

Lithuania

Ethnicity in Lithuania

Group selection

The **Lithuanians** are the demographic and politically dominant majority. Politically relevant minorities include the **Poles** and **Russians**. There are two periods in Lithuania with same ethnic power relations but different group sizes. The periods were divided according to the census in 1989 and 2001. The relative number of Lithuanians increased and the number of Russians declined.

Power relations

The ethnic power relations have remained the same since independence with Lithuanians as politically dominant ethnic group. The Lithuanians constitute a clear majority with 83.5% ⁽²⁵²⁴⁾. In Lithuania the minority situation is not such important political issue as in the other Baltic States ⁽²⁵²⁵⁾.

The Poles and the Russians are powerless: The Polish minority is represented by the party AWPL ⁽²⁵²⁶⁾, but they have only a small voter support in the country, and only in those municipalities with high share of Poles. Poles living in Lithuania do not face any significant disadvantage ⁽²⁵²⁷⁾. In the parliamentary elections of 2012, the “Electoral Action of Poles in Lithuania” party won eight seats in the Parliament, one seat in the European Parliament, and 11 seats in coalition with the Russian Alliance in the Vilnius City Municipality ⁽²⁵²⁸⁾. Yet, there are (and were) tensions between Poles and Lithuanians concerning language rights (especially in schools), spelling rules in official documents (the Latvian alphabet lacks the “W” which is important for many Polish names) and historical experiences ⁽²⁵²⁹⁾.

The Russians usually live in larger cities ⁽²⁵³⁰⁾, they do not face disadvantages either ⁽²⁵³¹⁾, but are less organized than the Polish minority. Still, the Russian minority does have political organizations, such as the Russian Union and Alliance of Lithuanian Citizens, and there are organizations promote Russian culture in Lithuania.

²⁵²⁴ [Statistics Lithuania, 2014]

²⁵²⁵ [Zaagman, 1999]

²⁵²⁶ [AAkcja Wyborcza Polakow na Litwie, 2010]

²⁵²⁷ [Zaagman, 1999]

²⁵²⁸ [The Baltic Course, 2011]

²⁵²⁹ [The Economist, 2012]

²⁵³⁰ [Library of Congress, 2009]

²⁵³¹ [Zaagman, 1999]

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Political status of ethnic groups in Lithuania

From 1991 until 2000

Group name	Proportional size	Political status
Lithuanians	0.766	DOMINANT
Russians	0.094	POWERLESS
Poles	0.07	POWERLESS

From 2001 until 2017

Group name	Proportional size	Political status
Lithuanians	0.842	DOMINANT
Poles	0.066	POWERLESS
Russians	0.058	POWERLESS



Figure 530: Political status of ethnic groups in Lithuania during 1991-2000.



Figure 531: Political status of ethnic groups in Lithuania during 2001-2017.

Geographical coverage of ethnic groups in Lithuania

From 1991 until 2017

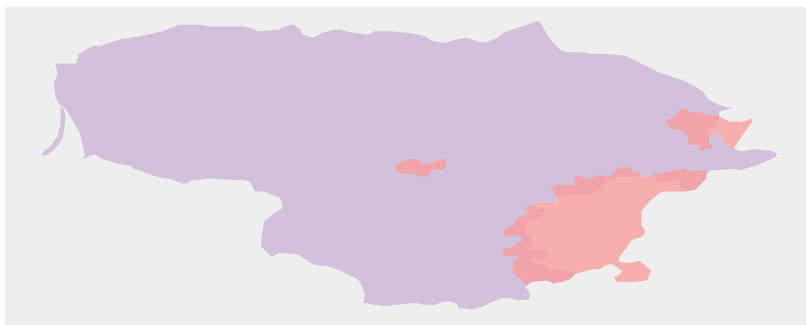


Figure 532: Map of ethnic groups in Lithuania during 1991-2017.

Group name	Area in km ²	Type
■ Lithuanians	59 805	Regional & urban
■ Poles	7801	Regional & urban
■ Russians		Urban

Table 183: List of ethnic groups in Lithuania during 1991-2017.