



CAN A STATELESS PERSON ACQUIRE CITIZENSHIP OF THE REPUBLIC OF LITHUANIA?

The legislation of the Republic of Lithuania provides for the cases and conditions under which individuals, including stateless persons, may apply for citizenship of the Republic of Lithuania.



WHERE CAN A PERSON APPLY FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THE ACQUISITION OF CITIZENSHIP OF THE REPUBLIC OF LITHUANIA?

The Lithuanian Red Cross Society is a humanitarian association which provides free legal advice to stateless persons on the following issues:

- What the grounds and conditions for the acquisition of citizenship of the Republic of Lithuania are
- What documents are necessary for applying for citizenship of the Republic of Lithuania
- Where to apply for citizenship of the Republic of Lithuania and what the procedure is for examining such an application.



THE LITHUANIAN RED CROSS SOCIETY

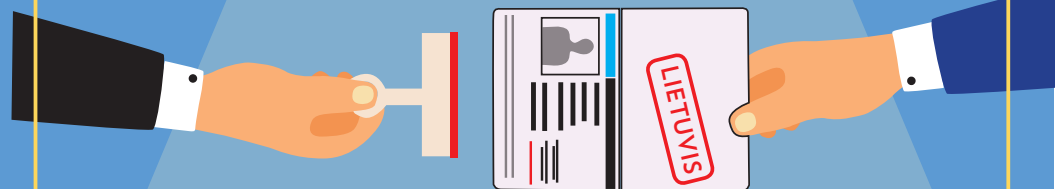
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INFORMATION ABOUT CITIZENSHIP



HAVE YOU NEVER HAD CITIZENSHIP?

DO YOU DOUBT IF YOU HAVE CITIZENSHIP?

HAVE YOU LOST YOUR CITIZENSHIP?



WHAT ARE THE DISADVANTAGES OF BEING A STATELESS PERSON?

Citizens of the Republic of Lithuania have the broadest extent of rights, freedoms and guarantees in Lithuania. Whereas, the possibility of stateless persons to use the rights granted to foreign nationals residing in Lithuania depends on the type of residence permit they possess in the Republic of Lithuania and, in general, on the fact of whether such a person resides within the territory of Lithuania legally, i.e., whether he or she has been granted a permit for residence within the Republic of Lithuania. Thus, the main disadvantages of being a stateless person are the following:

- Stateless persons intending to enter and live within the territory of the Republic of Lithuania have to meet the conditions required for the granting of visas and a residence permit in the Republic of Lithuania, although residence permits for the Republic of Lithuania are only issued for a certain term and may be withdrawn.
- Stateless persons do not have the right of voting in elections (except those who have a permanent residence permit in the Republic of Lithuania – persons with a permanent residence permit are entitled to participate in municipality elections).
- Stateless persons illegally staying within the territory of the Republic of Lithuania or after the expiry of their residence permit for the Republic of Lithuania can be detained and removed from the Republic of Lithuania.
- A travel document issued to a stateless person is only valid for up to 2 years.
- Stateless persons may not use visa exemptions for travelling to states with which Lithuania has concluded agreements for such exemptions to its citizens (for example, travelling to Ukraine, Byelorussia or Russia).
- Stateless persons who reside in Lithuania under a temporary residence permit in the Republic of Lithuania may not use the national health and social protection system in its full scope (for example, such individuals are not entitled to receive support for deprived residents, are not entitled to receive state social assistance benefits, are not granted a one-time monetary sum for support in the case of death and cannot apply for child benefits or be insured by the compulsory health insurance except when they meet certain additional conditions).
- In cases when a stateless person does not have a residence permit in the Republic of Lithuania and has not legalised his or her residence in Lithuania, he or she is unable to be lawfully employed, may not use the services of the national health and social protection systems, and may be detained or removed from the country.

WHAT DOES BEING A CITIZEN OF THE REPUBLIC OF LITHUANIA MEAN?

Possession of citizenship of the Republic of Lithuania is interpreted as an individual's permanent legal relationship with the Lithuanian state based on mutual rights and obligations. Citizens of the Republic of Lithuania have all the rights, freedoms and obligations established by the Constitution, laws and other legislation of the Republic of Lithuania, as well as international agreements of the Republic of Lithuania, whereas stateless persons, i.e., individuals who are not citizens of the Republic of Lithuania or any other country, are treated as aliens in Lithuania, and they are granted a narrower scope of rights and freedoms than the ones granted to citizens of the Republic of Lithuania.

WHAT ARE THE ADVANTAGES OF HAVING CITIZENSHIP OF THE REPUBLIC OF LITHUANIA?

Possession of citizenship of the Republic of Lithuania provides a person with certain rights, freedoms and guarantees which are not granted to foreign nationals residing in the Republic of Lithuania, or are granted them in a narrower scope. Thus, being a citizen of the Republic of Lithuania is an advantage, as:

- The Lithuanian state defends and takes care of its citizens not only in within the territory of the Republic of Lithuania, but also outside its borders.
- A citizen of the Republic of Lithuania cannot be removed from the territory of the Republic of Lithuania.
- A citizen of the Republic of Lithuania cannot be extradited except in cases provided for in international agreements.
- Citizens of the Republic of Lithuania are free to leave from and come back to the territory of Lithuania.
- Citizens of the Republic of Lithuania are free to travel in member states of the European Union, to live in them and to work in them under the same conditions as the citizens of these states.
- Citizens of the Republic of Lithuania may use visa exemptions for travelling to states with which Lithuania has concluded agreements for such exemptions to its citizens (for example, travelling to Ukraine, Byelorussia or Russia).
- Citizens of the Republic of Lithuania may participate in the political life of Lithuania, i.e., they have voting and election rights in the elections of the President of the Republic of Lithuania, Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania, municipality elections and election to the European Parliament.
- Citizens of the Republic of Lithuania may enjoy the services of the national health and social protection systems and other rights provided for them by law.