

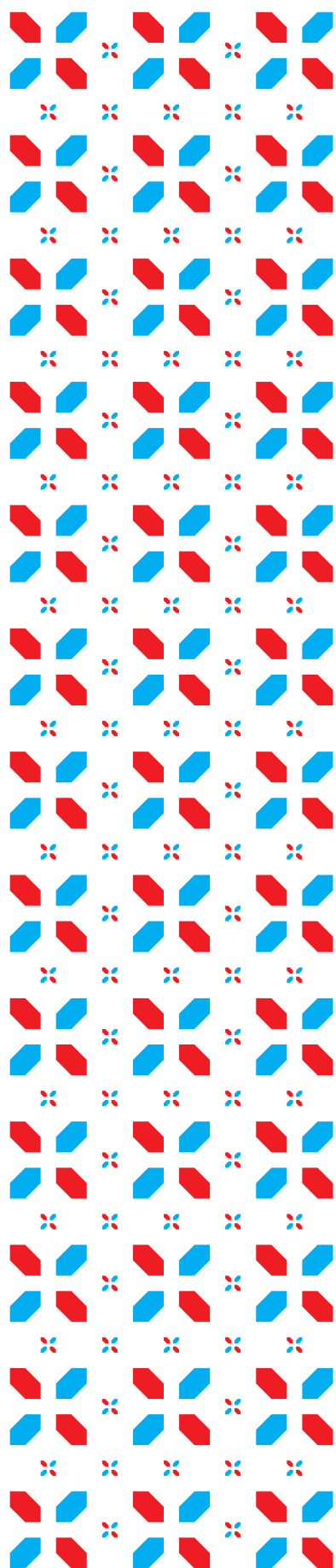


LUXEMBOURG
LITUANIE

30 ANS DE RÉTABLISSEMENT DES
RELATIONS DIPLOMATIQUES
DIPLOMATINIŲ SANTYKIŲ
ATKŪRIMO 30-METIS

CELEBRATING
THE 30TH ANNIVERSARY
OF THE RE-ESTABLISHMENT OF
DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS BETWEEN
LUXEMBOURG AND LITHUANIA







2022

is a special year for bilateral relations between the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg and the Republic of Lithuania for several important reasons.

We celebrate the 30th anniversary of re-establishing diplomatic relations between our two countries, on 23 March 1992. Lithuania was the first Soviet Republic to declare the restoration of its independence, and the first to be recognised *de jure* by Luxembourg, on 27 August 1991. The official documents regarding the re-establishment of diplomatic relations were signed on 2 July 1992, upon the accreditation of the first Envoy of the Republic of Lithuania to Luxembourg. Luxembourg was one of few European States which have never recognised the occupation and annexation of Lithuania, Latvia or Estonia.

Bilateral cooperation between Luxembourg and Lithuania has always been excellent. The two countries value each other as reliable partners, sharing foreign policy objectives and interests within the European Union and multilateral fora, such as the Council of Europe, the OSCE, the United Nations, and NATO. Political ties have also been strengthened through annual meetings of Benelux Foreign Ministers with their Baltic counterparts since 2007, and deepening cooperation with the Baltic countries is a priority for Benelux.

Cultural exchanges between our citizens are increasingly popular. In 2022, Kaunas in Lithuania and Esch-sur-Alzette in Luxembourg are “European Capitals of Culture”, providing a great opportunity to enhance our cooperation in this area and to learn more about each other’s cultural heritage.

Let us also remember that Radio Luxembourg (RTL) was incredibly popular among people in Lithuania during the Cold War, especially in the 1960s and 1970s, providing an escape to a more free and colourful world and building a bridge with young people in the West.

The celebrations of 2022 offer an opportunity to recall the shared sympathy between our two nations.





