

Brief Embassy Report on Bilateral Relations – ITJ Division, DGCI&S, Kolkata.

India-Lithuania Bilateral Relation

A. Introduction

1. Indian Trade Journal (ITJ) division of the Director General of Commercial Intelligence and Statistics (DGCIS) brings out weekly publication on Embassy Profile Report providing information on recent policy changes and happenings in other countries that may be of interest to the Indian trading community. This is the Profile Report depicting the Embassy of Lithuania. 2. India recognized Lithuania (along with the other Baltic States, Latvia and Estonia) on 7 September 1991, after acceptance of their independence by the erstwhile USSR. Diplomatic relations were established with Lithuania on 25 February 1992. Lithuania opened its Embassy in New Delhi on 1 July 2008, and has three Honorary Consuls in India i.e. in Mumbai, Bengaluru and Kolkata. An Honorary Consul of India in Vilnius has been operational since October 2014.

3. It is widely acknowledged that the Lithuanian and Sanskrit languages have much in common. Lithuanian, being the Indo-European language grammatically closest to Sanskrit, signifies possible close ancient links. Experts suggest that more than 100 root words (and 10,000 derivatives) may be common between the two languages. Until conversion to Christianity in 13th century, the people in Lithuania worshipped nature and had a trinity of gods - Perkunas, Patrimpas, and Pikuolis.

4. Sanskrit became part of the academic curricula of the Vilnius University in the 1970s, when Prof. Ricardas Mironas started teaching the language in the Department of Philology. He translated 13 hymns of the Rig Veda into the Lithuanian language and became the third recipient of the Jawaharlal Nehru Award (the first two were poets Vacys Reimeris and Eduardas Miezelaitis).

B. Commercial Relations (Trade and Foreign Investment) – Recent facts & figures

5. As per Indian statistics, the bilateral trade between India and Lithuania reached a record high of US\$ 531.77 million in 2021-22. Major Indian imports from Lithuania include: edible vegetables, wood and articles of wood, textiles, plastics and articles thereof, electrical machinery and equipment, iron and steel, optical, photographic and measuring instruments, copper, zinc and articles thereof. Major Indian exports to Lithuania include: nuclear boilers and reactors, pharmaceutical products, fish, organic chemicals, tobacco and manufactured tobacco, textile articles, iron and steel, plastic and articles thereof, miscellaneous chemical products etc.

The export-import statistics for the last seven years as per India's Ministry of Commerce data bank are as follows :

The Export-Import statistics from 2019-2020 to 2023-24.

(US Dollar Million)

Year	Total trade	Import	Export
2019-20	372.85	262.09	110.76
2020-21	484.71	321.05	163.66
2021-22	531.77	200.92	330.85
2022-23	471.68	114.24	357.44
2023-24	440.81	136.39	314.42

(Source: Department of Commerce, India)

6. Indian Investment in Lithuania

(i) **HCL Technologies investment:** HCL Technologies Lithuania UAB, a 100% subsidiary of HCL Technologies Ltd., and engaged in business consulting, solution implementation and ongoing application management, start edits operation in August of 2016. HCL's Operation Centre was formally inaugurated on December 11, 2019 in Vilnius, Lithuania. Their main customers are Barclays Bank, Kraft Foods & Mondelez Global LLC. It has two centers in Vilnius—a near shore site for Europe region and a language capability center for the global business.

(ii) **Indorama development:** An important development in the economic field has been the investment of about US\$200 million by Indorama, a Lohia Group company, from their Thailand branch, in the Klaipeda Economic Zone in a plant to manufacture plastic resin. This investment has given visibility to India in Lithuania. It is the largest single line PET resin plant in Europe with lowest carbon footprint.

(iii) **Tonbo Imaging investment:** In September 2018, Indian company Tonbo Imaging entered Lithuania by opening office in Vilnius. The company develops advanced imaging and sensor systems for defense, security and intelligent transportation systems. The company plans to establish a research and development team of over 50 specialists in Kaunas, Lithuania.

