealed that a noteworthy percentage of young people in Lithuania intentionally purchased counterfeit goods, surpassing the EU average.

The illicit trade of excise goods, particularly tobacco products, is a prevalent issue. Lithuania has become one of the players in the illicit production and distribution of tobacco products within the EU. Cigarette smuggling constitutes a significant portion of smuggling cases, resulting in substantial financial losses. The trade involves small-scale consumers within the country, and large-scale transit to Western European countries from cheap factories in Belarus and Russia. Networks have been formed to engage in this trade in Lithuania. Cigarette smuggling has increased in recent year: smugglers reportedly use tactics such as drones and border waterways to transport goods.

ENVIRONMENT

The criminal market for flora is almost non-existent in Lithuania. The illegal logging of timber is a concern, however, although it is difficult to assess the scale and impact of this market due to limited information. Generally, more cases of illegal logging are reported in private forests than state-owned woodlands. The illegal wildlife trade is more problematic: Lithuania is both a source and transit country in this market. Marginal hunting and illegal fishing are prevalent in the country – both tend to increase during periods of economic crisis. Although relatively limited in size and scope, the country has been implicated in cases of wildlife crime including illegal hunting and fishing, and the smuggling of rhino horn, mammal skins (such as bears), caviar and tigers. The poaching of wolves has also been

reported. These illegal wildlife cases are often concealed and authorities seldom issue fines. Despite media coverage of poachers being apprehended, very few criminal cases related to illegal hunting or fishing are initiated annually.

While Lithuania is not abundant in natural resources, it serves as a destination and transit country for the illicit trade of amber. This criminal market is connected to demand in Asia and corruption within the country. The illegal amber smuggling market is connected to criminal groups in Russia, Ukraine and Belarus. Amber of various sizes is smuggled: from small pieces used in paintings and jewellery to large nuggets. The precious stones often enter into Lithuania from the Russian territory of Kaliningrad, for local use or to be redistributed and smuggled to countries in Western Europe. In addition to amber, Lithuania has reported numerous cases involving illegal fuel. Criminal groups reportedly mix diesel fuel with other substances to create an alternative oil that is sold abroad to evade excise duties. Illicit fuel is commonly purchased by Latvians and smuggled by Russian and Belarusian crime groups.

DRUGS

Heroin destined for Lithuania originates in Central Asia and is transported across Russia and Belarus before being redistributed within European markets, including the Kaliningrad region of Russia. The smuggling of heroin is carried out by various international organized criminal groups. However, there have also been recorded attempts by Lithuanian gangs to import heroin into Ireland and the UK. Regarding the cocaine trade, Lithuania primarily serves as a transit country. Although cocaine is the second most-seized drug, it remains relatively unpopular in Lithuanian society due to its high cost. Most of the cocaine seized in Lithuania enters through the seaport of Klaipeda and is destined for Belarus, Russia or Scandinavian countries, passing through the UK, the Netherlands or Germany. The cocaine trade in Lithuania also relies on international connections with South American and African countries.

Lithuania also acts as a transit country for cannabis, which remains the most frequently consumed drug despite social perceptions, police crackdowns and stricter legislation. Small-scale local cultivation of cannabis is uncommon, but evidence suggests that it does occur in Lithuania. Cannabis products are typically smuggled into the country from the Netherlands, Spain or Belgium and trafficked through Poland or on various maritime and land routes that use the Klaipeda seaport as the main point of entry.

In terms of synthetic drugs, Lithuania holds strategic importance in the global trade due to its proximity to trafficking routes and key seizure points. The country has close links with the synthetic drug trade and with organized criminal groups involved in the distribution, sale and transportation of amphetamine-type drugs, which are primarily destined for Baltic and Scandinavian countries.

In north-east Europe, Lithuanian and Polish organized crime groups dominate the production of synthetic drugs. These groups smuggle the drugs into Russia, Belarus and Scandinavia using land routes through Poland, Germany, Denmark and Sweden, or using sea routes through Lithuania, Estonia and Sweden. The Lithuanian criminal groups have been documented trafficking drugs to the UK, where they are subsequently redistributed within the Lithuanian diaspora. Within Lithuania itself, there has been a recent increase in the popularity of certain synthetic drugs, particularly among young people and clubgoers, with a focus on substances like carfentanil, a synthetic opioid. It is suspected that some small-scale production laboratories for synthetic drugs may be located in Lithuania.