The Two Grand Duchies

In 963, Count Siegfried acquired a small castle, “Lucilinburhuc”, on a rocky outcrop called the “Bock” in today’s capital, Luxembourg City. Thus began the millennial history of a small country, which soon developed into an economic, political and religious centre. In the 14th century, the Luxembourg dynasty was one of the most influential in Europe, and the Counts of Luxembourg gained key territories far away from the country’s current borders. Three members of the House of Luxembourg bore the Imperial Crown, including Charles IV (1316-1378), who elevated the County of Luxembourg to the rank of duchy, before it became a grand duchy in 1815 by decision of the Congress of Vienna. Today, Luxembourg remains the only grand duchy in the world, a constitutional monarchy with His Royal Highness the Grand Duke as Head of State.

However, the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg was not the first grand duchy in history. In 1240, the leader of Lithuania Mindaugas successfully united the tribal principalities of Lithuania to create the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. Just like the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, it was a rather small but fast developing country, and in the 14th century it became the largest country in Europe. In 1386, the powerful Grand Duke of Lithuania Jogaila married the Polish Queen Jadwiga and thus became the King of Poland Vladyslav II Jogaila, creating a new dynasty, which ruled the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth continuously until 1572.

During those years, Luxembourg and Lithuania wielded great influence. Over the centuries, the two grand duchies suffered more and more losses of their territories, and the First World War swept away most of the great dynasties of continental Europe. Grand Duchess Marie-Adélaïde of Luxembourg abdicated in 1919 and the government organised a referendum on the future form of the state. The vast majority of citizens voted in favour of keeping the monarchy, thus strengthening the legitimacy of the new Grand Duchess Charlotte who was the younger sister of Marie-Adélaïde. Lithuania chose another way when it signed its Act of Independence on 16 February 1918, founding the modern Republic of Lithuania. The new republic adopted the coat of arms of Jogaila, the “Pahonia” (Vytis), the oldest coat of arms in the world.



Charles IV (1316-1378) elevated the County of Luxembourg to the rank of Duchy.

© MNHA / photo: Tom Lucas



Mindaugas created the Grand Duchy of Lithuania in 1240.

© Photo: Monika Krilaviciene



Bilateral Relations Between the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg and the Republic of Lithuania



H.R.H. Grand Duchess Charlotte, the Head of State of Luxembourg from 1919 to 1964.

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H.E. Mr Petras Klimas, Lithuanian Special Envoy and Minister Plenipotentiary for the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg between 1925 and 1940.

© Wikipedia



Direct diplomatic exchanges at the time were rare. Archives show that Mr Oskaras Milašius was *chargé d'affaires* of Lithuania in France from 1921 to 1926. He was followed by Mr Petras Klimas, one of the first and most well-known diplomats in post-war Lithuania. Klimas began his career in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs after the first government was formed on 11 November 1918. In 1919, he served as an administrator in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In 1923, he was appointed Special Envoy and Minister Plenipotentiary for Italy, and between 1925 and 1940 for France, then Belgium, Spain, Portugal and the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg. On 21 December 1931, Ambassador Petras Klimas presented his letters of credence to Her Royal Highness the Grand Duchess of Luxembourg.

After World War II, Luxembourg was one of few European countries which never recognised the occupation and annexation of Lithuania and the other Baltic states.

The renaissance of our diplomatic relations took place after the restoration of Lithuania's independence in 1990. Luxembourg first recognised Lithuania on 27 August 1991, but the official documents regarding the re-establishment of diplomatic relations were not signed until the first Envoy of Lithuania was accredited in 1992.

Lithuania's accession to NATO and the European Union in 2004 further strengthened bilateral relations between the two countries. As a result, on 2 June 2008 Luxembourg accredited its first non-resident Ambassador to Lithuania, Mr Ronald Dofing. Since then, the diplomatic representatives in Vilnius, residing in Warsaw, have been: Mr Conrad Bruch (2011-2013), Mr Georges Faber (2013-2016), Mr Conrad Bruch (second mandate: 2016-2020). The current Ambassador, Mr Paul Schmit, was accredited in Lithuania on 15 April 2021. The non-resident Ambassador of Lithuania to Luxembourg, Mrs Rita Kazragienė, was accredited on 1 September 2019 by His Royal Highness the Grand Duke.