(iv) **Indian Chamber of Commerce in Lithuania:** In October 2018, the Indian Chamber of Commerce in Lithuania (ICCL) was established. ICCL is a platform for representing Lithuanian business environment to the entrepreneurs from India and vice versa.

C. Other Major Areas of Cooperation :

➤ Several Agreements/Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) have been signed between India and Lithuania for cooperation in the fields of economic and commercial links, technical cooperation and culture.

➤ The following agreements have been signed between India and Lithuania:

(i) Agreement on Trade and Economic Co-operation (July 1993) (ii) Protocol on Bilateral Consultations between the Foreign Offices (August 1995) (iii) Memorandum of Understanding on Air Services (November 1999) (iv) Agreement on Air Services (February 2001) (v) Agreement on Cooperation in Culture, Science and Education (February 2001) (vi) Agreement on Economic and Technical Cooperation (October 2001) (vii) Bilateral Investment Promotion and Protection Agreement (BIPA): March, 2011 (viii) Agreement on Avoidance of

Double Taxation(DTAA) (July2011) on Avoidance of Double Taxation(DTAA) (July2011) (ix) Agreement on the exemption from visa requirement for holders of diplomatic passports (November 2013)has come into operation on 30July 2014 (x) Cultural Exchange Program (CEP) for the years 2016-18 (xi) MoU on Agriculture and Allied Sector: July2016. (xii) Extradition Treaty:(October2017) (xiii) Protocol amending the Bilateral Air Services Agreement(October2017) (xiv) Cultural Exchange Program for the period 2019-21 (xv) Agriculture Work Plan 2020-2022 on 18-20 July 2016, (xvi) Extradition Treaty: Protocol of exchange of documents of ratification was signed during the visit of HVP to Lithuania in August 2019.

➤ **Foreign Office Consultations:** Under the Protocol on Foreign Office Consultations signed in Vilnius in August1995,eight rounds of FOC shave been held so far. These talks have focused on bilateral, regional and international issues. The 8th round of Foreign Office Consultations (FOC) between India and Lithuania was held on 16 March 2022 in New Delhi. The Indian side was led by Ms. Neeta Bhushan, Additional Secretary (Central Europe) in the Ministry of External Affairs and the Lithuanian side was led by Mr. Audrius Brūzga, Director General of Latin America, Africa, Asia and Pacific Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Lithuania.

➤ **India-Lithuania Forum:** The India Lithuania Forum was inaugurated in the Lithuanian Parliament in September 2010. This forum provides support to various NGOs, individuals and institutions that are interested in India to reinforce India's multi-faceted relationship encompassing culture, education, business and science.

➤ **Indology:** Study of Indian languages (mainly Hindi and Sanskrit) has been carried out at the Vilnius University for several decades. A separate center of Indian studies, under the Department of Oriental Studies, was set up in the Vilnius University in1996. In August 2006, the Vilnius University had hosted the 2nd Regional Conference of Central & Eastern Europe on Indian Studies (CEEIS) under the auspices of ICCR. A compilation of 108 common words of Sanskrit in Lithuanian languages has been brought out by the Oriental Centre of the Vilnius University jointly with the Lithuanian Embassy.

➤ **Yoga:** Lithuanians have great interest in Indian cultural traditions, including Yoga. An estimated 70% Lithuanians visiting India have spiritual and yogic interests. Yoga and Sanskrit are also taught in several Lithuanian cities. International Day of Yoga is being celebrated every year in Vilnius and several other cities of Lithuania.

➤ **ITEC:** Under the Indian Technical and Economic Co-operation Program(ITEC), since 1993, over 400 Lithuanian nominees have attended various courses in diplomacy, English, banking, mass communications, financial management, urban development management, IT, auditing etc. The Lithuanian leadership at the highest level has expressed appreciation for the ITEC program.

➤ **Indian Community:** The Indian community is around 1000, including students. Over the last few years, some Indian IT experts have come to Lithuania to work on IT projects.15 Indian families work in the Klaipeda plant of the Lohia Group. The number of Indian students studying full time in Lithuania now stand at around 900.

Source:www.mea.gov.in