

Summary

This research examines policy and practice of return migration. The research reviews various types and models of return migration, explores what factors influence re-emigration, what measures are expected by those who emigrated, how much support for return migration there is among Lithuanian population. The research also reviews experience of other countries with return migration policy, evaluates the effectiveness of measures implemented / ongoing in Lithuania, provides further recommendations.

The research was carried out in 2008, before the onset of economic crisis. For this reason, the study focuses more on the period when return migration was considered to be one of the measures to compensate for the shortage of labor force. Currently (2009), the situation is different: unemployment increases, one can even observe a new wave of emigration, thus, the issue of return migration „lost its relevance“, solutions are postponed for the future. However, issues and problems of return migration should not be omitted from the political agenda. Firstly, economic downturn only changes the motivation and underlying reasons for return, but does not deny the process of return. Secondly, it is likely that as the economy recovers, we once again (even more acutely) shall face shortage of labor force and the need to return emigrated countrymen. Thirdly, return migration should not be evaluated only in economical dimension, it constitutes an integral part of wider politics.

Migration situation in Lithuania

Similar to many other Central and Eastern European countries, political, social and economic development taking place in Lithuania left a deep impact on the process of international migration. During the last 18 years of independence (1990–2008), nearly half a million people emigrated from Lithuania (around 20 percent of working age people). Counter-flows remain far smaller. Due to deformed / specific composition of departing Lithuanian inhabitants structural changes take place among Lithuanian population and within labor force: one not only sees the decline in the size of population, but also records worsening demographic indicators, aging, labor force shortages (especially among professionals) become more and more pronounced, politicians think about bringing labor force from third countries.

A cause for special concern is that due to migration Lithuania firstly loses young people (around half the migrants are young people under 30), which means that in the future it will affect both – the development of demographic processes (wedlock, fertility, family) and labor resources, which might force the country to import them from third countries. However, at this time almost nothing is done to prevent temporary departures of young people for research, tourism or work purpose from turning into de-facto emigration. There is no clear vision on how to encourage return migration. For this reason, the research devotes a lot of attention to problems faced by young people. One of the causes for greatest concern is the fact that for some time we observe a so-called brain drain, that is loss of highly-skilled labor force and resulting decrease in country's economic/ innovative / competitive potential. Although brain drain provokes great concern, there are almost no concrete actions taken trying to reverse it or at least to utilize / co-opt them in tackling problems important for Lithuania. Attempts to uphold ties with departed researchers in virtual space or isolated research stipends for returning researchers are more of a symbolic gesture rather than a practical solution.

In parallel, one can observe how migration negatively affects the economy, that is, shortage of professionals and labor force (both – skilled and non-skilled) in various industry sectors. Labor shortage becomes increasingly apparent. Often, it is named to be one of the key impediments to development of economy and innovations now and in the future. Labor force shortage leads to situation, where Lithuania “exporting” its own labor force, itself becomes pull zone for labor migrants from third countries. Based solely on official data from Lithuanian Labor Exchange from 2001 to 2008 number of foreigners employed in Lithuania grew more than ten-fold, various informal and illegal schemes of importing labor force from third countries also take root, it is difficult to predict their consequences (due to different cultural, religious context and possible chain migration in the future) with certainty.

The situation is exacerbated by the fact the emigration potential does not decrease. As it was revealed in public opinion survey of Lithuanian population, conducted in 2008, a full quarter of adult Lithuanian population would like to depart for work abroad for a period longer than 6 months. Among young people, this number reaches 44 percent (Požiūris, 2008), thus it would be unrealistic to expect the extent of migration to decrease in the near future. Immigration flows, although they exhibit a trend for growth (before crisis), are significantly lower and cannot compensate losses due to emigration. It is clear that without active re-emigration promotion policy, Lithuania will not manage to encourage returns, though, it remains unclear what needs to be done and how. Additional problems might be posed by slide into economic crisis, which adds new impetus to emigration processes.