In multilateral fora, cooperation between Luxembourg and Lithuania is particularly strong. Successful military and security cooperation also constitute an important link between both countries. Through NATO, Luxembourg has participated in the "Enhanced Forward Presence" in Lithuania in Pabradė, since 2017, with military personnel and equipment on the ground on a rotational basis. Luxembourg provides Lithuania with satellite capacity and additional equipment to support the Baltic Air Policing mission. The Luxembourg army also regularly participates in military exercises in the Baltic States. In April 2020, Luxembourg made its civil strategic air transport capacity available to other Member States, thus enabling the delivery of 110 tons of medical equipment for the benefit of the Lithuanian population.

Regarding bilateral economic relations, Luxembourg is particularly pleased with emerging cooperation in the renewable energy sector. In 2017, both countries signed the Agreement on Statistical Transfers of Renewable Energy. After signing the Agreement in 2018, Luxembourg bought renewable energy worth 16.5 million EUR from Lithuania and Estonia in order to meet its green targets. The level of trade remains relatively low, mainly due to the geographical distance, but the trend is positive: since 2015, the volume of trade has increased fourfold, from 16.2 million EUR to 65 million EUR in 2020; imports from Lithuania reached almost 41 million EUR. Financial cooperation between the two countries also flourished: in the third quarter of 2019, the largest investment inflows,



worth 143.7 million EUR, came from Luxembourg. Because of the pandemic, the inflow has slowed down, but foreign direct investments from Luxembourg remain relatively high. In July 2021, one of the largest companies managing pension and mutual funds in Lithuania, INVL Asset Management, launched its flagship bond fund in Luxembourg.

Luxembourg has been very interested in developing its economic cooperation with Lithuania. During the official visit of His Royal Highness the Grand Duke to Lithuania in October 2017, a large business delegation participated in the Lithuania-Luxembourg Business Forum in Vilnius. The event was focused on exploring new opportunities in logistics, transport, innovation, finance and information technologies. Other sectors also look promising, such as the space sector and telecommunications, where Lithuania and Luxembourg share similar objectives.

Regarding cooperation in higher education, in November 2019, under the Luxembourg Presidency of the Benelux, the ministers of higher education of the Benelux countries and their counterparts from the Baltic States signed a declaration of intent on the automatic recognition of higher education degrees. The according treaty was launched on 27 September 2021.

Cultural relations between the two countries are marked by the highlight of Esch2022 and Kaunas2022 – European Capitals of Culture. Both are the second largest cities in their countries and have a rich historical heritage to share with the rest of the world.

Luxembourg currently has two Honorary Consulates in Lithuania, with Honorary Consuls Mrs Vilija Vaitkutė Pavan in Vilnius and Mr Ramūnas Garbaravičius in Kaunas at the helm.



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Official Visit of His Royal Highness the Grand Duke of Luxembourg to Lithuania

Our bilateral relations were further enhanced by the official visit of H.R.H. the Grand Duke from 25 to 27 October 2017, following an invitation by the Lithuanian President, H.E. Mrs Dalia Grybauskaitė.

After His arrival in Vilnius, the Grand Duke and the delegation visited the Palace of the Grand Dukes of Lithuania.



At the Palace of Grand Dukes of Lithuania on 25 October 2017 (from left to right): Mr Jean Asselborn, Minister of Foreign and European Affairs of Luxembourg; Mr Vydas Dolinskas, Director of the National Museum; H.R.H. the Grand Duke of Luxembourg; Mr Etienne Schneider, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Economy of Luxembourg.

© SIP / Photo: Charles Caratini

The following day, the Grand Duke and the President were present for the signing of the Agreement on Statistical Transfers of Renewable Energy between Lithuania and Luxembourg, aimed at helping Luxembourg achieve its national renewable energy target for 2020. The European Commission congratulated Lithuania and Luxembourg for the initiative, which was the first such agreement in the European Union.

