

My European Voluntary Service

STARTER KIT



"Human Rights – My Rights!", Presidential Palace in Vilnius

National LGBT* Rights Organization LGL in Vilnius, Lithuania

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Welcome at LGL!

YES! You made it! You found an EVS project that inspires you. You sent your CV and your motivation letter. You managed a Skype interview. And... you got accepted!

But what now? Here is your ultimate guide that will acquaint you safely out of your comfort zone to where the magic happens: The National LGBT* Rights Organization LGL in Vilnius, Lithuania!

Welcome in our team! =)

In this booklet you can find information about your arrival, accommodation, insurance, contacts, about living in Lithuania, your work, and, of course, about the situation of LGBT* people in Lithuania.

Flip the page and get started!



Gotta go: Preparations

A European Voluntary Service (EVS) is one single learning experience. And you are already right in it. So what's next?

Agreements

Your Hosting Organization – LGL – will prepare your Volunteering Agreement which will be signed between you, your Sending Organization (SO), the Lithuanian National Agency, and LGL.

Insurance

During your EVS you will be well insured. Your SO will provide you with all necessary information.

Travels

As soon as you and LGL have agreed on your starting date you can start searching and booking your travel tickets. LGL will reimburse you later.

There are different ways how to reach Vilnius: By plane, by train, and by bus.

Depending on where you come from trains can be complicated as you might have to cross a country in which you need a transit visa.

If you want to come by plane check also Kaunas Airport, sometimes flights are cheaper then.

There are also many international coach operators that go to Vilnius, for instance *Lux Express/ Simple Express, Eurolines/ Kautra, Ecolines*. You can also try to reach Warsaw first, e.g. with *Student Agency, Sindbad, or Postbus*. *Polski Bus* recently discontinued its service to Vilnius. Buses can take very long but usually they are the cheapest option and you can transport more luggage for free than in planes. Do not forget that your travel money is for your entire journey – also for your travels back home after your EVS ;-)

Pre-Departure Training

About four to two weeks before your service starts your sending organization will organize a pre-departure training for you. There you will learn more about the EVS in general and your host country, you will have the opportunity to talk about your fears, concerns, and expectations.

If you are interested you can have an informal Skype meeting with your future volunteer coordinator and/or the current EVS volunteers at LGL after you had your pre-departure training.

Tutor & Mentor

During your EVS two people will supervise you. One is directly from LGL, the Volunteer Coordinator. The Volunteer Coordinator will be your tutor and thus your counterpart regarding your work. By now you are already in contact with your tutor.

You will also have a mentor. The mentor is not a staff member but a local volunteer. Your mentor will support you in challenging situations at work and in your personal life and help you to get familiar with Vilnius and Lithuania. Your mentor will contact you before your arrival.



Here I am: Arrival

You finally arrived in Vilnius. But what now?

Pick Up & Accommodation

On your arrival you will be picked up by your tutor and your mentor. They will accompany you to your accommodation. You will share a flat with the second EVS volunteer. It is fully equipped with furniture, bedding, towels and kitchen tools. Each of you will have their own room. During the weekend you will have time to acquaint yourself with your flat mate and co-volunteer, the flat, and the city.

Orientation, Transport, Communication

On arrival you will receive the main tools to move around in the city: A map of Vilnius, the *Vilniečio kortelė* for the public transport, and a Lithuanian SIM card.

You will have a monthly ticket on your *Vilniečio kortelė*. You can top it up at the little kiosks that you can find close to many bus stops, they are called *Lietuvos spauda*. After topping it up you need to activate it on the bus. Try not to forget to top up and activate your ticket – the ticket control is very alert. In case you are enrolled at a university and have an ISIC let your tutor know ahead, then you will receive a different *Vilniečio kortelė* that is cheaper.

The SIM card you can top up either at the *Lietuvos spauda*, at so called *Fox Boxes*, and in any supermarket at the checkout.

Bus schedules you can find here: stops.lt/vilnius/#vilnius/en There are three different kinds of buses – trolley buses, regular buses, and fast buses. Go out and try them all!

Vilnius does not have too many night buses but you can always take a taxi. *eTaksi* accepts SMS in English and also has an English app.

If you are a cyclist try the orange Cyclocity bikes (April-October).

