



**THE REPUBLIC OF TURKEY
SOCIAL SCIENCES UNIVERSITY OF ANKARA
INSTITUTE OF GRADUATE STUDIES IN SOCIAL SCIENCES**

DIASPORA POLICIES IN THE BALTIC STATES

Master's Thesis

Dovilė Labutytė-Tavus

International Relations

July 2022

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**Thesis supervisor
Asst. Prof. Dr. Kadir Onur Unutulmaz**

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STATEMENT OF ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

I hereby declare that all information in this document has been obtained and presented in accordance with academic rules and ethical conduct. I also declare that, as required by these rules and conduct, I have fully cited and referenced all materials and results that are not original to this work. I declare that this thesis is written according to the writing rules of Social Sciences University of Ankara, Institute of Social Sciences.

Dovilė Labutytė-Tavus

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ABSTRACT

Diaspora policies are gaining increased importance worldwide, and the Baltic States are no exception. This thesis is researching why diaspora policies are playing an important role in the Baltic States' politics and how diaspora policies differ amongst three Baltic States – Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia. These three states provide a good research sample because they have significantly large diasporas worldwide compared to their population, which is again in a similar range. The Baltic States share close geographical proximity and some historical commonalities as well, and yet their diaspora policies differ to some extent. All three Baltic states, for example, have different dual citizenship policies and different voting systems for their diasporas abroad, etc. Can existing diaspora engagement policies explain occurring differences? In what ways do respective demographics, histories and economies of the Baltic States affect their diaspora policies?

Although these countries appeared to be quite similar on the surface, by analyzing their demographics, histories, and economies, some differences were discovered as well. Both Latvia and Estonia have quite a sizeable Slavic population, while the one in Lithuania is much lower, resulting in some different approaches. Overall, Baltic States' diaspora policies seem to be heavily influenced by their demographic and historical backgrounds, and as a result, these countries encourage long-distance nationalism. Diaspora institution theories were used as another method to research and understand occurring differences.

This thesis also explains that a multitude of factors of which some are susceptible to constant changes, influence each state's diaspora policies and the Baltic States are no exception. Overall, it can be noted that all Baltic States prioritize their diasporas even if their general diaspora engagement levels differ.

Keywords: Baltic States, diaspora, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, migration, diaspora policies.

ÖZET

Diaspora politikaları dünya çapında daha fazla önem kazanıyor ve Baltık Devletleri de buna bir istisna sayılmaz. Bu tez, diaspora politikalarının Baltık Devletlerinin siyasetinde neden önemli bir rol oynadığını ve diaspora politikalarının üç Baltık Devleti – Litvanya, Letonya ve Estonya arasında nasıl farklılık gösterdiğini araştırmaktadır. Bu üç devlet, yine benzer bir aralıkta olan nüfuslarına kıyasla dünya çapında önemli ölçüde büyük diasporalara sahip oldukları için iyi bir araştırma örneği sunmaktadır. Baltık Devletleri yakın coğrafi yakınlığı ve bazı tarihsel ortak noktaları da paylaşıyor, ancak yine de diaspora politikaları bir dereceye kadar farklılık gösteriyor. Örneğin, üç Baltık devletinin de yurtdışındaki diasporaları için farklı çifte vatandaşlık politikaları ve farklı oylama sistemleri vardır, vb. Mevcut diaspora katılım politikaları ortaya çıkan farklılıkları açıklayabilir mi? Baltık Devletlerinin ilgili demografik özellikleri, tarihleri ve ekonomileri diaspora politikalarını ne şekilde etkiler?

Bu ülkeler görünüşte oldukça benzer kabul edilse de, demografileri, tarihleri ve ekonomileri analiz edildiğinde bazı farklılıklar da keşfedildi. Hem Letonya hem de Estonya oldukça büyük bir Slav azınlık nüfusuna sahipken, Litvanya'daki bu sayı çok daha düşük olmakla beraber bu durum da bazı farklı yaklaşımlara yol açıyor. Genel olarak, Baltık Devletlerinin diaspora politikaları, demografik ve tarihsel arka planlarından büyük ölçüde etkileniyor gibi görünüyor ve sonuç olarak bu ülkeler uzun mesafeli milliyetçiliği teşvik ediyor. Bu tez ayrıca, bazıları sürekli değişimlere açık olan çok sayıda faktörün her bir devletin diaspora politikalarını etkilediğini ve Baltık Devletlerinin de istisna olmadığını açıklamaktadır. Genel olarak, genel diaspora katılım düzeyleri farklılık gösterse bile tüm Baltık Devletlerinin diasporalarına öncelik verdiği not edilebilir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Baltic Ülkeleri, diaspora, Litvanya, Letonya, Estonya, göç, diaspora politikaları.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

EEA – European Economic Area

EFTA – European Free Trade Association

EU – European Union

EUROFOUND - European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions

JBANC - Joint Baltic American National Committee

MFA - Ministry of Foreign Affairs

NATO - North Atlantic Treaty Organization

UK – United Kingdom

UN – United Nations

USA – United States of America

SoDra - The State Social Insurance Fund Board under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour of Lithuanian Republic

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction and general background

All three Baltic States – Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia have significantly large diasporas worldwide. Currently, the Baltic States' population is: ~2.8mil. in Lithuania, ~1.9mil. in Latvia and 1.3mil. in Estonia (Eurostat, 2021b). As opposed to 1990, it was ~3.7mil. in Lithuania, ~2.7mil. in Latvia and ~1.6mil. in Estonia. It shows alarming trends in population decrease. According to the United Nations estimates, Latvia's population can decrease even more by 22%, Lithuania's by 17%, and Estonia's by 13% (Birka, 2019, p.1). But it's not just the modern period of re-established independence of the Baltic States that happened in the 90s, which resulted in diasporas, but it goes much further than that. Large diasporas can be traced back to the Ist and IInd World War periods in Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia.

These numbers show how significant the Baltic diaspora is, especially considering that the Baltic States are already small countries facing depopulation problems that are primarily associated with emigration trends (Birka, 2019). So, it brings up questions: What are diaspora engagement policies in the Baltic States? What/who are the main tools, actors, and institutions in diaspora policies of the Baltic States? How do the respective demographics, histories, and economies of the Baltic States affect their diaspora politics? How have the diaspora policies of the Baltic States been evolving since the re-establishment of their independence in the early 90s?

This study consists of a comparative analysis. First and foremost, this thesis is a part of comparative research aiming to analyze arising similarities and differences between the

Baltic States' diaspora policies and understand why they occur by using a wide range of sources and international relation theories.

1.2 Statement of research questions

The main question of the thesis: In what ways do the respective demographics, histories, and economies of the Baltic States affect their diaspora policies?

Additionally, this thesis will provide answers to questions like: What incentivizes states to participate in diaspora engagement policies according to international relations theories?

How have the diaspora policies of the Baltic States been evolving since the Baltic States re-established their independence in the early 90s?

1.3 The purpose and significance of the research

The purpose of this thesis is to make a noteworthy contribution to the area of diaspora policies research and, more specifically, to the Baltic States' diaspora policies research. This thesis aims to understand and explain the underlying reasons behind certain countries' reasoning for their diasporas policies. At the same time, it offers a complex explanation as to why seemingly similar countries sometimes adopt different policies and why sometimes apparently obvious and straightforward explanations for the robust diaspora engagement policies can be short-sighted and not entirely accurate. This thesis explains that a multitude of factors of which some are susceptible to constant changes, influence each state's diaspora policies, and the Baltic States are no exception. At the same time, it's important to note that some factors may be more dominant than others.

This thesis is significant because it appears that the Baltic States' diaspora policies are not an extensively researched topic. As diaspora policies are gaining continuing importance in all Baltic States of Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia, more substantial and large-scale research projects are necessary. This research is seemingly one of the first to analyze Baltic States' diaspora policies from different perspectives in a comparative manner and try to find cause-and-effect relations.

But even more so, it's not just the case for the Baltic States, but in general, there is a lack of comparative diaspora engagement policies research; it's mostly limited to individual case studies (Gamlen, Cummings and Vaaler, 2021, p.494). Making this research even more important to conduct.

1.4 Outline

This thesis is divided into seven chapters to make it easier to understand. The first chapter introduces the general topic of the thesis and provides main statements and research questions, in addition to highlighting the thesis' importance. The second chapter provides the reader with research design and methodology; right after that, the operationalization of key concepts is provided. Analytical background and theoretical framework set the stage for understanding the research concepts used for analyzing Baltic diaspora policies. And lastly, existing literature on Baltic diasporas is systematically reviewed. The third chapter contains contextual information about the demographical and historical background of the Baltic diaspora and diaspora importance during the occupation years and after. The fourth chapter has all the main findings regarding Baltic States' diaspora policies in different areas like citizenship laws, cultural support, economics, etc. The fifth chapter analyzes discoveries of the thesis and how they relate to the known international relations concepts, theories, and main questions. The sixth chapter has concluding remarks and provides answers to research questions. And lastly, the seventh chapter gives the list of all sources referenced in this research.

CHAPTER II ANALYTICAL BACKGROUND AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Research design and methodology

First and foremost, this thesis is a part of comparative research aiming to analyze arising similarities and differences between the Baltic States' diaspora policies and understand why they occur.

Research is going to utilize secondary data like national statistics, official records and reports, interviews with influential politicians, bureaucrats and previous studies in the form of academic articles. To ensure the reliability of the data to the best of my ability, official governmental sources are the preferred way of information if available. The research for this paper mainly relies on qualitative research methods but also includes quantitative data in the form of each state's official statistical records.

Contextual information for this research is essential and was used in understanding how the context affected the ultimate outcome of the current Baltic States' diaspora policies. The early hypothesis is that occurring differences in economies and mainly in histories and demographics can play a role in shaping individual state's diaspora policies. Although the Baltic States of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia may appear very similar on the surface, there are some significant differences between them.

It should also be acknowledged that the information is collected to the best of the author's ability; however, there still might be information missing because of its accessibility or unavailability in different languages.

2.2 Operationalization of Concepts

2.2.1 Diaspora

Before going any further, the concept of ‘diaspora’ should be operationalized. According to the Encyclopedia Britannica, diaspora is defined as “populations, such as members of an ethnic or religious group that originated from the same place but dispersed to different locations.” (The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2014).

When it comes to social science, there isn’t a clear agreement on what groups exactly qualify as diasporas amongst researchers, but in general, it can be said that the diaspora definition has undoubtedly been expanded from the classical or more traditional definition of describing forceful migration of certain ethnic groups of people and most commonly known the dispersion of Jewish people to including more contemporary diasporas as well that were results of more opportunities of free migration brought by globalization like labor migration (Reis, 2004, p.49) .

Social Scientist Robin Cohen defines common diaspora features by combining classical tradition, William Safran’s and his own views as follows:

“1. Dispersal from an original homeland, often traumatically, to two or more foreign regions; 2. Alternatively or additionally, the expansion from a homeland in search of work, in pursuit of trade or to further colonial ambitions; 3. a collective memory and myth about the homeland, including its location, history, suffering and achievements; 4. an idealization of the real or imagined ancestral home and a collective commitment to its maintenance, restoration, safety and prosperity, even to its creation; 5. the frequent development of a return movement to the homeland that gains collective approbation even if many in the group are satisfied with only a vicarious relationship or intermittent visits to the homeland; 6. a strong ethnic group consciousness sustained over a long time and based on a sense of distinctiveness, a common history, the transmission of a common cultural and religious heritage and the belief in a common fate; 7. a troubled relationship with host societies, suggesting a lack of acceptance or the possibility that another calamity might befall the group; 8. a sense of empathy and co-responsibility with co-ethnic members in other countries of settlement even where home has become more vestigial; 9. the possibility of a distinctive creative, enriching life in host countries with a tolerance for pluralism.” (Cohen, 2008, p.17)

Of course, not all diasporas might possess all of these traits.

Gabriel Sheffer offers another similar definition of contemporary diasporas: “an ethno-national diaspora is a social-political formation, created as a result of either voluntary or forced migration, whose members regard themselves as of the same ethno-national origin and who permanently reside as minorities in one or several host countries. (...) Among their various activities, members of such diasporas establish trans-state networks that reflect complex relationships among the diasporas, their host countries, their homelands, and international actors.” (Sheffer, 2003, p.9). Additionally, diasporas are described as staying in touch with their perceived homelands and their co-ethnic diaspora members either on a frequent or occasional basis by maintaining their common identity, being involved in various areas like culture, economics, politics, etc (Sheffer, 2003, p.9).

In addition to that, numerous ways to categorize diasporas exist. Robin Cohen has divided diaspora into five categories: victim, labour, imperial, trade, and deterritorialized (Cohen, 2008), Milton J. Esman three - settler, labor, and entrepreneurial categories, Michael Bruneau four - religious, political, cultural and entrepreneurial diaspora categories (Gazso, 2017, p.68).

In the case of this thesis, as it will be seen in the upcoming chapters, Lithuanian, Latvian, and Estonian diasporas are not homogenous and result from multiple types of migration and from quite varying periods of history; therefore, resulting in different types of diasporas. I would argue that the same can be said for the majority of existing diasporas. Perhaps diaspora waves can be influenced by particular geopolitical, economic, etc events, but if we try to analyze the entire ethnical diaspora, we will see that it consists of all kinds of people that have left their homelands for a multitude of reasons: ranging from forced migration to simply more attractive job opportunities.

So, in this context, the term Baltic diaspora is simplified and refers to anyone who has a shared collective identity and came from a specified geographical origin. Historically, in the case of all Baltic States: Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia’s borders were susceptible to changes. There could be numerous differences between what were considered borders of these countries now and 100 years ago, especially in the case of Lithuania, considering the past of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. As for the

Baltic States overall, numerous occupations, including the Russian Empire, Soviet Russia and Nazi Germany and lastly, the re-establishment of independence affected the borders.

When it comes to precisely defining who qualifies as Lithuanian, Latvian, or Estonian on a state law level, it gets a little bit more complicated. Simply because these countries have slightly different laws regarding ethnicity that correlate highly with each country's historical and demographic background, which will be explained later on since it plays a significant role.

But to make things easier in this context, it will refer to anyone who is sharing the collective identity of a Lithuanian, Latvian or Estonian and can track their heritage to any historical part of these countries.

So, in this context, members of the Baltic diaspora are not defined by their citizenship, since the Baltic States have different laws in regards to it, but rather by their sense of belonging and relating to the culture and ability to track their roots to historical lands, that includes multiple generations of descendants too. In the upcoming text collective diasporas of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia will be continuously referred to as the Baltic diaspora.

2.2.2 Diaspora Politics and Policies

Diaspora politics and policies are a few of the most important concepts for this research, and it should be clearly understood as well. Diaspora politics can be defined as “forms of political engagement that link constituencies in one country with a real or imagined “homeland” somewhere else” (Adamson, 2016, p.291). When it's talked about diaspora policies, it typically refers to diaspora engagement policies that “consist of a variety of government measures aimed at engaging, maintaining or developing a relationship with their diaspora living abroad.” (Migration Research Hub, no date). Diaspora policies most commonly focus on fostering a sense of belonging and national identity, providing the medium for diaspora-state interactions, and trying to attract diaspora to invest in their homeland's development or growth via social or economic ways, for example, investments, remittances (Migration Research Hub, no date).

Scholars have multiple ways of categorizing diaspora policies. Just to provide a few typologies: Peggy Levitt and Rafael de la Dehesa categorize diaspora policies into five types – “1) ministerial or consular reforms; 2) investment policies which seek to attract or channel migrant remittances; 3) extension of political rights in the form of dual citizenship or nationality, the right to vote from overseas, or the right to run for public office; 4) the extension of state protections or services to nationals living abroad that go beyond traditional consular services; and 5) the implementation of symbolic policies designed to reinforce emigrants’ sense of enduring membership.” (Levitt and de la Dehesa, 2003, p.589-590).

Alan Gamlen divides diaspora engagement policies into three types: 1) capacity building that is further subdivided into symbolic nation-building that can include things like conferences, inclusive rhetoric, cultural promotion etc and institution building with things like ministerial-level agency, consular and consultative bodies, dedicated bureaucracy etc; 2) extending rights divided into political incorporation mainly in regards to voting, and civil and social rights that could potentially include welfare, pensions etc; 3) extracting obligations with mainly investment policies and lobby promotion (Gamlen, 2006, p.19).

2.3 Analytical Background

2.3.1 Increasing importance of diasporas worldwide

In the not-so-distant past, diasporas were excluded from nation-state policies or even treated as traitors, but now it’s being used in a positive light by many countries to highlight their connection to the homeland. Effectively, diaspora status went from “traitors to heroes” (Ragazzi, 2014, p.2).

What changed? Why are diasporas playing an increasingly important role in international and internal affairs? Diasporas have a significant impact on world affairs in more ways than one and can have both constructive or destructive effects while contributing in both passive and active ways (Shain and Barth, 2003, p.449).

This importance can be primarily associated with globalization and the ease of staying connected and aware of political developments in different parts of the World due to modern technologies. That does not imply that diaspora politics didn’t exist prior to that, because

historically, we have seen diasporas' political activism long before the rise of media. For example, the protest against British rule in Ireland was organized by the Irish nationalists at that time known as Fenians in the United States in the late 19th century (Adamson, 2016, p.291). So, it simply means that it became much easier for both diasporas and their homelands' respective governments to stay interconnected, worldwide diaspora communities, in a significant sense, have the opportunity to react to any events on a real-time basis, and it was unprecedented in our history until very recently. That resulted in the diasporas' much more considerable influence than ever before.

Diasporas are known for contributions to their homelands financially, most commonly via remittances (Strielkowski *et al.*, 2018). Quite often, diasporas residing in democratic host countries act as ethnic lobbies to campaign for their authoritarian homeland's liberalization and democratization and promote multiculturalism, and in general, diasporas are able to influence their kin-state foreign policies on multiple levels. Overall, these diasporas "are increasingly able to promote transnational ties, to act as bridges or as mediators between their home and host societies (...)" (Shain and Barth, 2003, p.450).

That being said, diasporas might also have destructive effects: it's a known phenomenon that some diaspora members financially support insurgencies in their homelands (Byman *et al.*, 2001, p.41). According to the World Bank study, diaspora can have the strongest effect on the renewal of war: "After five years of post-conflict peace, the risk of renewed conflict is around six times higher in the societies with the largest diasporas in America than in those without American diasporas." (Shain and Barth, 2003, p.449). It can be safely assumed it can refer to other big diasporas as well in developed countries that would have the financial means to finance insurgencies.

Additionally, in recent decades we have seen the rise of intrastate conflicts resulting in large groups of people having to leave their homelands and, in general, increased level of migration both for political and economic reasons. Intrastate conflicts naturally attract the attention of these states' already existing diaspora, further increasing political importance and the need to utilize them (Østergaard-Nielsen, 2001, p.222).

These are just several examples of the wide range of potential impacts. The general trend of more and more countries actively interacting with their diaspora and increasing the number of institutions geared towards diaspora points to worldwide political leaders recognizing diaspora potential and trying to utilize it.

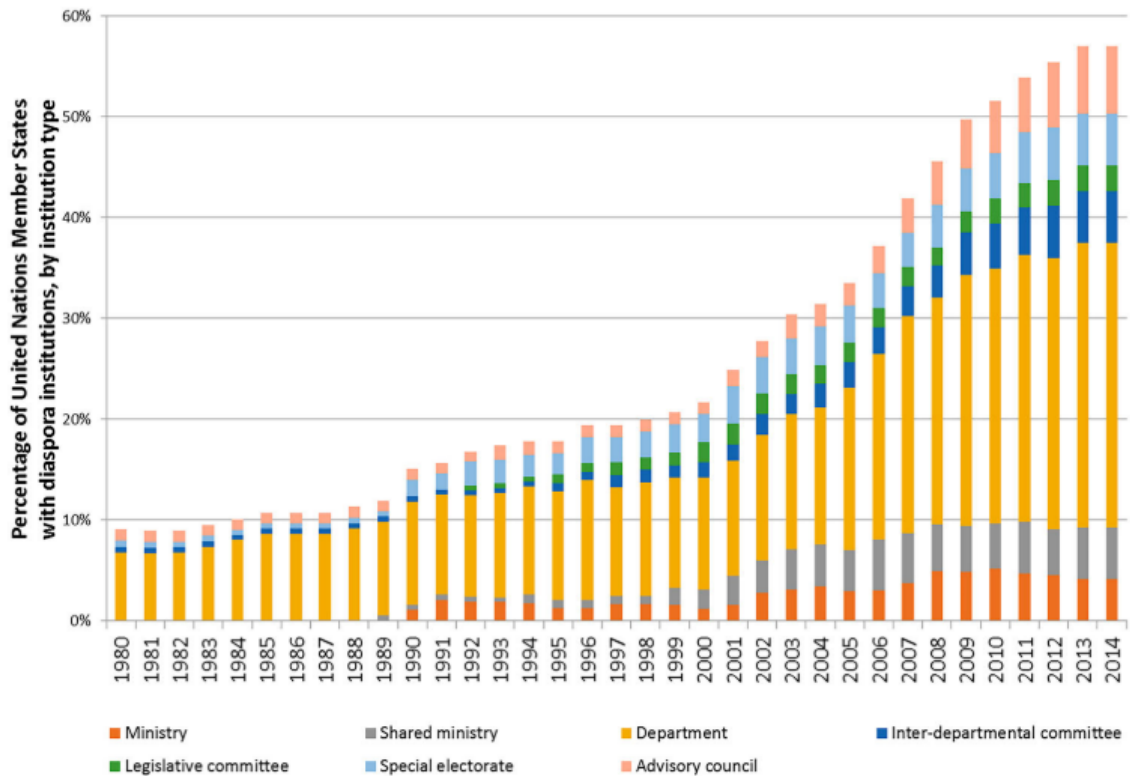


Figure 2.3.1.1 1 Percentage of United Nations Member States with diaspora institutions, by institution type, 1980-2014. Source: (Gamlen, Cummings and Vaaler, 2021).

In the early 1980s, interaction with homeland diasporas on the governmental level was almost non-existent as there were only a dozen countries with any kind of institutions geared toward handling diaspora matters (Petkevičienė, 2015, p.17). The table provided above shows the clear trend of gradual diaspora institution increment with an especially high increase after 1990.

This contextual background is important for understanding the Baltic States’ diaspora policies. A similar pattern of the gradual rise of diaspora importance and the establishment

of new institutions that deal with diaspora matters was observed as well, as will be seen in subsequent chapters.

2.4 Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework focuses on the set range of theories that were discovered during the research. Evidence found in a comprehensive analysis of resources suggested that the following concepts of long-distance nationalism, transnationalism, and a hybrid of diaspora institution theories have been instrumental in shaping Baltic States' diaspora policies.

It is essential to understand why certain states adopt different diasporas policies. Previously provided typologies are helpful in categorizing state policies and seeing where the particular state is leaning, but at the same time, it would be short-sighted not to highlight the most essential fact that diasporas nor states' policies are static. They can be susceptible to change at any moment. As Daniel Gazso mentioned, "(...) diaspora communities should not be seen as bounded entities, or a static ethno-demographic condition, but rather as a dynamic and multi-dimensional phenomenon, the kin-state should be conceived not as a given, analytically irreducible, fixed entity, but rather in terms of differentiated and competitive positions adopted by different actors, organizations, parties or individual political entrepreneurs competing for power." (Gazso, 2017, p.73). This means states are not unitary actors; domestic matters affect the way political leaders make decisions. And yet at the same time, it's seen that certain geopolitical and historical factors and selected approaches do influence diaspora policies, and similar backgrounds can result in commonalities in state approaches to their diasporas (Gazso, 2017, p.75-82).

2.4.1 Diaspora Institution Theories

As more and more states are engaging with their diasporas and establishing specific institutions to deal with them, it's important to understand existing theoretical approaches that explain the reasoning behind institution establishment. There are three major perspectives: tapping perspective, embracing perspective, and governing perspective. The following summary is from the book "The Microfoundations of Diaspora Politics" chapter

called Explaining the rise of diaspora institutions (Gamlen, Cummings and Vaaler, 2021, p.496-502).

Tapping perspective

This perspective is based on international relation theories of rationalism and neostructuralism. Rationalists are further divided into neorealists and neoliberals. Both of them agree and claim that states are ‘unitary actors driven by material strategies’ as opposed to Gaszo, therefore their main interest is to pursue national interests, and diasporas are used as a way to achieve just that. Good examples of that would be states using their diasporas for lobbying efforts. Neorealists propose an interesting hypothesis that “diaspora institution emergence is more likely in the wake of an origin state’s involvement in violent conflict” (Gamlen, Cummings and Vaaler, 2021, p.497). In the neoliberals viewpoint, states prioritize potential economic gains over security and diplomacy efforts. Therefore, new diaspora institutions are created in order to get their diasporas to be involved with their homeland economically by finding a way to attract remittances, donations, and taxes, attract frequent travels to the homeland and share diaspora foreign expertise for economic development, etc.

Neostructuralists focus primarily on how state and diaspora interactions are shaped by the asymmetrical global economic system. According to neostructuralists, the emergence of diaspora engagement institutions just showcases the weakness of less developed countries as their aim is to use diaspora resources for keeping up with developed countries. Meaning that they do pay attention to the economic side as well, but according to this theory, less developed countries have the need to stay engaged with their diasporas because they can’t compete with developed countries for attracting the best workers or preventing the ‘brain drain’ so it’s more like last ditch effort to diminish their weakness at least in some way, but it’s not a very promising one.

Embracing perspective

Embracing perspective is also based on multiple international relation theories: rationalism, neorealism, neoliberalism, and neostructuralism, but they are all united under the assumption of ‘origin states as territorially sealed individual actors with bounded

identities.’ Embracing perspective focuses mainly on ‘ideas and identities that constitute origin states and shape their behaviour’ (Gamlen, Cummings and Vaaler, 2021, p.498).

Homeland states are creating diaspora institutions in order to ‘embrace’ worldwide ethnic diasporas; therefore, heavy focus is placed on reaching out to their ethnic diasporas, enhancing nationalism by focusing on common values and identities. Although, there are some instances where states prioritize their diasporas based on legal citizenship, not ethnicity, for example, Germany (Gamlen, Cummings and Vaaler, 2021, p.498). It can be said that this perspective overall employs state-led long-distance nationalism and, in turn, suggests that countries with deeper nationalistic tendencies would be interested in strengthening their diaspora institutions.

Governing perspective

This perspective differs in many ways from both tapping and embracing perspectives as they are focused on domestic factors affecting diaspora institutions’ emergence by claiming that “institutions further an ongoing international quest for a coherent system of global governance in the area of migration.” (Gamlen, Cummings and Vaaler, 2021, p.500). Homeland and host-states are both involved with managing diasporas together.

This perspective has seen the endorsement of international organizations like the United Nation. It suggested the “decentralised, state-led approaches to international cooperation in the area of migration, based on enlightened self-interest” (Gamlen, Cummings and Vaaler, 2021, p.500) would be a win-win scenario, so to speak, for everyone involved. It can be hypothesized as per this perspective, that states actively involved in international organizations, especially migration-focused ones, are more likely to have stronger diaspora institutions and be influenced by other countries’ successful practices in engaging with their diasporas. Neighbouring states with strong diaspora institutions can be a source of inspiration as well, even without direct international organizations’ influence.

Diaspora institutions’ theories highlight the importance of various Baltic States’ diaspora institutions in understanding and analyzing diaspora-homeland relations. In fact, as is suggested in the following chapters of the findings of this thesis, diaspora institutions have

helped the Baltic States to identify their diaspora policy goals, communicate these to their respective diasporas and implement these policies. For example, all Baltic States have departments in their respective ministries of foreign affairs, ministries of education, ministries of economy, etc that specifically deal with their Baltic diasporas worldwide and are responsible for implementing new policies and maintaining state-diaspora interactions.

In the case of the Baltic States, a hybrid approach of institution theories, as suggested by Leblang and Glazier (Leblang and Glazier, 2022), appears to be necessary, because based on the findings (in the main finding sections), it can be argued that the Baltic States have adopted multiple approaches at slightly different levels. Although all of them appear to heavily favour embracing perspective, differences at tapping and governing approaches levels could be a potential reason for emerging differences. Therefore, understanding and analyzing diaspora institution theories certainly seems to have an important place in Baltic States' diaspora policies.

2.4.2 Diasporas as significant Transnational Communities

What is transnationalism? This concept can be defined as 'multiple ties and interactions linking people or institutions across borders of nation-states' (Mcdowell *et al.*, 2018, p.12). Transnationalism started gaining importance at the same time as links between migration, mobility and identity became a significant research topic in the 90s – it was observed that diaspora communities are involved in the social, political, and economic life of multiple societies, i.e, countries, therefore they are not attached to one location – this observable fact was coined as 'transnational social spaces' (Mcdowell *et al.*, 2018). In the context of this thesis, transnationalism can be described as 'processes by which immigrants build social fields that link together their country of origin and their country of settlement.' (Schiller, Basch and Blanc-Szanton, 1992, p.1).