During the visit, the Heads of State inaugurated the Lithuania-Luxembourg Business Forum, which gathered more than 200 participants from both countries. It focused on exploring new opportunities in logistics, transport, innovation, finance and information technologies.



H.R.H. the Grand Duke of Luxembourg and the Lithuanian President, H.E. Mrs Dalia Grybauskaitė, at the Presidential Palace on 26 October 2017.

© SIP / Photo: Charles Caratini



The Heads of State of Luxembourg and Lithuania, the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Economy of Luxembourg, Etienne Schneider and his Lithuanian counterpart, Minister Žygimantas Vaičiūnas.

© SIP / Photo: Charles Caratini

The Grand Duke laid a wreath in the Antakalnis Cemetery at the memorial for victims of the Soviet military and security forces attacks during the January Events and Medininkai Massacre in 1991.

Ceremony at the Antakalnis Cemetery during the Official Visit on 26 October 2017.

© SIP / Photo: Charles Caratini



In the afternoon, the Grand Duke met the President of the *Seimas*, Mr Viktoras Prancietis, and the Prime Minister of the Republic of Lithuania, Mr Saulius Skvernelis.

After the official meetings, the Grand Duke visited Vilnius Tech Park Sapiegos, where Lithuanian innovators and founders of various start-ups met the Luxembourg delegation.

In the evening, the President received the Grand Duke for a Gala Dinner at the Presidential Palace.

On the third day of the official visit, the Grand Duke, together with the President and Ministers of Defence of both countries, visited the military unit in Pabradė, where they met soldiers from Luxembourg serving as a part of the international battalion of NATO.

Visit to the military unit in Pabradė and meeting with soldiers from Luxembourg on 27 October 2017.

© SIP / Photo: Charles Caratini





Esch2022.lu // Kaunas2022.eu Together: European Capitals of Culture in 2022

The title “European Capital of Culture” has been awarded annually by the European Union since 1985. The objective of the European Capitals of Culture is to highlight the diversity of European culture, promote encounters, and communicate European values. Cultural aspects of a city, region or an entire country are made more accessible to the European public. The title is intended to support sustainable cultural initiatives and contribute to the development of the awarded cities through increased national and international attention.

In 1995 and 2007, the capital of Luxembourg, Luxembourg City, was designated “European Capital of Culture” and shared this title with Thessaloniki and Sibiu respectively. This time the honour goes to Esch-sur-Alzette, located in the formerly industrial south of Luxembourg, as well as to Kaunas, an important centre of economic, academic and cultural life in Lithuania. It has been twelve years since a Lithuanian city, namely Vilnius, was awarded the title. In addition to Esch-sur-Alzette and Kaunas, Novi Sad in Serbia has also been selected as a “European Capital of Culture”. All three “European Capitals of Culture” are the second largest cities of their respective countries.

Esch-sur-Alzette (Esch2022) organises a series of cultural events with a strong pan-European dimension, in cooperation with other municipalities, including 8 in France. The city’s theme is a ‘remix culture’, to emphasise the future of Europe as a peaceful, multicultural region. Esch2022 invites us to “mix and mingle, create together, and reimagine the Esch2022 region, Europe, and the world of the 21st century”.



ESCH-SUR-ALZETTE
EUROPEAN CAPITAL
OF CULTURE



Kaunas2022 puts the emphasis on a common journey from temporary to contemporary. It is also a call to start a dialogue, to speak with history, and to discover the identity of the city, which was the capital of the Republic of Lithuania from 1919 to 1940. The organisers would like to promote the same passion and spirit of modernity and innovation that was characteristic of those times. Kaunas2022 is organising around 4,025 events and activities, with 17,000 people involved, and plans to reach more than 1 billion people.

Esch2022 and Kaunas2022 have decided to support as many joint initiatives as possible between the two capitals.

One such common initiative is a project launched by the Kaunas Photography Gallery in cooperation with the Centre National de l'Audiovisuel in Luxembourg, in which artists from Lithuania and Luxembourg prepare a photographic magazine dedicated to contemporary humanistic photography.





