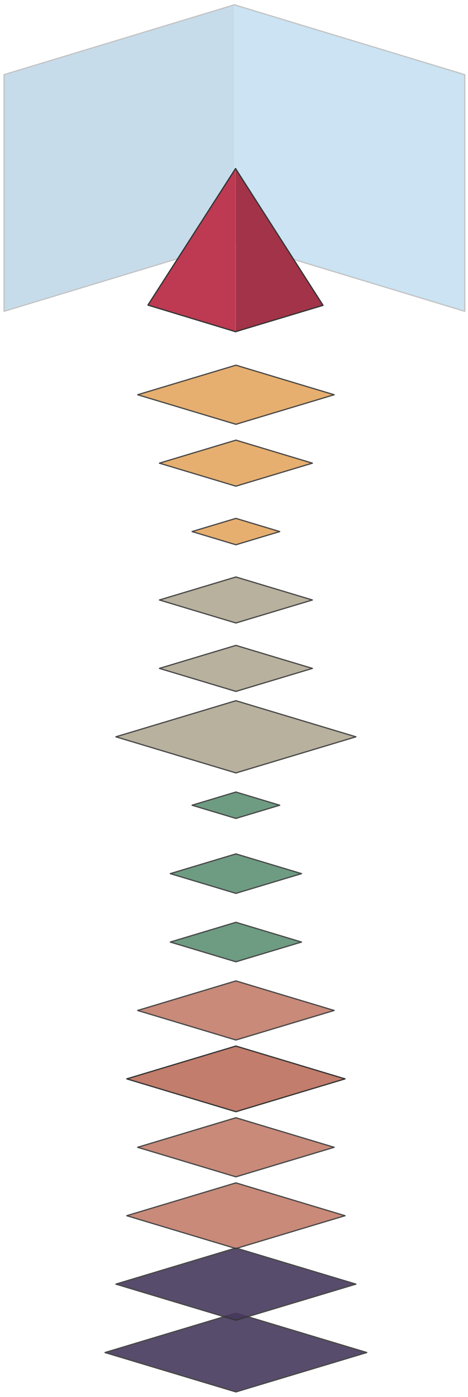
GLOBAL ORGANIZED CRIME INDEX

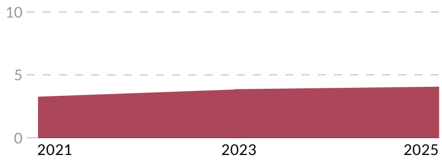
GLOBAL INITIATIVE AGAINST TRANSNATIONAL ORGANIZED CRIME

LITHUANIA



4.08 ↗0.18 CRIMINALITY SCORE

150th of 193 countries ↗6
35th of 44 European countries -
4th of 8 Northern European countries -



CRIMINAL MARKETS 4.07 ↗0.27

HUMAN TRAFFICKING	4.50	↗0.50
HUMAN SMUGGLING	3.50	↗0.50
EXTORTION & PROTECTION RACKETEERING	2.00	0.00
ARMS TRAFFICKING	3.50	↗0.50
TRADE IN COUNTERFEIT GOODS	3.50	↗0.50
ILLICIT TRADE IN EXCISABLE GOODS	5.50	↗0.50
FLORA CRIMES	2.00	↗0.50
FAUNA CRIMES	3.00	0.00
NON-RENEWABLE RESOURCE CRIMES	3.00	↗0.50
HEROIN TRADE	4.50	0.00
COCAINE TRADE	5.00	0.00
CANNABIS TRADE	4.50	0.00
SYNTHETIC DRUG TRADE	5.00	↗0.50
CYBER-DEPENDENT CRIMES	5.50	0.00
FINANCIAL CRIMES	6.00	0.00

CRIMINAL ACTORS 4.10 ↗0.10

MAFIA-STYLE GROUPS	3.50	↘0.50
CRIMINAL NETWORKS	4.50	0.00
STATE-EMBEDDED ACTORS	4.00	0.00
FOREIGN ACTORS	4.50	↗0.50
PRIVATE SECTOR ACTORS	4.00	↗0.50

This project was funded in part by a grant from the United States Department of State.