Since this is a pilot research, attempts were made to view return migration problems from different angles – from external and internal, theoretical and practical perspectives, thus a combination of various research methods was utilized:

- Review of foreign literature (theories) and policy
- Statistical analysis of Lithuanian migration and return migration
- Review of ongoing policy measures employed by the Government of the Republic of Lithuania to promote return migration
- Lithuanian population public opinion survey about emigration and return emigration
- Internet survey of representatives of Lithuanian communities abroad
- Expert survey
- Media content analysis

Research body on the problem, theoretical insights (*what matters / what politicians should know*)

Although return migration is an integral part of migration process, there is very little research or comparative statistical information about it on international level. In theoretical field, descriptions and evaluations of return migration are rather controversial. Depending on which theoretical context is used to analyze return migration, returns can be judged as:

- „failed“ migration (neo-classical economic migration theory),
- as thought through in advance part of economic migration, that is, as „successful plan“ (new economic migration theory),
- as a result of desire to change social context / nurture innovation in the country of origin (structuralist approach),

- as a transition stage in an open migration cycle process (network theory and transnational approach).

Differences in theoretical approaches also lead to a variety of return migration policy goals and measures. For this reason, when shaping return migration policy, it is necessary to take into account social economic context, against which emigration takes place, and what type of return migration is dominating. Some migration types are more easily influenced, other are left almost untouched by return promotion policy.

Talking stock of Lithuanian situation, firstly, one can claim that before the crisis, Lithuania did not exhibit the so-called stage migration features and the likelihood of return depended on factors pertinent to migration in two countries: origin country / Lithuania and destination country. Economic crisis alters migration trajectories, increasingly, one can observe stage migration trends, when migration involves several countries, thus return process also becomes more complicated, it is more difficult to influence.

Planned in advance permanent emigration without return is another difficult type to influence. Most often, it involves emigration with the purpose of family reunification or is motivated by personal reasons. Such migration is little affected by external factors, including various migration policy initiatives.

Also, it is important to pay attention to the fact that due to many reasons (incorrect information, changed social economic conditions in origin or destination country and so on) „migration plan“ does not work out as expected and return is postponed and happens later than was intended originally. Namely this trend is currently observed in Lithuanian émigré communities: those who were planning to return to Lithuania are postponing their decision for the later. Thus, promotion of return right now will not produce the desired effect, because „plan is not completed yet“. In such situation, it's important to retain ties with these emigrants and to prevent the postponement of return from turning into de facto emigration due severed contacts. In parallel, in order to make return migration policy effective, it is beneficial to devote more attention to so-called „*accidental returns*“, which are very widespread in Lithuania. Return migration promotion policy measures could be focused on this group of migrants (it allows to retain social ties, there are favorable conditions to inform people about possibilities to re-emigrate).

When thinking about shaping of return promotion policy, especially about optimizing effectiveness of its measures, it is beneficial to devote attention to so-called „*Innovative returns*“, when return is motivated by desire to utilize to the maximum accumulated material and non-material resources in order to achieve innovations in origin country. This type of return migration is very important for identifying new social–economic niches, finding new initiatives and innovations; when shaping return migration policy measures, main attention should be paid to promotion of this type of return migration. One should draw attention to the fact that promotion of return of such migrants is relevant not only and not so much during the years of economic boom, but in the conditions of crisis.

Simultaneously, one should pay attention to another type of migration - “**virtual return**”, that is, migrant’s participation in social, economical, cultural and other lives of origin country, while physically remaining abroad. Although such „returns“ do not affect the size of population, their economic and social benefits can be significant. Besides, this stage can constitute a middle chain before *de facto* return.

Should return migration be encouraged? What do other countries do?

Contrary to immigration policy, which has underwent rapid changes during recent decades, politicians pay far less attention to policy concerned with return migration issues, thus there is a limited number of programs, and only single cases of successful examples. In reviewing policy measures, which are implemented in the area of promoting return migration, it is necessary, first of all, to draw a distinction between measures implemented by destination countries (which are often interested in sending away „unnecessary“ migrants) and measures initiated and implemented by origin countries, in an attempt to return their citizens.