Esch-sur-Alzette

The town was first mentioned in 773. However, it was Henri IV, Count of Luxembourg, who granted the town its freedom in 1287. Esch-sur-Alzette was fortified in 1311, and these fortifications were dismantled in 1671. Its growth is largely due to the discovery of iron ore in 1838. Thereafter, the rural town became a prosperous industrial centre and the second city of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg.

With a lively past and a large selection of cultural attractions, the multicultural city is well known for its architectural charms (the architects Viollet-le-Duc, Joseph Stübben, Gottfried Böhm and Peter Rice all left their mark on the city). Esch-sur-Alzette is a real melting pot of European architecture: architectural expressions connected with Historicism, Art Nouveau, Modernism, Functionalism and contemporary architecture can be found there.

These two important emanations of Esch-sur-Alzette – its industrial past and its architectural heritage – merge in a spectacular manner in Esch-Belval, a new urban district located on the outskirts of Esch-sur-Alzette and Sanem. The site of the former steel plant of ARBED, the Luxembourg steel and iron company created in 1911 (which became Arcelor in 2002 before merging with Mittal Steel in 2006 to become world-leading steel company ArcelorMittal, headquartered in Luxembourg), was transformed into a modern post-industrial city of flats and offices – a real jewel in terms of architectural, economic and cultural revitalisation.





City Hall of Esch-sur-Alzette.

© SIP / Photo: Claude Piscitelli



**Esch-Belval,
a former steel-producing site.**

© SIP / Photo: Paul Cannar



Esch-Belval hosts a campus of the University of Luxembourg.

© SIP / Photo: Claude Piscitelli



Kaunas

The city was mentioned by chroniclers for the first time in 1361. After being granted municipal rights based on Magdeburg law in 1408, Kaunas became an important centre and one of Lithuania's main trading ports. In 1441, the merchants of Hansa opened offices in Kaunas. By the end of the 16th century, Kaunas had become one of the most developed towns in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. However, during the 17th and 18th centuries, it went through a long period of hardship, caused by attacks, plagues and fires. In the 19th century, Kaunas regained some prosperity. From 1919 to 1940, it was the capital and most important city of Lithuania. The city was devastated during World War II and the Soviet occupation. Since regaining its independence, Kaunas has become a powerhouse in the industrial development and spectacular economic growth of Lithuania.

This industrial past is only one of the commonalities between Kaunas and Esch-sur-Alzette, and Kaunas is also proud of its architectural heritage. The city has a wonderful old town with Gothic, Renaissance and Baroque buildings. Above all, Kaunas is proud of its unique modernism, designed by young, ambitious Lithuanian architects who combined popular modernism ideas with Lithuanian tradition to create a very distinctive school of interwar architecture. Modernist architecture in Kaunas is already included on the UNESCO World Heritage Tentative List, and it has a good chance of being permanently recognised as "The Capital Inspired by the Modern Movement".



Modernist architecture in Kaunas.

© Photo: Martynas Plepys





City of Kaunas.

© Photo: Martynas Plepys



City of Kaunas.