Diasporas, by definition, are transnational communities because they are bounded to both their homelands and host lands; they are not just migrants who left their countries (or in the case of the second, third generation, etc migrants, their ancestors did) and fully assimilated severing all the ties to their former home. As per T. Faist, transnational community term has broader connotations than diaspora it can include borderland

communities or cross-village communities (Faist, 2010, p.21). In simple terms, the transnational community definition can include diasporas, but that doesn't automatically mean that every existing transnational community is a diaspora. Although there is a precedent of considering borderland communities as diasporas too, even though no migration technically occurred, but rather a border change (Bruneau, 2010, p.35). This thesis also applied this simplified approach.

As per Schiller, Basch and Blanc-Szanton, transnationalism can be conceptualized by using six assumptions: 1) bounded social science concepts such as tribe, ethnic group, nation, society, or culture can limit the ability of researchers to first perceive and then analyze, the phenomenon of transnationalism; 2) the development of the transnational migrant experience is inextricably linked to the changing conditions of global capitalism, and must be analyzed within that world context; 3) transnationalism is grounded in the daily lives, activities, and social relationships of migrants; 4) transnational migrants, although predominantly workers, live a complex existence that forces them to confront, draw upon, and rework different identity constructs-national, ethnic and racial; 5) the fluid and complex existence of transnational migrants compels us to reconceptualize the categories of nationalism, ethnicity, and race, theoretical work that can contribute to reformulating our understanding of culture, class, and society; and 6) transmigrants deal with and confront a number of hegemonic contexts, both global and national. (Bruneau, 2010, p.5).

Baltic diasporas in general can be unequivocally defined as significant transnational communities. Also, as this thesis will showcase, the Baltic States are encouraging and have policies in place for maintaining their diasporas as active transnational communities.

2.4.3 Long-distance nationalism

Benedict Anderson can be credited with popularizing the long-distance nationalism concept. However, it was partly used with a negative connotation to describe certain diaspora members who were funding often violent conflicts in their native lands. That being said, Anderson fully acknowledged that there are millions of 'long-distance ethno-nationalists who are by no means necessarily committed to fanaticism or violence' (Anderson, 1992, p.12).

So in a way, this term can be used to describe an ideology that connects people living outside of what they perceive as their ancestral homeland. Ways to keep people engaged in long-distance nationalism can range from a rather things like voting, demonstrating, lobbying to funding various organizations (legal or illegal ones) and to fighting and other kinds of

psychical involvement (Schiller, 2005, p.570). Although Anderson described long-distance nationalists as more so as living ‘their real politics long-distance, without accountability and separated them from exiles, who are waiting for their chance to return back (Anderson, 1992, p.12).

It’s said that in order for long-distance nationalism to develop, a particular diaspora community should have a relatively high number of political exiles who are deeply invested in their perceived homeland politics (Schiller, 2005, p.577).

According to Schiller terms diaspora and long-distance nationalist are not the same: diaspora encompasses more of a feeling of shared history and/or culture. Diaspora members are not necessarily in state-diaspora political relations, but they may be interested in joint cultural or social projects that align with their interests in their host location. While long-distance nationalists are politically involved with the territory they consider as their homeland. To put it in simple terms, one can be a diaspora member without being a long-distance nationalist or can be both a diaspora member and long-distance nationalist at the same time (Schiller, 2005).

2.4.4 State-led long-distance nationalism

States are more and more interested in engaging with their diaspora, and as diaspora engagement policies are reaching an all-time high, the phenomenon of states viewing their diaspora abroad as an ‘extended nation’ is also observed (Leblang and Glazier, 2022). Some countries are actively advocating for their diaspora political involvement and even expect it as a way to show their loyalties (Leblang and Glazier, 2022).

A kin-state policy that is a known phenomenon in many European countries, especially in Central and Eastern Europe in a way could be called state-led transnationalism with the intention to create a state transcending the sense of belonging to the said homeland (Volkova, 2019, p.143). Some scholars define long-distance nationalism as a result of the transnationalism (Sobral, 2018).

Going back to the Baltic diasporas and how long-distance nationalism relates to them. It will be seen in the thesis that all Baltic States not only provide some opportunities to be

involved politically but also encourage it, if their diaspora members wish to do so, in the form of voting, lobbying, advocating, etc. So it can be said that state-led long-distance nationalism does have a place in the Baltic States' policies.

2.5 Literature on Baltic diaspora

Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia have large diaspora populations worldwide (Berzins and Zvidrins, 2011; Lulle, 2014; Kumpikaite, 2019) resulting from both historical and political circumstances (Lebedeva, 2002; Römeris, 2005; Pētersone, 2012; Kirch, 2013; Williams, 2014) that lead to multiple different generations of diaspora (Tammaru, Kumer-Haukanõmm and Anniste, 2010; Saulītis and Mieriņa, 2019) and the economic ones that were exacerbated after joining EU in 2004 (Engbersen & Jansen, 2013; Hazans, 2013; Sipavičienė & Stankūnienė, 2013). That can be associated with the fact that economic migration became easier with the accession to the EU and, subsequently Schengen zone. Although it is quite challenging to establish an exact period of time when the first conscious diasporas emerged, on a larger scale, they can be associated with the rise of romantic nationalism in the 19th century (Plakans, 1971; Cerūzis, 2000; Raun, 2003; Römeris, 2005; Ijabs, 2013).

Diaspora policies play quite an important role in all three Baltic States' politics. There could be numerous reasons associated with it, like the most straightforward - the sheer volume of the diaspora population. Other reasons can include but are not limited to already existing historical ties with diasporas that worked to inform the world about the realities of occupation and later on continued to advocate for Baltics even after re-independence (Nordness, 2015). Another reason could be potential benefits, like financial ones in the case of remittances (Strielkowski *et al.*, 2018) or numerous mutual benefits from economic cooperation to scientific or cultural exchanges (Lescevic *et al.*, 2019; Gudelis and Klimavičiūtė, 2020; Lapėnaitė and Pilietybe.lt, 2021).

Although the Baltic States appear to be similar in numerous ways, there are some different approaches when it comes to diaspora policies. Dual citizenship is a potentially important topic for diaspora and this is where quite stark differences appear (Williams, 2019): Latvia allows acquiring another citizenship of a specific list of countries (Office of

Citizenship and Migration Affairs Republic of Latvia, 2020), Lithuania grants dual citizenship to people that meet specific narrow requirements mainly concerning older diaspora emigrants (Lietuvos Respublikos Seimas, 2016), Estonia does not technically allow dual citizenship but yet does not typically rescind citizenship even in the case of people taking up another citizenship as it is seen as the ethnic Estonian birth right (Cavegn, 2018; Järve and Poleshchuk, 2019).

The Baltic States also focus on education either by providing access to education abroad to some extent via online sources or by sponsoring already existing diaspora non-formal schools and pre-schools (Kulu, 2000; Šileikytė, 2019; Pauliukaitytė and LRT.lt, 2021)(or even some formal education as in the case of Lithuania (Rinkevičienė, 2018; Aikos, 2021)), offering language classes (Mägi and Siarova, 2014) or integrating returnees' diaspora children back into the education system (Lietuvos Respublikos švietimo ir mokslo ministerija, 2005; Budginaitė and Mašidlauskaitė, 2015; Studente, 2016; Kaša, Cara and Mieriņa, 2020).

Social security and health insurance policies provide the Baltic diaspora with the opportunity to receive old-age pensions abroad if they meet specific requirements (Gudelis, Gečienė and Jakulevičienė, 2012; SoDra, 2021; State Social Insurance Agency of the Republic of Latvia - Valsts sociālās apdrošināšanas aģentūra, 2021b). Lithuanian and Estonian diaspora can receive old-age social assistance pension if they were to return to Lithuania or Estonia but do not have enough working experience and do not receive any other government benefits that would be higher than the social assistance pension (Republic of Estonia Social Insurance Board, 2021a; SoDra, 2021b), while Latvia requires residence of 5 years and uninterrupted stay in last 12 months (European Commission, 2021c). In general, the Baltic diaspora does not benefit upon their return from free health insurance if they don't pay taxes; there are exceptions like minors and pregnant women, etc. (Saeima, 2018c; Lulle, 2020; Saar, 2020; SoDra - The State Social Insurance Fund Board, 2022). Lithuania offers the most extensive free health insurance, as in one of the parents can have free health insurance until their child is eight years old (Valstybinė ligonių kasa / National health insurance fund, 2017).

Baltic diaspora return policies are definitely one of the most important fields (Mieriņa, 2013; Birka, 2019; Simons, 2021). All three Baltic States provide various incentives for return migration like job opportunities, traineeships, studying in local universities (Gudelis, Gečienė and Jakulevičienė, 2012; Židžiūnienė, 2018), even monetary support. Highly educated individuals and young families receive the most attention.

Other diaspora policies include helping their diaspora to maintain cultural ties to the homeland (Ūdre, 2012; Petkevičienė, 2015; Lulle, 2020; Dumbliauskienė, 2021; Linde, 2021), encouraging political participation of diaspora (Springall *et al.*, 2014; Henke, 2016; Ikstens, 2018; Jakobson and Kaley, 2018; Guzun *et al.*, 2020; Matulaitis and Lapėnaitė, 2020) and previously mentioned economic cooperation.

CHAPTER III

A DEMOGRAPHIC AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE BALTIC DIASPORAS

3.1 Demographics and the historical background of Baltic diasporas

3.1.1 Lithuania

According to the latest statistical data provided by Eurostat, Lithuania's population is 2.79 mil. (Eurostat, 2021b). As opposed to 1990, it was ~3.7mil. It shows an alarming trend in a population decrease. According to the United Nations estimates, Lithuania's population can decrease even more by 17% by 2050 (Birka, 2019). And the high emigration rates account for the majority of such decreases. But it's not just a modern phenomenon. Lithuania actually has a lengthy historical background of diasporas.

It's not easy to define a point when Lithuanian diasporas emerged exactly. Lithuania lived through several statehood changes, namely the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth; also, Lithuania was occupied multiple times. That being said, ideas of identity and nationalism gained more traction with the rise of what became known as romantic nationalism in international relations. Very clear signs of it emerged in Lithuania in the mid-19th century as a response to Russian occupation and attempts to 'russify' Lithuanians (Römeris, 2005). At this point, identity gained increasingly high importance and hence a number of people emigrating maintained their culture. Although no one can tell when the first diasporas emerged precisely, this point can be considered a turning point in the tangible emergence of Lithuanian diasporas.

A large number of emigrations from Lithuanian lands started after the 1831 Lithuanian revolt and the 1863 January uprising against Russian Empire. A substantial amount of people emigrated to the United States of America. There were multiple reasons for the increase in migration: starting with ideological ones – russification policies, growing

national movement, suppressions and wars that also led to really poor economic conditions. This migration wave continued until World War I (Migration law center, no date).

The second wave started during the interwar period of Lithuanian independence during 1918-1940. It was also a time of political fragility (parts of Lithuania were still occupied, there were multiple disputes over demarcation lines, etc.) and economic instability. Interestingly enough, during this time, the most popular destinations for Lithuanians were Canada and South America (Argentina, Brazil, and Uruguay); migrants to South America accounted for about 60% (Migration law center, no date). That could be associated with the immigration quotas in the United States of America for Lithuanian migrants.

The third period started after World War II when Lithuania was re-occupied by the Soviets and Germans. Migrants of this period are considered to be political refugees and part of forced migration escaping persecution. Lithuanians were sent from camps in various countries to different parts of the world, but the majority ended up in the United States of America.

And the latest emigration wave starts with the re-establishment of Lithuanian independence in the 1990s. There were different waves of migration after this period. One of the first was a high level of ethnic Slavic emigration – mostly Russian; by the end of 1994, about 50.000 people left the country (Kirch, 2013, p.2). They are not considered to be part of the Lithuanian diaspora but rather returnees to mostly Russia. This period can be further classified into multiple categories, emigration after the 1990s, after the EU accession, and the 2009 economic crisis. But the one thing that it has in common is the fact that these migrations were mostly because of economic reasons.

From this classification, it can clearly be seen that the Lithuanian diaspora has numerous differences not just in migration periods but also in reasoning for their emigration; it can be said that the Lithuanian diaspora is quite diverse.

These statistics clearly show the incidence of a high number of diasporas worldwide. Lithuania has the biggest diasporas abroad: in the United States (~700,000), the UK (~200,000), Brazil (~200,000), Ireland (~90,000) (Lulle, 2014, p. 136). Over a million of

Lithuanians live outside of Lithuania, which accounts for about 25% of the population. But in this case, it's very important to distinguish between new diasporas vs old ones. The big ones in the United States and Brazil are the results of the Ist and IInd World Wars, and their return to Lithuania is unlikely, at least not en masse, since several generations have passed – not all of them have the citizenship or know the language. The biggest 21st century new diasporas are in UK and Ireland. This distinction might account for differences in Lithuania-diaspora relations and interactions, also differently targeted both governmental and non-governmental approaches.

3.1.2 Latvia

Currently, the Latvian population is 1.91mil. (Eurostat, 2021b). In 1990 it was 2.67mil. (Centrālā statistikas pārvalde, no date). Again, quite a similar trend of population decrease can be seen. United Nation estimates of 2050 are not optimistic either and they predict even a higher decrease of 22% (Birka, 2019).

Historically Latvian land remained under foreign rule for quite some time. The territory was often in play when it came to conflicts between the State of the Teutonic Order, the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth, Sweden and the Russian Empire.

Similar to Lithuania, the Latvian national awakening started in the mid-19th century (Plakans, 1971). To explain this more it must be pointed out that during this period majority of current Latvian regions were under a very specific political rule known as Landesstaat (Ijabs, 2013, p.91). To put it in simple terms, while these lands were occupied by the Russian empire, they were actually ruled by German-speaking nobilities. The majority of Latvian lands have been under Germanic rule since the 13th century. Because of this historical background ruling class in Latvia consisted of Baltic Germans. Numerous political and economic changes of the 19th century resulted in the emerging Latvian-speaking intelligentsia, most famously called 'Young Latvians' or 'New Latvians' (Cerūzis, 2000). Interestingly, previously having low profile Slavic influence of Russian empire became increasingly interested in Latvian lands too (Ijabs, 2013). This time period can be marked as a clear rise of Latvian identity even if it sometimes was influenced by different sentiments -

emigrants from this period would most likely consider themselves as a part of the Latvian diaspora.

Similarly, to Lithuania, Latvian diasporas can be separated into four migration waves.

The first wave occurred while Latvia was under Russian Empire rule. A high number of Latvians left Latvian lands; it seems like the majority of them were farmers in search of better opportunities (Mieriņa, 2020). That being said, it wasn't just economic migrants; especially after the 1905 revolution in Latvia, thousands of political refugees left the country. Statistically, between 1897-1913 Latvian diaspora consisted of 220 thousand people, 45 thousand of them moved to the Western countries, namely the United States (Mieriņa, 2020). This migration wave ended with the beginning of World War I.

The second wave started in 1918 and lasted during the interwar period until 1940. Again, in a very similar way to Lithuania, it was a time of political fragility, not exactly for the same reasons, but Latvia was just a newly established country trying to pull itself back together after the war. Naturally, a situation like this resulted in economic instability as well. During this period, a lot of people emigrated to Latin America and Australia, hoping for a better life (Pētersone, 2012).

The third wave of migration started with World War II. World War II was devastating to Latvia, just like the other two Baltic States. It is estimated that around 200 thousand Latvians fled the country, mostly to the USA, Canada, Sweden, Germany, Great Britain and Australia (Pētersone, 2012). Migrants of this period were political refugees trying to escape the harsh reality of war while under the occupation of Nazi Germans and the Soviet Union.

And, of course, the last migration wave starts yet again with the re-establishment of independence. Latvia became independent again in the 1990s. Because of the Soviet Union's occupation, there were a high number of Slavic people in Latvia – mainly Russians. By the end of 1994, about 63.000 of them had left the country (Kirch, 2013, p.2). Yet again, they are not considered to be Latvian diaspora but just returnees to their actual homelands. There were multiple periods when emigration from Latvia had its peaks, mainly right after independence, after the EU accession, and the 2009 economic crisis. Later two clearly point

out to economic reasons for migration. When it comes to recent migration, the highest numbers of Latvians migrated to the United Kingdom, Ireland, Nordic countries and Germany (Hazans, 2019, p.35).

This highly simplified breakdown of the Latvian diaspora shows multiple differences in reasoning for migration but diverts further in the age of diaspora.

Overall, when it comes to numbers, according to estimates by the Foreign Ministry of Latvia for 2012, about 370,000 Latvian nationals are permanently residing outside Latvia. For non-citizens of Latvian descent, numbers are even higher, and they are still considered to be a part of the Latvian diaspora. There are ~96,000 Latvians in the United States, ~100,000 UK, and less than 50,000 in Canada, Australia and Brazil.

3.1.3 Estonia

According to the latest Eurostat statistics, currently, Estonia's population consists of 1.33mil. people (Eurostat, 2021b). In 1990 it was 1.57mil. (Statistics Estonia, 2000). Just like the other Baltic States, Estonia's population decreased due to emigration, although in recent years, Estonia managed to achieve positive net migration and this is where it differs from Lithuania and Latvia. The country has achieved positive net migration six years in a row as per the official Estonian statistics (ERR News, 2021b). It is surely quite remarkable, but people are still leaving Estonia even if overall numbers are smaller besides, historically, Estonia has significant older diasporas too, especially if we consider how small of a country it is.

Notable Estonian diasporas started to emerge after the Estonian national awakening. It can be traced back to the 19th century when the literacy rates began to significantly increase and the availability of new reading materials inspired intellectuals with the idea of Estonian nationality and uniqueness. Previously, the ruling class of Baltic Germans stopped being viewed as the ones to transmit cultural ideals known as kulturträger, to the role of 'others', in a sense that they are culturally distinct from Estonians (Raun, 2003, p.143).

In a similar way, Estonian diasporas can be separated into four main waves as well. The first wave of emigration started in the 19th mid-century and lasted till World War I

(Tammaru, Kumer-Haukanõmm and Anniste, 2010, p.1159). During this period of time, Estonian lands were ruled by the Russian Empire. That being said, in the same way, as in Latvia, actual everyday governance was left to the Baltic Germans. Most of the people emigrated (including forced migration) to different regions of Russia, reasons varied from deportation to Siberia to economic reasons. At the same time, local peasants didn't really have proper opportunities to climb up the social ladder as non-ethnic migration was preferred over them. For example, although Estonia had its own university at Tartu, peasants were not allowed to study there and their closest option was St Petersburg in Russia (Tammaru, Kumer-Haukanõmm and Anniste, 2010, p.1159).

After the war in 1918, Estonia declared its independence. This change marked the second wave of migration. It lasted during the interwar period until Estonia was occupied by Russia and Nazi Germans. Estonia was facing multiple challenges in building up the state – the postwar situation resulted in some economic difficulties, which in turn encouraged some level of migration, this time mostly across the Atlantic Ocean.

The third wave of emigration started after World War II, Estonia in different periods of time was occupied by the Soviet Union and Nazi Germans. Naturally, a high number of political refugees fled the country. It is estimated that about 75-80 thousand people left and the most popular destinations were Sweden, the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom and Australia (Republic of Estonia Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2019).

After Estonia re-established its independence, the fourth and currently outgoing emigration wave started. Similar to Latvia, Estonia had a high number of ethnic Slavs, mostly Russian, ~59 thousands of them decided to leave (Kirch, 2013, p.2). Because of their ethnicity and historical ties to Russia, they are not considered to be part of the Estonian diaspora. Just like Latvia and Lithuania, Estonia joined the EU in 2004, which naturally led to increased emigration rates because it was simply easier to leave, especially after accessing the Schengen zone. One of the main differences between Estonia and the other Baltic States was the government and people's response to a 2009 finance crisis (Kasekamp *et al.*, 2013, p.50). These combined differences resulted in lower emigration rates than those of its Baltic neighbors. It can be speculated that slightly better Estonia's economy led to lower emigration

rates to this day, plus the close proximity to Finland allows people to work there without moving permanently.

Estonia has the lowest diaspora numbers amongst the Baltic States. Biggest populations are in Finland ~30,000, Sweden ~25,000, and USA ~ 25,000 (Kasekamp *et al.*, 2013, p.50). Some of these are again post-war exile diasporas. When it comes to Finland, there are different statistics about the Estonian population there. According to Statistics Finland, there are about 51,000 Estonian living in Finland (Statistics Finland, 2018.) This can be a result of Estonia's proximity to Finland and some cultural ties.

3.1.4 Baltic Countries and Their Diasporas in Comparative Perspective

Although there are some similarities between Baltic states, especially when it comes to national awakening timing and the rise of identity importance resulting in one of the first notable diasporas. At the same time, there are some differences, namely when it comes to the demographic composition of the Baltic States.

All three Baltic States became independent from Russia after the I World War in 1918, and the independence lasted quite shortly during the interwar period until 1940 when USSR occupied Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia. This is important to mention because a significant portion of Baltic diasporas goes back to this historical background. Multiple occupations and both Ist and IInd World Wars led to a high number of people leaving the country, the majority of them being political refugees. From this point forward, Baltic States' migration rates stopped developing naturally but were even forced in some ways by the Soviet Union (Kirch, 2013). Living standards in the Baltic States were one amongst the highest in the entire Soviet Union and the continuous industrialization attracted people from Russia and other Soviet Union regions to the Baltics (Kirch, 2013). Latvia and Estonia were particularly affected by this. For example, the Latvian population in the capital Riga went from 63% in 1940 to 45% by 1959 (Misiunas and Taagepera, 1993, p.365). At the same time Estonian population in the capital Tallinn went from 85% in 1940 to 60% in 1959, and by 1986 Estonians accounted for only 49.5% (Kirch, 2013). Even more staggeringly, some sources show that during the interwar period, ethnic Estonians accounted for 90% of the overall population (Williams, 2019, p.8).

During the interwar period, while all three Baltic States were independent, a high number of migration to South America was observed. Why is that? At the beginning of the interwar period, the most popular destination for the Baltic people was the United States of America, but in 1924 new restrictions on emigrants were enforced (Tammaru, Kumer-Haukanõmm and Anniste, 2010, p.1161). So this resulted in the search for new destinations that weren't ravished by the war.

Emigration during the occupation by the Soviet Union in the Baltics is not mentioned in detail for each country because it was pretty much the same in all Baltic States – free migration outside of the Soviet Union was not possible hence the numbers were lower, and no exact official data is available because it only consisted of people who managed to escape via unauthorized ways. At the same time, the Soviet Union would systematically deport people whom they considered as 'class enemies' (Hazans, 2019, p.40) or just in general Soviet state enemies for any kind of dissent to work camps, most famously to Siberia. As soon as Soviet Russia forcefully incorporated the Baltic States into the Soviet Union forceful deportations began. June 14, 1941, marks the beginning of the mass deportations from the Baltic States' soil; during that day, 10,187 people were deported from Lithuania, 9,546 from Latvia, and 5,978 from Estonia, accounting for a total of 25,711 people as per an official report to the Central Committee of the Communist Party of that time (Lebedeva, 2002, p.109). Overall, the Soviets deported more than 200,000 Baltic people to the different settlements all across the Soviet Union and about 75,000 to the Gulag labor camps (Williams, 2014).

Post re-independence main difference between the Baltic States was the migration rates between Lithuania in comparison to Latvia and Estonia. Both Latvia and Estonia experienced extremely low levels of net migration, it especially dropped to an all-time low highest ever recorded since independence until now in 1995 (Latvian net migration rate was -9, Estonia net migration -14,9), but the same wasn't the case for Lithuania (Eurostat). What was the reason behind it? It's actually quite simple, both Latvia and Estonia had higher rates of minorities, especially Russian ones as a remainder of russification politics, while in Lithuania minority population was relatively low in comparison. According to the data

provided by (Mežs, Bunkše, & Rasa, 1994, p. 13) in 1989, the three main ethnicities in Baltic countries were: In Lithuania - 79,6% Lithuanians, 9,4% Russians and differently from the other Baltic States for historical reasons 7% Poles, Latvia – 52% Latvians, 34% Russians, 4.5% Belarusians, Estonia – 61.5% Estonians, 30.3% Russians, 3.1% Ukrainians.

After regaining independence, both Latvia and Estonia, possibly because of the high minority population, adopted strict citizenship policies, one of the requirements was a good knowledge of the native tongue and everyone had to apply for it; citizenship wasn't just naturally given. Therefore, thousands of Slavic people, mostly Russians, became immigrants living in foreign countries (Kirch, 2013, p. 1). Although many of them were able to apply, some of them opted not to. There was no such problem in Lithuania. According to (Kirch, 2013, p. 2) "At the start of the transition period in 1990–94, tens of thousands of Soviet-era immigrants, including families of former members of the Soviet military residing in the Baltic States, returned to their homelands, particularly the Russian Federation." Therefore, we can assume that these reasons impacted especially high emigration rates in Latvia and Estonia and were responsible for depopulation.

Another difference is positive net migration rates. Estonia is the only Baltic State that managed to reach positive migration rates for years in a row.

In general, all Baltic States have a high number of new diaspora members in the United Kingdom, Ireland and Sweden because these countries were one of the first ones to open up their doors after the EU accession in 2004 (Hazans, 2019, p.44). The United Kingdom and Ireland's popularity can be also explained by the way ease of integration when it comes to language; also after Brexit the United Kingdom is losing its appeal for new migrants because of difficulties in immigrating.

Overall, it should be acknowledged that getting exactly accurate numbers of the Baltic diaspora is impossible for two reasons. Firstly, it's not exactly clear how much of second-third generation diaspora members there actually are since some of them do not have particular Baltic country citizenship. Secondly, keeping track of new diaspora members is much harder because of the Schengen zone's freedom of mobility, which leads to many

people not registering out of the Baltic States population registry (Berzins and Zvidrins, 2011, p.46).

3.2 Economic background of the Baltic States

In order to better understand differences in the Baltic States' worldwide diasporas and their governmental approach to them, it's important to be aware of the Baltic States' general economic situation.

During the 1990s, the Baltic States re-established their independence from the Soviet Union and started in a similar place economically, based on each country's GDP. That being said, soon after, Estonia managed to overtake other states and more than double its GDP by 2018 (Koyama, 2020, p.23). Latvia and Lithuania are slightly behind and go hand in hand with their GDP rates (Koyama, 2020, p.23). During the 2009 economic crisis, Lithuanian and Latvian governments introduced stricter measures to curb the crisis, known as austerity policies. Thus, that may have been responsible for higher rates of emigrants, of whom the majority appear to have left for economic reasons. Current latest available statistics are from 2019 from the World Bank, - Estonia has the highest GDP per capita of 23 723,31 USD, Lithuania comes in second with 19 601,89 USD, and Latvia has the lowest rate of 17 828,89 USD (The World Bank, no date). When it comes to HDI – Human Development Index, Estonia is 29th, Lithuania – 34th, and Latvia – 37th out of 189 countries.

The Baltic States are in Eurozone. Estonia was able to join Eurozone in 2011, on January 1st – the earliest of all Baltic States. Latvia joined Eurozone in 2014, on January 1st. And lastly, Lithuania joined in 2015, on January 1st. All three Baltic States are tightly integrated into a similar economic area, with their main trade partners being from the EU and to some extent Russia (Poissonnier, 2017, p.9), which may be unexpected to some given common political disagreements, but the geographical proximity was hard to ignore at times when it came to economics before. Also, some of that can be associated with ethnic Russian speakers that live in the Baltic States and their interest to trade with Russia. That being said, with the recent Russian invasion of Ukraine, Baltics decided to sever almost all economic

ties with Russia. So the main trading partners in the new updated sources are going to be different.

Although based on this statistical data, all three Baltic States are highly developed countries, migration for economic reasons is still widespread. Why is that? It can be attributed to the simple fact that since the Baltic states are EU members, it's much easier to migrate, and there are numerous countries in the EU that can have higher living standards. Perhaps the best way to illustrate it is the net average monthly salary – 1,214eur in Estonia, 967eur in Lithuania and 932eur in Latvia. Interestingly enough, when it comes to minimum wage Lithuania has the highest one out of the Baltic states (Eurostat, 2021a). The net average monthly salary was chosen as the most reliable sign of the general population's economic situation because, as it is in this case in Lithuania, even though Lithuania has the highest minimum wage, but when it comes to average, it is quite behind Estonia. In any case, when it comes to both of these measurements, western European countries have much higher rates; for example, popular destinations for Baltic diasporas like Ireland and Sweden offer a net monthly wage of 2,748eur and 2,802eur respectively.

Migrating is quite an easy financially viable option; even though some of these people just end up being temporary migrants and return, quite a significant portion of them decides to stay. It is quite challenging to retrieve exact and accurate statistics on that since it's based purely on people self-reporting and registering themselves abroad.