Policy of origin countries encouraging migrants to return most often is aimed only at its own citizens and includes such measures as:

- *Informational campaigns*, information centers, web portals, informational events within the country and foreign communities, and so on (with an aim to inform about evolved living and work conditions in origin country, providing useful information and contacts tailored for returning)
- *Direct organization of a trip home*, financial and practical support, including, for example, provision of psychological and legal consultation before departure
- Indirect promotion of returns. Most often used measures include *tax breaks*, encouraging migrants to invest money earned abroad in origin country, *facilitated credits* for return and settling down, provision of *temporary accommodation* or accommodation in temporary centers (in case of mass return) and so on.
- *Re-integration*. Traditional reintegration package includes such measures as help in finding accommodation, health check/health insurance provided free of charge, help in finding employment / re-training, assistance in tackling of social protection problems
- *Trainings* upon return (can also take place before the departure, in destination country): language, professional, re-training. As a part of these measures, countries often also include special educational programs for returning children.

Indeed, in the recent years, as the extent of emigration grew, more and more governments of origin countries implement various measures in an attempt to return those departed, especially highly-skilled professionals and young people. Such policy is implemented in Asian, South American, African countries, in the recent years, return migration attracts more and more attention in European, especially Eastern and Central European countries.

Eastern and Central European countries implement almost identical measures in the area of promoting return migration: provision of specific information to migrants (internet, phone, printed materials) and consulting of migrants, organization of information fairs in foreign countries and so on. However, most countries agree that employed measures to encourage migrants (or labor force?) to engage in return migration are somewhat late and fail to live up to the intended mission – to attract departed labor force. Currently, in the face of economic crisis, they perform instead a social mission: they provide assistance to unsuccessful migrants who failed to settle down in another country or migrants who – due to the crisis – lost out on jobs abroad and forced to take off. Similar situation also unfolds in Lithuania.

What steps Lithuania takes to encourage the return of emigrants?

When it comes to promotion of migrants' return or assistance to returning individuals, in Lithuania there is a clear distinction drawn between so-called „repatriates“ (that is individuals deported from Lithuania during the Soviet period or their descendants and those returning to live in Lithuania at this time) and voluntary emigrants (those are mostly working emigrants, who departed from Lithuania already during independence period and now thinking about the return).

In respect of both migrant groups, the Government conducts different policy: while „repatriates“ enjoy very generous and long-term (it has been in place since 1990s, every year there are around 150 families of such migrants returning) support program, policy-making in the area of promoting the return of working migrants and their support makes only initial steps, though activities are quickly developing further.

Although mass emigration continues almost 2 decades, thus causing a whole range of negative social– economic– demographic consequences, until the current period, there were no discussions about promotion of return migration; it is only in face of massive labor force shortages and under pressure from employers representatives that measures came to be implemented to promote return migration:

- In April 2007, the Government of the Republic of Lithuania approved the Economic migration strategy, whose one of principal goals is to encourage the return of economic migrants.
- In 2008, Guidelines of Lithuanian immigration policy were developed and approved (they indicate that „...*preference should be given (...) to create incentives for decreasing economic emigration, to encourage the return of emigrated citizens of the Republic of Lithuania...*“)
- Other/sector-specific programs or specialized measures are also implemented (sometimes rather formally)
 - Education/ return of pupils to schools
 - Science/ Research/ return of brains
 - Broadcasting information / consultations
 - Labor market / attracting workers from abroad
 - Agriculture. Support of young farmers returning from abroad (there were 5 such projects supported)
 - Business. Encouragements (declarative?) to invest in Lithuania
 - Psychological assistance
 - Others

Although we listed here a whole range of programs in different areas, their actual implementation oftentimes is fragmentary, short-term, formal. Besides, as we shall see from the results of research presented below, some of these measures are viewed by emigrants and Lithuanian inhabitants as very necessary, others are either unknown or are met with doubt about their efficiency.