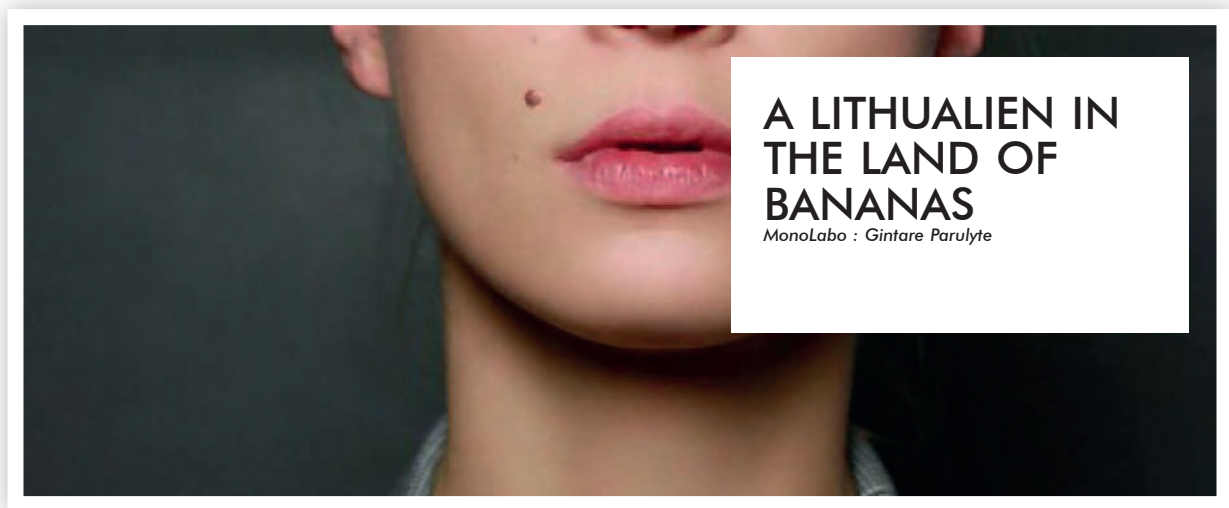
© Photo: Martynas Plepys



A Lithualien in the Land of Bananas

In this autobiographical play, the “Lithualien” is the Lithuanian actress, singer, author and director, Ms Gintare Parulyte, who is well known in Luxembourg. She performed in the films of Roman Coppola (CQ), Peter Webber (Girl with a Pearl Earring) and Jean-Claude Schlim (House of Boys), as well as many other productions.

The “Land of Bananas” refers to the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, where Gintare Parulyte has lived since the age of 7, when her father found a job there and decided to move his family from Vilnius to Luxembourg.



A poster of the premiere of “Lithualien in the Land of Bananas” in 2018.

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The play explores the experiences and thoughts of a young girl who spent her early life in the grey Soviet Republic of Lithuania, where bananas were a rarity and therefore symbolised some kind of luxury. Unexpectedly, she moved to Luxembourg, where bananas are available all year round. Moreover, according to the little Lithualien, bananas in Luxembourg were consumed at a disrespectfully quick pace! The play is a collection of surreal details that struck and confused the little girl who came from a completely different, alien world. The personal narration tries to explore the topic of alienation, emotional isolation, and ultimately the power of human resilience.

The premiere took place in Luxembourg City in 2018 at the *Banannefabrik*, a cultural centre in the very same place where ‘luxurious’ bananas were stored in the past. In 2019, it was performed at the State Small Theatre of Vilnius with the support of the Embassy of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg to Lithuania.



Early life in Soviet Republic of Lithuania.

Photo: Private archives of Gintare Parulyte



“A Lithualien in the Land of Bananas” at the State Small Theatre of Vilnius on 4 June 2019.