As it can be seen, the Baltic States of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia do have some differences relating to their economic backgrounds. On the other hand, general findings suggest that these differences are quite minor on a grander scale and thus further amplify other potential factors playing into affecting the Baltic States' diaspora policies and their differences.

3.3 Diaspora importance during the occupation years and after

Baltic diasporas played an important part in highlighting the realities of the Baltic States' occupations. Numerous people who were political or cultural elites left the Baltic States trying to escape the Soviet regime and the deportations and remained active even while

living abroad, lobbying for the Baltic States (Nordness, 2015, p.2). Often times diaspora members invested their own time and money to spread messages and to call their host countries into action.



Figure 3.3.1 May 31, 1974, JBANC delegation meeting with then USA Vice President Gerald Ford. Source: JBANC - Joint Baltic American National Committee. <https://jbanc.org/>

One of the most active diaspora communities was in the USA. Joint Baltic American National Committee (JBANC) consisting of Estonian American National Council, the American Latvian Association, and the Lithuanian American Council working together with the various American governmental institutions to promote cooperation between the Baltics and the US to help to Baltics become independent again. Their effort continued even after the re-independence, most famously advocating the US government to support Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia's accession to NATO by contacting their state senators, activists, attending hearings and briefings, etc. (Nordness, 2015, p.3).

These historical ties do affect how the Baltic States treat their diaspora, as will be shown below.

CHAPTER IV

A REVIEW OF DIASPORA POLICIES OF THE BALTIC STATES

4.1 State policies regarding its diaspora

All three Baltic States are proactive and interactive with their own diaspora, especially after the EU accessions. Of course, it can be speculated that the sheer volume of their respective diasporas is responsible for that, and for the most part, it's probably true. That being said, at the same time, Baltic diasporas already have proven themselves to be helpful, whether it would be the older ones who supported Baltic States' independence and tried to inform the world what was happening behind the 'iron curtain', or the newer ones who are investing back home financially. For example, multiple researchers have found that the Baltic diaspora remittances make a significant positive economic impact (Strielkowski *et al.*, 2018). Because of these reasons, the Baltic States are motivated to retain tight relations with the diaspora.

4.2 Laws - Citizenship laws

When it comes to citizenship laws, there are some major differences between the Baltic States on who can be considered a citizen and whether multiple citizenships are allowed. All three Baltic States based their laws on the old pre-existing citizenship laws of the interwar period before countries were occupied again; in accordance with that, all people who were citizens during that period and their descendants became citizens again, but when it comes to people who emigrated to the Baltics during Soviet occupation this is where differences have emerged (Williams, 2019, p.23).

4.2.1 Lithuania

After the re-independence, Lithuania introduced all-inclusive citizenship laws, meaning that all permanent residents were granted citizenship if they wished so. The Law on Citizenship of November 3rd 1989, made all ethnic Lithuanians eligible for citizenship, plus

everyone who had been a permanent resident for at least two years regardless of their ethnicity. The law was valid till November 1991, and by then, the absolute majority, 90% of non-ethnic Lithuanians, decided to become citizens (Council of Europe, 1993).

By December 11, 1991, new citizenship law was adopted and was more restrictive under the assumption that all previous people who were interested in becoming citizens already had a sufficient amount of time to decide. Non-ethnic Lithuanians had to reside 10 years in Lithuania and had their knowledge of the Lithuanian language and constitution tested (Council of Europe, 1993). Of course, all these people, by law, would be considered as a part of the Lithuanian diaspora if they were to emigrate later on.

Lithuania does not universally grant dual citizenship, but there are some special conditions i.e. exceptions when a Lithuanian can have dual citizenship. According to the Republic of Lithuania Law on Citizenship Article 7, these conditions are:

“1) he has acquired citizenship of the Republic of Lithuania and citizenship of another state at birth; 2) he is a person who was exiled from the occupied Republic of Lithuania before 11 March 1990; 3) he is a person who left Lithuania before 11 March 1990; 4) he is a descendant of a person referred to in point 2 or 3 of this Article; 5) by virtue of marriage to a citizen of another state he has *ipso facto* acquired citizenship of that state; 6) he is a person under 21 years of age, provided he was adopted by citizens (citizen) of the Republic of Lithuania before reaching 18 years of age and, as a result of the adoption, acquired citizenship of the Republic of Lithuania pursuant to Article 17(1) of this Law; 7) he is a person under 21 years of age, provided he, being a citizen of the Republic of Lithuania, was adopted by citizens (citizen) of another state before reaching 18 years of age and, as a result of the adoption, acquired citizenship of that state; 8) he has acquired citizenship of the Republic of Lithuania by way of exception while being a citizen of another state; 9) he is a person who has retained citizenship of the Republic of Lithuania or who has citizenship of the Republic of Lithuania restored for his outstanding merits to the State of Lithuania; 10) he has acquired citizenship of the Republic of Lithuania while having refugee status in the Republic of Lithuania.” (Lietuvos Respublikos Seimas, 2016)

The first condition is actually one of the most recent changes; it mostly refers to people that are of mixed descent and acquired another citizenship as a birthright in accordance with other state laws, but it can also refer to a such rare condition known as *Jus Soli*, meaning that anyone born in the country with jus soli law has the right to citizenship regardless of their parents' status, it's not commonly adhered law and the United States of America is the most well-known example of it. According to Lithuanian laws, before the year

2015, individuals were able to maintain dual citizenship only until the age of 21, and after that, they had to decide and choose one. For many years it was considered to be one of the major problems for the Lithuanian diaspora since numerous people are in international marriages, which means their children wouldn't be eligible to maintain their citizenship for the rest of their lives. This even opened up ways for some resentment because the state offered exceptions to descendants of pre-1990s emigrants regardless of their nationality, mixed ethnicity or language knowledge. Nonetheless, Lithuania changed its law, probably adhering to the globalizing world and the fact that Lithuania was already facing huge depopulation issues, so giving the option to maintain dual citizenship for emigrants' children was seen as a way to keep their ties to Lithuania and possibly encourage them to return back in the future.

Lithuania also grants the option to reinstate or acquire citizenship, which mostly refers to early generation emigrants and their descendants.

So far, giving the right to maintain dual citizenship to emigrants' children that acquired another citizenship by birth is as far as Lithuania has come to expanding citizenship laws. In 2019 there were attempts to change that and amend the constitution. On 2019 May 12th, there was a referendum for approving a new formulation of citizenship; the proposed new article of the constitution was: "Citizenship of the Republic of Lithuania is acquired at birth and on other grounds established by the constitutional law. A citizen of the Republic of Lithuania by origin who has acquired the citizenship of a state meeting the criteria of European and transatlantic integration criteria chosen by the Republic of Lithuania established by the constitutional law shall not lose the citizenship of the Republic of Lithuania. In other cases, a citizen of the Republic of Lithuania may not be a citizen of another state at the same time, except for the exceptions established by the constitutional law. The procedure for the acquisition and loss of citizenship is established by constitutional law." (Lietuvos Respublikos užsienio reikalų ministerija, 2019).

This referendum only referred to the maintenance of Lithuanian citizenship for already existing citizens, not to dual citizenship overall. Another criterion was 'European and transatlantic integration', which referred to countries that are either members of the European Union or European Economic Area, members of NATO or members of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development.

53,16% of all registered voters attended the referendum, and 73,92% voted in favor of the new constitution amendment (VRK - Lietuvos Respublikos Vyriausioji Rinkimi Komisija, 2019), but that wasn't enough since for the constitution amendment 'two absolute majorities' should be present. Meaning that in order for this referendum to be successful, almost 80% of voters had to come and vote and their absolute majority had to support the amendment. Historically in modern Lithuania voting activity has never surpassed 80%, it only came close during the first presidential election after the independence re-establishment. Political experts are skeptical about it reaching such numbers even if the referendum is held again in the future.

Besides, it should be mentioned that dual citizenship is a very sensitive issue in Lithuania overall; even though Lithuania opted only for the maintenance of Lithuanian citizenship, which means it would interest mainly ethnic Lithuanians and their descendants, there were still countless fears about how it affects Lithuanian demographics and fear over immigrants, even though dual citizenship exception would not refer to non-Lithuanian immigrants. Other skepticism included doubts over being loyal to two countries and how it would work in practice, military service, taxes, etc. These ideas were not exclusive to Lithuanians currently living in Lithuania but also to some diaspora members as well, who stressed that the government needs to prepare more for possibly arising issues and find solutions to them. That being said new referendum for dual citizenship is being scheduled to be held in 2024 (Migration Law Center, 2021).

4.2.2 Latvia

Latvia is one of the Baltic countries with a high number of ethnic Russians as a result of russification politics. Right after re-independence, Latvians were barely a majority with 52%. Perhaps mainly for this reason, Latvia has adopted *ex iniuria ius non oritur* principle, which in simple terms means that only people that were citizens during interwar Latvian independence and their descendants were directly able to restore their citizenships, which left Soviet emigrants unaccounted for (Krūma, 2015, p.1). Of course, because of political and historical circumstances, a high number of these people were left with no citizenship since USSR no longer existed. Since they never were Latvian citizens, they weren't automatically

granted citizenship – but instead, separate status was established for them - “former citizens of the USSR without the citizenship of the Republic of Latvia or any other country” or nepilsoņi in Latvian (hereinafter ‘non-citizens’) (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Latvia, 2018).

These people are not considered stateless because they enjoy a variety of privileges like pensions and unemployment benefits, but they are not allowed to vote or hold any job related to the national security (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Latvia, 2018). It was assumed that this status was going to be temporary and non-citizens will be naturalized as established by law, but surprisingly enough, to this day, there is a considerable number of people who are non-citizens because they are not willing to naturalize. That being said, according to the Ministry of foreign affairs of the Republic of Latvia, the number dropped from ~730 thousand (29%) to ~233 thousand (11%). Non-citizens are generally not considered to be Latvian diaspora members if they choose to emigrate, although they do benefit from the same protection and visa-free traveling in certain countries just like Latvian citizens.

1998 reform made former USSR citizens’ children born after 1991 eligible for Latvian citizenship. 2013 amendment further simplified the procedure: children were automatically granted citizenship as long at least one of their non-citizen parents expressed his/her permission. Previously parents had to make a pledge of loyalty in order to register their child as a Latvian citizen, but that requirement was removed with the latest amendment (Krūma, 2015, p.12). Children aged 15 and over can apply for citizenship themselves.

But perhaps the latest legislature is the one that set historic precedence: in 2019 October 17, new legislation stated that starting in 2020, all children born in Latvia to non-citizens will automatically become Latvian citizens, provided they don’t have any other country’s citizenship (Latvian Public Broadcasting, 2019a). Based on that, it appears that special non-citizen status will cease to exist in the future.

Starting on 2013 October 1st, with the amendments to the Citizenship Law, Latvian citizens became eligible for maintaining their citizenship while becoming other country

citizens, albeit it applies only to a limited number of countries. Latvians can maintain their citizenship if they acquire:

“Citizenship of another EU Member State or another EFTA Member State; Citizenship of another NATO Member State; Citizenship of Australia, Brazil or New Zealand; Citizenship of such a country with which Latvia has concluded an agreement on the recognition of dual citizenship (no such agreement is currently concluded); Citizenship of a country not referred to previously if due to important national interests permission from the Cabinet is received to retain dual citizenship; Citizenship of a country not referred to previously if it has been acquired automatically (ex lege) through marriage or as a result of adoption.” (Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs Republic of Latvia, 2020)

For example, Turkey would fit these requirements, enabling Latvians to be both Latvian and Turkish citizens. This amendment is almost exactly the same as Lithuania tried to do but couldn't due to an unsuccessful referendum.

Further exceptions to this are children of citizens of Latvia; they can have citizenship of any country until 25 years old, but if this country does not comply with the requirements provided above, the child has to choose one of them. Another quite interesting exception is people reclaiming their citizenship of ethnic Latvian or Liv descent – they can maintain any of their already existing citizenships (Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs Republic of Latvia, 2020). People of Latvian or Liv descent or simply put, usually second or third-degree Latvian diasporas, have to prove their ancestry ties and pass a language test (Williams, 2019, p.25-26.).

Latvian dual citizenship laws might seem complicated at first, but having the historical and demographic context of Latvia, one might understand why these rules only apply to certain countries. It can be easily guessed that fears over ethnic Russians are the reason why Russia is not on the list.

4.2.3 Estonia

Estonia has similar historical demographics to Latvia as in a high number of ethnic Slavic people, mostly Russians, and because of that, they opted for a similar citizenship approach. High number of non-ethnic people who were brought here after the occupation was considered as a threat to maintaining a sovereign state.

To address these concerns, in 1992, the already existing Citizenship Act of 1938 was re-adopted. It automatically granted citizenship to those who were citizens before the Soviet Occupation in 1940 and their direct descendants. It should be noted that there was no discrimination based on ethnicity; all historical minorities of 8% of that period were automatically entitled to citizenship as well (Council Of Europe and Bratinka, 1993). That rule still applies today, meaning that anyone who can prove their lineage to someone who would be considered a rightful Estonian citizen right before the occupation can also apply for Estonian citizenship. In simple terms, if someone has an Estonian grandparent or even great-parent, regardless of where they were born or live, they can also apply for Estonian citizenship, even if the mentioned grandparent is no longer a citizen himself/herself.

This Act resulted in one-third of people residing in Estonia without citizenship. Estonia, in their own terms, defined them as 'määratlemata kodakondsusega isikud' or 'individuals with undefined citizenship' (Järve and Poleshchuk, 2019). It is debatable whether these people can be called stateless in any sense because, essentially, it was a choice. People were able to naturalize and gain Estonian citizenship or become citizens of their ethnic country if they wished to do so. The government was able to expeditiously speed up the citizenship acquisition for those people who were avid independence supporters before it was less than obvious that Estonia was actually going to become an independent (Council Of Europe and Bratinka, 1993). Based on 1992 law, in order to naturalize, people had to be permanent residents of Estonia for at least two years and a minimum of one year after they made an application, language knowledge was also tested (Järve and Poleshchuk, 2019, p.5).

New Citizenship Act came into effect in 1995. Some requirements have been increased; in order to naturalize, people need to be residents for at least five years and have knowledge of the Constitution of the Republic of Estonia and the Citizenship Act (Estonian Citizenship and Migration Board, 2008). Some exceptions were made for elderly people, like skipping the written examination part of the language test (Estonian Citizenship and Migration Board, 2008). In 2006, taking an oath was added to the list of requirements 'I swear to be loyal to the constitutional order of Estonia' (Riigikogu, 2015). Changes in requirements can be associated with the idea that pre re-independence migrants had enough

time to naturalize if they wished to do so. The latest requirement for naturalization is having a permanent legal income which was added in 2015 (Riigikogu, 2015). According to the Estonian Ministry of Interior in 2018, there were 77,268 people remaining with undetermined citizenship (Republic of Estonia Ministry of the Interior, 2020). That accounts for slightly over 5% of the entire Estonian population. These people, just like in Latvia's case, would not be considered to be Estonian diaspora members if they were to emigrate.

In addition, to acquiring citizenship by birth and naturalization, one can become an Estonian citizen by the achievement of special merits, which usually means great internationally recognized achievements in science, culture or sports. Interestingly enough, as per the citizenship act, Estonian citizenship for achievements of special merit can be granted only to a maximum of ten people per year. In this instance, it does not affect the overall number of Estonians citizens even by a slight margin.

When it comes to dual citizenship, Estonia seems to have the most conservative approach yet, at times, quite contradictory. According to Estonian citizenship laws, Estonian citizens can not hold dual citizenship (Riigiportaal and Police and Border Guard Board, 2021). There are two clear and notable exceptions as per the Estonian Citizenship Act (Riigikogu, 2015): If a person acquires Estonian citizenship as a minor as well as holding another citizenship, he or she can have dual citizenship till the age of 21 (after the person becomes 18 and is considered a legal adult, he or she should decide within the 3 years which citizenship will be kept). Another exception that can grant Estonian citizenship without renouncing the previous one "(...)if that person has been granted international protection by the Republic of Estonia or another member state of the European Union, the situation in his or her country of origin has not changed significantly and, for that reason, the person cannot renounce his or her previous citizenship." (Riigikogu, 2015). Both of these exceptions entered into force in 2016. Previously to that, there were no officially written exceptions.

Judging from the two exceptions provided above, it appears that dual Estonian citizenship is meant to be only a temporary solution and that eventual transferring to the singular citizenship is expected if at all possible. But this is where confusion begins; even though the citizenship act seems to be quite clear, at the same time, the very same act claims

that: “No one may be deprived of an Estonian citizenship acquired by birth.”. This situation opens up a way for different kinds of interpretations and speculations. There even has been some cases of Estonian parliament members with dual citizenship and Estonian courts do not usually interfere in these situations (Järve and Poleshchuk, 2019, p.12). It is argued that if you are Estonian by blood, then citizenship is a basic right, and in established legal practice, citizenship through naturalization is viewed as a privilege rather than a right (Cavegn, 2018). In this instance, it seems that de facto Estonia does not allow dual citizenship, but if Estonians who have Estonian citizenship as a birthright opt to have more than one citizenship state does not take any active action against it, on the other hand, naturalized citizens do not appear to receive the same approach and can be stripped of their citizenship.

4.2.4 Overview

First of all, Lithuania differs the most fundamentally from Latvia and Estonia in the way it granted citizenship, to begin with right after restoring independence. This can mainly be associated with the different Lithuanian demographics since ethnic Lithuanians account for a much higher percentage than ethnic Latvians or Estonians in their own countries. Lithuania granted citizenship to everyone who had been a resident for at least two years (until the law changed), while Latvia and Estonia employed a very similar approach of granting citizenship only to people and their descendants who were citizens prior to the Soviet occupation in 1940. The latter approach resulted in a substantial number of non-citizens in Latvia known as ‘nepilsoņi’ or in Estonian - ‘määratlemata kodakondsusega isikud’. Currently, non-citizens account for around 11% of the population in Latvia and ~5% in Estonia. Although, in Latvia, starting in 2020, all the children of non-citizens will automatically be given Latvian citizenship if there are not eligible for any other citizenship; therefore, in the future non-citizen status will cease to exist. It was proven difficult to find information about similar non-citizen status in other countries, therefore leading to a conclusion that Latvia’s and Estonia’s situation is quite unprecedented.

When it comes to dual citizenship, Baltic States have varying approaches amongst themselves: Estonia technically does not allow dual citizenship (with the clear exception of children till 21 years old), Lithuania limits it to mainly emigrants before 1990 and their

descents, and with a new amendment to people who acquired other citizenship as an automatic birthright, Latvia permits dual citizenship with EU, EFTA and NATO members states in addition to Australia, Brazil, and New Zealand. Lithuania will potentially adopt a similar approach with the scheduled 2024 referendum, although the outcome is not clear yet because the previous referendum of 2019 failed as it didn't reach 'two absolute majorities' of the population; that being said, those who came to vote were in support of it with 73,92%. Also, it should be noted that while dual citizenship is technically not allowed in Estonia for adults, yet at the same time, ethnic Estonians are generally not stripped of their citizenship even if they were to accept citizenship of another country because it is seen as a birthright. Contrary to that, Lithuania is quite strict with its citizenship policies, with the most famous case that was all over the news and quite criticized for withdrawing citizenship of a prominent NBA basketball player Žydrūnas Ilgauskas after becoming a citizen of the United States (LRT.lt, 2015).

Worldwide 85 countries allow dual citizenship (Migiro, 2020) list is longer of countries that allow dual citizenship as a temporary solution. For example, Japan, just like Estonia, allow the usage of dual citizenship until a certain age; a person must choose one citizenship until the age of 22, and failure to pick citizenship would result in losing his or her Japanese citizenship (Ministry of Justice (Japan), 2014).

Overall, the trend worldwide is that the general acceptance of dual citizenship is increasing – between the period of 1990 and 2016, the number of countries that permit dual citizenship has increased in every single region (Harpaz, 2021, p.99). Although, in the post-soviet countries, dual citizenship is a more controversial issue. Multiple countries do not allow dual citizenship or have some restrictions: fear is mainly associated with the potential usage of force in the justification of 'protecting citizens' as it was when Russia invaded Georgian territory in 2008 (Spiro, 2010, p.116). But in this context, dual citizenship wasn't the defining factor as Georgia does not recognize dual citizenship (Spiro, 2010, p.116). Still, one can see why ex-soviet states are quite wary of having all-inclusive dual citizenship laws because of a potential situation like these.

4.3 Access to education

4.3.1 Lithuania

Lithuanian education policies in regards to its diaspora can be divided into four categories: integration of Lithuanian diaspora into the Lithuanian education system, formal Lithuanian education abroad, informal Lithuanian education abroad, Lithuanian and Baltic centers in foreign universities (Rinkevičienė, 2018).

First of all, re-integration into the Lithuanian system should be discussed. Returning Lithuanian families with school-age children have some tools provided to make their reintegration into the Lithuanian school system easier if necessary. If the children have no knowledge of the Lithuanian language at all, they have the option to get a free one-year Lithuanian language education (Lietuvos Respublikos švietimo ir mokslo ministerija, 2005). For children with minor gaps in education, whether it is the Lithuanian language or general subjects, due to foreign school system differences, it's usually enough to provide after-school guidance by teachers. In order to make this possible, the Lithuanian education ministry provides Lithuanian diaspora children with up to 30% more financing for usually a maximum one-year period (it can be extended due to specific circumstances like insufficient progress) (Budginaitė and Mašidlauskaitė, 2015, p.117).

Of course, it should be noted that given all that support, some families still need to receive private lessons. This is especially true when it comes to smaller cities; according to one research, it is much harder to establish language learning groups due to often insufficient returnees number or teachers in small cities are often less experienced in dealing with children coming from different education systems, sometimes there is even a language gap, especially with older teachers who may not have sufficient English knowledge (Budginaitė and Mašidlauskaitė, 2015, p.122). (As mentioned previously biggest Lithuanian diasporas live in English-speaking countries).

Judging from that information it can be noted that if children are coming from non-English speaking countries with imperfect Lithuanian knowledge, they will have an even harder time adjusting or explaining themselves. That being said, major cities are doing quite well, especially the Lithuanian capital Vilnius since teachers have the chance to deal with

returnees' children on a daily basis, and not just that - major city schools are much more likely to have experience teaching foreign children who may come from completely different cultural backgrounds, resulting in more understanding.

Lithuania also tries to provide some young adults incentives to return back for studying at universities. The state grants easier access for Lithuanian diaspora to local education in numerous ways: Firstly, in accordance with Lithuanian Republic Science and Study edict 73, article 2: children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren of Lithuanian diaspora members can receive financing for their studies in Lithuania (Lietuvos Respublikos Seimas, 2009). There are established quotas for such financing and different levels of scholarships ranging from 25% to full scholarships. Ministry of Education, Science and Sports of the Republic of Lithuania finance 150 students each year (Židžiūnienė, 2018). People need to prove their Lithuanian origin and comply with individual eligibility requirements provided by the university that they are interested in. Secondly, Diaspora members that do not know Lithuanian have the ability to receive one year of language education prior to their studies (this applies to foreign students as well). Thirdly, diaspora members can receive extra marks for their entrance scores for bachelor's education as opposed to other foreigners in accordance with Lithuanian Republic Science and Study edict 1086 (Gudelis et al., 2012, p.72). Students can expect to get 1 or 2 extra scores depending on the range of circumstances (Rinkevičienė, 2018).

In addition to that, Lithuanian diaspora members can have access to Lithuanian schools even while living abroad in the form of formal and informal education. As of 2018, there were 209 Lithuanian schools or, as they are known locally – *Lituanistinės mokyklos*. The main goals of Lithuanian schools abroad are to nurture and protect the Lithuanian language, to preserve the national identity, teach about the history, culture and heritage of the Lithuanian state and to create a space for self-expressing in the Lithuanian language (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Lithuania, 2021a). 42 of them are in the United Kingdom, 36 in the USA, 14 in Kaliningrad (an enclave of the Russian federation), Ireland, Norway, 8 in Sweden and Germany, 7 in Australia, 6 in Belarus, Denmark, Canada, Russia, 5 in Argentina, 4 in Finland and Italy, 3 in Poland and Spain, 2 in Belgium, Estonia

and Ukraine, and finally 1 in Austria, Brazil, Czechia, Egypt, Iceland, Israel, United Arab Emirates, China, Latvia, Luxembourg, Netherlands, France, Georgia, Switzerland, Turkey, Uruguay and Venezuela (Rinkevičienė, 2018).

Most of these schools are operating on weekends and are part of informal education – meaning that they are only additional to children’s education. That being said, there are a total of 9 Lithuanian schools that offer formal education: in Latvia, Poland, Belarus, Russia and Germany (Aikos, 2021). These schools are coordinated by the Ministry of Education, Science and Sports of the Republic of Lithuania, which finances teachers working there, and schools provide extensive full-time education for children like any other school in the countries provided above.

Of course, the main initiative in establishing formal or informal schools falls on diaspora members, but the government can help with some additional funding or providing guidance and training to teachers. Schools can make their requests to the ministry. Funding usually goes towards providing learning materials like books and various national attributes like Lithuanian national costumes. For example, in 2018, 52 Lithuanian schools requested Lithuanian national costumes (Šileikytė, 2019).

As a small side note, governmental support can also go to diaspora kindergartens or nurseries. For example, one of the newest Lithuanian kindergartens was established in the north-eastern region of Poland. Ministry of Education, Science and Sports of the Republic of Lithuania finances about 75% of this particular kindergarten expenses (Pauliukaitytė and LRT.lt, 2021).

Starting this year (2021), new distance learning tools became available for all interested diaspora. The distance learning tools were developed with the funding of the Ministry of Education, Science and Sports in cooperation with the Vilnius Lithuanian House, the Education Commission of the World Lithuanian Community, the chairmen of the regional education councils and Lithuanian education teachers. For now, it’s only available to pre-school-aged children (starting at 2 years old) and first graders (LRT Lituanica, 2021). It is expected to expand classes to all school-aged children, but so far, the initiative appears

to be greatly successful because numerous schools in Austria, Norway, Sweden, USA, Ireland, Italy, Australia, Turkey, Spain, Russia, United Kingdom, Belarus, Poland, Latvia, Hungary, Chile, Taiwan, Ukraine, Switzerland, Canada, Iceland, Greece, Germany, Netherlands, Belgium, Cyprus and Luxembourg started to use the tools as soon as they become available (LRT Lituanica, 2021). It is estimated to be about 150 diaspora schools for now. The program offers Lithuanian language, history, geography and civic education classes. Some speech therapy exercises are included as well; this particular idea seems definitely necessary, especially because diaspora children are more prone to having pronunciation and other Lithuanian speech-related issues by not being exposed to the Lithuanian language as much and perhaps even having another language or languages to learn which are sometimes primarily used.

And lastly, Lithuania also supports Lithuanian or Baltic centers. The purpose of them is to teach or learn about the Lithuanian language, history and culture. Quite often, these centers explore the overall Baltic States' culture of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia, hence the name Baltic centers. As of 2018, there were 39 centers operating in universities abroad: 4 of them are in Latvia, Poland and Germany, 3 in Russia, 2 in Czechia, Italy, United Kingdom, USA, France, Kaliningrad (Russian enclave), Ukraine and 1 center respectively in Australia, Austria, Belarus, Estonia, Japan, Kazakhstan, Georgia, Finland, Sweden, Hungary (Rinkevičienė, 2018). How do they relate to Lithuanian diaspora members? Although they are mainly resulting from inter universities cooperation and the primary goal is to introduce Lithuanian history and culture to the local residents of any particular country that they are in, diaspora members can still greatly benefit from them. In some instances, it can be a way to maintain their ties to Lithuania, by taking a language course and attending events, but it can also offer the opportunity of employment for Lithuanians that live abroad. Some of the staff and resources are directly financed by the Ministry of Education, Science and Sports of the Republic of Lithuania.

In 2021 October 1st, during the latest discussion about Lithuanian schools abroad, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Lithuania minister Gabrielius Lansbergis stressed the importance of Lithuanian schools and diaspora:

“Living far from Lithuania and teaching the Lithuanian language and history to the younger generation in schools founded on your own initiative and efforts, deepening children’s and young people’s acquaintance with our culture and traditions, you (Lithuanian diaspora) create and nurture tomorrow’s Lithuania - bold, free and modern yet remembering it’s uniqueness and strengthening the foundation of it’s statehood - the Lithuanian language.” (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Lithuania, 2021c).

This discussion brought together the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Vytautas Magnus University (state-owned university), the Education Commission of the World Lithuanian Community and the Association of Lithuanian Schools. Upcoming changes and goals were discussed: amendments to the Law on Education are being coordinated, which will allow Lithuanian schools abroad to receive not only project-based funding, but also basic funding for general school activities, the ministry will ensure the establishment of an achievement assessment system and improve the working conditions of teachers. Also, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, on its own initiative, with the participation of experts in the field of education and other fields, is running a campaign to raise awareness of Lithuanian education abroad, which will hopefully effectively contribute to the growth of numbers of students in schools.