Results and conclusions of empirical research

Research limitations. Since it was already mentioned that this is pilot research and it combines various methods, not all the results are fully representative. For example, internet survey of Lithuanians from abroad communities can represent only a partial opinion of all emigrants due to a small sample, but also because it surveyed only those representatives who were “most oriented towards Lithuania“: chairmen of Lithuanian communities. Review of measures employed by the Government of the Republic of Lithuania to promote re-emigration was conducted on the basis of state institutions‘ reports or other informational material, without undertaking practical verification of whether those measures were implemented. Besides, the research was conducted before signs of economic crisis became evident, therefore the impact of changed context on return migration is not adequately evaluated in conclusions. All the research limitations indicated here (some of them were planned due to limited resources, others became apparent in the course of research) clearly indicate the complexity of research process and at the same time serve as guidelines for further research in the area of return migration.

Research results and conclusions

- Mass emigration from Lithuania that continues for almost 20 years and negative demographic, social, economic consequences it causes lead one to thinking about measures to decrease the extent of emigration as well as about programs for promotion of return migration. To justify / prepare such programs [policy-makers] need to have access to detailed scientific research, analysis of experiences of other countries. Unfortunately, there is very little research or comparative statistical information available about return migration internationally; in Lithuania such research has never been conducted.
- Despite the lack of research, more and more origin countries governments implement variety of measures in an attempt to return those departed, especially highly-skilled professionals and young people. Such policy is embraced by many developing countries, in the recent years more and more attention is paid to return migration in Eastern and Central European countries, also in Lithuania.
- In Lithuania, only in the face of mass labor force shortage in many economic sectors and confronted with alternatives of bringing labor force from third countries or returning those who are departed, return migration was accorded clear preference and various programs promoting the return of migrants began to be created. This research allowed to a certain extent evaluate effectiveness of some measures being implemented and can be consulted in creating future programs.
- According to public opinion survey, two thirds of Lithuanian population think that „majority of emigrants want to return to Lithuania“ (64%), that „majority of emigrants will return to Lithuania“ (52%). Somewhat less optimistic assessments are given by representatives of Lithuanian communities abroad, however, more than half of them think that in the future emigrants „will make a significant contribution in creating just and wealthy Lithuania“.
- According to assessments of representatives of Lithuanian communities abroad, re-emigration potential, although being small, still exists – there are those people who want to return, among those surveyed more than half the people expressed such opinion (54.5%). Although realization of this sentiment often depends on a variety of external factors, frequently emigrants run into problems that they cannot resolve themselves or do not know how to resolve.
- Reasons that prevent those wishing to return from exercising this wish are very varied – starting with „traditional“ - „Family/ children/ friends“ (55%), „Will not find a job in Lithuania / a well-paid job ” (30%), “Social welfare system abroad is better ” (24%) – going to more personalized reasons – such as scientific aspirations or negative attitudes

towards gays. A considerable part of emigrants indicate that they have nowhere to return, that social ties with Lithuania have been severed.