© Photo: Sarune Zurba

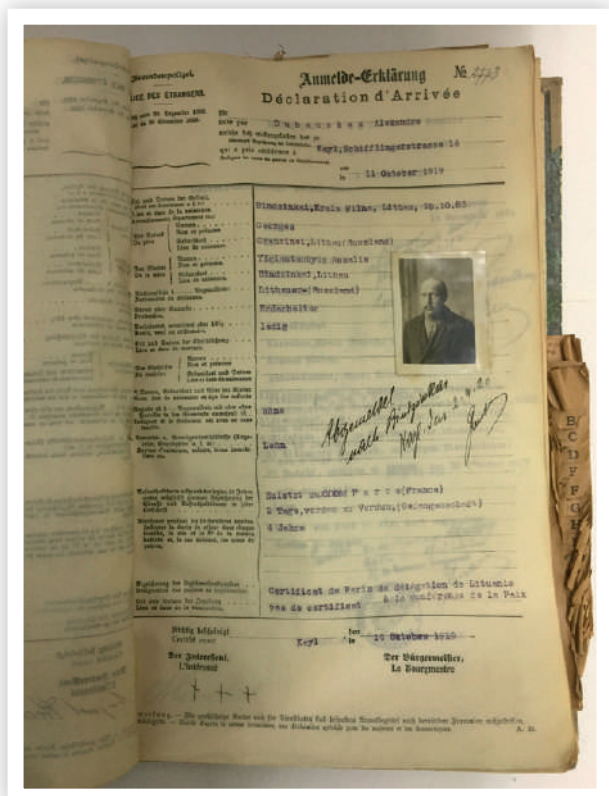


Note on Immigration from Dr Inna Ganschow

In the late 1890s and early 1900s, people from what is now Lithuania had difficulties in identifying themselves as Lithuanian citizens, because Lithuania was incorporated into the Russian tsarist Empire. Only in the years between the two World Wars, when Lithuania was independent, do people show-up in records as Lithuanians. Also, due to the frequent misspelling of Lithuanian family names in official documents, it is difficult to conduct thorough research on individual people.

Nonetheless, documents seem to show that there was a small Lithuanian presence in Luxembourg before World War I. This population increased in the 1920s, most probably due to the demise of the Russian empire. Around this time, the Republic of Lithuania decided to nominate an Honorary Consul in Luxembourg: Mr. René Blum (1889-1967). As a member of the Socialist Party, he was a well-known lawyer and politician (head of the Luxembourgish Parliament and member of the Government before World War II). In 1944, he became the first diplomatic representative of Luxembourg residing in Moscow, and in 1956, President of the Luxembourg-USSR association.

In the 1930s, the Lithuanian presence in Luxembourg diminished. Due to a shortage of work, people moved on to other destinations. Some Lithuanians also obtained Luxembourgish citizenship, and were therefore no longer identified as Lithuanians.



About the author:

Dr Inna Ganschow is the author of the monograph "100 Jahre Russen in Luxemburg", 2020. She is known as a history journalist in the field of contemporary history at the German television network ZDF and the newspaper Luxemburger Wort. Ganschow is currently working as a migration researcher at the Center for Contemporary and Digital History C²DH at the University of Luxembourg.



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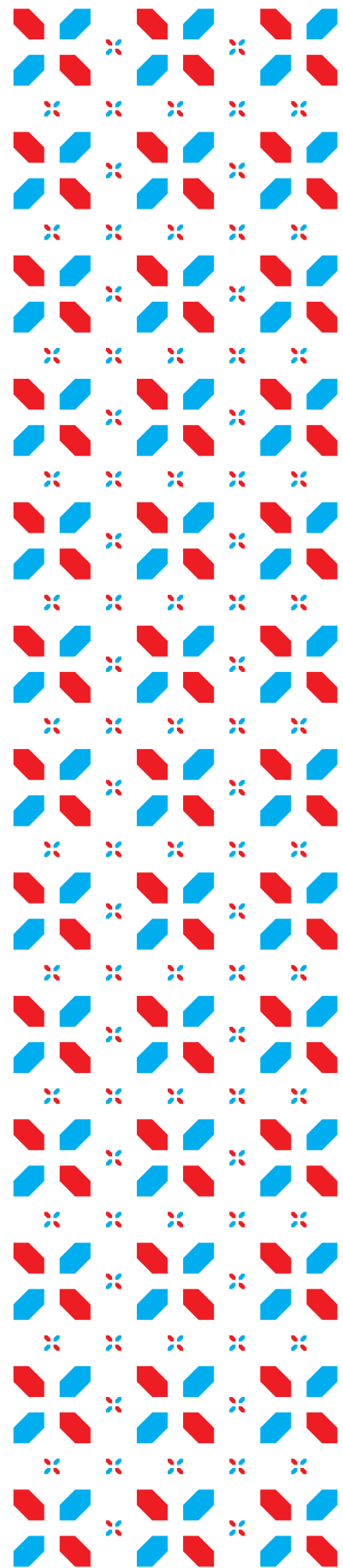
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Ambassade en Lituanie