CYBER-DEPENDENT CRIMES

Lithuania has a high rate of cybercrime and the market is quite developed. In 2021, cyber incidents became more targeted and complex, resulting in increased damage. Hosting providers were the most affected targets, followed by internet service providers and critical information infrastructure. Notable incidents included data leaks and hybrid attacks against institutional websites. Cyber incidents continued to rise in 2022, particularly after the start of the war in Ukraine. Malware distribution remained prevalent: authorities recorded more than a thousand cases. Intrusion attempts and successful intrusions also increased, while distributed denial-of-service attacks showed a downward trend. Ransomware cases also saw a rise, driven by the demand for stolen personal information. Lithuania faced cyber threats from adversarial states such as Russia and China, with ghost-writer hacking operations attributed to Russia.

FINANCIAL CRIMES

Financial crimes in Lithuania have experienced a significant increase, resulting in substantial economic damage. The most prevalent financial crime is tax fraud. This is largely due to Lithuania's proximity to Belarus and Russia, which makes it a target for various tax evasion schemes. Value added tax (VAT) fraud has been specifically identified as the primary source of illicit income. There have been cases where certain Lithuanian companies misused pandemic relief funds to acquire luxury vehicles and yachts, taking advantage of tax refund claims under their companies. Along with Estonia, Lithuania has also gained a reputation for being an offshore financial service centre, which exposes the country to vulnerabilities related to financial crimes.

CRIMINAL ACTORS

Mafia-style groups operating in Lithuania are involved in a range of criminal activities, including drug trafficking, tobacco smuggling, human trafficking and money laundering. While these groups previously had rigid hierarchies, many

have now adopted a more flexible and decentralized structure. They collaborate and divide illicit markets among themselves, although tensions may exist between them. Despite this, major conflicts have been relatively uncommon in recent years. These mafia-type groups extend their influence beyond Lithuania and have a presence in several European countries.

Smaller criminal networks have also become increasingly sophisticated over the past decade. They have adapted to changes in technology, law enforcement capabilities and international cooperation. While they still focus on local activities like tobacco and drug smuggling, they have also expanded their operations across borders. Smaller networks tend to concentrate in cities, while larger groups engage in transnational activities. Lithuanian criminal networks collaborate with groups from South America and Central Asia, particularly in drug trafficking. They take advantage of the migration of the Lithuanian population to countries within the Schengen Area, to establish their presence and carry out criminal activities. Law enforcement efforts have achieved some successes in dismantling these groups.

Lithuania has a long history of various foreign crime groups operating within its territory, including Russian, Polish, Chechen and Georgian criminal organizations. Some groups use Lithuania as a transit point due to the country's geographical location and its connections across the wider European region. Despite their prevalence, the activity intensity of these groups is generally low: most are small and operate locally. Their activities involve human smuggling and trafficking, smuggling of cigarettes, alcohol, arms and car parts. Larger organized criminal groups mainly focus on drug trafficking. Corruption linked to organized crime is primarily associated with drug trafficking, and the country continues to face challenges in addressing corruption within the government and various public institutions. Recent evidence has also emerged of officers from the Lithuanian State Border Guard Service collaborating with organized criminal groups involved in smuggling. In the private sector, organized crime cases often involve cross-border VAT fraud, money laundering, fraudulent bookkeeping and procurement irregularities.

RESILIENCE

LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

Overall, Lithuania is recognized as a stable country with a commitment to fighting organized crime and corruption. Political fragmentation has hindered the progress of certain reforms, but the country continues to prioritize its efforts to create a secure environment and strengthen its institutional framework against organized crime. Corruption remains a persistent issue, even with the presence of a dedicated anti-corruption unit. External perception is that corruption in Lithuania is limited; internally, however, there is remarkably low trust in the government.

Lithuania has enhanced its international cooperation with law enforcement agencies substantially, both within the EU and with other countries. Agreements and partnerships have been established to foster better collaboration and information exchange, and to coordinate efforts against organized crime. These measures have yielded positive results, including a reduction in illegal border crossings and an increase in joint operations targeting drugs and arms trafficking, tobacco smuggling, human trafficking and other forms of transnational crime. Lithuanian authorities actively seek to target criminal activities facilitated by the dark web and by social media platforms. To combat organized crime, Lithuania has implemented strict sanctions and policies. The legal framework includes multiple measures that restrict individuals' rights to liberty, property and privacy; other laws provide tools to tackle organized crime, such

as tax penalties for unexplained income, criminalization of illegal enrichment, regulations for ownerless property and the confiscation of property through criminal and civil procedures. Lithuania has also criminalized the involvement in, and organization of, criminal associations that consist of two or more individuals. Participation in armed criminal organizations can result in a lengthy prison sentence; holding a leadership position in such an organization may lead to imprisonment terms from a decade to life.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND SECURITY

Lithuania's judiciary system has gained international recognition for its continuous improvement in recent years. Nevertheless, bribes and irregular payments are common tender for obtaining favourable judgments; a notable number of judges report facing inappropriate pressure to decide cases in a particular way. Moreover, there have been some complaints about prisoners being denied internet access for educational purposes within the penitentiary system, and in 2022 the government was ordered to compensate a Guantánamo detainee for allowing foreign intelligence services to hold and torture him in facilities outside Vilnius, which violated EU laws.