All these initiatives show that Lithuania prioritizes access to Lithuanian education for the diaspora. There could be multiple reasons for it: promoting Lithuanian language and culture, maintaining diaspora ties with its homeland, and relating to these two points even to attract some Lithuanians back home.

When it comes to diaspora reintegration into the Lithuanian system, one of the most important and oldest institutions is Vilniaus Lietuvių Namai (translation: Vilnius Lithuanian House) it was established right after Lithuanian re-independence in 1990 by the Ministry of Culture and Education of the Republic of Lithuania. It is an educational institution for all school-aged children that offers formal and informal education, starting with first graders and going all the way to twelfth grade, and some language courses for adults. As per the official school website, the purpose of the school is to educate descendants of Lithuanian deportees and political prisoners (it is referring to mass Lithuanian deportations to labor camps in Siberia, etc. by the USSR), Lithuanian citizens or non-citizens who have returned permanent or temporary, Lithuanians who are living abroad (Vilniaus Lietuvių Namai, 2021). To put it simply, everyone who can prove their Lithuanian heritage is eligible to study there; education

is free of charge. The school even has a dormitory for children coming from abroad – accommodation and meals are also free, descendants of Lithuanian deportees and political prisoners coming from abroad can even receive extra state funding – including payment for their and guardians’ tickets (Vilniaus Lietuvių Namai, 2021).

Lithuanian diaspora can also benefit from free distant education provided by 6 Lithuanian formal education schools – 4 of them offer education for standard school-age children per their grades Vilniaus Ozo gimnazija (1st-12th grades), Šiaulių Simono Daukanto gimnazija (9th-12th grades), Šiaulių Sandoros progimnazija, (1st-8th grades), Klaipėdos Vyturio progimnazija (1st-8th grades), and two offer education for minors starting at age 16 and all adults: Akmenės suaugusiųjų mokymo centras (5th-12th grades), Kretingos suaugusiųjų ir jaunimo mokymo centras (11th-12th grades) (Renkuosi Lietuvą, 2021a). These schools offer formal education approved by the Ministry of Education, Science and Sports of the Republic of Lithuania, meaning the curriculum and diplomas are the same as any other school in Lithuania; students only need to attend their final examinations of 12th grade (and in some instances 10th grade). Vilniaus Ozo gimnazija is a pioneer amongst these schools and offers distant education to Lithuanian children in Lithuania and all across the globe since 2003 (Vilniaus Ozo gimnazija, no date). All these schools are state-owned hence the education is free and coordinated by the ministry of education.

In addition to offering formal education, schools provide an option for students to pick only Lituanistinis paketas (Lithuanian ‘Lituanistic’ package) which includes Lithuanian language classes and if interested Lithuanian history, geography, ethnic culture (Renkuosi Lietuvą, 2021a). This could be a great option for children who do not live anywhere near diaspora weekend schools. Yet again, education is free.

4.3.2 Latvia

Latvian education policies can be divided into three different categories: integration of the Latvian diaspora into the Latvian education system, Latvian school education abroad, Latvian and Baltic centers in foreign universities.

First of all, overall, it should be said that the concept of diaspora policies is a relatively new concept in Latvia, even with a large historical population abroad, the term gained popularity in the 2010s (Lulle, 2018), but the peak interest started in 2018 when the diaspora law was adopted.

Access to education is mentioned as one of the top priorities in Latvia's diaspora law that was adopted in 2018 and came into force in 2019. The law mentions that its goal is to provide access to diaspora members to learn "Latvian language, and also to get to know the history of Latvia, State structure and administration, the Latvian culture and traditions through formal and non-formal education" (Saeima, 2018a). The law also mentions the importance of Latgalian and Livonian languages.

To achieve these goals as productively as possibly Latvian Saeima assigned the Ministry of Education and Science with multiple tasks:

"a) implement a unified national policy in respect of diaspora weekend schools, diaspora summer high schools, and other non-formal education activities of diaspora (hereinafter also - the diaspora education); b) coordinate the acquisition of education of diaspora teachers and educators and the raising of professional skills thereof; c) coordinate research and methodological work in the field of diaspora education; d) develop and implement the guidelines of the diaspora education; e) develop and implement support measures conforming to the guidelines of the diaspora education, *inter alia*, shall develop methodological teaching aids and ensure the availability thereof; f) develop and implement support measures which are directed towards the Latvian language, also preservation, protection, and development in diaspora of the Latgalian written language as historical variation of the Latvian language, and also that of the Livonian language; g) ensure the organisation and availability of the examinations of the proficiency in the official language for diaspora at the permanent places of residence of its members abroad by issuing an appropriate certificate of the proficiency in the official language; h) organise the public service remit in the field of diaspora research and for cooperation with diaspora in the field of science and research; i) coordinate and implement cooperation with diaspora in the field of youth policy; j) control the use of the State budget funds intended for the implementation of the diaspora policy in the authorities under subordination thereof and in diaspora organisations according to the delegated State administration tasks; k) coordinate cooperation with foreign countries and international organisations in the field of the diaspora education; l) promote inclusion of remigrated diaspora members in the education system of Latvia;" (Saeima, 2018a).

As it is clearly seen from this extensive list Latvia prioritizes its diaspora education and is also hoping to attract at least some portion of the diaspora back home by providing all these opportunities to maintain ties to their Latvian roots, which will make reintegration that much easier

Since 2001 the National Library of Latvia has been running the reading promotion program “Children and Youth Jury” and in 2007, it became available in Latvian diaspora schools and other education-focused centers. In 2012, the Parent’s Jury was established to keep all family members involved in reading and promote reading as a family activity. As of 2018, the program was operating in 57 Latvian diaspora communities (European Commission, 2022).

Summer school of Latvian Language and Culture for diaspora youth has been taking place since 2018 and is funded by the Latvian Ministry of Education and Science (last year it was cancelled due to the pandemic, and this year it was held remotely). It offers 64 academic hours of language teaching, lectures on Latvian history, politics and culture (University of Latvia, 2021).

First of all, the Latvian diaspora integration into the Latvian education system will be reviewed. It can refer to both diaspora members’ children who are going to schools and adults who decided to pursue higher education in Latvia. Although Latvia delegated some funding specifically for diaspora integration there are still some difficulties. Surveyed educational institutions mentioned that the most common issues are: differences in children’s education abroad and in Latvia resulting in some gaps, insufficient Latvian language skills, and the most importantly, lack of teachers’ experience dealing with children from different countries and cultures (Kaša, Cara and Mieriņa, 2020, p.58). Lack of experience makes solving issues much more difficult.

When it comes to adults, one of the biggest difficulties is mentioned to be a lack of Latvian language knowledge and difficulty in requiring existing diploma recognition, whether because of the time-consuming process or expenses involved (Kaša, Cara and

Mieriņa, 2020, p.62). Offering free Latvian language courses it is a good incentive for more diaspora members to come and study there.

In order to make the transition from the foreign education system to the Latvian one easier, Cabinet Regulation No. 591 was adopted, it refers to students who have no recent experience with the Latvian education system and the fact that they are entitled to help and support to learn typical compulsory courses like Latvian history, language and literature, social sciences, etc. that may have differed from student's previous curriculum and resulted in learning gaps (Studente, 2016).

On 2021 January 1st, the Latvian government has announced a Plan for Work with the Diaspora for 2021-2023 that heavily focuses on the education (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Latvia, 2021). Probably one of the most important initiatives is financial: The state of Latvia will be providing almost 1.1 million euros annually for the sole purpose of preserving and teaching the Latvian language amongst its diaspora (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Latvia, 2021).

As a response to the ongoing pandemic website www.maciunmacies.lv was created, which focuses on online Latvian education for both children and adults. It enables Latvian diaspora members to have access to learn Latvian anywhere in the world regardless of their financial capabilities since all education is free. At the same time, it's not just about the pandemic, because there is a significant number of children who do not live anywhere near Latvian diaspora schools, so this website might be their only chance to professionally structured Latvian language education. The Classflow program is used for lessons. Classes are taught by professional Latvian language teachers and occur twice a week via live streaming services (Latvian Public Broadcasting, 2019c).

As per the Latvian Language Agency, Latvian informal education is available in 103 institutions in 25 different countries: 24 of them are in the United States, 5 in Canada, 3 in Russia, 66 in Europe (the highest number of schools is in the United Kingdom, Ireland and Germany), 7 in Australia and 1 in South America (Latviešu valodas aģentūra, 2021). Informal education is usually offered in the form of weekend schools and is supplementary

in children's host country formal education. These schools became eligible to receive financial support in 2013; diaspora weekend schools that are interested in financial support can submit their application and enter a competition. Schools are then selected based on fulfilling various requirements. In 2015, 42 schools received funding (Latviešu valodas aģentūra, 2021).

In 2018, that number grew to 56 – including one in Istanbul, Turkey (Latviešu valodas aģentūra, 2018). The numbers keep growing; in 2019 – it was 58 schools (Latviešu valodas aģentūra, 2020).

European Latvian school funding is handled by the European Latvian Association and schools outside Europe by the World Association of Free Latvians. This results in interesting eligibility criteria differences since both of these organizations have their own selection committees – and yet, still, all decisions are being coordinated with the Latvian Language Agency. It should be noted that the Latvian Language Agency operates under the Ministry of Education and Science and that the diaspora schools are funded by the “State Language Policy and Administration” program (Latviešu valodas aģentūra, 2020).

Diaspora members also have the opportunity to attend camps, usually in summer, whether in their host country or Latvia (LU DMPC, 2021). It seems to be a great way for children to immerse fully in the Latvian language and culture, which in turn helps them feel connected to their roots and solidify their interest in learning after putting their Latvian language skills to practical use.

The last category is Latvian or Baltic centers at universities. They have the same purpose as Lithuanian centers - to teach or learn about the Latvian language, history and culture. Again, often times these centers involve all three Baltic States. According to Latvian language agency, there are 24 centers where people can learn Latvian – 4 of them are in Germany, 3 in Lithuania, 2 in the Czech Republic, Estonia, China, Russia, Poland and 1 in the USA, Austria, France, Finland, Ukraine, Hungary and Sweden (Latviešu valodas aģentūra, no date).

4.3.3 Estonia

Estonian education policies will be divided into the same categories: integration of the Estonian diaspora into the Estonian education system, Estonian school education abroad, Estonian and Baltic centers in foreign universities.

Until 1996 there was no clear Estonian policy on diaspora educational and cultural support: after Estonian days in Tallinn that consolidated all Estonians across the globe, the Ministry of Education received requests for providing supplies for learning the Estonian language (Kulu, 2000, p.140). Based on that and already existing Estonian diaspora schools, it was decided that a clear diaspora educational policy was necessary: one of the key features was providing teaching materials and some financing to ensure worldwide Estonian diaspora education.

One of the ways to help with diaspora easier reintegration into the education system is “keelekliik” online Estonian language learning project. It has some beginner and intermediate courses. For example, beginner courses are quite extensive with 16 chapters and ~1200 exercises (Keelekliik, no date). The website is financed by the European Social Fund and the Estonian Ministry of Education and Science. Although these courses are not specifically aimed at children or even the diaspora, they are useful to virtually anyone who wants to learn the Estonian language and culture, including the diaspora.

Another way more specifically targeting diaspora is project eestikeel.ee, which is directed to 6-10 years old diaspora children that provides 10 hours of Estonian language courses. The project’s aim is to help maintain language ties in diaspora communities that reside abroad temporarily (Mägi and Siarova, 2014, p.11). These courses would help to maintain children’s Estonian level and they would potentially have an easier time reintegrating into the education system. Of course, to make it more effective, much more than 10 hours is needed, especially for children with weaker language skills. Older Estonian diaspora children aged 13-18 can attend culture and language and camps (Mägi and Siarova, 2014, p.11).

Estonian state provides opportunities for reintegration and supports language skills of Estonian diaspora children by giving extra education if it's deemed to be necessary (Anniste and Masso, 2020, p.84).

Perhaps one of the best ways to get Estonian education online is through Global Estonian School, it is open to all diaspora children. It is especially useful to children who do not live anywhere near Estonian supplementary schools. This school is sponsored by the Estonian Ministry of Education and Research (Üleilmakool, 2021).

There are numerous Estonian schools abroad. Estonia supports these schools by providing some study materials at the schools' request, in addition to that, teachers can receive state-funded training (Kulu, 2000, p.140). Although finding a proper official list of all Estonian diaspora schools was proven to be quite difficult, it is known that there are 63 institutions that teach the Estonian language and 80 general education institutions or Sunday schools (Madison, 2018). According to some websites that used information from <http://oppevara.estinst.ee> web page, Estonian schools can be found in 21 countries: USA, Austria, Australia, Belgium, Georgia, Spain, Netherlands, Ireland, Italy, Canada, Luxembourg, Latvia, Norway, France, Sweden, Germany, Finland, UK, Denmark, Ukraine and Russia. Newer information from Estonian Institute has information on diaspora schools in 20 countries, but the exact countries differ slightly: there is no information on Australia and Ukraine, and it appears that there was a new school opened in United Arab Emirates (Eesti Instituut, 2021b). It is unclear whether schools were closed in Australia and Ukraine, but perhaps it's more likely that the information about these countries is simply not available yet on this particular website.

But what is clear, is that some of the most active schools can be found in North America (in the USA and Canada) since they have long diaspora historical roots there. For example, a supplementary Estonian school in Toronto was established in 1949 – more than 70 years ago (Linask, 1979, p.11). In addition to that, as discussed biggest recent days Estonian diaspora lives in Finland, so it seems quite natural that Finland has the highest supplementary school numbers as well. As per the Estonian Institute website, there are 19

places that provide some sort of Estonian classes, the number of hours and classes can differ per location (Eesti Instituut, 2021b).

All Estonian diaspora schools and societies that teach the language can submit annual reports to the Estonian Institute, which is funded by the ministry of education and research. Based on the findings in the reports, grants can be awarded. In general, it provides vital information to the state about the current diaspora schools situation; for example – how many children are studying there, how is the situation with teachers or materials. Reports like these are arguably one of the most important things in helping to maintain diaspora schools' relations with the Estonian state.

In addition to that, Estonian schools abroad or any other Estonian institutions, societies or entities can apply for governmental support for educational projects. These projects are funded by the Estonian state through the ministry of education and research; forms can be submitted by May 2nd or November 1st respectively (Eesti Instituut, 2021a). Applications can be made if they concern any of the following projects: teaching Estonian language and culture abroad, Estonian language camps for children in their countries of residence, training and methodological assistance, or speech therapy counseling (Eesti Instituut, 2021a).

As one of the ways to improve diaspora schoolteachers' expertise, the state offers a short summer camp where teachers can discuss all kinds of educational topics and learn from each other. Training topics in 2019 included opportunities for museum training in Estonia, nature education, the latest Estonian children's books, e-textbooks and World Estonian Language Week 23 - 29 September 2019 (Eesti Instituut, 2019).

Speaking of World Estonian Language Week, it is an annually organized event by the Estonian Institute with support from the Integration Foundation and the Ministry of Education and Research. The event is aimed at everyone interested in the Estonian language: teachers, educators, and learners. This year, the Estonian Institute with the help of a language learning company, created learning games that can be played alone or with a group (ERR News, 2021c).

And lastly, Estonian and Baltic centers. Numerous universities have Estonian centers or, quite commonly, joint centers with the other Baltic States. Estonian Ministry of Education and Research lists 18 countries with Estonian or Baltic centers: Finland, Sweden, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Germany, United Kingdom, France, Italy, Austria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Ukraine, Russia, China, Colombia, USA, Canada (Republic of Estonia Ministry of Education and Research, 2021). Some of the countries have numerous universities with Estonian centers, for example, Finland has 4, the USA has 2. Just like the other Baltic States, Estonian institutions cooperate with these institutions as well, some of them offer language and history classes.

4.3.4 Overview

It appears that access to education is one of the priorities when it comes to all Baltic States' diaspora policies. Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia all have legislations and laws about the reintegration of diaspora returnees into the education system by providing extra language classes or other courses if necessary. Lithuania even offers scholarships and extra points for university students.

When it comes to diaspora access to education abroad, all Baltic States have some informal schools, mainly in the form of weekend schools where children can learn about the culture and language of their each respective states. Although maintaining informal diaspora schools falls mainly on diaspora members, yet again, all Baltic States provide some form of funding and grants to incentivize them and ease the financial burden. Furthermore, Estonia also organizes summer camps for diaspora schoolteachers to discuss important topics and learn from each other. What distinguishes Lithuania from Latvia and Estonia is the fact that Lithuania also has 9 formal schools abroad, meaning that children can get their formally recognized education there just like in any other school in their host country. These schools are fully funded by the Ministry of Education, Science and Sports of the Republic of Lithuania. In addition to that, Baltic States provide at least some sort of resources for learning languages online. But yet again, when it comes to online or distant learning, it appears that Lithuania offers the most in this sphere by providing the opportunity to study online in state-owned schools in Lithuania all the way from 1st to 12th grade, meaning that the Lithuanian

diaspora can get fully recognized formal school education online (student do need to attend 12th-grade examinations in person in Lithuania, and depending on the situation 10th grade too).

And lastly, Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia are also interested in cooperating with universities in establishing Lithuanian, Latvian or Estonian culture centers or very often joint Baltic centers there.

Overall, it appears that Lithuania has the most extensive laws when it comes to access to education amongst diaspora members. Although while Latvia and Estonia seem to be the less involved, when we compare it with the international standards (or other countries), it has to be said that they are investing significant amounts of effort in this (Gudelis, Gečienė and Jakulevičienė, 2012; Lafleur and Vintila, 2020).

4.4 Social Security

4.4.1 Lithuania

Citizens of the Republic of Lithuania permanently residing abroad have the right to receive a state social insurance pension when it is established by international agreements or in accordance with the procedure established by the Government of the Republic of Lithuania.

Minimal working experience for a pension is 15 years. Although technically 15 years of working experience is enough, in order to get a “full” retirement pension currently a person needs to work for 32 years (in 2021) and it will increase by six months each year until 2027 (SoDra, 2021c).

Currently, (2021) retirement age for women is 63 years 4 months, for men 64 years 2 months. In 2026, the retirement age will be 65 for both, and in order to achieve that starting in 2012 retirement age has increased gradually and is still increasing (Renkuosi Lietuva, 2021c).

People can still retire up to 5 years prior to the official retirement age if they acquired working experience for a full pension. That being said, the early retirement pension is going

to be 0.4% lower than normal for each month left until the official retirement age (SoDra, 2021a). Under some exceptions, people can retire earlier, only having half of the working experience required for a full pension (16 years) if: they are mothers who have at least 5 children for at least 8 years, taking care of children with 40% or less 'work capacity' for at least 15 years or took care of someone who has a need of constant care for at least 15 years (SoDra, 2021a). People can also receive an early retirement pension temporarily and then start working again if they wish to do so.

Because of international agreements, if a person worked in other European Union countries, working experience there might be included in the total experience required for a pension. But things get a little bit complicated with other countries that have no bilateral agreements with Lithuania on pensions, that way, working experience is not included in the total experience in Lithuania. Meaning that emigrants that lived in countries with no bilateral agreements on pensions with Lithuania, their working experience would not be eligible for inclusion (Gudelis et al., 2012, p.73). Expanding bilateral agreements might solve this issue.

Countries that have agreements with Lithuania include all EU, EEA – European Economic Area countries, the United Kingdom and Switzerland. These countries allow to add up total working experience. Meaning that if, for example, a person has worked 5 years in the EU member state Germany, then 10 years in Lithuania, - the total working experience will be calculated as 15 years and this person will be eligible for an old-age pension in Lithuania. It should be mentioned that each respective country will be calculating only their sum of the pension depending on the years that the person has worked over there (Renkuosi Lietuva, 2021d). In the simplest terms, if a returnee has working experience in multiple countries, each country will be paying only their part in accordance with their old-age retirement calculations.

So how would it work exactly if Lithuanian diaspora members decide to return and receive an old-age pension in Lithuania? When filling in the application for receiving an old-age pension person should indicate that he/she has also worked in another country and wishes to receive a pension in a Lithuanian account. Then Sodra – the Lithuanian social insurance office, will take care of the remaining steps in the role of intermediary – will forward the

person's request to the relevant foreign countries, will receive documents certifying the person's accumulated social insurance record and the right to receive a pension and a specific amount from a foreign state. The foreign state will pay the old-age pension directly to the person in the account. The procedure for reimbursement of transfer costs is determined by each state individually and Lithuania does not interfere in that (Renkuosi Lietuvą, 2021d). The same rule would apply if a Lithuanian decides to leave a country after working in Lithuania; he or she is still eligible to receive an old-age pension while living abroad if the requirements provided above are met.

At the same time, if a diaspora returnee doesn't have minimal working experience of 15 years or perhaps had some of the work experience in a country without any bilateral agreements with Lithuania regarding pensions, he/she can receive an old-age social assistance pension. This pension is for people who are not entitled to old-age pensions, or if they are receiving any other pensions, their total sum is lower than the old-age assistance pension. For 2021, the monthly payment is 143eur (SoDra, 2021b). In certain instances, people can be eligible for a higher amount. For example, mothers who have raised 5 or more children will receive 1,5 of the pension base, which would be 214.5eur for 2021 (SoDra, 2021b).

A certain number of older Lithuanian diaspora were political prisoners and deportees. According to a legal statute for victims of occupations between 1939 and 1990 (political prisoner under Article 4 of the law; deportee under Article 5 of the law), they are eligible for supplementary pensions if they are recognized as incapacitated or partially incapacitated for work, or have reached retirement age (Lietuvos Respublikos Seimas, 1997; Lietuvos Respublikos socialinės apsaugos ir darbo ministerija, 2021a). If persons were in exile or imprisoned for 15 years or more in certain regions of the former USSR (Far East districts or other areas approved by the Lithuanian government) they can receive a pension 5 years prior to pensionable age, provided they are not receiving any pension for their special working conditions either in Lithuania or any other country. Also, the overall duration of the exile or imprisonment (of rehabilitated political prisoners) will be included in total working experience calculations for an old-age pension. In addition, widows and orphans are entitled

to some pensions of victims under established conditions. Lithuania also provides opportunities for diaspora political prisoners and deportees and their families to return back to Lithuania (which will be discussed in the return policies section in detail).

Lithuanian diaspora members are subjected to the same social security laws as any other local living there. Although people with working experience in a country without bilateral agreements would potentially face multiple issues if they wish to return to Lithuania and do not have enough working experience there.

4.4.2 Latvia

Latvian citizens residing abroad are eligible for an old-age pension if they meet the requirements. Overall, the old-age pension can be granted to people whose place of residence is in Latvia, a Member State of the European Union or any other country that has an international agreement with Latvia in regards to their pension system. The retirement age for 2021 is 64 years old for both men and women (State Social Insurance Agency of the Republic of Latvia - Valsts sociālās apdrošināšanas aģentūra, 2020). Retirement age is being increased slowly by three months each year, and in 2025 it will be 65 years old for everyone (State Social Insurance Agency of the Republic of Latvia - Valsts sociālās apdrošināšanas aģentūra, 2021b). People can still continue to receive their pension if they decide to move abroad.

As mentioned above, all the EU countries have international agreements regarding their social security, so people's working experience there can be calculated to the overall total working experience. Each country will be paying its own separate amount for accumulated working experience. In addition, European Economic Area countries like Norway, Liechtenstein, Iceland plus Switzerland and the United Kingdom have the same agreements as well (European Commission, 2021c). Additional intergovernmental agreements on social security with Ukraine, Russia, Canada, Belarus, Australia and USA were found on the official website of the State social insurance agency (State Social Insurance Agency of the Republic of Latvia - Valsts sociālās apdrošināšanas aģentūra, 2021a). Although terms and conditions might vary slightly for each country, all of them address old-age pensions and some of the agreements also allow receiving social security benefits, survivor's pension, etc.

The minimum working experience is 15 years, but starting in 2025, it will become 20 years. People have the option to retire up to 2 years earlier if they have paid for work-related insurance (i.e. worked) for at least 30 years. Under specific circumstances like the following: parent or guardian with at least 25 years of experience (for mothers, required minimum experience is 20 years) who have raised 5 or more children, or a disabled child for at least 5 years, unlawfully politically repressed people with 30 years of experience, people who have worked in harmful environments under special conditions (like Chernobyl nuclear power plant clean up), people with certain health conditions like dwarfism, etc can retire up to 5 years earlier (State Social Insurance Agency of the Republic of Latvia - Valsts sociālās apdrošināšanas aģentūra, 2021a).

How does the application process work? People can apply to any State Social Insurance Agency branch. For ones that have working experience prior to 1996, additional documentation that proves their working history is necessary. Diaspora members have to send in their request via postal office between 1 October to 15 December and also provide proof of life via notary annually or it can be done in local Latvian State Social Insurance Agency branches (European Commission, 2021b).

Those who are not entitled to an old-age pension because they do not meet requirements and have a very low or no income can receive state social security benefits. However, in order to do so, one should permanently live in Latvia for a minimum of 5 years and more importantly 'of which the last 12 months have been uninterrupted residency' (European Commission, 2021a). This policy excludes some diaspora members who may otherwise consider returning to Latvia without sufficient recognized working experience.

4.4.3 Estonia

In a similar fashion to Lithuania and Latvia, Estonian citizens residing abroad have the right to receive a state social insurance pension as well if it is established by international agreements or in accordance with the procedure established by the Government of the Republic of Estonia.

This can be done through the Estonian Social Insurance Board if the person gained enough working experience in one or multiple EEA countries, Switzerland, or the state that Estonia has a bilateral agreement on the issue. Currently, these countries are Moldova, Ukraine, Belarus, Russia, Canada and Australia. According to the Estonian Insurance Board, an agreement with Belarus is currently pending (Social Insurance Board, 2021). If the working experience was gained in any different country the person has to contact the state directly and see whether he/she is eligible for the pension and can receive it if decides to return to Estonia.

Estonian citizens who gained enough working experience in Estonia can also receive a pension if they live in European Union Member State, Norway, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Switzerland or in previously mentioned states that have a bilateral agreement with Estonia through the simplified procedure because these particular countries' social security authorities can directly communicate with Estonian Insurance Board. If the person resides anywhere else Estonian Social Security Board has to be contacted directly (Social Insurance Board, 2021). The minimum working experience for receiving a pension is 15 years just like in Lithuania.

Diaspora returnees who are retirement-aged but do not have the necessary working experience for receiving a pension, can receive a monthly benefit of 255,18eur (as of April 2021). Provided they do not have any additional income that's above the benefit sum (Republic of Estonia Social Insurance Board, 2021b).

All other old-age related pension rules apply to the Estonian diaspora just like to any regular Estonian citizen. By 2026, the retirement age will become 65 years old. Currently, people who were born in 1953 can get a standard old-age pension at the age of 63. People whose birthdates are after 1961 will be retiring at 65. Everyone else who has birthdates between 1954-1960 will have 3 months added to their pensionable age for each year after 1953; for example, for 1954 retirement age is 63 years and 3 months (Republic of Estonia Social Insurance Board, 2021a).

Estonian used to provide an option to retire up to three years earlier in exchange for a small cut of pension for each month that was early. Starting in 2021, it was replaced by a flexible old-age pension, although the general idea is quite similar: “You may retire up to five years before the retirement age; however, before the old-age pension, your pension qualifying period must be longer. If you retire before the retirement age, your pension will be smaller. If you retire later than the retirement age, the pension will be bigger.” (Republic of Estonia Social Insurance Board, 2021a).

Of course, there are some exceptions. People working in certain fields are eligible to retire earlier, for example, police officers, rescue workers, prison officials, anyone working in hazardous conditions or in general positions where age often plays a crucial role in the ability to do the job, like circus artists, ballet dancers, etc. Detailed information can be found on the Social Insurance website for case-by-case professions.

Estonia also grants pension exceptions for unlawfully repressed persons. This relates to the diaspora in a way that some percentage of people were forced into exile, and they are eligible to retire earlier, time of their exile could be included in their pensionable service and supplementary pension – 20% of the national rate for exiled people. Children who were born during the exile can receive these benefits as well for the period they were prevented from returning. (Republic of Estonia Social Insurance Board, 2021a).

Another exception is old-age pension under favorable conditions that refers to parents (mother or father), step-parents, guardians or caregivers; people can retire earlier if: “5 years before the pensionable age when you have raised a child under 18 years of age with a medium, severe, or profound disability for at least eight years. 5 years before the pensionable age when you have raised five or more children for at least eight years. 3 years before the pensionable age when you have raised four children for at least eight years. 1 year before the pensionable age when you have raised three children for at least eight years.” (Republic of Estonia Social Insurance Board, 2021a) Only one of the parents or caregivers can use this early retirement opportunity and it should be decided amongst them who is going to use it. It seems like this policy, in general, is focused to help the parents overall who may need it the most, but the clause about the number of children appears to be an incentive, albeit probably

minuscule on a large scale, to encourage people to have more children in a country with low birthrates such as Estonia as is the general trend in Europe.