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Funded by the European Union

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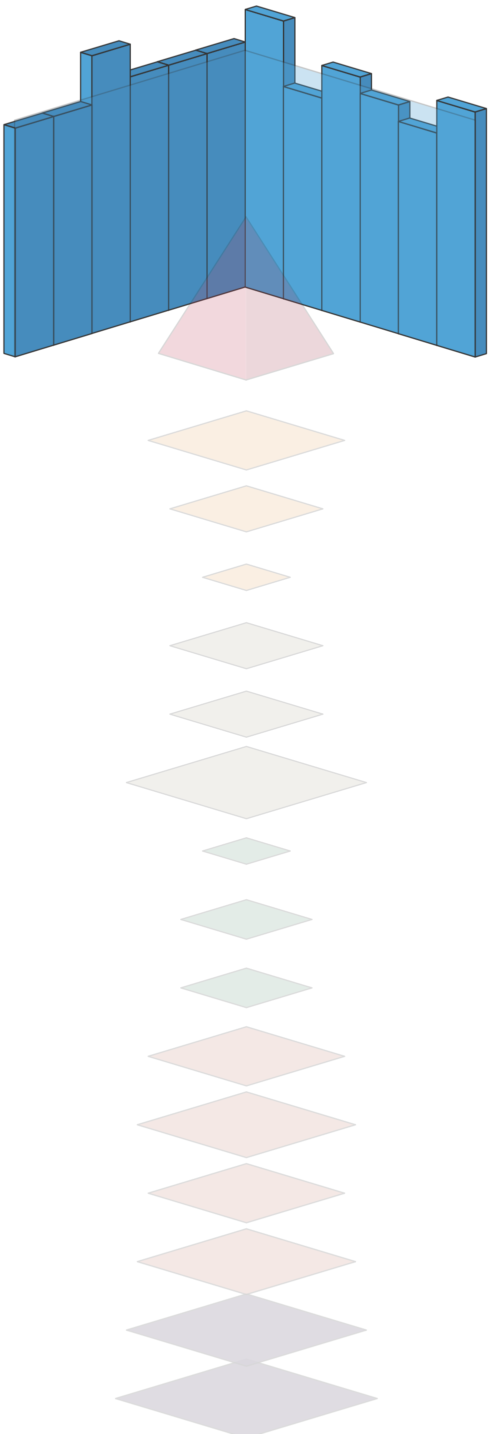
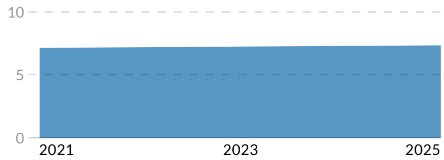
LITHUANIA



7.38 ↗0.08 RESILIENCE SCORE

21st of 193 countries ↗1
15th of 44 European countries ↗1
7th of 8 Northern European countries ↗1



POLITICAL LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE	7.00	0.00
GOVERNMENT TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY	7.00	0.00
INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION	8.50	0.00
NATIONAL POLICIES AND LAWS	7.50	↗0.50
JUDICIAL SYSTEM AND DETENTION	7.50	↘0.50
LAW ENFORCEMENT	7.50	0.00
TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY	8.50	↗0.50
ANTI-MONEY LAUNDERING	6.50	0.00
ECONOMIC REGULATORY CAPACITY	7.50	0.00
VICTIM AND WITNESS SUPPORT	7.00	0.00
PREVENTION	6.50	0.00
NON-STATE ACTORS	7.50	↗0.50

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CRIMINALITY

CRIMINAL MARKETS

PEOPLE

Lithuania is a source, transit and destination country for human trafficking, with both local and foreign victims affected. Lithuanian criminal groups are involved in sex trafficking, labour exploitation and forced criminal activity, targeting women, men and children. Lithuanian women are trafficked abroad for forced marriage and domestic servitude, while men are more commonly exploited for forced labour. Both genders are also subjected to begging, labour exploitation and coerced involvement in criminal acts. As a source country, most Lithuanian victims are trafficked to Germany, the UK, Ireland, Norway and Spain. Although the number of identified victims has remained relatively stable in recent years, inconsistent data collection across government agencies hampers a comprehensive understanding of trafficking trends, even as indications suggest the market is expanding. Lithuania has also become a destination country, with victims identified from Ukraine, Nepal, India and Thailand.

Lithuania primarily serves as a transit country for human smuggling, with migrants entering from Belarus or Latvia en route to Western Europe. The Russia-Ukraine conflict has contributed to a rise in smuggling cases, with a numerous arrests of smugglers from Ukraine, Latvia and other countries. Criminal networks play a key role in coordinating cross-border routes and some smugglers reportedly bribe local police to facilitate operations. Belarusian state-linked actors have also been accused of orchestrating smuggling, directing migrants to cross illegally into Lithuania. Reports indicate that smugglers recruit drivers via encrypted messaging apps, with recent arrests involving Moldovan, Syrian and Iraqi nationals.

Evidence of extortion in Lithuania is limited, though incidents have been reported in migrant detention centres. In the village of Rūdninkai, smuggled people were allegedly forced to pay for services.