- Positive or negative attitude towards those returning in Lithuanian society is important only to every fifth respondent, while the absolute majority of Lithuanians abroad think that “those are firmly determined to return, ignore this fact” (72 %). Besides, as the survey revealed the absolute majority of Lithuanian population (91%) views returning countrymen positively, although they also discern certain dangers if mass re-emigration would take off.
- Most often cited dangers are related to possible mass re-emigration – increasing competition (47%), fear about employment (22%), abuse of social welfare system (20%). Various social groups differently view main dangers of return migration: working age people are more likely to be concerned with increased competition; anxiety that emigrants did not pay taxes and now are likely to benefit from social assistance is more often voiced in among people of pre-retirement age; price inflation is more often cited by people with lower education, lower income.
- Despite various fears, majority of Lithuanian population think that return migration needs to be actively promoted – almost three quarters (73.5%) of Lithuanian population speak „in favor“ of such initiative. Even bigger share of Lithuanians support promotion of returns when faced with alternatives of returning citizens departed from Lithuania or bring labor force from other countries / foreigners. Meanwhile, Lithuanians abroad more restraint on this question – only less than a half (45.5%) think that returns should be promoted.
- Lithuanians abroad distinguish as especially important measures aimed at children: „top assist emigrant children in adapting“ (79%), help Lithuanian schools in emigration countries (77%) and to increase access to information about possibilities of the return (89%). However, doubts were expressed about some of the measures being implemented, for example, broadcasting LTV (Official national TV channel) to emigration countries. The absolute majority of Lithuanians abroad also think that it is not beneficial to support returns financially.
- According to research data, majority of Lithuanians abroad, short of returning, would like to participate more actively in political life of Lithuania, they want more rights: they would like Lithuanians residing aboard to have voting rights not only in Seimas (parliamentary) elections, but also in municipal elections (84), would have their own representative in Seimas (64), would be elected to Seimas, could hold double citizenship (71). On the other hand, many think that old age pension, free health care in Lithuania and advantageous treatment in higher education enrollment should not extend to Lithuanians from abroad.
- According to research data, one can claim that only some of the measures being implemented by the Government of Lithuania are supported both among Lithuanian population and Lithuanians living abroad. Firstly, its measures aimed at education of children, retaining language skills, helping children to adapt. On this point everybody is unanimous: such measures should be fully supported. Although effectiveness of other measures is questioned: broadcasting of Lithuanian television is supported by less than a

half of Lithuanians abroad, absolute majority of respondents disapprove of facilitated enrollment procedures at higher education establishments; financial support to those returning, including highly-skilled professionals does not enjoy support neither among Lithuanian population nor among those emigrated, because main problems are seen elsewhere, where efforts of the state should be directed.

- Problems, faced by those wanting to return are very varied: of economic nature – „work, low wages“ (41%), bad state policy towards returning emigrants / lack of social guarantees (25%), property issues, taxes (16%), problems related to children’s integration (14%), loss of social ties (14%), corruption / red tape of Lithuanian authorities (14%), simply lack of information (9).
- Results of representatives of Lithuanian communities abroad survey and expert survey demonstrated that economic migrants, especially those who live abroad for extended period of time and only rarely return to Lithuania, are in need of information about various features of living and working in Lithuania - though not information of general nature, but possibility to receive individual consultations, advice on issues related to the return. Understanding that you will receive assistance, that there are people who care about your problems helps to make a decision to those who are in doubt and encourages return migration.
- Media, as a powerful social institution upholding the process of communication between politicians and society, can be used to prevent emigration and encourage re-emigration. Unfortunately, Lithuanian media does not perform this function. Lithuanian and émigré media content analysis allows one to claim that prevalent rather negative attitude towards emigrants could contribute not only to appearance and entrenchment of social distance between the two groups (migrants and emigrants), but also to influence negatively emigrants’ willingness to return – what is the point of returning to society, where one is judged and not welcome.
- State’s attempts to manage and promote return migration in media are given ambiguous assessments. In émigré press (commission articles?), one observes desire to demonstrate that upholding ties with emigrants is the Government’s priority. However, simultaneously (and even more frequently) the image of indecisive government emerges, while criticisms levied on new, just launched measures undermines people’s belief in their effectiveness. Thus, focused work with media should be viewed as integral part of return migration policy.
- Although in many countries, including Lithuania, return migration policy is driven by economic considerations (presence of labor force shortage), in the wake of changed economic situation, one can also discern its social function. During economic crisis, it is precisely social function of the policy – assistance to those who decided to return, thinking about the return or even are forced to return – that becomes increasingly more important. Such policy constitutes not only direct assistance to returning migrants, but also contributes to prevention of possible social conflicts, dampening of social tension in Lithuania.