Overall, it seems that Estonia provides multiple opportunities for diaspora members to receive a fair pension, just like any other Estonian living in their homeland. Diaspora members are even eligible for a returnee pension without having enough work experience. It sends a message they are still valued by the state even if their economic investment is minimal.

4.4.4 Health Insurance

Baltic States are EU members, so their diasporas residing in other EU countries can benefit from having European Health Insurance Card (EHIC). When diaspora members temporarily return, they are able to use EHIC cards for emergency services (Lulle, 2020, p.297).

Latvia has adopted Health Care Financing Law in 2018 which proclaims that people receive their health insurance based on their residence and taxes, which means that a person needs to pay health insurance taxes multiple times to be able to benefit from them. There are no exceptions for diaspora returnees. Although all minors up to 18 years, pregnant women, and up to 70 days postpartum if the medical services are related to the birth receive free healthcare regardless, including some other exceptions like victims of Chernobyl, people who are treated for infectious diseases specified by the cabinet, etc (Saeima, 2018c).

After 2009 Lithuania, in a way, started to use health insurance to encourage people to declare their country of residence correctly. Lithuanian health insurance is calculated separately from their income tax, meaning that citizens that are declared in Lithuania are subjected to this compulsory payment. If people do not declare their residence correctly they might be billed for health insurance although they are living abroad for years. Until the debt is paid off they are not entitled to receive free health care in Lithuania if they decide to return back, with the exception of the emergency services (SoDra - The State Social Insurance Fund Board, 2022).

There is one way to erase the debt by providing all required documents that the person has been working abroad and paid for insurance there (SoDra - The State Social Insurance Fund Board, 2022). This is an incentive to register properly and in time. Although there are still loopholes because of some exceptions, like minors, or young adults who are registered students are not subjected to any payments and receive free healthcare regardless. Another example, in Lithuania one of the parents gets free insurance until their child is 8 years old without needing to work (Valstybinė ligonių kasa / National health insurance fund, 2017). That means that multiple emigrant mothers and fathers potentially won't declare their departure from Lithuania so that they can benefit from free health care during their holidays back home. That being said, compulsory health insurance certainly played a role in more accurate diaspora statistics. In 2010, emigration rates reported were several times higher than in previous years, because numerous people declared their foreign residency only then even if have been living abroad for multiple years (Kumpikaite, 2019, p.4).

Estonia offers free health insurance to pensioners and everyone under 19 who are registered in Estonia (Saar, 2020, p.171). So these diaspora returnees would receive free health care automatically. Estonian diaspora students can also receive free healthcare, but it's not an automatic process and necessary documents have to be submitted annually (Saar, 2020, p.171).

4.4.5 Overview

It seems that all three Baltic States have quite similar policies regarding an old-age pension. There is an ongoing trend of increasing the retirement age and working experience required – the retirement age will be 65 years old in 2025 in Latvia and in 2026 in Lithuania and Estonia. Currently, the minimum working experience is 15 years in all Baltic States, but in Latvia, starting in 2025, it will be 20 years. Perhaps that can be associated with the general trend of an aging population because of low birth rates and continuing emigration (although Estonia is slowly moving its population curve upwards).

Baltic States have multilateral agreements with EU and EEA countries and Switzerland for calculating foreign working experience into the total working experience. In addition, Lithuania has agreements with the UK, Latvia with Ukraine, Belarus, Russia,

Australia, Canada and the USA, Estonia – with Moldova, Ukraine, Russia, Canada and Australia.

Estonia offers additional support for returnees without sufficient working experience, while Lithuania offers the same policies for both local residents and diaspora and potential returnees; Latvia appears to have the most conservative policies toward diaspora because of the permanent residency requirement for receiving social state benefits.

4.5 Political participation

This section, for the most part, relates to diaspora members who have retained their citizenship because to participate in most political interactions, one needs to be a citizen, perhaps except for lobbying and advocating for some political changes and some voting rights that all EU citizens are subject to like elections to the European Parliament. This section will only analyze participation on a national election level.

4.5.1 Lithuania

According to Global Lithuania, there are about 1.3 million people of Lithuanian descent living abroad, and more than 300 thousand of whom are Lithuanian citizens (URM, 2018).

Lithuanian diaspora members are able to participate in elections in three ways: voting via mail and send their ballot to the closest embassy, voting in person at the closest embassy or voting in Lithuania.

When it comes to politics in Lithuania, participation is quite low, not just regarding diasporas but also in general. For example, one of the referendums of 2019 wasn't valid because the absolute double majority couldn't be reached. This remains the case even in the presidential election, in the most recent presidential elections of 2019, voting activity ended up being 56,45%. (Gaučaitė *et al.*, 2019). Which seems to be around average in Lithuania.

But when it comes to the Lithuanian diaspora, political inactivity is even more expressed. Only a small part of Lithuanian citizens living abroad actively cultivate political relations with their country. This is best reflected in elections. For example, in the 2009

presidential elections, less than 20,000 people were registered as voters by Lithuanian embassies (Sekunde.lt, 2010). It is less than 10% of the total Lithuanian diaspora population that has the right to vote.

Lithuanian diaspora's inactivity in voting can be associated with the voting system itself. Previously in all elections, the Lithuanian diaspora was registered in Vilnius Naujamiestis district, so they have no separate representations and it is actually quite hard to separate out diaspora interests that way. Another thing is since they are voting as residents of Naujamiestis in some elections, they are voting only for this district candidates. A situation like this creates a huge disconnection between diaspora members and local district residents. It can be argued that it's not fair for both of them since often times Lithuanian diaspora has no connection to this particular district, it's not always relevant for them to vote at all; at the same time, local residents are not represented properly – if all Lithuanian citizens abroad would suddenly decide to vote – local residents would become a minority in their own district. Such voting arrangements can not properly represent both Lithuanian diaspora interests and both local resident interests.

Lithuanian diaspora has suggested a solution for this – a separate voting district (Sekunde.lt, 2010). Allowing online voting might be another good initiative since not all countries with Lithuanian diaspora have working embassies often times voting process becomes a hassle because of mailing issues and costs, sometimes mails can't reach voters in time and that way, they are losing their right to vote.

During the 2016 elections, there were some attempts to involve the Lithuanian diaspora in politics more. For the first time in 25 years, there were political debates in numerous Lithuanian communities abroad. Meetings with Lithuanians and debates were held in Brussels, Dublin, Oslo, Stockholm and the biggest one in London. Live online streaming where people could ask questions was available for the majority of debates. But when it came to the voting system implementation, some problems occurred: electronic registration didn't work properly for almost a week, some people reported that they received their voting ballots too late, some embassies received ballots without stamps which makes them invalid, etc (Henke, 2016). Although there were some positive efforts to promote political activity in the

end it fell short because of numerous technical issues and a lack of preparation for actual voting implementation.

Regardless of all of these limitations, the political activity of the Lithuanian diaspora has increased in recent years. Most recently, in 2019, according to foreign ministry data, at least 42.5 thousand people voted abroad. This number was expected to increase even more because ballot papers might take up to a couple of days to reach embassies. A total of 61 thousand people registered to vote, which also gave the reason to believe that the data was not final yet. (Final official data could not be found). These numbers increased 3 times more since the 2016 parliamentary elections (Tv3, 2019).

Such a slightly unexpected turn of events opened up the way for new debates. Lithuanian foreign minister Linas Linkevičius suggested that a separate district should be considered since the Lithuanian diaspora is becoming more active, and a separate district would help to encourage people even more (Tv3, 2019).

Finally, by the end of 2019, a separate voting district for the Lithuanian diaspora was confirmed. In the 2020 parliamentary election, the Lithuanian diaspora had their own separate district. This was long-awaited by Lithuanians living abroad and it is expected to boost political activism. But did it succeed? According to The Central Electoral Commission of the Republic of Lithuania, 43503 people registered for voting abroad and 36214 of them actually voted, resulting in a turnout of 83.24% (VRK - Lietuvos Respublikos Vyriausioji Rinkimi Komisija, 2020). Although the number of people who voted is slightly lower than in previous elections, it is considered a huge success for multiple reasons. Firstly, it can be estimated that the ongoing pandemic and the timeline of the election – October 11, resulted in some people's hesitancy to come and vote. Perhaps a certain percentage wasn't able to come even if they originally planned to as a result of that. Another thing, it can be said, that the parliamentary election can be viewed as "less important" than the presidency one. Usually, fewer voters register to begin with. During the 2020 parliamentary elections diaspora voters' number increased two times in comparison with the previous one, - therefore the new system resulted in historic diaspora voting activity for parliamentary elections. (Matulaitis and Lapėnaitė, 2020) Also, the newly established constituency resulted in having

the highest number of voters in Lithuania (Matulaitis and Lapėnaitė, 2020). Perhaps the next presidential elections will be a great test for the new system's continuous success.

It is important to note that although this new voting district was long-awaited by the diaspora and most likely the main factor in the voting activity other initiatives were created as well. Like the website <http://musumetasdabar.lt/> (translation: now it's our time). The website focused on boosting Lithuanian diaspora voting activity by providing information about voting and candidates in general but also highlighting the importance of voting even while living abroad. The website was sponsored by various Lithuanian diaspora organizations and also by the Lithuanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The latest developments regarding online voting were addressed during Seimas and the World Lithuanian Community Commission session in 2021. Commission ended up proposing a resolution to start online voting in the next election of 2024, it was mentioned that such voting would be especially important for Lithuania's diaspora in the light of the pandemic that deprived some people of voting. It is expected that the online voting system could possibly be tested in the Lithuanian diaspora voting district in the 2024 elections (BNS.lt and Šėdauskienė, 2021). Based on that, it seems that online voting might become a reality, at least for the Lithuanian diaspora in the near future.

It should be acknowledged that the Lithuanian diaspora has produced some important politicians, the most notably the President of Lithuania – Valdas Adamkus, who was a president for two terms 1998-2003 and 2004-2009. His election to the presidency was controversial to some and even had to be approved by Lithuanian courts since he lived in the United States of America for about 50 years. He holds up a place in the Guinness Book of World Records. He is registered as the state leader who lived in his country for the shortest period of time before his election and was elected president several months after he returned back to Lithuania (Gunter and Traveckis, 2001). That being said, even while living abroad, he was known to be actively involved in Lithuanian politics and diaspora issues.

From the provided data above, it can be said that Lithuanian political activity is generally not high, and the Lithuanian diaspora is no exception. Although in more recent

years, it appears that there has been an increase in people voting abroad, and even higher participation is expected. Although it should be mentioned that the general diaspora population increased over the years as well, the increase in voting proportionally speaking still remains higher than the overall increase in the Lithuanian migrant population.

4.5.2 Latvia

In the 2018 general Latvian elections, there were more than 130 thousand voting-aged Latvian citizens living abroad and eligible to vote (Lulle, 2018). Of course, these numbers only show people who officially declared their place of residence; the actual number of people living abroad, especially in the EU, is most definitely higher because of the ease of visa-free working and living there.

Latvian diaspora that holds Latvian citizenship, for the most part, have the same political rights as local residents. Regardless of the place of residence, all people can even be candidates for the Saeima elections (Ikstens, 2018, p.6). When it comes to voting, the diaspora can vote in specific polling stations abroad in Latvian embassies and consulates or vote via mail. In 2018, there were 121 polling stations (Ikstens, 2018, p.12). Of course, going to Latvia and voting there is also a possibility. The main exception is municipal elections; participants should either live in that particular municipality for at least 90 days or own real estate in the location (Ikstens, 2018, p.6). To sum it up, essentially, there are three ways to vote for the Latvian diaspora, similarly to Lithuania.

It appears that Latvia is also using a similar system to the previously existing Lithuanian one in regards to their diaspora votes. Latvian diaspora votes are counted as part of the Riga electoral district and people can vote only for candidates there. Interestingly enough, if diaspora members are in Latvia during the elections, they can vote up to 5 days prior to the election, and not only that, they can vote in any electoral district they wish because Latvia uses stamps in the passport to ensure that one person can vote only once and does not have separation of electoral district based on people's residency. Therefore, all Latvian citizens, diaspora or not, can vote in any of the five electoral districts for Saeima election (Ikstens, 2018, p.12). That being said, presumably, people typically vote in their local electoral districts because of commitments there and cost-effectiveness.

During the 2018 election, just like previously, Latvia had a low voting turnout of 54.6%, amongst the Latvian diaspora, it was even lower – 24.4% (Ikstens, 2018, p.12). Multiple reasons can be associated with much lower diaspora voting rates; perhaps one of them could be the difficulty of voting – not enough polling stations or none at all in the particular country, unreliable postal service in the host country, dissatisfaction with the current system or even just general disconnection from the homeland politics.

As one of the ways to improve voting turnout, the possibility of online voting was discussed. In 2019, during the Central Election Commission conference, multiple specialists highlighted the benefits and risks of potentially establishing online voting, at least in some municipalities. Successful Estonian online voting example was cited, but at the same time, some examples where the system failed were given as well: “Switzerland has had online voting for various level elections from 2009 to 2018. They're currently halted due to security concerns. They've had it in Australia at the provincial level since 2011. Security experts have been harshly critical,” said the University of Latvia Faculty of Computing Professor Andris Ambainis (Latvian Public Broadcasting, 2019b). This conference didn't lead to any particular new policy implementation. Discussions of implementing an online voting system are halted for now mainly due to security concerns.

The Latvian government is interested in higher diaspora voting turnout, and is trying different ways to achieve that: so far for the 2020 local elections following steps were taken as per the Latvian foreign ministry: “ (...) a service has been introduced to electronically register for voting by post and receive election materials; informative materials prepared and distributed on the CVK website, social networks on 1 topic - voting procedure abroad.” (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Latvia, 2021, p.32).

The new diaspora law and plan of 2021-2023 focuses on improving diaspora opportunities to participate in elections while abroad, educating people about the election process and candidates, have diaspora representatives represent themselves (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Latvia, 2021, p.8). Based on planned improvements, it is expected that “at least 50,000 voters abroad will be active and participate in the 2022 Saeima elections.” (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Latvia, 2021, p.8).

2022 October Latvian parliamentary elections will be the real test of whether policies have made any impact. It remains to be seen whether more proactive measures will be necessary.

In addition, not related to voting but the Latvian diaspora law also focuses on providing opportunities for the diaspora to be directly involved in the shaping of their diaspora policies themselves; “(...) members and organizations of the diaspora have the right to participate in the development and implementation of diaspora policy, which includes involvement in the development of policy planning documents and legal acts, as well as participation in the Diaspora Advisory Council, (...), as well as implementation and assessment of diaspora policy.” (Birka and Kļaviņš, 2019, p.7)

In conclusion, overall general turnout is low, but the diaspora one is even lower. Low diaspora voting activity can probably be associated with the current system because the diaspora does not have a political platform that showcases their interests and needs, as their votes might get lost in the sea of the Riga electoral district, which is the largest one in Latvia.

4.5.3 Estonia

In 2018, 108,903 Estonian citizens of voting age registered their residency abroad (Jakobson and Kalev, 2018, p.5). Again, it's quite difficult to know real diaspora numbers because they are based on self-reporting. Some other sources online estimate the potential number to be much higher.

Voter registration is automatic and based on the population registry; therefore, it's very important for the Estonian diaspora to make sure that they are registered and that the information provided is up to date prior to the election date if they wish to vote. Estonia has a different voting system from both Lithuania and Latvia. Estonian are voting based on the residential districts. In this particular instance, diaspora members are assigned to their last residential districts before they moved; if the person has never lived in Estonia, then he or she can vote based on his or her parents' or grandparents' last residence, and if that cannot be established i.e. unknown then a person will be voting in Haabersti, North of Tallinn and Kristiine in Tallinn which is a first voting district in Estonia (Jakobson and Kalev, 2018, p.9).

Estonian participation in elections can be very straightforward. All eligible Estonian citizens are able to vote online. Estonia actually became the first country in the world to use

online voting nationwide (Springall *et al.*, 2014, p.703). The idea of online voting first surfaced in 2001; in 2002, the Estonian Parliament legislated the procedure for internet voting, in 2005, Estonian people were able to vote online for the municipal election, in 2007 – parliamentary elections (CEF - The Connecting Europe Facility, 2020).

That being said, online voting is not the only way to vote, just perhaps the most convenient one for the diaspora. Estonia uses I-voting system based on the usage of Estonian national ID or special sim cards known as mobile ID. “Estonian national ID cards are smartcards with the ability to perform cryptographic functions. With the use of card readers and client software, Estonians can authenticate to websites (via TLS client authentication) and make legally binding signatures on documents. The cards are popularly used for online banking and accessing e-government services. In the I-voting system, voters use their ID cards to authenticate to the server and to sign their ballots.” (Springall *et al.*, 2014, p.704). Online polls open up 10 days before the elections and can be used for a week, meaning that they are closed 4 days prior to the election. (CEF - The Connecting Europe Facility, 2020). It is a safety measure to ensure that enough time is provided to eliminate double votes. The online voting system has received some criticism about its potential vulnerability to cyber-attacks and other safety concerns, but the majority of Estonian specialists and citizens there appear to be content with it (Springall *et al.*, 2014). At the same time, some benefits were found as well, including making elections more cost-effective (Guzun *et al.*, 2020, p.13).

I-voting system provides an excellent option for the Estonian diaspora to vote because they are able to vote anywhere regardless of their residence location.

For those who are not interested in online voting, there are other options. After all, regardless of online voting acceptance in Estonia, a minority of all voters voted online. In the 2015 parliamentary elections, a total of 30,5% of people voted online from all across the World – 116 countries (CEF - The Connecting Europe Facility, 2020). In 2019, the number was 43,8% (Valimised, 2019b).

Estonian diaspora is presented with 3 other options when it comes to voting. First, voting in Estonia: if diaspora members are in Estonia during the elections, they can vote in

their voting district or early election period (10 to 4 days prior) they can vote in any polling stations that are open. Second, voting at the embassy or other official entity – only advanced voting is available – 15 to 10 days prior to the election. Third, voting via mail – a person has to apply to the closest Estonian institution (Riigi Teataja, 2021).

Since 2007 voters' turnout for parliamentary elections ranged from 61,9% to 64,2%, with the lowest being in 2007 and the highest in 2015, in comparison in 2003, turnout was 58,2%, but in 1995 68,9%. So while online voting increased the percentage of voters in comparison with 2003, overall, it didn't make a significant difference and there are instances where the turnout was even higher prior to i-vote system (Valimised, 2019a). How did online voting affect diaspora activity? In 1992 9349 people voted abroad, in 1995 – 6678, 1999 – 3294, 2003 – 1915, 2007 – 2265, 2011 – 2763, 2015 – 3998, 2019 – 6454 (Valimised, 2019a). It followed quite a similar path, with a higher number of diaspora voting in the 90s, but the number was gradually decreasing all the way till 2003, and then after online voting became accessible, numbers started to increase again. Of course, one can argue that the Estonian diaspora numbers fluctuated during the different years as well, but the voters turning appears to be subsequent to online voting. But overall, in comparison with diaspora numbers voting turnout is still extremely small and nowhere near one of the local residents even with the ease of online voting. Other incentives from the government might be necessary to make a difference.

That being said, the Estonian diaspora is being targeted more and more by political parties. Numerous campaigns online or through traditional media occurred, but more interestingly and unusually, live interaction became more frequent as well, for example: “the Conservative People's Party in Estonia has initiated a branch organization in Finland (...), the Estonian Social Democratic Party ran a billboard campaign in Helsinki.” (Jakobson and Kalev, 2018, p.20).

Estonian diaspora members are also able to run in parliamentary elections, but not in the local elections. They can also participate in all the elections, with the exception of the municipal elections (Saar, 2020, p.167).

Overall, Estonian general population turnout was higher than Latvia's and Lithuania's in recent years. However, Estonian diaspora turnout appears to be the lowest one out of other Baltic countries, but with the availability of online voting activity is slowly picking up, at the same time, it appears that Estonian political parties have started to prioritize their diaspora more, which in the future might continue affecting turnout positively.

4.5.4 Overview

All three Baltic countries are using different voting systems for their diaspora – Lithuanian diaspora has their own separate district that was established in 2019 (previously similar system to the Latvian one existed); the Latvian one is part of Riga's electoral district and the Estonian diaspora vote based on their or ancestors' last residence (if the last residence is unknown then people are voting in the first district of Haabersti, North of Tallinn and Kristiine in Tallinn). Baltic States diasporas can vote in closest embassies or consulates, via mail, or in person by going to their homeland. In addition, Estonia provides an online voting option. Estonia was the first country in the world to vote online nationwide, so this option for diaspora is quite unprecedented and sets Estonia apart from the majority of countries in the world, not just Lithuania and Latvia.

All Baltic States and political elites are interested in increasing their diasporas' voting turnout and various initiatives are available; Latvia's new law focuses on improving diaspora opportunities to participate in voting; Lithuania already has a website for easy access to information and to highlight the importance of diaspora votes in addition debates are held in communities abroad face-to-face or online; Estonia also has information and debates online and even live interactions abroad like the Conservative people's party having a branch organization in Finland.

It appears that Estonia provides the easiest access for diaspora members to vote because of online voting. Moreover, both Estonia and Lithuania are very active with their diaspora communities. Lithuania can be credited with giving the diaspora their voice the most by establishing entirely separate district just for their votes. Although Latvia seems to be last active for now in comparison, numerous initiatives are being planned to improve the voting turnout.

That being said, it's quite early to establish which system is preferred by the diaspora the most; after all, it's not just the system that plays a role but also a state and political leaders' engagement with the diaspora in other areas and addressing topics that are deemed important to their native diasporas.

4.6 Governmental projects

4.6.1 Cultural support

National song and dance festivals have an incredibly important place in the Baltics because it was one of the ways that paved the road to independence by establishing unity and inspiring patriotic feelings. These events that led to Baltic States' independence are also known as – the singing revolution (Lithuanian - dainuojanti revoliucija, Latvian - dziesmotā revolūcija, Estonian: laulev revolutsioon) (Šmidchens, 2016). Therefore, all Baltic States also place a lot of importance on preserving Baltic culture amongst diasporas too as will be explained below.

4.6.2 Lithuania

Since 2012 Global Lithuanian Awards (Globalios Lietuvos apdovanojimai) has aimed to acknowledge achievements of the Lithuanian diaspora in various categories: for investments attracted to Lithuania, for expansion of business connections, for scientific innovations brought to Lithuania, for international experience brought to Lithuanian regions, for Lithuanian ideas leading globally, for nurturing young Lithuanian talents abroad, for the promotion the name of Lithuania globally (Global Lithuanian Awards, 2021). Although this project is not directly created by the government, the President of the Republic of Lithuania is the patron of awards, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Lithuania is one of the main partners.

In the 2017-2020 period, the Lithuanian Ministry of Education and Science also provided some cultural exchange opportunities for children. Diaspora children attended summer camps organized in Lithuania, that way they can be immersed in Lithuanian culture, interact with other children who often share a similar background, and of course, learn about their ancestors' land. Language courses are included if necessary. It is important to note, that

the project covers 30% of the camp expenses, the rest of it presumably should be financed by the children's parents or guardians. All diaspora children aged 7 to 18 years old can apply (Pasaulio Lietuvis, 2017).

Starting in 2019, summer camp 'Pasaulio Lietuva' (Word Lithuania) took place in Lithuania, where diaspora children camped together with local children. The Ministry of Education and Science fully finances this camp. The campers received guidance and classes from famous Lithuanian people for public speaking, acting, stage language training and other activities; in addition to that, children attended sports competitions, open-air cinema screenings, kayaking, mind battles, etc. (Ministry of Education Science and Sport of the Republic of Lithuania, 2020).

This is not the only free camping opportunity for diaspora children. Another example is SEM - a creative summer camp that invites diaspora children aged 13 to 15 years old to participate. As per the official website, 'this camp is an opportunity for diaspora children to remember their roots: homeland tales, songs, dances and why it is good to be Lithuanian in Lithuania and all around the world.' (directly translated from Lithuanian) (SEM, 2021). Camp is sponsored by the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport, Vilnius College of Technology and Design.

Of course, in addition to that, Lithuanian diaspora schools can submit their own cultural summer camp projects and receive funds. Last year another camp was organized by the United Kingdom Lithuanistic ethnocultural school "Bitė" that focused on Lithuanian mythical creatures from legends and tales. Children were able to attend from different diaspora schools in the UK, Ireland, Iceland, Spain. The camp was organized for the first time in 2019 and is expected to continue next year as well. Ministry has allocated 56.000eur for the 2020 camp. (Ministry of Education Science and Sport of the Republic of Lithuania, 2020).

These camps are probably not the only ones available for diaspora children, but these examples are probably enough to showcase the importance that the Lithuanian state is placing on them.

Lithuania also routinely finances cultural projects that are viewed as important and necessary for communities. For example, in 2019, the government decided to build an educational and cultural center in north-eastern Poland, which is widely populated by Lithuanians. The Cabinet of Ministers is planning to allocate 360.000eur for the project dividing the sum between 2020 and 2021 (BNS, 2019). In general, for similar plans to support diasporas abroad, it was planned that the financing will be a little bit over 1.2million euros in 2020, and almost 1.3million euros in 2021 (BNS, 2019).

Another way to provide cultural connection is through media and the internet. LRT Lituanica is a state-owned television channel for diaspora about diaspora and it also shows some general Lithuanian cultural content. It was originally launched as an LTV World in 2007. Channel broadcasts 24 hours a day, taking into account all different kinds of time zones that the Lithuanian diaspora lives in. The channel broadcasting used to be available in numerous countries through satellite but starting in 2020; satellite streaming was suspended due to the fact that nowadays majority of the channel viewers watch it through the internet and annually, it cost about 500.000eur just to maintain the satellite connection. Instead, it was decided to allocate the funds to improve the content and its availability through the internet for the diaspora (Pasaulio Lietuvis, 2019). According to LRT, they are still ready to allow foreign cable television to broadcast the channel through online channels if the need arises (Pasaulio Lietuvis, 2019).

Not everything is done through the internet though, in August 2020, the channel started broadcasting in Suwałki, a city in the northeastern part of Poland approximately 30km away from the Lithuanian border. Due to its proximity to Lithuania, the Vilnius television tower is used for broadcasting services. The city of Suwałki has a historical Lithuanian community and it was done due to their request. Of course, to make it possible international cooperation between the states of Lithuania and Poland was necessary, and now all the city residents and surrounding areas can watch LRT Lituanica for free (Jačauskas, 2020).

LRT Lituanica also has a website <https://www.lrt.lt/lituanica/>. Website shares news in three different languages, worldwide Lithuanian diaspora stories, information for people

interested in returning to Lithuania, etc. And of course, the main purpose of the website is to provide access to everyone interested in the broadcasted program.

And lastly, online historical archive system. Lithuania is currently working on a massive project to digitalize as many historical archives and make them accessible to the public. Archives that are newer than 100 years are not publicly available due to the personal information protection act, but the relatives can still receive this information if they can submit documents proving their ancestral ties. Support in the English language for those who cannot speak Lithuanian is also provided at <https://www.archyvai.lt>. Paid services for research are offered as well. Lithuanian historical websites can find and translate records of birth, marriage certificates, etc, make genealogical trees, and similar services.

This project is worth almost 3 million euros (Zilnys, 2020). Although this project is technically not aimed just at the diaspora, its importance is very significant considering large and older Lithuanian diasporas all around the world. This website might be their only way to reconnect with their roots. As per Strategic Guidelines for Lithuanian Diaspora Policy “Global Lithuania” 2022–2030: “The historical memory that unites the state and the diaspora is the foundation of national self-awareness and citizenship. Historical memory, together with the mother tongue, heritage, culture and ethnic traditions, creates preconditions for preserving and creating the uniqueness of the Lithuanian nation in the world.” (Dumbliauskienė, 2021, p.4).

It can be clearly seen that Lithuania is prioritizing its interactions with the diaspora on a cultural level: there are many opportunities for diaspora members to stay connected and learn about their homeland or even get financing for their own projects.

4.6.3 Latvia

The Latvian government has numerous initiatives that focus on preserving Latvian culture. There are already numerous existing dance, folklore, choir groups or event sports teams in diaspora countries of residence. Many of them have relatively deep historic roots.

On 16 November 2012, it was decided that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs should set up a council that would be working within the framework of the Monitoring Council for the

Implementation of the Guidelines on National Identity, Civil Society and Integration Policy in addressing diaspora matters. In October 2013, the diaspora policy working group was created where the Foreign Ministry is the main chair and the Ministry of Culture is essentially a secretariat (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Latvia, 2017). The diaspora working policy group consists of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of Education and Science, the Ministry of Economy, and sometimes other public institutions are involved. All these public institutions cooperate with non-governmental Latvian diaspora groups like the World Federation of Free Latvians and the European Latvian Association. Essentially diaspora working policy group has 4 goals: “(1) facilitating the civic and political engagement of the diaspora; (2) preserving the diaspora’s bonds with Latvia and the Latvian identity; (3) promoting cooperation with the diaspora in business, science, education, and culture; and (4) providing support for those who wish to return to Latvia.” (Lulle, 2020, p.291).

