

Sport & Physical Activity - Lithuanian Community

Basic Facts:

- Lithuania proclaimed its independence from the Soviet Union in March 1990, the first Soviet Republic to do so.
- It joined the European Union in May 2004.
- The capital city is Vilnius.
- The 2003 Census showed it had a population of just over 3.4 million people.
- Lithuania is the largest and most populous of the Baltic States. The country has about 100km of sandy coastline of which only 38kms face the Baltic Sea.
- There are wet moderate winters and summers.

Demographics:

- Over 80% of the Lithuanian population is ethnically Lithuanian and speaks the Lithuanian language. It is the only official state language. Other sizeable minorities exist such as Russians, Poles and Belarussians.

Immigration:

- The Lithuanian community is fairly new to Great Britain. Since 2004, the Worker Registration figures show that **62,799** people have registered for work in England. The most significant communities are in Cambridgeshire, Lincolnshire, Central London and Norfolk.

Health:

- According to a report by the Lithuanian Ministry of Health, the life expectancy of males in 2005 was 63.5% years and for women 77.1%.
- The prevalence of men who were overweight and obese increased from 47% and 11% in 1994 to 56% and 21% in 2006, respectively. There were no changes recorded in the prevalence of overweight and obese women. In 2006, 19% of women were obese and 49% overweight.
- In 2006, drinking of strong alcohol at least once a week was reported by 30% of men and by 10% of women. The frequency of beer drinking has been continuously increasing.

Religion:

- The main religion is Roman Catholic but Eastern Orthodoxy, Protestantism (especially Calvinism) and Judaism also exists as minority religions.

Physical Activity and Sport:

- A report produced in 2008 by the Lithuanian Academy of Physical Education stated that Lithuanian sports policy was still geared towards elite sport. Only a small part of the population (6%) took part in the "Sport for All" movement.
- The most popular sport by far is basketball with numerous Lithuanian players successfully playing in the NBA. The Lithuanian men are ranked 6th in the world in the current FIBA rankings and their women 12th.
- Other popular sports include football, athletics, cycling, orienteering and tennis.
- Lithuania won 5 medals (3 bronze and 2 silver) at the recent Beijing Olympic Games in athletics, sailing, wrestling and modern pentathlon.
- There are a number of established Lithuanian basketball clubs playing in England and in England basketball sanctioned competitions. There is a Lithuanian Basketball League with 13 teams based in London. Deaf Basketball UK also receives support from a Lithuanian consultant, himself a basketball player in the English League.

Further Information:

Basketball League: - www.gintaras.co.uk

Newspapers/Magazines

- Infozona magazine - Infozona
- London Zinios - Londonozinios

Radio

- LZ Radio station - LZ Radio

For more information about partnership working with the Lithuanian community please contact Sporting Equals on **0121 777 1375**.

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