Recommendations

Research conducted on the basis of experiences of world / other countries indicates that if migration process is left unattended, within 5 years period from the moment of emigration around 20-50 percent of emigrants return to origin country (later, the likelihood of return drastically decreases). When there is considerable gap in economic well-being between origin and destination country, the likelihood of return falls further. Being aware that differences between economies of Lithuania and some of the main destination countries are considerable (for example wages differ up to 8 times), it would be unrealistic to expect natural return migration to increase. Thus, **return migration policy measures are necessary in order to encourage countrymen to return**. The same point is confirmed by the survey of representatives of Lithuanian communities abroad – although there is a potential for re-emigration, individuals willing to return oftentimes run into problems, which they cannot resolve on their own or do not know how to resolve. Therefore, state's assistance is necessary.

In order to ensure that return migration policy measures reach their target groups and be effective, it is necessary to evaluate emigration and likely return migration types and models (and their modifications due to economic crisis) dominant in Lithuania. Currently, as migration trajectories are shifting, stage migration (via several countries) becomes more pronounced, **return process becomes more complicated and more difficult to influence directly**. Besides, even planned returns are postponed for the future at the times of crisis. Thus it becomes particularly important **to continue the dialoged and uphold social ties with émigré community** and to direct some of measures to temporary „accidental returns“, which are very widespread in Lithuania. Simultaneously, it is also necessary **to encourage „virtual returns“**, especially among highly-skilled professionals and researchers, to involve migrants in Lithuania's social, economic live and scientific projects, even though emigrants physically will remain abroad.

In shaping return migration policy, one should clearly distinguish **two main types of returning emigrants**:

- Return as migration „failures“ (under conditions of crisis, the number of such cases can drastically increase)
- Return with a purpose to utilize accumulated capital / resources (financial and „human“) in Lithuania.

While in the case of unsuccessful migrants, main attention should be focused on provision of information, social-psychological assistance, job search, in case of „successful“ migrants attracting them requires a wider range of actions, many of them in economic area. By the way, here one should also distinguish two categories of returning emigrants – those who are determined to utilize accumulated capital for personal purposes / personal well-being, for example, to acquire property, other articles for personal use (Lithuania needs to adopt measures facilitating targeted use of financial resources accumulated abroad in Lithuania) and those who aim to utilize accumulated capital / resources for innovations in their city/ region or Lithuania (wishing to finance investment projects in Lithuania or participate in them).

Scientific literature draw attention to close correlation between investment friendly environment, environment friendly to business development in origin countries and the likelihood of return migration. It is also indicated that local bureaucracy and traditions can lead to failure of even best

innovative intentions. Therefore, when shaping return migration policy measures, it is also necessary to pay attention to **potential of utilizing migration experience and capital** present / absent in origin country, it is especially important not to block new initiatives. Creating environment friendly to small business and promotion of investment as well as elimination of red tape preventing innovation – these are important constituent parts encouraging re-emigration of potential investments.

The latter type of return migration is especially important. Promotion of such return migration could attract main focus in shaping return migration policy measures. Returns of such migrants, especially if they are successful, **could also result in a chain reaction**. Besides, one should draw attention to the fact that promotion of return of such migrants is relevant issue not only during the years of economic boom, but also in conditions of crisis.

When shaping return migration policy, special focus should be given to promotion of return of highly-skilled professionals and students graduating from higher educational establishments abroad. Steps must be taken to inform them about possibilities (and giving them such possibilities) **to participate in scientific activities or even initiate scientific-research projects**. It is also necessary to think about special long-term „brain drain reversal“ programs, however, at the same, to avoid discriminating against locals. Here, focus should be placed not only and not so much on their physical return, but rather on attempts to involve them in implementation of projects important to Lithuania.