TRADE

Lithuania is increasingly becoming a source and transit point for reactivated and modified firearms, particularly non-lethal pistols converted for live ammunition. Despite legal reforms, both the modification and smuggling of these weapons continues. The country remains a hotspot for the seizure of assembled firearms, with foreign actors, particularly Russian entities, actively involved. Rising demand for legal firearms, driven by regional instability, has raised concerns about overlap between legal and illicit arms markets. Although Lithuania has tightened regulations on firearms possession and strengthened border controls, trafficking networks continue to operate covertly. Improved intelligence-sharing with EU partners has led to higher detection rates, but persistent demand from criminal groups sustains the trade.

Counterfeit goods, including electronics, luxury items and illicit tobacco products, are trafficked through Lithuania by organized crime networks exploiting trade routes to European and Asian markets. The proliferation of these products poses economic risks, particularly to the consumer goods sector. While customs authorities have enhanced monitoring capabilities, online sales and evolving smuggling tactics continue to complicate enforcement. Clandestine cigarette factories have been discovered within Lithuania, producing counterfeit brands for export across Europe. Authorities have increased seizures and dismantled several production sites, yet high profit margins make the trade attractive. The smuggling of excise goods, particularly tobacco and alcohol, also remains a notable concern. Criminal networks take advantage of tax discrepancies between Lithuania and neighbouring non-EU countries to move contraband across borders.

ENVIRONMENT

Illegal logging is difficult to detect in Lithuania, but the country has become a destination for smuggled timber from Russia and Belarus. Criminal entities bypass EU sanctions by falsifying documentation, with some Lithuanian companies implicated in rerouting shipments through Central Asia. Although monitoring systems have been introduced to track logging activities, enforcement remains inconsistent, and there have been reports of corruption within regulatory agencies. The illegal timber trade undermines conservation efforts and contributes to deforestation.

Wildlife trafficking remains a persistent issue, particularly involving protected species such as birds and reptiles. Lithuania serves as a transit point for exotic animals bound for European markets. Despite national laws criminalizing the trade, enforcement is sporadic and penalties are relatively lenient, limiting the deterrent effect.

Illicit mining and unauthorized extraction of resources such as peat and amber continue to affect Lithuania's natural environment. These operations, often linked to organized crime, exploit regulatory loopholes and operate in remote areas. While authorities have targeted illegal sites, high demand for valuable natural resources drives continued activity. Environmental degradation resulting from unregulated mining practices remains a pressing concern. Lithuania has also reported instances of illegal fuel smuggling, primarily involving criminal groups transporting fuel from Russia and Belarus. A notable share of the population admits to purchasing fuel through these illicit channels, which are often supplied by truck drivers.

DRUGS

Lithuania functions primarily as a transit country for heroin smuggled from Central Asia to Western Europe. Traffickers exploit its well-developed transport infrastructure to move shipments along established routes. Domestic consumption and availability have remained relatively low and stable over the years, concentrated primarily around urban centres. While law enforcement has disrupted some operations, concealed shipments continue to enter the country.

Cocaine trafficking remains prevalent, with frequent seizures at both ports and land borders. Organized crime groups facilitate the importation of cocaine from South America, using Lithuania as a distribution hub for European markets. The rise in containerized shipments has complicated detection, prompting enhanced port security measures. Despite these efforts, cocaine remains accessible, especially among more affluent consumers.

Cannabis is the most widely used illicit drug in Lithuania, with domestic production on the rise. Indoor cultivation sites operated by criminal networks supply both local and regional markets. Although authorities have dismantled several grow operations, demand remains high.

The synthetic drug market continues to expand, with amphetamines and MDMA readily available. The emergence of synthetic cannabinoids has further complicated enforcement and public health efforts. Domestic production and trafficking are facilitated by organized crime groups with links to broader European networks. Law enforcement has targeted clandestine laboratories, but drug manufacturers continue to evolve their operations. Online sales and dark web platforms further undermine control efforts.

CYBER-DEPENDENT CRIMES

Lithuania has been targeted by cybercrime, including malware, DDoS attacks and ransomware incidents affecting state institutions and businesses. Criminal networks employ advanced techniques to breach digital infrastructure, particularly in the financial and corporate sectors. Russian and Chinese actors have conducted espionage and cyber-attacks, while domestic groups exploit weaknesses in banking and online systems. Despite government investment in cybersecurity and improved coordination with international agencies on investigative efforts, digital payment systems and other platforms remain vulnerable to cross-border cyber threats.