Food & Drugstore Products

In Lithuania there are some main supermarket chains: *Maxima*, *Rimi*, and *Iki*, smaller ones are *Čia* and *Norfa*. You can find all main products there – food, drugstore products, homewares. (Alcohol is not being sold past 10 PM by the way :-P) They are usually open from 7/8 AM until 10/11 PM, also on Sundays and public holidays. For emergencies the 24h *Maxima* on Mindaugo gatvė is always waiting for you. Of course, there are also some specialized chains and shops, for instance *Drogas* for drugstore products and tons of little shops, for example for meat.

There are markets as well where you might find things for less money, for instance at *Kalvarijų turgus* or *Halės turgus*. Most of the food you can find there is not homegrown. If you want food from local producers try *Senamiesčio krautuvė* or the farmers' market *Tymo turgus*. From spring till fall grannies are selling seasonal and cheap food and flowers in front of many supermarkets, there you can also get a lot of things you will not get in supermarkets – berries, birch sap, ...

Clothing

There are many shops and shopping centers in Vilnius. Whatever you need, you will find it! There is also a lot of second hand shops with cheap and quality clothing. Ask your friends and colleagues, everyone has their favorite shop(s).



Cafés, Bars, Restaurants

Here are our favorites!

7 Fridays is one of those bars you want to stay at all summer long – just because of the yard.

Akivarai has foosball and the prettiest beer glasses in town.

Alaus Namai – Beer House – the name speaks for itself.

Arbatos Magija is the magical tearoom near the Halès Market.

Bix Baras is your place for a burger on Sundays.

Bukowski baras has the most amazing summer terrace and good hot dogs.

Būsi trečias is a must for the pub quiz on Tuesdays... and also for potato pancakes!

Café de Paris is there for you when you need mulled wine, good food, and music.

Chaika has the best (bestbestbest) tea in town and also some vegan drinks and snacks.

Dėvėti has the best (bestb...) Falafel in town. Lunch menu for 4 €, good beer.

Forto dvaras is your place for meat cepelinai, mushroom soup in bread, gira, and tea with fruits.

Inkilas is the place for drum 'n' bass and alternative music.

Kablys is the place for the cool kids. Alternative concerts & DJ sets.

Liverpool looks hipster but is cozy and has great (indie) live concerts.

Mano guru has salad, salad, salad. And it is great. Social reintegration workplace for addicts.

Mano kiemas – oh, just another summer terrace...

Mint Vinetu is books. And hot chocolate, books, postcards, books, a piano, books, a dog, books.

Mr. Pub is a bit punk, has good beer, and cozy sofas.

Paviljonas does not have the best menu but good (jazz) concerts.

Peronas 0 is the alternative train platform at... the train station.

Planeta is a tiny cinema café with amazing tea.

Plum Bum Baras awaits you with a lunch menu and concerts.

Prie Katedros brews awesome beer and has the best mushroom soup and dark bread ice cream.

Que Pasa is where you go to dance salsa on Saturday night. Located at train station.

Sarkozy is apples, apples, and apples. The one and only cider place.

Šnekutis is your place for all really traditional Lithuanian dishes. Pig feet - we dare you!

Špunka is small, crowded, and unique. And the beer is good.

Šviešios bandelės has the most amazing sweet and savory buns. Try spinach & cheese.

Tappo d'Oro is "the bar". Everyone loves it, nobody knows why.

Užupio kava has coffee (Oh, the cappuccino!) that accomplishes even the standards of Italians.

Vegcafé Ashram has the best Indian food and fruit cocktails in town and it is sooo cozy.

Who hit John? is hidden between two big restaurants, the interior is definitely worth a visit.

X baras is your other place for a burger on Sundays.

Yucatan offers Mexican food and... well, find out yourself.

Zatar is very good vegan falafel place in the very city center and open almost 24/7.



Museums, Parks, Cinemas & Everything Else

All places that do not have food or music. Our favorites!

Active Vilnius invites you all summer long to joint Tai Chi, Yoga, Nordic Walking, ... events.

Bastille offers a nice and calm (*chrn*) view over the city.

Beepart is a community center with a lot of great events, especially movie screenings.

Contemporary Arts Center – the names speaks for itself.

