

### 3. INFORMATION ABOUT LITHUANIA, ŠIAULIAI AND ŠIAULIAI STATE COLLEGE

#### 3.1. BASIC FACTS ON LITHUANIA

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Lithuania is the country, located at the western end of the East European Plain, on the shores of the Baltic Sea. State name – the Republic of Lithuania.

In 2009 Lithuania celebrated 1000 years since its name was first mentioned in written texts.

**State emblem** – the white Vytis in the red field.

**National Flag description** – three equal horizontal bands of yellow (top), green, and red. The colours of the flag symbolize: yellow – the sun, light and prosperity; green – the Lithuanian landscape, hope and joy; red – the colour of earth, life and blood. It symbolizes the nation's courage and tenacity in the struggle for freedom. The state flag was created in 1918.

**National Anthem** – “The National Song” by V. Kudirka.

**Official state language** – Lithuanian. It is an Indo – European, Baltic language.

**Capital** – Vilnius.

**Major cities** – Vilnius, Kaunas, Klaipėda, Šiauliai, Panevėžys.

**Basic law** – the Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania adopted 25 October 1992.

**Background:** Independent between the two World Wars, Lithuania was occupied by the USSR in 1940. In March of 1990, Lithuania became the first of the Soviet republics to declare its independence.

**Government** – Executive branch: chief of the state – President, head of the government – Prime Minister. Legislative branch: unicameral Parliament or Seimas. The Seimas consists of 141 Seimas members, representatives of the People, elected for a four-year term.

**National currency** – Litas (LTL; 1 LTL = 100 ct). Exchange rate -1 EUR = 3.4528 LTL.

**National Holidays (2011):**

- 1 JANUARY – New Year's Day
- 16 FEBRUARY – National Day – Independence Day
- 11 MARCH – Restoration of Lithuania's Statehood
- 24, 25 APRIL – Easter
- 1 MAY – International Labour Day
- 1 MAY – Mother's Day
- 5 JUNE – Father's Day
- 24 JUNE – St. John's Day
- 6 JULY – Day of Statehood
- 15 AUGUST – Assumption Day
- 1 NOVEMBER – All Saints' Day
- 25, 26 DECEMBER – Christmas Days

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**Population** – 3,261,322 (October 2010). Ethnic groups – Lithuanians 83.1%, the Polish 6%, Russians 4.8%, Byelorussians 1.1%, Ukrainians 0.6%, other 4.4% (2010).

**Major religion** – Roman Catholics.

**Neighbour States** – North border with Latvia, East border with Belarus, South border with Poland, Southwest border with Russia.

Lithuania is in the Central European Time Zone: GMT +2 hours in winter, GMT +1 hour in summer.