FINANCIAL CRIMES

Financial crime in Lithuania continues to centre on fraud and corruption, frequently involving state-embedded actors and organized crime networks. Tax fraud remains the most prevalent type, with Value Added Tax fraud serving as a major source of illicit income – primarily through the underreporting of goods' value. Recent cases underscore the systemic nature of these offences, particularly the misappropriation of EU and public funds and the execution of large-scale fraud schemes.

CRIMINAL ACTORS

Mafia-style groups in Lithuania are active across multiple illicit markets, including drug and human trafficking, luxury car theft, cigarette smuggling and money laundering. Many Lithuanian criminal actors have relocated abroad, particularly to the UK, Ireland and Spain, where they remain engaged in illegal activities while retaining influence over domestic operations. Violent enforcement tactics, including contract killings, have been linked to Lithuanian organized crime figures both at home and overseas.

Lithuanian criminal networks operate both domestically and across Europe, engaging in drug trafficking, arms smuggling, fraud and financial crimes. Their decentralized and flexible structures allow them to adapt quickly to changes in law enforcement strategies. Recent investigations have linked Lithuanian actors to high-profile criminal operations, with Europol listing three Lithuanian nationals among its most wanted. These networks frequently collaborate with Afghan, Turkish and Latin American drug trafficking groups, facilitating the movement of illicit goods through Western Europe. Their connections to transnational criminal enterprises allow them to bypass regulatory controls, making Lithuania a key node in international smuggling routes.

Corruption continues to pose challenge in Lithuania, particularly in law enforcement, border control and public procurement. Investigations have exposed the involvement of some officials in smuggling operations, including members of the state border guard service facilitating illicit activity along the Belarusian border. While anti-corruption measures have resulted in indictments, bribery and illicit financial transactions are prevalent. Efforts to improve oversight mechanisms are ongoing, yet holding officials accountable remains difficult.

Foreign criminal groups exert influence in Lithuania, particularly in drug trafficking, human smuggling, money laundering and illicit trade. Russian, Polish, Chechen and Georgian organized crime groups have long used Lithuania as a strategic transit hub between Eastern and Western Europe. These groups smuggle cigarettes, alcohol, arms and stolen or counterfeit goods, often in collaboration with local criminal networks. Russian state-affiliated actors have also been implicated in cybercrime, targeting Lithuanian financial institutions and government agencies through cyberattacks and fraud schemes. Belarusian state actors have been accused of facilitating human smuggling by physically assisting migrants to cross the border illegally. Additionally, financial crime networks previously based in Estonia, have begun operating in Lithuania, particularly those involved in cryptocurrency fraud.

The Lithuanian private sector has been implicated in various forms of illicit activity, including timber smuggling, arms trafficking and large-scale money laundering. Several companies have falsified documentation to circumvent EU sanctions, particularly involving Russian and Belarusian timber imports. At least nine Lithuanian firms have reportedly used third countries, such as Kazakhstan and Türkiye, to re-route illegal shipments into Europe. Others have engaged in irregular practices related to the trade in medical goods, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic. High-profile cases have revealed the involvement of shell companies, offshore accounts and financial institutions in facilitating illicit financial flows, underscoring broader vulnerabilities in regulatory oversight and the sector's susceptibility to criminal exploitation.

RESILIENCE

LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

Lithuania's political leadership has shown a sustained commitment to combating organized crime, with ongoing efforts to strengthen transparency and accountability. Recent legislative amendments have targeted economic and financial crimes, particularly within the financial services sector. Parliamentary debates have also focused on closing regulatory loopholes that could be exploited for illicit activity. The country's performance in global governance indices continues to improve, reflecting institutional resilience. While no evidence suggests direct infiltration of organized crime into the political system, isolated bribery cases have been reported.

Lithuania has advanced digitalization initiatives to promote transparency and public oversight. Mechanisms for financial disclosures and procurement monitoring have improved, supported by the launch of open-data platforms that grant access to government records. These tools have aided investigative journalists and civil society in flagging potential irregularities. However, enforcement capacity remains uneven, limiting the impact of these transparency initiatives. Corruption continues to be a concern, with public surveys highlighting dissatisfaction, particularly in the healthcare and energy sectors. Independent oversight bodies monitor electoral finances and lobbying activities to mitigate the risk of undue influence.

Lithuania actively engages in international law enforcement efforts through Europol, INTERPOL and joint operations with EU member states, enhancing its capacity to combat organized crime. Intelligence-sharing agreements and regional cooperation have also been prioritized. While extradition agreements have streamlined prosecution efforts, procedural hurdles and differences in legal frameworks among partner states continue to delay some enforcement actions. Lithuania's participation in multinational task forces has led to notable successes against transnational criminal networks, yet legal inconsistencies and jurisdictional complexities still hamper the effective prosecution of cross-border crimes.