Latvian involvement in various projects goes multiple years back, for example in 2013-2015 Latvian Foreign Ministry allocated 341,711eur for various diaspora projects funding a total of 90 different projects, but not all of them were solely cultural projects (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Latvia, 2016). Biggest projects included the World Latvian Economic and Innovations Forum, youth activities in Latvia, Ireland, the United Kingdom, and Belgium, the Centre for Diaspora and Migration Research at the University of Latvia (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Latvia, 2016).

Latvia helps with organizing numerous dance and song festivals, cultural events or seminars. In addition to that, since 2019, the Latvian government is offering support for Latvian diaspora amateur cultural groups as well (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Latvia, 2021). For example, in 2023 the state is planning to offer financial support of 285 thousand euros for diaspora groups that will participate in the Latvian Song and Dance Festival (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Latvia, 2021). Latvian Song and Dance Festival is held every 5 years since 1873 (Gross, 2018). According to song and dance celebration law: “The amount of funds of the annual State budget in between each Song and Dance Celebration may not be less than the amount of funds allocated in the previous year (...)” (Ūdre, 2012, p.5).

Another interesting field that the Latvian government is being involved with is the diaspora archives (National Archives of Latvia, 2022). It involves helping with the compartmentalization of archives, researching, finding records, digitization of findings or already existing files, etc. This kind of work could play a significantly important role in preserving diaspora ties with Latvia. Especially when it comes to the second, third, or even later generations because for some of them, the only remaining tie to Latvian identity is through their ancestry. This could potentially lead to establishing stronger ties later on. At the same time, all this data is important to Latvia too because it provides a clearer image of historical migration paths, and the number of diaspora members. It helps to see in which countries diaspora is more active, which countries might need more attention etc, which in turn can lead to diaspora policy changes. For these purposes, defined as ‘cultural heritage preservation measures’ in the official diaspora plan of 2021-2023, the state is allocating 800 thousand euros per year (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Latvia, 2021, p.7).

In addition to heritage preservation expenditures, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Latvia will work with its embassies and all sorts of diaspora organizations in order to maintain their ties and will provide funding for projects that will be meeting allocated criteria. Ministry has planned to spend 158 thousand euros annually on these projects (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Latvia, 2021).

In March 2021, 42 project ideas were received, and almost all of them – 40; ended up being selected. The total amount of monetary spending amounted to 62.000 eur (Linde, 2021, p.3). Approved projects focus on traditional art: folklore music, dance and theatre, national cuisine and events for children and youth.

"Latvians in the world - belong to Latvia" a yearly conference organized together with the Latvian Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Education and Science tries to strengthen diaspora ties with their homeland by analyzing ways to preserve Latvian cultural heritage, maintain cooperation when it comes to diaspora and Latvian state especially when it comes to educational institutions (Petkevičienė, 2015, p.107).

An academic research study in 2019 found that about 60% of Latvian diaspora are involved in diaspora cultural life, but “(...) face-to-face activities such as choirs, dance groups and social clubs” only account for about half of that, others are usually involved via online means such as social media. Around 10% are in interest groups or book clubs, sports clubs, etc, 8% work in cultural groups like choirs, musical ensembles, dance groups, etc. (Latvian Public Broadcasting and Zvirbulis, 2020). The study found that ‘older’ diaspora, such as second, third-generation diaspora are typically more involved in cultural activities which can be explained as longing to reconnect with their culture. Interestingly, the study also pointed out that young people are typically the least involved and it was explained as the cultural events or organizations being too formal or politically affiliated and these concepts are deterring features to many (Latvian Public Broadcasting and Zvirbulis, 2020). The lack of easily publicly available information is another problem. In 2012, the Latvian Ministry of Culture acknowledged that the state should be more involved in nurturing (..) a Latvian identity and the feeling of belonging to the Latvian cultural space (...) (Latvian Ministry of Culture, 2012). Which has been one of the foreign policy goals of Latvia for quite some time.

4.6.4 Estonia

Estonian diaspora has numerous societies abroad: in Australia, Belgium, Netherlands, Ireland, UK, Canada, Greece, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Moldova, Norway, France, Sweden, Germany, Finland, Switzerland, Denmark, Czech Republic, Ukraine, Hungary, USA, Belarus and Russia; totally in 24 countries (Eesti Instituut, 2021c).

Estonian Ministry of Culture offers support for these societies by providing opportunities to receive grants for cultural activities. Societies can make annual applications in the framework of activities such as: “ 1) cultural events are organized in Estonian communities abroad; 2) cultural exchange of Estonian cultural collectives and creative people with Estonian communities abroad; 3) study days related to Estonian cultural heritage and traditional culture are organized for different age groups; 4) contact and information seminars are organized at the level of Estonian centers and associations abroad and the Estonian state, local governments, cultural organizations and non-governmental organizations; 5) participate in major Estonian cultural events, regional song days and folklore festivals; 6) in-service training of Estonian choir and dance conductors and members abroad is carried out; 7) exchange information on

Estonian cultural collectives and events abroad, including the preparation and printing of information materials. (Riigi Teataja, 2019).

Again as per the official state act quoted above, the purpose of the support is preserving Estonian culture and language, being involved in the mediation of cultural events and forming a sense of belonging to the Estonian state for Estonians living abroad. The budget for this annual program is 40.000eur, and each application can receive up to 4.000eur per project. To be better understand what kind of projects are being funded, a couple of examples are necessary, - from this year's selection: Estonian House in the Netherlands received 3.000eur for teaching Estonian folk dance in the Netherlands, Estonian Studies Center received 4.000eur for Estonian Music Week Toronto (Integratisoon, 2021e).

The Ministry of education and research also funds summer camps for diaspora children and youth. One of the most popular ones is organized by the Integration Foundation. The purpose of these camps is to immerse children in Estonian speaking environment and help to motivate them in maintaining their ties with Estonia, learn some new things about their country's history and improve their language skills if it is needed. To better achieve all these things, attendees are divided based on their Estonian language skills – elementary, upper-intermediate and fluent. Of course, the camps are completely free (traveling expenses and health insurance should be covered by the parents or guardians) and therefore subjected to quotas. According to the official website, selection criteria are based on motivation, language skills, potential attendee age, their location, time spent outside of Estonia and whether they already attempted language camps before or not (Integratisoon, 2021b). Of course, due to this current ongoing pandemic is not yet quite clear will the camps continue this summer, will be any changes, etc.

The Ministry of Education and Research organizes and cooperates numerous events and conferences relating to the Estonian diaspora. For example, 'Estonian language and culture in the World' that first started in 2000. The aim of the conference is to get an overview of teaching the Estonian language and culture in the world, introduce Estonian domestic and foreign policy, economic and cultural life, but foremost to cooperate and exchange information (Eesti Instituut, 2020).

In addition to all these, the Estonian Ministry of Culture offers another grant for high-level cultural events related to music, literature, performing arts, cinema, fine arts, museums, folk culture, architecture and Estonian communities abroad (Republic of Estonia Ministry of Culture, 2021).

What is the difference between this grant and the previously mentioned one for worldwide Estonian societies? This one is only for higher-scale events that require more funds, it could be things like a professional concert, exhibition or international events that present Estonian culture, while the first grant can be to simply celebrate events amongst usually small-ish local communities. Of course, based on the nature of this grant, the sum of money per project is also different – the minimum amount is 4.000eur and the maximum is 60.000eur. The total budget for 2021 was 450.000eur, which actually seems quite a generous amount of money, especially considering that Estonia has the smallest diaspora community out of the other two Baltic States. It is also important to mention that the grant can cover a maximum of 80% of total event expenses.

Another interesting and positive thing about this grant is transparency: a commission list that will decide who is getting grants and how much is publicly available on the ministry's website (Republic of Estonia Ministry of Culture, 2021), for 2021 applications it consisted of 7 people – Adviser of the Foreign Relations Department of the Ministry of Culture, Undersecretary of the Arts of the Ministry of Culture, Cultural Adviser at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, a film critic, an artist, a composer and Estonian Public Broadcasting, Senior Editor of ETV. Full detailed legislation can be found on the official Riigi Teataja website (Riigi Teataja, 2018).

Just like Lithuania and Latvia, Estonia is also focused on archival work through Compatriots Programme active since 2004 (Birka and Kļaviņš, 2019, p.4).

Estonian foreign policy strategy of 2030, highlights the importance of cultural cooperation by promising to foster Estonian diaspora involvement in the development and social life of Estonia via civic diplomacy by assisting competent authorities in adopting diaspora policies that would support diaspora activities and encourage cooperation with

coordination; help to maintain close diaspora relationships with their local embassies, or even to monitor international agreements and if deemed important form new agreement taking into account local Estonian community living in the relevant country (Republic of Estonia Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2020, p.36).

4.6.5 Overview

It can be clearly seen that the Baltic States are actively engaging with their diaspora in the cultural area. It can be argued that this is one of the most approachable areas because all diasporas can relate to it one way or another, regardless of their political affiliation or lack thereof.

Establishing which country is the most active in the cultural interactions is quite difficult because projects are susceptible to change and finding information about all existing initiatives was proved to be quite difficult whether to the unavailability of information online overall or perhaps sources only in available different languages. But what can be said confidently is that the Baltic States provide numerous opportunities for the diaspora to stay engaged. All Baltic States organize and fund multiple cultural events, festivals, and conferences, partially or fully funded summer camps for diaspora children exist as well. Lithuania has a specific television channel, LRT Lituanica geared towards its diaspora. Another interesting initiative is the Baltic States' funding for archival work, which allows diaspora members to discover more details about their ancestral ties to the homeland. It seems that currently, Lithuania is allocating the most funding – 3 million euros to making massive internet databases of accessing historical records online.

4.7 Controversial Estonian state policy towards its diaspora in Crimea

The first big Estonian emigration to Crimea dates all the way back to 1861 (Viikberg and Kurs, 2003, p.171). In 2014, when Russia annexed the Crimea region Estonia found itself in a tough spot. Perhaps to show their stance and support to Ukraine, Estonia has recalled a language teacher who was playing an important part in the community by helping diaspora children to maintain their connection to the ancestral land from the village of Aleksandrovka. According to the state official, it had to be done because otherwise, this would send a wrong

message of not condoning illegal annexation and not respecting Ukrainian laws (Madison, 2018). Of course, this decision instantly led to controversial opinions. A question can be asked whether it was really justified? Or what would happen to any other diaspora communities if any other foreign relations issues arose? Would they be left to fend for themselves?

Sven Mikser, Minister of Foreign Affairs has responded to criticism that not all ties with the community have been severed: according to him, societies there can still and already have received support for cultural projects and language teaching. Youngsters are also eligible, just like any other diaspora members to attend events in Estonia, including summer camps or general language studies (Madison, 2018). But the author of the article argued that it's not enough and that there are some urgent issues like the main community building that was left without power due to severe roof problems that were declared to be a safety hazard. But perhaps even more importantly community could feel abandoned overall due to political instability.

Some people brought up the previously discussed Abkhazian case, and how the Estonian state didn't leave their diasporas to fend for themselves even if it received some criticisms from Georgia that by offering to evacuate people of Estonian descent and their families, Estonia has supposedly indirectly acknowledged Abkhazia (Madison, 2018). This particular case in itself can be enough for a separate research paper because the situation is quite multidimensional and deciding what the correct decision is not that simple, especially because there are two countries involved. Both Ukraine and Russia can react in different ways to Estonian actions. That being said, criticism seems like a reasonable reaction to the way Estonia handled its diaspora residing in Crimea. But overall, Estonia isn't the only country with diaspora members in Crimea; observing and taking lessons from countries like Germany if necessary, can be proven quite useful.

Cases like these show that diaspora policies can be affected by so many external factors and diaspora willingness and interest to maintain their ties is quite simply not always enough.

4.8 Economics

It has been shown that the diasporas generally add on to their homeland economies, whether it is through direct expenses or through remittances. Baltic States have one of the highest remittance rates in comparison with their population in the EU (Strielkowski *et al.*, 2018). Perhaps partly due to that, the Baltic States are trying to utilize their diasporas' potential in economic participation via numerous projects.

4.8.1 Lithuania

The current minister of the Ministry of the Economy and Innovation of the Republic of Lithuania Aušrinė Armonaitė was elected in the Lithuanian diaspora's election district; as a result of that, she views herself as the diaspora representative and also prioritizes diaspora involvement and potential in the Lithuanian economy (Lapėnaitė and Pilietybe.lt, 2021). According to her, the Lithuanian diaspora can play an important role in three different areas: First, involving diaspora representatives in consultation and decision-making at the ministry level. For example, the ministry has appointed Lithuanian diaspora representative Karolis Žemaitis, who is also a minister's advisor. Second, attracting investment and finding contacts. Armonaitė pointed out that it's sometimes unnecessary to send governmental representatives for establishing contacts; already existing non-governmental diaspora organizations could have pre-existing necessary networks, contacts and partnerships. And lastly, attracting talents. Minister is interested in attracting the Lithuanian diaspora back to the labor market – the plan is to reduce taxes for people that did not participate in the labor market for at least 5 years to 8% personal income tax (Lapėnaitė and Pilietybe.lt, 2021).

Global Lithuanian Economic Forum is/was an annual event attracting Lithuanian diaspora members from all around the world (Gudelis and Klimavičiūtė, 2020, p.310). Although the latest information about the event couldn't be found, it's unclear whether the forum was discontinued.

One of the biggest projects by the Ministry of Economy and Innovation is "Investuok Lietuvoje" (Invest Lithuania) – investment development agency (Lietuvos Respublikos Ekonomikos ir Inovacijų Ministerija, 2021a). The primary purpose is to attract foreign investment and companies from abroad to Lithuania (Investuok Lietuvoje, 2021). This

agency is not specifically tailored for the Lithuanian diaspora, but the diaspora members can also benefit from it.

“Versli Lietuva” (Enterprise Lithuania) is another similar project. As per the official website: the main goals are to maintain Lithuanian Exporters Database ‘which is a free online platform tailored for companies that are looking for a reliable business partner in Lithuania’, consulting and providing support for new businesses and startups, attending international exhibitions and trade fairs and organizing trade missions as well (Enterprise Lithuania, no date).

Project “Team Lithuania” is another important one. It focuses on the cooperation between Lithuanian diplomatic institutions, commercial attachés and Lithuanian communities abroad, introducing Lithuania to foreign markets and encouraging the flow of tourists. The project’s website has pre-prepared material for the presentation of Lithuania abroad, including things like photos and videos that are free to use for non-profit purposes (Lietuvos Respublikos Ekonomikos ir Inovacijų Ministerija, 2021c). It is expected that representation from diasporas abroad will help to educate others about Lithuania and its potential and as a result, attract tourists or potential investors, which would boost Lithuania’s economy.

Previously mentioned Lithuanian Global Awards in the Cultural section are founded by the GLL – Global Lithuanian leaders, as per their website “is a high-impact non-governmental not-for-profit platform connecting Lithuanian professionals with international experience, who build global opportunities for the Lithuanian economy. Established after the first World Lithuanian Economic Forum in 2009, today GLL connects more than 2000 members from almost 40 countries around the world.” (Global Lithuanian Leaders - GLL, no date). GLL is also partnered with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Lithuania, the Ministry of the Economy and Innovations of the Republic of Lithuania and current Lithuania’s president Gitanas Nausėda. So, although this platform is not established by the Lithuanian state, it is actively supported by the state.

Overall, recently Lithuanian diaspora has gained more importance in the economic field than ever before: as per the current minister of economics: “Representatives of the Lithuanian diaspora are one of the cornerstones of the success of our country's economic diplomacy. They can be active where the state's institutional network is not yet widely developed, help Lithuania sell its high-value services and products, attract talent, investment and make greater use of its knowledge and network of contacts. The inclusion of the diaspora in the Lithuanian economy has been discussed for many years, and we want to give a real impetus to this process - Lithuanians have a really powerful potential in the world.” (Lietuvos Respublikos Ekonomikos ir Inovacijų Ministerija, 2021b).

4.8.2 Latvia

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Latvia financially supports the World Latvian Economy and Innovation Forum – a project that first started off in 2013. It is an international event for Latvian diaspora professionals that focuses on the Latvian economic situation in general in exploring business investment opportunities in Latvia. The goal is to engage the Latvian diaspora in maintaining economic ties with Latvia, better understanding the current economic situation. The previous year's forum discussed Latvia's post-pandemic economic recovery plan, Europe's transitioning to green energy and the three sea initiative (project advocates for better regional cooperation of 12 European Union states that border or go in between of Baltic, Adriatic or the Black Sea – Austria, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia). The government is showing great importance to this forum, judging from the fact that last year both the Latvian president and parliamentary secretary from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs have attended (American Chamber of Commerce in Latvia, 2020). The first World Latvian Economy and Innovation Forum were attended by both the Latvian president and prime minister (Petkevičienė, 2015, p.131).

Latvian MFA's Action plan on cooperation with the Latvian Diaspora for 2015-2017 also focused on some economic cooperation and it set the following goals: to expand contacts between Latvian diaspora's professionals and Latvians back home and bring attention to capital investment possibilities, to maintain continuity of the World Latvian Economic and

Innovations Forum and all their networking potential and economic cooperation, to use embassies for collecting information from diaspora representatives in multiple areas including economic one, to organize economic events abroad and in Latvia with the help of Latvian diplomats, honorary consuls, foreign representatives, and business associations, consider the idea of ‘a network of high-level Foreign Latvians living abroad’ and the involvement of the President or Prime Minister as patrons (Petkevičienė, 2015, p.102).

The investment and development agency of Latvia that has multiple offices for different countries works together with the Latvian Ministry of Foreign Affairs in implementing the previously mentioned action plan, which foresees two annual events for diaspora entrepreneurs and investors (Petkevičienė, 2015, p.112).

Latvian state could potentially benefit from offering more support for new diaspora businesses and initiatives like tax incentives. Things like exchange visits could result in boosting the Latvian economy because of exposure to fresh perspectives and ideas that in turn would open up a way for improvement (Lescevic *et al.*, 2019, p.487).

4.8.3 Estonia

The Global Estonian Business Network was created by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Public Sector Innovation Team, it focuses on Estonian diaspora current and potential entrepreneurs and provides tools and information for bringing them together in order to benefit the Estonian economy with their work experience, skills and contacts (Global Estonian, no date).

Estonian e-residency although not directly connected with Estonian diaspora investments can be used by those who do not have Estonian citizenship to make things easier. The program provides an opportunity to use services like various payments, filing taxes, company formation etc., e-residence is used for signing documents (Saar, 2020, p.167). It provides a perfect gateway for being involved in Estonian economic life regardless of location.

As one of the Estonian foreign policy goals for 2030 economic cooperation is mentioned: “involving Estonian companies and the Estonian community abroad in achieving

Estonian economic goals, incl. fostering and encouraging the investments of Estonian entrepreneurs living abroad in the Estonian economy.” (Republic of Estonia Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2020, p.36)

4.9.3 Overview

Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia all highlight the importance and continuing economic cooperation between their states and diaspora, and all of them have future plans for enhancing it even further in the future. Various projects or forums either directly supported or partnered with relative ministers exists in the Baltics like Invest Lithuania, Enterprise Lithuania, World Latvian Economy and Innovation Forum, Global Estonian Business Network.

Estonian e-residency could potentially be helpful in attracting Estonian diaspora investors who don't have Estonian citizenship. Lithuania's way to attract investment is by plan to reduce taxes for the people that did not participate in the labor market for at least 5 years.

Overall, as it was seen, the Baltic States don't just target diaspora for direct monetary investment into their homelands, although it certainly has its place. More and more importance is given to other people who may not be actual investors but perhaps the tools in economic diplomacy by providing their knowledge of the host country's markets, potential investors, etc. allowing the establishment of economic relations between their homeland and a host country. The Baltic States encourage return migration, as will be seen in the chapter below, but it's not always necessary in order to for diaspora to boost their homeland economy.

It is also important to acknowledge that Baltic diasporas are in no way homogenous, as mentioned before people emigrated during different periods of times for various reasons. Part of diasporas were already born abroad and are disconnected directly by two, three or even more generations. For example, a high number of more recent migrants have left after the Baltic States joined the EU, thus leaving for economic reasons. As a result of that, they may not feel like they should be giving anything back because in their view they were not given enough to stay. Therefore, it's important for the states to encourage economic

interaction in a positive way and something beneficial for both sides if the goal is to attract as many people as possible and have a productive two-way circulation and go beyond remittances.

4.10 Global Lithuania

Although Global Lithuania is not considered to be a governmental organization directly, it was established by the Lithuanian Foreign Ministry which handled diaspora policies in 2011. Many of Global Lithuania's projects are financed by the Foreign Ministry.

The main goals of a program are: “1) to encourage the maintenance of Lithuanian identity; 2) to promote involvement in the life of Lithuania; 3) to support public diplomacy efforts; 4) to transform the “brain drain” into “brain circulation”; and 5) to strengthen communication” (Engbersen & Jansen, 2013, p.22).

‘Global Lithuanian Programme’ itself was created with the active participation of diaspora organizations like the Lithuanian World Community and Global Lithuanian leaders that are even responsible for developing some programs (Birka and Kļaviņš, 2019, p.6).

Global Lithuania program focuses on different sections that can interest diaspora: education, politics, culture and economy. This includes things like modernizing Lithuanian education abroad, creating an online voting system for elections, getting diaspora involved in different investments and export markets, building news networks from professionals, preserving and finding Lithuanian cultural heritage in different parts of the world, finding and integrating Lithuanian archives into easily accessible information systems, trying to attract Lithuanian diaspora for studies in Lithuania, mentorship and internship programs for young diaspora members, easing up reintegration, creating and expanding already existing diaspora focused television and radio programs like “Ltv World”, spread news about diaspora achievements for Lithuania and abroad to the local Lithuanian population and in general to encourage public diplomacy (Gudelis & Klimavičiūtė, 2016, p.6).

Speaking of online voting, establishing such a system was a priority for Global Lithuania program for a while since that would ease up diaspora participation in the elections.

Successful implementation of the online voting system in another Baltic state – Estonia, shows that it is possible. However, after the Global Lithuania proposal failed to pass in the parliament, there was no further action taken, at least not in 2014-2016 plans (Gudelis & Klimavičiūtė, 2016, p.9).

Although the idea is still not dropped completely, which means there might be some new attempts in the future.

Education can be considered as one of the most important sections of the Global Lithuania program since about 71% of its entire financing comes from the Ministry of Education (Gudelis & Klimavičiūtė, 2016, p.12). In order to maintain stronger ties with diaspora members, especially second or third generation who might not have good Lithuanian language knowledge program focuses on providing resources for learning language and history. This also includes support for Lithuanian weekend schools abroad in providing resources or training for teachers there.

Cultural engagement is important too, the most well-known one is World Lithuanian Sports Games which are aimed at all non-professional Lithuanians living worldwide. In the past, it organized other cultural events like music or dance festivals.

Global Lithuania focuses heavily on providing information via the internet, which seems to be a sensible call, especially regarding the newest wave of emigrants that are able to use the internet with ease.

Since 2012 Global Lithuania in cooperation with the Lithuanian Foreign Ministry, has been surveying Lithuanian diaspora members online. Anyone who is over 18 years old and has been living abroad for at least 6 months is invited to participate. The survey is completely anonymous and is interested in Lithuanian citizens' and non-citizens' opinions on opportunities to nurture Lithuanian identity abroad, to get involved in Lithuanian life, to implement the idea of returning to Lithuania. It is hoped that the survey will help with strengthening the partnership between Lithuania and its diaspora and improve Lithuanian diaspora policies by understanding what is actually prioritized and important to the diaspora (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Lithuania, 2021b).

It can be said that Global Lithuania does play a significant role in interacting with the Lithuanian diaspora in terms of providing information and organizing events, also advocating diaspora interests, but it also needs a more detailed action plan on how to attract the diaspora back.

4.11 Global Estonian

Global Estonian (<https://globalestonian.com/>) is a global online community that aims to unite all worldwide Estonians by providing opportunities to join local Estonian communities, learn the Estonian language, find information about how to return to Estonia. The Estonian Ministry of Culture is responsible for managing the website. It was established in November 2018.

In June 2019, Global Estonian Cooperation Committee was formed, led by the Ministry of Interior, with representatives from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other governmental ministries plus diaspora representatives to improve cooperation between the Estonian government and diaspora and focus on a wide range of issues, not just culture and education that receives most attention (Birka and Kļaviņš, 2019, p.5).

4.12 Return policies

4.12.1 Lithuania

Although the Lithuanian government heavily focuses on trying to lure emigrants back, there is a lack of policies that would make reintegration into society easier. As mentioned before, Lithuania uses information technology and social media for providing information on how to find jobs, required documents, etc. And this information is certainly useful but the practical side of reintegration is a little bit more difficult. There are some programs mainly organized by Global Lithuania geared towards highly educated young people, but when it comes to other parts of society it's not clear how much incentive they have. It seems like the government is expecting return migration to increase as the economy is getting better, but even during the times of the stronger economy, there was no substantial increase in the return migration (Sipavičienė and Stankūnienė, 2013). Currently occurring higher return migration rates can be associated with the fears and uncertainty over Brexit in

the United Kingdom (Birka, 2019). This shows that targeted policies regarding diaspora return might be needed.

As mentioned, there are some projects that target highly educated individuals. One of them is Kurk Lietuvai (Create for Lithuania) in partnership with the Lithuanian government. This project is functioning for almost 10 years – starting in 2012, people who completed their higher education abroad can apply for one-year full-time job opportunities provided by various official institutions. As it is seen by the official website <https://kurklt.lt/> a lot of participants hold master's degrees and have numerous years of experience abroad. 20 people are selected and work 3 rotations with each lasting 4 months “(...) in public offices including the parliament, government ministries, municipalities and state-run enterprises.” (Petkevičienė, 2015, p.50).

Another Invest Lithuania initiative is Work in Lithuania project - <https://workinlithuania.lt/> , the goal is to encourage highly educated and/or skilled people from abroad to choose Lithuania as their destination, it provides information about job opportunities, including practical information about moving to Lithuania. “Gal į Lietuvą?” is a website from the Lithuanian Public Employment service it tries to educate the Lithuanian diaspora about the labor market in Lithuania. This initiative will be organizing events, focusing on meeting with potential employers, representing relevant information about most marketable specialties, social benefits, living conditions in Lithuania and answering questions (Renkuosi Lietuvą, 2021b). It also cooperates with the previously mentioned initiative Work Lithuania.

Bring together Lithuania is another similar program that specifically targets young diasporas (18 to 26 years old) that were born abroad or grew up there. In order to be eligible, applicants should have at least one Lithuanian birth parent, a grandparent. People are offered 6 weeks of working experience in top Lithuanian companies or organizations in hopes that they will decide to stay because of newly established professional connections and, of course, to provide an opportunity to visit their homeland, perhaps for some even for the first time (Bring Together Lithuania, 2022). Total fees account for 550eur - registration fee is 150eur, participation 400eur, plus personal expenses for traveling, etc; the program provides living

accommodations. This program is not directly funded by the government but by the Lithuanian diaspora foundations, although it cooperates with multiple governmental institutions, mainly with Vilnius city municipality (Bring Together Lithuania, 2022).

Lithuania also has a specific program regarding the return of political prisoners and exiled people. The program provides living accommodations for the returnees – in the period of 1992-2020 government has spent over 32 million euros for providing 2067 families with living quarters (Lietuvos Respublikos socialinės apsaugos ir darbo ministerija, 2021b, p.2). The program also finances moving expenses and expenses related to reintegration like Lithuanian language courses, employment programs, etc (Lietuvos Respublikos socialinės apsaugos ir darbo ministerija, 2021b, p.2).

The economic Migration Regulation Strategy document highlighted the importance of encouraging economic migrants' return, but because of the 2009 economic crisis, almost all activities of this strategy were terminated as of 2010. Another document talking about return migration is Lithuania's Immigration Policy Guidelines, which mentions that priority should be given to returning Lithuanian nationals over third-country nationals, but there is no information on how this should be implemented or any further action plan (Sipavičienė & Stankūnienė, 2013, p.61).

Return migrants are not eligible for social support unless there are some specific circumstances like having at least 18 months of working experience in 36 months (Gudelis et al., 2012, p.73). But then again it only applies to previous residents of other European Union countries. Meaning if someone is from the outside of the EU, or have no working experience required (students, maternity leave users, housewives/househusbands), they are going to have a hard time coming back to Lithuania, unless they already have a pending work offer, saved up a substantial amount of money or strong family support that can provide financially. Actually, according to the questionnaire, many diaspora members are saying that specific financial support for diaspora returnees is not necessary – only 14% supported such an idea (Gudelis et al., 2012, p.74).