Free Excursions invites you to free excursions. Logically. Different and unexpected topics.

Hill of the crosses is one of the most beautiful viewpoints.

KGB Museum tells about the times of Lithuania as a part of the Soviet Union.

Mickevičiaus biblioteka is a beautiful library – one of many in Vilnius.

National Art Gallery – well, um, art?

Neris and *Vilnielė* are the rivers in Vilnius – rent a canoe in the summer and explore the city from the different point of view.

Parks and forests are all over Vilnius. Recommending you to visit *Vingio Park* in the very city center and not that much remoted *Verkių* and *Pavilnių Parks* – first one for the Calvary, Balsys Lake and the longest stairs and the latter one for the amazing view from the highest rock exposure in Lithuania - Pūčkorių atodanga. Remember that it is forbidden to drink in public! (*chrn*)

Pasaka is the bigger arthouse cinema. Screenings in English/ with English subtitles.

Skalvija is a tiny arthouse cinema. Screenings in English/ with English subtitles.

Skamba skamba kankliai is one of hundreds of summer festivals. And the best one.

Subačiaus gatvė has the other really, really amazing viewpoint.

University of Education – hidden volleyball courts. Join the local couchsurfers!

Užupio galeria has even more art for you. Yeah!

White bridge – picnic, swings, half pipes, volleyball courts (for free!), and our Sakura <3

Where I am: Lithuania & Vilnius

Everything you need to know about Lithuania and Vilnius in four paragraphs.

The Country

Lithuania is situated in Eastern Europe between Poland, Belarus, Latvia, Russia, and the Baltic Sea. It has approximately three million inhabitants, the capital is Vilnius. The country is small and the border countries are easy to reach – just do not forget to take your passport with you. Nevertheless you should also travel a lot within the country – it is different from Vilnius.

Lietuva is the place where it rains – but only according to its name. The Lithuanian summer is bright – and the winter long. It is getting cold in October and you can have snow until April. But in summer you will easily reach 30 degree and there is sun, sun, sun (with short rain showers from time to time). Everything else you need to find out yourself =)

The City

Vilnius is the capital of Lithuania. It offers you many wonderful opportunities. Explore!

The people

Yes, Lithuanians do know how to smile. You do not believe it? Make them smile =) And do not mix Lithuania and Riga with Latvia and Vilnius... eh. They are proud of their country. Do not hurt their feelings – otherwise... Small, but oh my!



Where I work: LGL

Although Lithuania is a member of the European Union it often struggles with equal rights for the LGBT* community. Here we are, spreading unicorns and rainbows!

LGL

LGL is the only organization in Lithuania exclusively representing interests of the local LGBT* community, it is non-governmental and non-profit.

LGL's vision: a respectful, open, and inclusive Lithuanian society that is free of discriminatory attitudes.

LGL's mission: to promote inclusive social and legal environment for LGBT* individuals through advocacy, awareness raising and capacity building.

Orientation week & Work

The first week of your EVS will be an "orientation week" in which you will get to know the organization and the city guided by the volunteer coordinator, your mentor, and local volunteers from LGL. The orientation week will include e.g. an evening with the new colleagues, a by local volunteers guided tour through Vilnius, an introduction to the local volunteers at a community event, and presentation about social and legal situation of LGBT* people in Vilnius by a colleague.

You will receive a security training during to learn how to react in certain situations (visitors at the office, behavior in suburbs of Vilnius, reaction to threats on the street), as well as an introduction to LGL's security arrangements: The front door is locked but allows to take a look at visitors, there are two silent alarm buttons in the office, one in the volunteers' office. Before bigger events there will be specified security briefings. They are, nonetheless, for emergencies. LGL will never involve you in any actions that are considered as dangerous.

Furthermore you will talk about your learning goals at LGL and your ideas for own projects.

On-Arrival and Mid-Term Trainings

During your time at LGL you will have two trainings with volunteers from all over Lithuania.

In your on-arrival training (2-4 weeks after your arrival) you will learn more about EVS, your rights and duties, and your learning opportunities and wishes.

In your mid-term (circa in the middle of your EVS) you will reflect your work, set new goals, and catch energy and motivation.



Important Contacts

Your Volunteer Coordinator

Your Mentor

Your Embassy