Lithuania has implemented national policies to address organized crime, money laundering and financial fraud. Domestic laws have been updated to align with EU standards, particularly in the area of cybercrime. Despite these developments, enforcement agencies face challenges in detecting and prosecuting complex financial crimes due to limited resources. Amendments to anti-corruption legislation have increased penalties for bribery, although capacity constraints continue to hinder investigations. The introduction of comprehensive legal frameworks has strengthened oversight, but gaps remain in regulatory enforcement, particularly in high-risk industries. Recent reforms have also sought to enhance procedures governing legislative processes, with the goal of increasing transparency and accountability in policymaking.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND SECURITY

Lithuania's judiciary handles organized crime cases through specialized units managing financial and cyber-related offences. Despite increased financial intelligence gathering, prosecutions for high-level financial crimes remain limited. Legal reforms have aimed to strengthen judicial independence, though concerns persist over inconsistent sentencing. Rehabilitation initiatives have been introduced in detention facilities, but their impact is constrained by limited capacity and inadequate access to reintegration programmes. Overcrowding, poor healthcare and substandard conditions in some prisons have drawn international criticism. Civil society organizations continue to call for reforms to improve prisoner rights and expand reintegration efforts.

Law enforcement agencies in Lithuania have strengthened their technical capacity to combat organized crime, investing in digital forensics and cybercrime investigation units. Specialized task forces targeting drug trafficking and financial crime have successfully disrupted criminal networks. However, limited resources and increasingly sophisticated criminal tactics require ongoing adaptation. Isolated cases of corruption within law enforcement underscore the need for sustained oversight. Joint operations with EU partners have bolstered Lithuania's operational capabilities, though challenges such as specialized training and the retention of skilled personnel continue to affect overall effectiveness.

Lithuania's position as an external EU border state presents ongoing challenges linked to trafficking and cross-border crime. Strengthened control measures, including surveillance systems and scanning technology, have improved monitoring capabilities, yet criminal networks continue to adapt by exploiting alternative routes. Intelligence-sharing with neighbouring countries has enhanced Lithuania's response to these threats. Geopolitical tensions with Russia and Belarus have led to stricter border security protocols, including restricted crossings and intensified scrutiny of illicit movements. In parallel, cybersecurity threats have emerged as a national concern, prompting efforts to bolster protections for critical infrastructure.

ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL ENVIRONMENT

Lithuania has implemented stricter anti-money laundering (AML) measures, increasing oversight of financial transactions and cryptocurrency-related activities. Authorities have expanded monitoring of high-risk sectors to mitigate illicit financial flows. While the country has aligned its AML framework with EU directives, enforcement gaps persist, particularly in monitoring designated non-financial businesses and professions. Despite improvements, detecting and prosecuting sophisticated money laundering schemes remains a challenge.

Lithuania's economic regulatory framework supports foreign investment while introducing safeguards to prevent financial crime. Oversight of sectors such as real estate and financial services has been strengthened, with regulatory agencies enhancing corporate due diligence requirements to reduce the risk of exploitation by organized crime. Cash payment limitations have been introduced to curb shadow economy activity, though enforcement challenges remain. Stricter rules for virtual asset service providers aim to address financial crime risks, but consistent compliance across the sector requires ongoing scrutiny.

CIVIL SOCIETY AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

Victim and witnesses support services in Lithuania include shelters, counselling and legal aid, delivered through collaboration between NGOs and government institutions. These initiatives aim to assist those affected by human trafficking and extortion. However, underreporting driven by fear of retaliation continues to hinder their effectiveness. While comprehensive support frameworks exist, access to specialized services is limited in rural areas. The absence of a national action plan, coupled with the inconsistent implementation of victim referral mechanisms, has hindered the provision of effective support to victims.

Public awareness campaigns and education-based prevention efforts have been introduced to reduce susceptibility to organized crime. Initiatives targeting youth and vulnerable groups have supported early intervention, while outreach on issues such as human trafficking and cybercrime is delivered through media and school-based programmes. Nevertheless, evaluations of their long-term deterrent effect are yet to be conducted.

NGOs play a key role in crime prevention and victim assistance, complementing government initiatives. They provide advocacy, direct support and policy input to enhance Lithuania's resilience to organized crime. However, dependence on external funding poses sustainability challenges for NGO-led initiatives, reinforcing the need for more institutional support. Civil society's role in anti-corruption monitoring and public policy advocacy has supported greater transparency, though closer institutional cooperation is still needed to maximize long-term impact.

This summary was funded in part by a grant from the United States Department of State. The opinions, findings and conclusions stated herein are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the United States Department of State.