There are multiple law enforcement agencies dedicated to combating organized crime in Lithuania. Many of these organizations also actively address corruption within their

ranks, since corruption remains a prominent issue within law enforcement institutions. To tackle the problem of internal corruption, surveillance mechanisms such as cameras in police cars have been implemented, and police officers are required to wear and activate body cameras when they leave their vehicles. These measures have contributed to a reduction in corruption cases. Lithuania has two primary intelligence agencies focused on national security – these agencies have also participated in investigations related to organized crime.

As a Baltic state, Lithuania shares a border with Poland and faces challenges related to territorial integrity. The sparsely populated Suwałki Gap, on Lithuania's eastern border, is particularly vulnerable and requires attention. Smuggling activities – including cigarettes, alcohol, drugs and fuel – have been increasing along the borders with Kaliningrad (Russia) and with Belarus. In response to the 2021 migration crisis on the Polish-Belarusian border, Lithuania initiated the construction of physical barriers such as fences and barbed wire to prevent unauthorized crossings. There are some concerns that the focus on addressing migration issues has allowed other forms of international illegal activities to go overlooked. Lithuania has implemented good measures to improve cybersecurity, particularly in the areas of legal regulation and the development of cybersecurity facilities.

ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL ENVIRONMENT

Lithuania has implemented comprehensive legislation and measures to combat money laundering and terrorist financing. The country's financial crime investigation service plays a crucial role in fighting organized crime – this has helped Lithuania avoid being implicated in major money laundering scandals that have affected other Baltic nations. That said, recent financial scandals and offshore money laundering incidents have raised concerns about the effectiveness of the government's policies. While Lithuania has taken steps to prevent money laundering and terrorist financing in areas such as crowdfunding and online gambling, there are ongoing challenges that need to be addressed. These include implementing a centralized register of beneficial owners, increasing regulatory supervision, and strengthening measures to prevent financial crimes across various sectors.

One notable aspect of Lithuanian life is the relatively high use of cash compared to other Baltic and Nordic countries. This could potentially make the economy vulnerable to the infiltration of illicit funds. Despite the risks, Lithuania has not implemented a threshold for the use of cash and is considered to have a transparent banking system with adequate regulations. There are some challenges related to Lithuania's shadow economy, which substantially impacts the country's GDP. Irregular labour is also concerning: it is estimated that about a quarter of private sector GDP is generated by unreported workers. The size of the shadow economy has also increased, particularly due to factors associated with the COVID-19 pandemic; and it is expected to continue growing. While Lithuania's control of corruption

is relatively good compared to previous measures (and close to the EU average), efforts need to be made to combat the shadow economy and address irregular labour, which will further strengthen its economic regulatory environment.

CIVIL SOCIETY AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

Lithuania has made progress in providing support services to victims and witnesses, particularly in cases of domestic violence, human trafficking and sexual exploitation – and especially in cases involving children. A noteworthy milestone was the 2021 adoption of a law establishing the country's first system of generic victim support services. Organizations to assist victims of human trafficking work closely with the government and receive funding through tender-based allocations. Funding for comprehensive support for child victims remains limited, however: only small amounts are allocated annually through tenders.

Lithuania has implemented various preventive measures to address crime and ensure public safety. Internal findings indicate a consistent decrease in reported crimes over several consecutive years, although improvements are still needed in the crime prevention system to define responsibilities and functions. The government has invested in media campaigns to raise awareness about human trafficking, and it has collaborated with organizations to assist victims and carry out preventive work. Efforts to combat cybercrime have been prioritized: the police department conducts meetings to educate members of the public about how to recognize and protect themselves against cybercrimes. A whistle-blower protection law also makes provision for legal services and protection to be afforded to individuals who expose violations within their organizations or businesses.

Lithuania generally respects freedom of association and civil society organizations (CSOs). However, concerns have been raised about the government's curtailment of critical voices aligned with certain political interests. The country is considered free, with a high level of respect for political rights but with a comparatively lower level of civil liberties. Non-state actors, particularly NGOs, play a big role in providing support services to various vulnerable groups. In terms of press freedom, Lithuania has made improvements in its media environment in recent years. Political attacks against journalists are rare, but there are also challenges involved with accessing information. Funding for investigative journalism is limited, primarily due to the country's small population: the government prioritizes efforts to counter disinformation campaigns, and there have been instances of restricted public access to media following investigative articles about political corruption.

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