Lithuanians living back home are not fond of this idea too, since it would be seen as emigrants having special status over the rest of the citizens. Help such as ease to find a well-paid job would be a much better incentive for returning, because even though the Lithuanian economy is growing and had substantial growth in salaries since the EU accession, and in comparison with other EU countries, Lithuanian wages are far from being the lowest – it's more around the middle. Many western countries are still offering better wages and working standards, even for unqualified jobs. For example, the minimum salary in 2020 in Lithuania was 607eur, while in Germany it was 1,584eur, Ireland - 1,707eur, Spain - 1,108eur (Eurofound, 2020). In 2021, the minimum wage has been increased to 642eur and in 2022 it reached 730eur, accounting for the second biggest salary increase in the entire European Union as per Eurofound (Vacas-Soriano *et al.*, 2022).

So it can be argued that if these disproportions are highly reduced, it could be much more effective in attracting the diaspora back than any specific diaspora targeting policies coupled with ease to find a job since these things are most important for economic migrants who are responsible for a big part of recent migration after the EU accession.

In the meantime, the government is looking for other new ways to attract the diaspora back, because the current monetary budget is insufficient for drastic changes in wages. Because previous policies didn't prove to be highly effective, starting in late 2017, the government started to show interest in 'integration' policies. The current strategy acknowledges globalizing world and that a substantial amount of Lithuanian diaspora members might not have a Lithuanian spouse or partner and hence their children might have a little bit harder time learning Lithuanian fluently. It encourages these families to return by: providing opportunities to learn Lithuanian, increasing usage of English in public services, spousal integration into the labor market, promoting children's integration into the education system (Savickas, 2018) since many of them will end up needing time to readjust to the new system and extra Lithuanian language classes. It is quite early to tell whether these initiatives will be highly effective, since many of these policies still need to be detailed and improved in practical implementation, especially in the cities outside the capital. But so far it seems like a good way forward to attract and address all diaspora members, because previous

policies focused mainly on Lithuanian families ignoring the mixed ones, hence why Lithuanians with foreign spouses were more hesitant to return because of lack of opportunities for their spouses and harder time in integration for their children.

4.12.2 Latvia

Latvian government migration policy is to support the Latvian diaspora and their families who are interested in returning back, whether it's to find jobs or establish their own business (Engbersen and Jansen, 2013, p.22). In the National Development Plan of Latvia for 2014-2020 attracting Latvian migrants back and reducing emigration rates overall is mentioned as an important goal (Mieriņa, 2013, p.15).

The repatriation law that was adopted in 1995 was the first law after re-independence actively encouraging people of ethnic Latvian or Liiv descent to return back to Latvia (Valsts valodas centrs (Latvian State Language Centre), 2017, p.1). If the person is not a Latvian citizen at the time he or she has to submit documents proving their lineage. Spouse and close family members of that person can benefit from this law as well and move to Latvia regardless of their ethnic background. As per law section 14, a potential returnee that has left Latvia prior to 4 May 1990, was born in a different country or left after 4 May 1990 as a minor 'has the right to receive assistance in solving social issues in accordance with the provisions of Section 8 of this Law' (Valsts valodas centrs (Latvian State Language Centre), 2017, p.6). Assistance can come in forms like 'the resolution of issues associated with the integration of repatriates in their administrative territory, helping to solve housing issues, providing with living space if at all possible that belongs to local government or give parcels of lands that would be used for building a house. Repatriates also have the right to receive different financial assistance: 1) allowance for travel expenses related to moving up to 711.44eur. 2) monthly allowance that is 90% of the minimum wage for six months if the person is unemployed 3) allowance can be provided in some other additional situation based on an individual decision by the office (Valsts valodas centrs (Latvian State Language Centre), 2017, p.7).

Coinciding with joining the EU in 2004, Latvia has introduced its first Latvian Diaspora Support Program (Birka, 2020, p.2).

Latvia appears to be mostly interested in recent emigrants because, as it will be seen, most diaspora policy initiatives are targeting people who left after or around the EU accession. “Re-emigration Support Plan 2013–2016” was developed with the help of numerous organizations but mainly with the Ministry of Economics of Latvia; it’s goal is to bring back at least 120 thousand Latvian citizens by 2030 (Mägi and Siarova, 2014, p.11). So far, the project is quite far from its goal and whether it will be successful is yet remaining to be seen. Re-emigration support plan targets multiple areas that would make potential returnees’ reintegration into Latvian society easier: support for learning the Latvian language, help to integrate returnees’ children into the Latvian education system, more readily available and accessible data about the labor market, etc (Mieriņa, 2013, p.17). This plan aims to access different diaspora groups like highly skilled professionals, young people with foreign education, families (Mieriņa, 2013, p.17).

Campaign for attracting diaspora ‘I want you back’ was held by the Latvian Institute back in 2016 (Simons, 2021, p.115).

Junior World Latvian Economy and Innovation Forum was an event specifically organized for young Latvian diaspora professionals, the goal was to attract young people back to Latvia by educating them about career opportunities, how to open up a business in Latvia, etc (Petkevičienė, 2015, p.105).

The newest diaspora law went into effect on January 1st, 2019. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is tasked with handling the implementation of diaspora policies. So far, policy goals are quite standard: to preserve and advertise the Latvian language and culture, support various diaspora organizations worldwide, encourage return migration and, in general, engage with the diaspora in multiple areas.

Latvia is actually offering a very inclusive definition of diaspora: “citizens of Latvia permanently residing outside of Latvia, Latvians, and others who have a lasting social connection to Latvia, as well as their family members.” (Birka, 2019, p.6).

In 2018 the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Region Development started to work specifically with return migration by helping families to return: assisting with

employment, house searching, registering children to schools or preschools, applying for financial support to start business, etc (Birka, 2019, p.6).

According to Riga planning region representative Inese Ozoliņa, although the ongoing pandemic resulted in instability in the World overall, numbers of returnees did not drop at all; quite the contrary, for some, the pandemic was actually the reason to return, perhaps due to feeling more stable in familiar land and having friends and family support. Most returnees are adults with young children – pre-school or primary school-aged, and single young adults (Latvian Public Broadcasting, 2021). These news seems to be quite promising and if it will continue to be the trend it might even result in positive population growth. That being said, it shows the importance of focusing on young children’s needs for reintegration – language and integration into the school system; when it comes to young adults the main need is a lively and well-paying competitive job market.

Research conducted by political scientist Mikhail Hazan shows that only 20% of Latvian emigrants have plans to return, research also showed that the longer time abroad coincided with less desire to return (Leščevica and Kreituze, 2018, p.176). As one way to encourage more people to return remediation support action plan focuses on creating job opportunities (Leščevica and Kreituze, 2018, p.176).

In 2021, Latvia did increase its minimum wage by 70eur to 500eur (Eurofound, 2021), but in 2022 there was no increase at all, resulting in one of the lowest minimum salaries in the EU (Vacas-Soriano *et al.*, 2022). Increasing salaries more could potentially be one of the most effective methods to attract the diaspora that emigrated for economic reasons.

4.12.3 Estonia

Historically, Estonia had a number of diaspora members living in ex-soviet countries, mainly by forced migration. So after Estonia re-established its independence, the topic of this diaspora fate would emerge from time to time. One of the most important examples was the 1992 article by Baltic New Service journalist Ruusaar, which advocated for Estonia the importance of engaging more actively with its diaspora, especially the ones who were subjected to great historical hardships (Kulu, 2000, p.139). The same year, as the result of

the referendum, the Estonian Basic Law was released, enabling all Estonian diaspora to return back home by establishing a clear idea that ‘every (ethnic) Estonian has a right to settle in Estonia’ (Kulu, 2000, p.139). This can be considered as one of the first Estonian government’s ways of engaging with its diaspora post-independence.

By far, the most important start for Estonian actual repatriation policy was War in Abkhazia which started in 1992. A number of Estonians have lived there since the 1880s and established Estonian villages of Lower and Upper Linda, Salme and Sulev. It was decided that Estonia had the duty to help these people: people who wished to come to Estonia had the opportunity to do so via 3 different flights. 170 Estonian diaspora members and their families were brought back (Jürgenson, 2018). Some others were provided help by moving further away from conflict zones to safer areas. Estonia was planning to make another flight, but it became impossible due to toughening political tensions; however overall one way or another, it is estimated that 570 people came to Estonia (Jürgenson, 2019).

Of course, this situation led to natural considerations about detailed return migration policy implementations. It became necessary to establish some precedent for upcoming returnees who might be in a similar position as those who arrived from the Abkhaz region. It was decided that ethnic Estonians that are coming from conflict areas are eligible for financial support. Returnees from conflict areas can receive a single payment of two monthly Estonian salaries and in addition to that three-month minimum salary, a free apartment and some financial support for necessary repairs if there are any, and lastly, if any of the returnees have weak Estonian language skills they can get free language courses as well (Kulu, 2000, p.139). All this support is given because comers from conflict areas are usually in a challenging situation financially since they just left everything they own behind. Financial aid gives them time to get their lives in order by handling all legal documentation and learning the language for better job opportunities.

The main diaspora policy is known as the Compatriots program has been active since 2004. It is managed by the Ministries of Culture and Education. The program is not just directed at attracting diasporas back home, but mainly to support them by preserving culture,

maintaining ties with Estonia, language courses, archival work in order to preserve Estonian history (Birka, 2019, p.4).

Estonian government tries to encourage return migration by “return support” program. It especially concerns people who have been migrants for a long time – 10 years or more, they are paid 2000eur upon return to Estonia to help them to reintegrate into Estonian society (Engbersen and Jansen, 2013, p.22). Discussed in more detail in the next section. In the period of 2000-2009, the state has supported 879 people with this program (Saar, 2020, p.168). These numbers appear to be really low in comparison with that period’s emigration rates.

Another initiative is a website developed by the Estonia Chamber of Commerce and Industry called “Talents back home”. The idea behind this website is quite simple – to provide the Estonian diaspora with information about potential job opportunities and to lure them back home. This program was perceived ambiguously by the Estonian diaspora and even viewed as highly offensive by some who couldn’t reach the requirements (Birka, 2019, p.4).

And lastly, Estonia also offers non-financial support. All Estonians who are interested in returning or already did but need some advice can contact a consultant. A consultant is there to provide all practical information about returning or help to deal with any arising issues upon returning to make the transition as smooth as possible (Integratisoon, 2021a). In addition, the Integration foundation organizes zoom meetings for previous diaspora members who have returned to meet others who are in the same situation and get to know them, share stories, experiences, concerns, and of course, to receive some advice if necessary (Integratisoon, 2021d). Zoom meetings also include trained specialists just like the one on one consultations.

In order to better understand their diaspora and improve diaspora-related policy Estonia is currently processing a large-scale survey. All Estonian diaspora members were asked to participate online and express their expectations from the state. The survey is launched by the Institute of Baltic Studies with the Center for Applied Anthropology of

Estonia and Estonian Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Culture (ERR News, 2021a). Hopefully, this will play a role in improving communication between the Estonian diaspora and the state.

4.12.3.1 Estonian return support program

Ethnic Estonians (for this program person is considered to be of Estonian descent if at least one of his or her parents or grandparents were/are Estonians (Integratsioon, 2021c) who either have Estonian citizenship or residence permit can apply for return support no later than 8 months after they returned from long term emigration provided they meet at least one of them following criteria:

- Returnee who emigrated at least ten years ago from Estonia. Returnee who was in a different country and will be bringing his or her minor children or will be returning to his or her minor children.
- Foreign-born returnee who is no older than 30 years old and has a postgraduate or doctoral diploma from abroad and wishes to become a permanent citizen of Estonia.
- Returnee that has lived outside Estonia for at least 10 years or is foreign-born and 'is partially or fully incapacitated.
- Returnee who came a maximum of 8 months ago with his or her children and has registered their 'place of residence in the Population Register of the Republic of Estonia'.
- Returnee who needs economic support to be able to return to Estonia because of his or her socio-economic situation that is below the officially established Estonian threshold for support. (Riigiportaal and Integration Foundation, 2021).

If the application is confirmed returnee can receive up to 640eur, additionally, each minor who either returned or was living in Estonia, but the returnee is their financial supporter can receive up to 640eur as well (Riigi Teataja, 2019).

The idea behind this return support program seems quite simple. It encourages Estonians to return back home who otherwise might have a difficult time doing so. Typical reasons for that might be resettling costs, especially with children, not finding a suitable job

before returning. This program provides an opportunity to at least alleviate some of the upcoming costs and gives a little bit more time to find jobs etc. As it is seen from the requirements program usually targets either long-term emigrants or highly educated young professionals. Both of these groups seem least likely to return either because of having fully integrated into another country or being highly educated and perhaps finding higher-paying jobs elsewhere. It's not exactly clear how much this program is effective in making a high-impact difference in encouraging return migration, but at least it gives some opportunities and incentives to the Estonian diasporas that are considering returning by showing that they are valued and wanted.

In addition, the Estonian minimum salary was 584eur in 2021, and it became 654eur in 2022 (Vacas-Soriano *et al.*, 2022).

Just like in Lithuania and Latvia, the increase in minimum salary would most likely encourage more people to return.

4.12.4 Overview

Return policies do play an essential role in overall Baltic States diaspora policies. It can be argued that some policies in other sections, like cultural support, economics, etc, are at least partly geared towards attracting diasporas back.

All Baltic States have specific policies towards attracting diaspora: Lithuania pays a lot of attention to attracting young families and highly educated people, but at the same time provides information via online sources for everyone else. In addition to these, new integration policies toward mixed families were also launched – providing help with integrating a foreign spouse or helping children learn the Lithuanian language, etc. There is even a program for financially helping and reintegrating political prisoners and exiles. Latvia provides financial support for older diaspora returnees who left the pre-1990 period. Furthermore, the new diaspora law also targets recent post-EU accession migrants by providing assistance with finding jobs, house searching etc; Latvia mainly targets highly skilled professionals, young people with foreign education and families. In Estonia, diaspora returning back from conflict areas are eligible for financial support and the long-term

migrants meeting specific requirements mentioned previously, non-financial support in forms of consultations is also offered, highly educated individuals also have specific programs geared towards them. The general approach of targeting highly educated individuals for returning seems quite typical with countries experiencing brain drain like Greece, China, India etc (Sheffer, 2003, p.23).

It appears that Estonia has the most extensive financial support program for returnees, while in Lithuania, it's limited only to political prisoners and exiles, while Latvia's is limited to the pre-independence diaspora. Although, according to Lithuanian diasporas, help with finding well-paid jobs would be a far better incentive to return for many than financial support.

Overall, it can be seen that the Baltic States in part target similar groups of people for attracting them back home. A somewhat of increase in return migration has been observed, but it can be argued that it is more associated with Brexit and the ongoing pandemic. The full result of these policies is yet remained to be seen.

4.13 Consular services

Consular services play a very important part for the Baltic diaspora. It provides a connection to the homeland as the embassies or other consular institutions often organize events for the national holidays or any other culturally or nationally important days. At the same time, it gives the official means to request any relevant documentation, renew passports, ask for help in case of trouble, etc.

4.13.1 Lithuania

One of the main Lithuanian diplomatic missions abroad goals is to “engage in cultivation and strengthening of relations between Lithuanians residing in the state concerned and Lithuania” (Gudelis and Klimavičiūtė, 2020, p.307).

Lithuania, out of the three Baltic States, has the highest number of embassies worldwide. Lithuania provides consular services in the majority of European countries (pictured below). Countries that have a high number of diaspora members often times have

embassies as well. Lithuanian diasporas in Africa and to some extent in South America would have the most challenging time accessing services because the number of embassies over there is low.

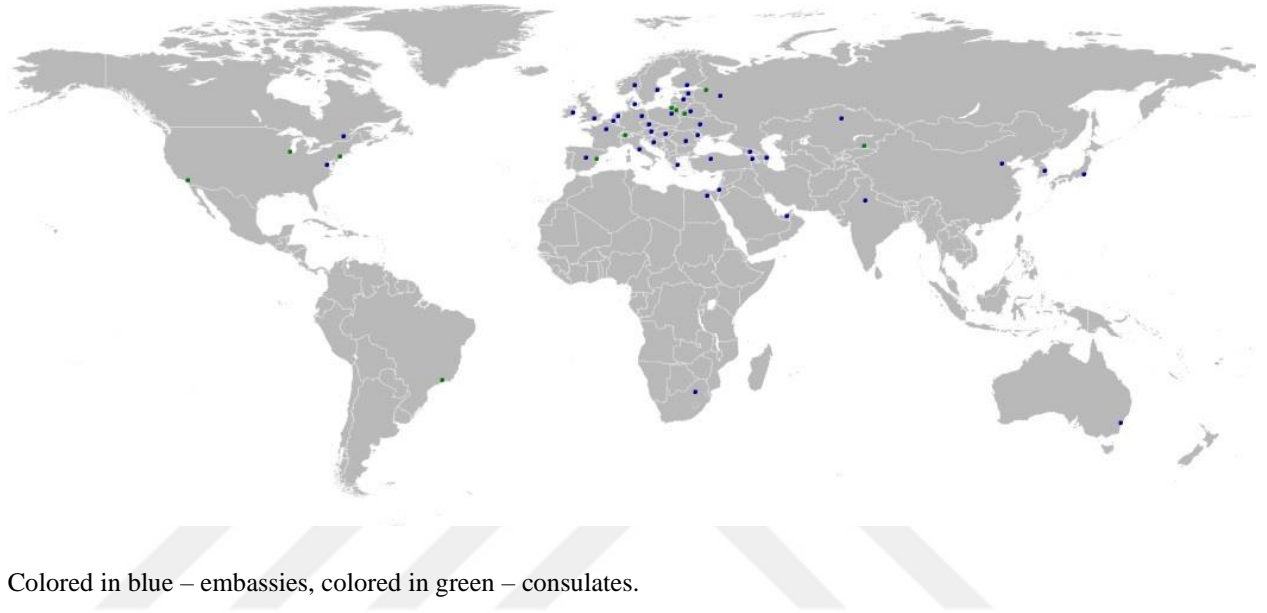


Figure 4.13.1.1 Lithuania's foreign missions on the world map. Made by author. Information Source: Ministry of Foreign Affairs Republic of Lithuania. <https://www.urm.lt/default/en/embassycontacts>

According to Government program Point 8 of Strategic Work 3 of Mission XII of the Implementation Plan “To decide on the development of the diplomatic network, focusing on the East Asian region and working with the diaspora” it’s planned to establish a Lithuanian embassy in Singapore in 2022. The plan was approved by the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania on March 31, 2021 (Lietuvos Respublikos užsienio reikalų ministerija, 2021). The importance of the East Asian region was noted before as well, by establishing a new embassy in South Korea in 2021 (Lietuvos Respublikos užsienio reikalų ministerija, 2021).

That can be attributed to the need to find new markets for economic cooperation but also with the diversifying Lithuanian diaspora communities all across the world as it is the trend everywhere.

As per the Consular Statute that first came into effect in 1995, Lithuanian embassies provide multiple standard services for their diasporas like issuing documents like new passports or temporary traveling documents in case of a loss of a passport or personal identity card that is accepted as a valid traveling document in the EU, organize voting or even provide material assistance under specific circumstances like helping the victims of a crime. Financial support is a temporary measure and should be reimbursed within 3 months as per article 22 (Lietuvos Respublikos Seimas, 2021). Although it should be said that diplomatic missions do not offer any financial assistance to the diasporas in case of economic difficulties related to unemployment etc (Gudelis and Klimavičiūtė, 2020, p.311).

In the event of a natural disaster, catastrophe, act of terrorism, mass riots, war, armed conflict, etc consular officer should maintain contacts with the local diaspora if at all possible and offer to contact the affected person's family, relative or a friend, if the situation is life-threatening or directly affecting security; consular officer can offer assistance with evacuation to the closest safe zone including for diaspora member's immediate family (Lietuvos Respublikos Seimas, 2021).

Speaking of receiving documents, Lithuanian diaspora members are required to psychically be at the embassy to make applications for new identity documents; after that they are able to receive any document via mail or face to face if they wish to do so. Some services are available online on <https://www.registrucentras.lt/gyventojai/> or <https://www.epaslaugos.lt/portal/>. This presents an issue to people that live in locations that are very far from Lithuanian embassies because it could be time-consuming and expensive to go there, sometimes even hardly possible because of visa requirements or current day realities of occurring travel restrictions. Lithuania would potentially benefit from establishing more readily available online services, especially considering the ongoing pandemic. Consular statute mentions the possibility of consular officer visiting at home if the person because of the very important reasons like sickness is unable to come himself/herself (Lietuvos Respublikos Seimas, 2021), it can be reasonably assumed that the traveling distance is quite limited for such service and in other cases that person would need to send a

legally authorized person to handle services for him or her which goes back to the same potential difficulties.

4.13.2 Latvia

One of the main tasks of Latvian diplomatic and consular services is to: “ensure the protection of the interests of the Republic of Latvia and its citizens, subjects of the Law On the Status of those Former U.S.S.R. Citizens who do not have the Citizenship of Latvia or that of any Other State and stateless persons (apatrides) who have a permanent residence permit in the Republic of Latvia, as well as of legal persons of the Republic of Latvia;” (Saeima, 2018b).

Latvia has a similar diplomatic missions infrastructure as the other Baltic States – numerous embassies in Europe and a smaller amount on other continents, especially with weak infrastructure in South America and Africa (pictured below). Typically the number of consular missions is dependent on diaspora size. For example, one of the most popular destinations for recent Latvian diaspora – the United Kingdom, has 8 honorary consulates (Lulle, 2020, p.291).



Colored in blue – embassies, colored in green – consulates.

Figure 4.13.2.1. Latvia’s foreign missions on the world map. Made by author. Information Source: Ministry of Foreign Affairs Republic of Latvia. <https://www.mfa.gov.lv/en/latvias-embassies-and-consulates>

Latvian embassies provide standard consular services like renewing passports, providing requested documents like marriage certificates, etc. Numerous consular services

are available online on <https://latvija.lv/PPK/Konsularie-pakalpojumi> . By using services online it's sometimes possible to receive certain documents without ever needing to go embassy.

Partly as a response to the pandemic, it was decided to implement Latvian electronic IDs – eID for the Latvian diaspora. The latest amendment regarding diaspora was adopted on June 10, 2021. For the residents of Latvia, electronic ID will become mandatory 1 January 2023, for the Latvian citizens living abroad 2025. Because of the pandemic, Latvian consular missions weren't working at full capacity or sometimes not providing face-to-face appointments at all (Saeima Press Service, 2021). It is expected that eID will provide even a more secure and faster way to receive consular services.

If the Latvian citizens abroad are in emergency situations monetary support can be provided through consular channels but it should be paid back to the Latvian state. Other help can include the preparation of relevant documents, contacting relatives (Lulle, 2020, p.302).

4.13.3 Estonia

In the case of Estonian consular services, the majority of European countries have an Estonian embassy (pictured below) or if there isn't any local one reaching one is relatively simple because of the closer proximity. Embassies on other continents are another story. Estonian diaspora would potentially have a very difficult time getting help in, for example, South America because there aren't any embassies there. So getting to the closest embassy would prove to be very costly or sometimes nearly impossible because of potential visa requirements etc. Not to mention ongoing current-day realities that made traveling much more difficult, albeit necessarily with restrictions, quarantine rules or sometimes outright banning travelers coming from certain countries for a period of time (and visa-free traveling does not provide any extra benefit in these particular instances).

Receiving a new passport or identity card is perhaps one of the most popular routinely requested procedures by Estonian citizens living abroad. But in order to do so, Estonian have to be present at the embassy, as mentioned above, which could present all kinds of obstacles. As the Estonia foreign ministry acknowledges more innovative measures like expanding the

consular network, cooperation with relevant authorities, or the usage of modern technologies could somewhat alleviate this problem (Republic of Estonia Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2020, p.31).

Estonian Foreign Ministry's objectives are to extend the usage of e-services for Estonian diaspora, provide some opportunities to apply for new identity cards online using e-environment and receive documentation via post, enable some notification that would alert the travelers or Estonian diaspora living in the particular country of any emerging crisis in the local area. These are the main objectives related to the consular services in 2030 (Republic of Estonia Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2020, p.31).



Figure 4.13.03.1 Estonia's foreign missions on the world map. Source: Republic of Estonia Ministry of Foreign affairs.

https://vm.ee/sites/default/files/Estonia_for_UN/Rasmus/estonian_foreign_policy_strategy_2030_final.pdf

At the same time, it should be mentioned that Estonian diaspora doesn't even need to directly contact embassies or consulates for many services, thanks to their advanced digital system: the absolute majority of public services are accessible online irrespective of the time only processing of marriages and divorces is not available online, for now, making Estonia the only country in the world with such a user-friendly interface (Guzun *et al.*, 2020, p.16).

It is especially convenient for diaspora members because of the accessibility to embassies and time zone differences that might make it harder to get important documents as fast as possible.

4.13.4 Overview

The Baltic States offer standard embassy services just like any other country in the World, like issuing personal identification documents, registering marriages abroad, voting, etc. All states provide the option to access numerous services online, but appointments for new identity documentation could be done face to face at the embassy only. Additionally, financial support can be offered under specific circumstances provided above but it should be reimbursed later on.

Overall, it appears that the Baltic States provide quite similar consular services and most of their embassies are concentrated in other European countries. Minor differences that arise are the number of embassies and consulates, with Lithuania having a slightly higher number; another difference is how extensive services diaspora members can access online, with Estonia seemingly having the most user-friendly website and Latvia's goal to extend online services even further with implementing mandatory electronic ID in the future.

CHAPTER V

ANALYSIS: DIASPORA POLICIES OF THE BALTIC COUNTRIES INTO THE 21st CENTURY

5.1 Diaspora Policies of Baltic Countries into the 21st Century

As presented in the thesis, the main question of this research was ‘In what ways do the respective demographics, histories, and economies of Baltic States affect their diaspora policies?’ One of the clearest overall discoveries about the Baltic States’ diaspora policies was that all three states of Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia are quite heavily influenced by their geopolitical and historical positions. The aftermath of the Soviet occupation changed these countries’ demographical compositions most heavily in the cases of Latvia and Estonia. Therefore, ethnicity and citizenship are viewed in a different light than, for instance, in Western Europe; in general Central and Eastern European countries view their ethnic minorities having citizenship of another state as a potential threat: “They tend to suspect that behind the restoration of citizenship there is a dangerous nation-building project supported by the neighboring kin-states’ governments, which use the tools of political membership rather than irredentist violence to challenge the postwar settlement.” (Gazso, 2017, p.79).

Moreover, minorities can also be used for actual state-sponsored irredentism (homeland’s attempt to actually “recover” the land that’s heavily populated by their diaspora by using violence typically in neighboring states) (Shain and Barth, 2003, p.449).

And of course, the ongoing Ukrainian invasion by Russia is just going to further perpetuate the fears over minorities and any of these scenarios being a possibility, and that could potentially result in the securitization of minorities.

The securitization concept is mainly connected to researchers like Ole Wæver, Barry Buzan and is associated with the Copenhagen school of security studies (Munster, 2012). Wæver can be credited with the concept of origination in international relations theory. As per Copenhagen School, securitization has to fulfill the following criteria of: “(...) actor (1) claims that a referent object is existentially threatened, (2) demands the right to take extraordinary countermeasures to deal with that the threat, and (3) convinces an audience that

rule-breaking behavior to counter the threat is justified.” That kind of extreme rhetorics are not found in the Baltic States’ policies, but certain ethnic minorities are perceived as a potential matter of security, not even necessarily directly because of the said minority behaviour, but how these minorities can be used as an excuse in justifying the behaviour of ‘unfriendly states’.

This approach is seen not only in the Baltic States but in Central and Eastern European regions as well that were either behind the ‘iron curtain’ or under direct Soviet Occupation and have sizeable minorities. One interesting example to illustrate it outside the Baltic region involves Hungary and Slovakia. Hungarian law of 2010 has extended citizenship rights by granting national identification cards to ethnic Hungarian across the border; as a reaction to that Slovakian government amended the law by banning external citizenship, and all of those who would decide to take up Hungarian identity cards would end up losing their Slovakian citizenship. What’s more interesting, it resulted in a quite unusual situation: ethnic Hungarians, upon taking Hungarian identity cards, would have to give up their Slovakian citizenship but at the same time still wouldn’t have all Hungarian citizenship rights because of restrictions for people residing outside of country (Pogonyi, Kovács and Körtvélyesi, 2010; Waterbury, 2010, p.136).