One of components of return migration policy should be **maintenance of close ties with émigré community, encouragement of short-term visits to Lithuania**. Such policy allows to remain in touch with Lithuanian realities and facilitates later return. At the same time, it is necessary to evaluate dangers. Strong national communities abroad and very close social economic ties with origin countries can encourage „de-territorialization“ of nation. Thus making „de facto“ return irrelevant.

When shaping return migration policy, it is necessary to pay attention to the fact that motivation of return and possibilities often depend on destination country's immigration / integration policy and immigrant's status there. Thus, impact of return migration promotion policy measures in countries with different immigration policy can also have uneven effect. This circumstance should be kept in mind when trying **to return countrymen from EU and non-EU / third countries**.

However, irrespectively of returning emigrants' immigration status in destination country, their motivation to return and even outside economic circumstances (crisis or boom), the majority of those returning need some kind of assistance, often very narrow, specific, personal assistance. As was revealed by the study and experience of other countries, returning emigrants are mostly in need of individual, personal consultations rather than in information of general nature about aspects of living and working in Lithuania, individual assistance in resolving their personal problems, especially if they can be addressed on the basis of „one window“ principle.

On the other hand, as is shown by research and practice from other countries, effectiveness of implemented return migration policy measures can be increased (especially in the case of mass returns) if:

- Return migration is **territorially de-concentrated** and many measures are implemented locally (thus also distributing the burden of financial costs)
- Returning individuals are directed to certain activity sectors (**sectoral / activity concentration**), for example, agriculture, trade, research, since returning migrants often

are more inclined to engage in individual activities and particularly in the mentioned sectors (although, an in-depth study is needed in Lithuanian context).

Evaluating promotion policy for return migration implemented / being implemented by Lithuania, one can claim (according to research data) that **only a part of measures being implemented by the Lithuanian Government receive support among Lithuanian population and among Lithuanians living abroad**. Firstly, these are measures related to education of children, retaining language skills, helping children to adapt upon return. On this point everybody is unanimous: such measures should receive full support. However, effectiveness of other measures is questioned: broadcasting of Lithuanian television is supported by less than a half of Lithuanians abroad, absolute majority of respondents disapprove of facilitated enrollment procedures at higher education establishments; financial support to those returning, including highly-skilled professionals does not enjoy support neither among Lithuanian population nor among those emigrated, because main problems are seen elsewhere, where efforts of the state should be directed. Thus, return migration policy should be reviewed / modified and this should be done by consulting communities abroad.

Media, as a powerful social institution upholding the process of communication between politicians and society, can be used to prevent emigration and encourage re-emigration. Unfortunately, Lithuanian media does not perform this function. Lithuanian and émigré media content analysis allows one to claim that prevalent rather negative attitude towards emigrants could contribute not only to appearance and entrenchment of social distance between the two groups (migrants and emigrants), but also to influence negatively emigrants' willingness to return – what is the point of returning to society, where one is judged and not welcome. Thus, **focused work with media** should be seen as integral part of promoting return migration activities.

Although in many countries, including Lithuania, return migration policy is driven by economic considerations (presence of labor force shortage), in the wake of changed economic situation, one can also **discern its social function**. During economic crisis, it is precisely social function of the policy – assistance to those who decided to return, thinking about the return or even are forced to return – that becomes increasingly more important. Such policy constitutes not only direct assistance to returning migrants, but also contributes to prevention of possible social conflicts, dampening of social tension in Lithuania.

And one more last observation – it is necessary to evaluate properly present / available **financial resources for implementation of return migration measures**. If during the years of economic boom, programs could be comprehensive, aimed at multiple or all groups of emigrants, during crisis, faced with limited resources, the number of programs should be limited, while programs and measures should be exclusively targeted. Currently, main focus (apart from especially vulnerable emigrants, for example, victims of human trafficking, unaccompanied minors and so on) should be placed on promoting the return of those emigrants, who are interested to invest into Lithuanian economy, are willing and capable of implementing innovative projects, whose return is most effective not only in economic sense, but also can set in motion chain reaction (by their successful example, creation of new working places and so on).