It can be seen clearly in the Baltic States’ citizenship policies. Although, on the surface, it appears that all of them have different approaches like the mentioned *de facto* no dual citizenship in Estonia; very limited citizenship policy in Lithuania mainly to historical diasporas, and the ones who acquire another citizenship as a birthright; dual citizenship in Latvia only for EU, EFTA, NATO countries and Brazil, Australia and New Zealand. As mentioned, even though Estonia does not technically allow dual citizenship, ethnic Estonians are generally not stripped of their citizenship even if they acquire another one. Latvia essentially allows dual citizenship with countries that it has close cooperation and ties and the ones that are not viewed as potentially hostile. Lithuania is in the process of hosting another referendum in 2024 (Migration Law Center, 2021), and if successful, it will adopt seemingly the same approach as Latvia. At the same time, the previously mentioned citizenship acquisition path for non-historical minorities could also be used as an example,

the same approach was not used in Lithuania, but it can be quite reasonably speculated that a much lower number of ethnic minorities was the reason. So the clear pattern can be seen of how certain minorities have been partly seen as a matter of security because of geopolitical, historical background, and still ongoing political realities. And, of course, this dual citizenship policy affects Baltic diasporas as well by essentially limiting who can be a dual citizen and who can not, even for the countries that don't have any recorded historical grievances with, for example, is seen in Latvia's limited dual citizenship law.

When it comes to economic factors' effects, there is no instantly clear answer in the Baltic States' diaspora policy differences. That's not to say that economy doesn't play an overall important role in diaspora policy, because that is certainly not the case. This thesis showcases numerous incidents in all Baltic States where diaspora is targeted for investing their funds or resources into the homelands, for example, in the case of remittances, opening up a business, exchange of ideas for bettering economic cooperation, lobbying, etc. As it is seen in multiple sources, states, in general, tend to utilize their diaspora for economic gains, and that's a common practice. In general, it is agreed upon that “ (...) politics and economics are intricately and irretrievably interwoven—politics affects the economy and the economy affects politics.” (Frieden, 2020).

In the case of diaspora policies, some scholars say that poorer states have stronger incentives for creating stronger diaspora policies for attracting financial benefits (Ragazzi, 2014, p.9). That being said, the economic background of the Baltic States did showcase some differences in terms of each country's GDP, minimum salaries, etc, but in general, all Baltic States are in a similar range. Perhaps that can be responsible for not representing any staggering differences in diaspora policies in economic areas, although there certainly are some like Estonia having the most initiative e-residency program etc. But according to the idea of poorer countries financially having more incentive for attracting investment, it should be Latvia with the strongest policies, but in this instance, it appears not to be the case. It could be speculated that it's because economic differences are not stark enough. Although it should be acknowledged that Latvia seems to have a stronger tapping approach when it comes to institutional theories by heaving weaker social security policies than Estonia and Lithuania,

perhaps that could be reasonably associated with economic background and spending less on their diaspora.

Also, as discussed, there are some essential key points that unite the Baltic States' diaspora policies, but it also should be noted that overall diaspora policies are not always predictable. Emigration, immigration, and diaspora in a nowadays globalized world are playing perhaps more critical roles than ever before. Change in the ruling elites and parties can and certainly does affect diaspora policies to some extent. Typically, certain ruling parties have different agendas and whether they view the preservation of diaspora to be essential or not. Any kind of new development in our recent history can shift our perspective in favor or against any of these events. For example, in times of economic crisis, it might be decided that all this state funding for diaspora is not worth it, or it might go the opposite way, and new ways to utilize diaspora and attract more investment from the diaspora can be looked at.

In general, Myra A. Waterbury describes state political elite interest in diaspora engagement policies as mainly motivated by personal notions and potential benefits that are divided into three groups: 'the extraction of material resources for economic gain, the creation or maintenance of domestic and international political legitimacy and the utilization of those abroad as a culturo-linguistic resource to be used in defining the boundaries of national identity' (Waterbury, 2010, p.137).

Another discovery is that a lot of Baltic states' diaspora approaches and the rise of its importance can be at least partly traced back to the high level of emigration rates that were exacerbated by joining the EU and, subsequently Schengen zone as it was seen in the diversification of diaspora policies in all Baltic States and added focus to return migration policies. This trend was not just unique to the Baltic States but also in newer EU countries in Central and Eastern Europe. The same trend was young educated people migrating to Western Europe with very low rates of return migration (Waterbury, 2018). This similar trend in Central and Eastern Europe and the rise of engagement with its diaspora just act as confirmation for the causation. And yet, as Myra A. Waterbury analyzed four Central and Eastern European countries of Hungary, Bulgaria, Romania, and Poland, variations were observed even though these countries have numerous geopolitical similarities amongst them:

Romania and Poland appear to have more robust policies geared toward their near diasporas and maintaining ties, while Hungary and Bulgaria approach is more ambiguous with the lower range of policies. According to Waterbury difference in these responses could be a result of ‘pre-existing political and institutional structures driven by the state’s relationship to historical kin communities in neighboring and nearby states, and in some cases, to internal minority communities.’ (Waterbury, 2018, p.2).

So the high level of migration doesn’t always automatically lead to more extensive diaspora engagement policies.

How does that relate to the Baltic States? States’ level of interest in diasporas is very nuanced, and just the simple answers like the percentage of migrants living abroad or economic benefits are often lacking and are insufficient to explain or predict what kind of diaspora policies are going to be adopted. Although in the Baltic States, there appears to be a correlation.

The concept of ‘ethno-demographic survival’ found in Costica Dambrova’s article (Dambrova, 2016) appears to be appropriate in describing one of the key factors in Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia’s diaspora policies approach. Although the term was used in regards to real or perceived fears in terms of the fertility rates and migration patterns of different ethnic groups, in this thesis, it is used for partly understanding the driving force behind Baltic States’ diaspora policies that are mainly stemming from high emigration rates from these countries and minorities resulting from the Soviet era. Minority topic has especially gained importance after the occupation of Crimea, and heightened fears over potential scenario have emerged (Kuczyńska-Zonik, 2017). However, the approach to the Baltic States’ ethnic minorities is geared as it was toward integration, more attention to battling propaganda, and preventing the radicalization of vulnerable populations (Kuczyńska-Zonik, 2017).

As mentioned in the thesis, even though both Latvia and Estonia opted to have non-citizen status, it was meant more as a temporary solution. As explained in the citizenship section, about 10% of the Latvian population have non-citizen status and 5% of Estonia’s. However, Latvian non-citizen status is on its way to extinction because of the latest law

change – all non-citizens' children born after 2020 will be automatically granted Latvian citizenship.

The previously mentioned dual citizenship policy is also related to the issue of ethno-demographic survival. In general, the Baltic States are aware of their ever-growing diasporas in primarily Western Europe and North America and the potential necessity for dual citizenship that would help their diasporas to stay interconnected with their homelands. That being said, Baltic States, as is the case for the other former countries that were occupied by the Soviets, are wary about recognizing other citizenships offered to their ethnic minorities by 'neighbouring kin states,' even in countries where dual citizenship is allowed it is still a topic for discussion (Pogonyi, Kovács and Körtvélyesi, 2010, p.9). The main concern here is that it would increase Russia's influence in the Baltics if that were to happen. The Latvian way of dual citizenship seems to be a workaround it. Also, if we take a look at other ex-soviet countries, many of them do not allow dual citizenship.

Typically Western Europe has been defined by the de-ethnicisation of citizenship policies in recent years, but that hasn't been the case on a significant level in Central Europe (Dumbrava, 2018, p.2) or in the Baltic States, for that matter.

As mentioned, political elites and parties also play a significant role in influencing and guiding diaspora policies. Perhaps the best example of that would be the previously mentioned Lithuanian President Valdas Adamkus, who was a diaspora member himself. He advocated for broader diaspora policies and supported the expansion of Lithuanian citizenship to all ethnic Lithuanians (Pogonyi, Kovács and Körtvélyesi, 2010, p.10). Of course, a politician's personal viewpoint is not always enough to make a change in laws; as in the Lithuanian case, dual citizenship laws cannot be changed without amending the constitution.

5.1.1 Importance of diaspora – homeland – host country interactions

An interesting hypothesis by Sheffer suggests that state-diaspora relations are also affected by the host country, stating that if the homeland and the host country have friendly relations it would typically result in practical long-term compromises between all three actors

of diaspora – homeland and host country (Sheffer, 2003, p.28). Therefore, this situation would result in normal tensionless relations between everyone involved and the ease of more extensive diaspora engagement policies. This idea seems very logical and is confirmed in multiple instances during the research. For example, just previously mentioned Hungarian-Slovakian case and the approach taken makes it difficult for countries to reach an agreement that would benefit diasporas, and it escalated into quite unprecedented territory.

In general, it can be said if a host country perceives their minority's homeland to be a potential threat, had any previously historical grievances, etc, it would be completely unsurprising if those ideas would extend to that particular minority residing in the country as it might rise the question about their divided loyalties regardless of whether it's actually true. On the contrary, if two countries of homeland and host countries have productive cooperative relations it makes it so much easier for the homeland to engage with their diasporas. Being part of the EU allows Baltics to be involved with their diaspora in other European Union countries that much easier; numerous mechanisms are already in place, like agreements related to social security like recognizing foreign work experience. Also, it's clearly evident in Latvia's dual citizenship policy in the way it's limited only to certain countries that Latvia has partnered with. Another example would be all Baltic States' consular networks – embassies are not exclusively established because of the high diaspora populations, but also as a result of successful cooperation between countries as the host country has the ability to approve of any the establishment of any embassy.

These are just a few examples to illustrate that this hypothesis appears to be generally accurate, and the Baltic States are no exception.

5.1.2 Diaspora engagement policies in comparison with other countries

When it comes to other sections of diaspora engagement policies like access to education, social security, political participation, cultural support, economic interactions, and, lastly, return policies, it's challenging to trace why specific differences occur.

EU Member States	Provision role					Facilitation role	
	Unemployment benefits	Health care	Contributory pensions	Family benefits	Social assistance	Assistance home country benefits	Assistance host country benefits
France	Moderate	Extensive	Extensive	Moderate	Moderate	Extensive	Moderate
Belgium	Moderate	Extensive	Extensive	Moderate	None	None	None
Italy	Moderate	Moderate	Extensive	Moderate	Moderate	Extensive	Moderate
Spain	Moderate	Moderate	Extensive	Moderate	Moderate	Extensive	Moderate
Portugal	Moderate	Moderate	Extensive	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
Austria	Moderate	Moderate	Extensive	Moderate	Moderate	None	None
Lithuania	Moderate	Moderate	Extensive	Moderate	None	Extensive	None
Romania	Moderate	Moderate	Extensive	Moderate	None	Moderate	Moderate
Bulgaria	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	None	Moderate	Moderate
Croatia	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	None	Moderate	Moderate
Cyprus	Moderate	Moderate	Extensive	Moderate	None	None	None
Czech R.	Moderate	Moderate	Extensive	Moderate	None	None	None
Denmark	Moderate	Moderate	Extensive	Moderate	None	None	None
Estonia	Moderate	Moderate	Extensive	Moderate	None	None	None
Finland	Moderate	Moderate	Extensive	Moderate	None	None	None
Germany	Moderate	Moderate	Extensive	Moderate	None	None	None
Greece	Moderate	Moderate	Extensive	Moderate	None	None	None
Hungary	Moderate	Moderate	Extensive	Moderate	None	None	None
Ireland	Moderate	Moderate	Extensive	Moderate	None	None	None
Malta	Moderate	Moderate	Extensive	Moderate	None	None	None
Netherlands	Moderate	Moderate	Extensive	Moderate	None	None	None
Poland	Moderate	Moderate	Extensive	Moderate	None	None	None
Slovakia	Moderate	Moderate	Extensive	Moderate	None	None	None
Slovenia	Moderate	Moderate	Extensive	Moderate	None	None	None
Sweden	Moderate	Moderate	Extensive	Moderate	None	None	None
Latvia	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	None	None	None
Luxembourg	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	None	None	None

Figure 5.1.2.1. Homeland policies responding to the social protection needs of diaspora populations in EU countries. Source: J. Lafleur, D. Vintila Migration and Social Protection in Europe and Beyond. Comparing Consular Services and Diapora Policies , p. 23.

As it is seen in the table provided above of homeland policies responding to the social protection needs of diaspora populations in EU countries, there is a wide range of differences in policies amongst the EU countries, even amongst seemingly similar countries.

Typically, Lithuania’s extensive policies are associated with the high number of the diaspora in regards to the Lithuanian population, and the analyzed information points towards it being at least mostly valid, but then why Latvia seemingly has weaker policies in some areas in some areas and one of the weakest amongst the EU country as per the table? For example, it’s estimated that about 16,7% of native-born Portuguese live abroad (World Economic Forum, 2016), and it seems that, unsurprisingly, Portugal is relatively high up on

the table. And yet, if we take Ireland as an example, that have 20,8% of the native-born population living abroad (World Economic Forum, 2016) and the highest percentage out of all OECD countries, their diaspora policies are in the second lower half of the table. At the same time, countries with much lower native-born diaspora like France 3,1%, Belgium 5,4%, Italy 5,1%, and Spain 2,6% (World Economic Forum, 2016) are the top 4 countries with the most robust diaspora policies. This clearly shows that simply having a high percentage of citizens abroad is certainly not always enough for strong diaspora policies or necessary at all.

Economic backgrounds do not always give us a clear answer as well. The top 10 EU countries with GDP per capita in 2021 (descending order) were: Luxembourg, Ireland, Denmark, Netherlands, Sweden, Belgium, Austria, Germany, Finland, and France (Eurostat, 2022). As it can be seen, these countries range from being the first on the table with France to last on the table with Luxembourg and anywhere in between with trackable order.

Analyzing each EU country's historical diaspora background would go far beyond the means of the thesis, but we can take the example of Ireland again with its well-known massive diasporas worldwide and perhaps one of the biggest European ones: about 70 million people can claim at least some sort of Irish descent (Kenny, 2017). And yet, even if Ireland has an incredibly wide historical diaspora background, this fact is simply not enough for far-reaching diaspora backgrounds. Of course, the absolute majority of these people do not have Irish citizenship also, considering that Ireland's population is 5,123,536 people (Central Statistics Office - An Phríomh-Oifig Staidrimh, 2022), granting citizenship and extending diaspora rights would be both impractical and improbable.

What could be learned from this? Analyzing information from the table above clearly shows that extensive or weaker diaspora policies do not always have a clear answer or background. It can be a highly unique process based on a multitude of highly contextual reasons. Not only that, diaspora policies are susceptible to change just like political elites, worldwide realities, etc., are changing as a reflection of that, and so can diaspora policies. Of course, it's also crucial to mention that the table provided above doesn't analyze all diaspora-state interactions, so even though in this table Latvian diaspora policies might appear to be one of the weakest, but in the context of this thesis, it can be seen that Latvia have extensive

diaspora policies in multiple other areas that are not related to regular financial assistance therefore in this thesis Latvian diaspora policies are not considered weak because there are analyzed on a more comprehensive level. But yet, it does appear that Lithuania and then Estonia have more extensive laws overall. This is one of the reasons why this research is important because it is seemingly the first one analyzing Baltic States' diaspora policies from different perspectives in a comparative manner and trying to find cause-and-effect relations.

As we have seen from examples above, there is no exact and clear pattern that can explain differences in diaspora engagement policies. To amplify this further, even countries worldwide represent the same phenomenon: countries with autocratic regimes have very different approaches related to dual citizenship and extended voting rights, the same can be said for democracies as well. (Leblang and Glazier, 2022).

In order to explain differences in diaspora policies Leblang and Glazier advocate for hybrid theoretical approaches. According to them, just using one simple explanation is 'too blunt'. To illustrate this better, three case studies of Ireland, Morocco and Mexico were employed. Ireland mostly uses the embracing approach, Mexico – tapping and Morocco – mixed approach. The study discovered those diaspora engagement policies aligned with the approaches that states employed. For example, Ireland, Mexico and Morocco all allow dual citizenship, but the reasoning for allowing it was different: Mexico's dual citizenship law went into place in 1998, once the growth of their diaspora became apparent due to high permanent migration numbers to the US, while both Ireland and Morocco enacted it after becoming independent from colonial rule. Mexico's approach is related to the interest to tap into diaspora resources, and citizenship was used as a way to incentivize them to maintain their economic and other ties to Mexico, while both Ireland and Morocco highlighted a connection between national identity and citizenship. Morocco used their tapping approach in external voting by allowing it during the period of 1984-1992, but as the policy didn't bring expected economic benefits it was suspended (Leblang and Glazier, 2022).

Examples like these show that a simple clear-cut answer doesn't always exist, and multiple approaches can be employed to analyze each individual country's diaspora engagement policies.

5.1.3 The Baltic States in the context of diaspora institution theories

As discussed in the theoretical background section there are three main diaspora institution approaches: tapping, embracing and governing approaches, with the Baltic States seemingly adopting a hybrid of these approaches. These theories can also help us understand why there are some differences in the policies adopted by the Baltic States. It can be explained by the states' choices to draw more from one or the other approach, perhaps resulting from discussed contextual clues. It appears that a hybrid approach would work the best in explaining the Baltic States' diaspora policies as well.

All of the Baltic States have a clear embracing approach by highly emphasizing ethno-cultural background and providing the ability for ethnic diasporas to reinstate their citizenships, repatriation laws and support, but the degree to which they adopt an embracing approach differs, for example, in the context of reclaiming one's citizenship – Latvia requires diaspora members to take a Latvian proficiency test, while Lithuania does not. In addition, it can be clearly seen that embracing perspective in the Baltic was approached from the start of the Baltic States' re-established independence in the 90s. For example, with Estonia's 1992 and Latvia's 1995 repatriation laws or Lithuania's establishment of Vilniaus Lietuvių Namai (translation: Vilnius Lithuanian House) that was established right after Lithuanian re-independence in 1990 by the Ministry of Culture and Education of the Republic of Lithuania with the goal to educate returning Lithuanian exiles or political prisoners. These examples show the clear establishment of the institutional framework for diaspora policies.

Tapping perspective is also visible. To some extent, diaspora engagement policies are designed to attract diaspora economic investment back to the homelands but given the fact that states' financial support for returnees, embracing perspective takes a much more important slot, for example with Estonia offering more extensive support for returnees or the fact that all Baltic States have policies for attracting back their diasporas.

Discussing the influence of governing approach appears to be a little bit more difficult because it's not exactly clear to what extent the Baltic States are influenced by it; that being said, Lithuania's interest in dual citizenship and almost identical proposition of dual citizenship law to Latvia's one, point to Lithuania being directly inspired by its neighbor's

policy. Another good example would be Estonia's online voting system that inspired talks about the online voting possibility in both Lithuania and Latvia, as mentioned in the voting section.

Extensively discussed similarities between the Baltic States might have resulted in Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia employing similar approaches too, in turn leading to relatively minimal differences in the grand scheme of things, of what policies are considered important, but yet level to which they are invested in different.

Overall, as predicted by the diaspora institutions theories, various types of institutions were formed by the Baltic states to reach out to their diasporas. All Baltic States have various diaspora representatives at the institutional level; for example, Global Estonian Cooperation Committee was formed, led by the Ministry of Interior, with representatives from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other governmental ministries plus diaspora representatives to improve cooperation between the Estonian government and diaspora (Birka and Kļaviņš, 2019, p.5), Ministry of the Economy and Innovation of the Republic of Lithuania has appointed Lithuanian diaspora representative Karolis Žemaitis, who is also a minister's advisor (Lapėnaitė and Pilietybe.lt, 2021), Latvia's new diaspora law and plan of 2021-2023 is focusing on improving diaspora opportunities to participate in elections while abroad, educating people about the election process and candidates, have diaspora representatives represent themselves (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Latvia, 2021, p.8).

The findings show that while Lithuania appears to have the most extensive institutions that deal with diasporas overall, Estonia has the most innovative solutions relating to access to internet-based institutional services, while Latvia seems to have a lower interest in establishing an institutional framework for provisional roles it created multiple institutions for encouraging financial interactions. Hybrid diaspora institutional theories and the way they are implemented by the political elites seems to be a plausible explanation for differences in the Baltic States' diaspora policies.

To sum it up, this thesis shows improvements in diaspora engagement policies since Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia became independent again in the 90s in all researched areas. Generally speaking, the Baltic States are continuing to engage their diaspora more than ever, even if some improvements are still necessary.

5.2 Future Prospects and Recommendations

As seen, all Baltic States more or less have specific policies targeting their diasporas. In order to improve them, states need to stay up to date on all diaspora developments since diasporas are not a static phenomenon – new people keep migrating, some are turning back, worldwide or individual countries' actualities are constantly changing. One of the methods that can keep states engaged is suggested by Kingsley Aikins known as Diaspora Networking: it involves four steps starting with research, later cultivation (“the process of moving people from a state of unawareness to informed understanding, sympathetic interest, engagement, commitment and, finally, passionate advocacy”), solicitation (providing some tasks that can be done by diaspora) and lastly stewardship (the act of recognizing diaspora achievements and ways they help their native country) (Petkevičienė, 2015, p.54).

Estonian foreign policy 2030 objectives heavily prioritize diaspora policy: “(...) the three strategic axes of foreign policy: 1) security, the stability of international relations and sustainable development; 2) external economy; 3) the Estonian community abroad.” (Republic of Estonia Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2020, p.7). Simultaneously Estonia also acknowledges that improvement can be made in the long run, “diaspora policy must include measures to build the coordination system and infrastructure needed to implement the diaspora policy and the creation of preconditions for effective and close communication between communities abroad and the state. The relevant legal framework (both national law and international agreements fostering free movement and coping abroad) also needs to be reviewed and adequate funding provided for these measures.” (Republic of Estonia Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2020, p.31).

Commentary made by then Ambassador at large for relations with the Lithuanian World Community diplomat Gintė Damušis almost 10 years ago still rings true: “Today

Lithuania is so diverse across many lines – ideological, political, social, economic, etc. The benefit of such diversity is that every Lithuanian in the diaspora who is interested in Lithuania can find his or her counterpart. The disadvantage is that there is no single unifying cause as in the past for both Lithuania and the diaspora. Even so, opportunities to cooperate abound through specific areas of interest – along professional lines, in university student associations, through diaspora organizations, growing business and science networks, cultural, educational and charitable activities.” (Embassy of the Republic of Lithuania to the United States of America, 2012).

Arguably this situation can be applied to Latvia and Estonia as well because of the similar shared historical background. In the past Baltic diasporas were mainly connected with spreading the message of freedom and the Soviet occupation and maintaining their Baltic roots in all of this.

CHAPTER VI CONCLUSION

For the most part, diaspora policies are handled by each Baltic State's respective Ministries of Foreign Affairs, the Ministries of Culture, the Ministries of Education, and the Ministries of Economy.

As it was said by Aikins and White: "Global diasporas constitute an obvious collective of people through whom networks can be created and individuals mobilized for the mutual benefit of both diasporas and the home country. Global diasporas serve as an important conduit, facilitating the two-way flow of capital. That capital presents itself in every form, be it human, social, intellectual, cultural or financial."(Aikins and White, 2012, p.3) And it appears that the Baltic States are trying to utilize all these forms as well, albeit perhaps not at the same level or intensity but nonetheless, all three Baltic States target these forms at least in some way.

Although, given all the information above, it's clear that all Baltic States prioritize their diaspora policies, it appears that Lithuania has the most developed policies in regard to its diaspora, and that could be partly associated with the fact that Lithuania has the highest diaspora numbers out of Baltic States. According to statistics, since the 90s Lithuanian diaspora accounted for the biggest group of immigrants in Lithuania; this could partly explain extensive policies (Mägi and Siarova, 2014, p.10).

Estonian diaspora policy is mostly oriented towards culture and language with a small shift to economic matters, it is believed by some experts that the main way to attract Estonian diaspora is by having a better economy and naturally higher salaries; therefore, it is viewed as one of the priorities when addressing remigration (Saar, 2020, p.174). In addition, the Estonian diaspora is usually viewed as self-sufficient, resulting in the lack of some social services (Saar, 2020, p.174).

Lithuania is perhaps the most active in two-way diaspora interactions by actively involving its diaspora in the decision-making process since the very beginning; Latvia with its Diaspora Law and Estonia with its Global Estonian Programme are also focusing on two-

way interactions by enabling their diasporas to participate in the policy-making process and appears to have a lot of potential.

As it was seen from the information provided in this thesis, historical and demographic context does play a role to some extent in establishing diaspora policies in the Baltic States. The economic background could be a potential reason for weaker Latvia's policies in some areas of diaspora engagement policies.

As soon as Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia re-established their independence it affected the way citizenship laws were approached to begin with. At first, Lithuania chose more liberal citizenship policies: granting citizenship to everyone who's been a resident for at least two years and was changed only later on to stricter law under the assumption that all interested parties had more than enough time to apply for citizenship. Both Latvia and Estonia followed a similar approach of granting citizenship automatically only to the citizens during the interwar period and their descendants resulting in a number of people of non-citizens who were given the option to naturalize if they meet the requirements that can be clearly associated with the historical context of high numbers of russians that emigrated after the occupation of Estonia and Latvia, while numbers in Lithuania were much lower. People perceived migrants who arrived during the Soviet era as an extension of the former communist power structure, and their stay and potential effects of it after the independence were questioned (Vetik *et al.*, 2020, p.102). This is perhaps the most obvious historical and demographic context affecting policies; even it does not seem directly related to diaspora at first, it strongly affects what kind of people would be considered diaspora if they left or already did previously.

Although the dual citizenship approach and their differences can not be clearly pinpointed to any more recent historical, demographic or economic context as these in some regards were quite similar. That being said, the Baltic States adopted different approaches – Latvia grants dual citizenship to people in certain countries, Lithuania grants dual citizenship mostly to historical diasporas and people if other citizenship is automatically acquired as a birthright, Estonia generally does not grant dual citizenship and it is seen as mostly temporary

solution although there isn't really a precedent of stripping people of their Estonian citizenship if they happen to acquire another one anyway.

Diaspora education is arguably the most invested field by the Baltic States. Lithuania has strong laws for re-integrating diaspora children and young adults into the education system and provides additional financing for it. From the research, it appears that Lithuania is the only country out of the Baltics that has formal education schools outside of Lithuania that are fully funded. Children can attend and get formal education abroad via distance learning as well. Informal weekend schools and other learning centers can receive additional funding or training from the state as well. Latvia offers some additional funding for the reintegration of the Latvian diaspora into the education system as well. Preserving the Latvian language amongst diaspora is seen as the key policy resulting in additional funding of informal weekend schools and other centers that meet the criteria; online sources are used as well, although not quite as extensively as in Lithuania. In Estonia, again, importance is given to diaspora reintegration into the education system. Diaspora schools can receive grants and funding based on their activities and teachers can receive training in Estonia.

Social security, Baltic States' citizens can receive old-age pension abroad if they meet the requirements. Some major differences were observed in the social security area, Estonia offers additional support for returnees, Lithuania's social security policies are the same for locals and ex-diaspora who have returned and Latvia appears to have the most restrictive policies toward diaspora because of the prior permanent residency requirement for receiving social state benefits.

Political participation is another section where differences were observed; Lithuania has recently established a Lithuanian diaspora voting district, Latvia uses a similar system that used to exist in Lithuania previously – all diaspora votes are assigned to the voting district in Riga (unless they vote in person in Latvia, then people can vote in any district they wish to), Estonian voting system is based on residency districts so in the case of diaspora people votes are assigned to their last district of residency, if a person has never lived in Estonia then votes assigned to the district of their ancestors' or the first voting district of Estonia.

Cultural interaction with diaspora are on the list of priorities in all Baltic States – all of them have numerous state-funded projects aimed at people preserving their culture and ties to their respective nations. Because of the previously established importance of the diaspora's positive impact in Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia, states have an interest in maintaining economic cooperation.

And lastly, but certainly not least, important policies are aimed at attracting the diaspora back. It can be argued that these policies receive the most attention, especially considering that both Lithuania and Latvia still have net negative migration rates (Birka, 2019). Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia focus quite heavily on attracting highly educated individuals and young families. Additionally, Lithuania offers support for resettling back political prisoners and exiled people under occupation; Latvia offers financial support for pretty much everyone who left prior to independence or left as a minor after, not just certain groups like Lithuania; Estonia offers financial support for Estonians returning from the conflict areas. Also Estonia offers financial support not just to the old historical diasporas but to the relatively recent ones as well that meet requirements; they can get one-time payment upon return.

In the long run, it can certainly be argued that most of the Baltic policies, even while not being directly related to repatriation, still have it in mind – if the diaspora maintains strong ties to their homeland, they are more likely to return overall.

Lithuania is the most interactive with its diaspora; perhaps that can be partly associated with the highest number of diaspora out of the Baltic States, although that wouldn't explain why Latvian diaspora laws appear to be less extensive than Estonia's even though their diaspora percentage is higher than the one of Estonia's. Overall, occurring differences in diaspora policies are quite nuanced and dependent on many factors that can't be predetermined, like the current political leadership, people's perceptions, etc.

In the end, more often than not, diaspora laws and state interactions do not always have a very obvious answer behind them and are constantly changing depending on a multitude of factors that can't always be predicted, including political elites. A hybrid

diaspora institution approach could be used as one of the ways to analyze diaspora engagement policies. One thing can be said with certainty, though; all three Baltic States of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia are increasingly more interested in diaspora relations and are coming up with more ways to successfully maintain them.



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