



Dzūkija National park is the largest protected area of the country with exceptional natural conditions and well preserved ethno cultural heritage. People used to farm here just for personal needs and lived mostly from natural forest resources. Such living conditions created the unity between man and nature. Volunteers will have a perfect opportunity to feel the uniqueness of this region, to see the wooden architecture of villages, learn traditional crafts, traditional lifestyles of Dzukija region and how to prepare local traditional meals.

With the help of Park's specialists volunteers will be able to learn to work in many different fields. Together with cultural heritage specialists volunteers will conduct the registration of objects of cultural heritage, help with the early documentation of wooden architecture in photos. Together with nature specialists volunteers will implement the cartography of protected species, monitoring of landscape, camping grounds. They will also help to prepare expositions for the ethnographical museum and visitor centres, organize special events, festivals. Volunteers will help to maintain the tourist hiking trails and infrastructure, conduct tourist flow monitoring; participate in nature management actions in Natura 2000 territories, collect garbage in the most visited areas of the park. Schools of environmental education, camps, hikes, various actions are organized in the park, so volunteers will be able to share their experience or gain more while actively participating and working together with the parks' staff and event participants. The park is also occasionally visited by many specialized tourist groups (ornithology, botany, ethno culture, history). They are guided by specialized guides. Participating in such excursions will give volunteers a lot of new scientific information, they will be able to meet scientists, students and nature enthusiasts. During the summer season many events are organized together with the local community, so volunteers will have perfect opportunities express and realize their own initiatives, ideas, communicate to the local people, learn the language, songs, dances, and local traditions.



In July - August volunteers will assist in organizing international voluntary camp which will take place from 25th of July to 6th of August. During the camp volunteers will act as the camp leaders. The participants of the camp will be young people (from 18 to 30 y.o.) from different European countries. The camp is open for participants from Asia and Latin America countries as well.

The park is publishing its own newspaper and website. Volunteers will be given the opportunity to publish their experience and feelings about living and work in the region. This will raise awareness of volunteering and EVS among the local youth.

Volunteer profiles and recruitment process:
Dzūkija national park is open for all who:

- Is motivated to explore nature and culture of Lithuania.

- Is outgoing personalities.
- Is willing to communicate with new peoples.
- Is willing to work with tourists and groups of children;
- Is strong enough to spend most of the time in a small village.
- Is able to work independently and plan own activities.
- Have basic knowledge of English, Russian or German.

Risk prevention, protection and safety:

The volunteer will not be handling any potentially dangerous equipment or working in an unsafe environment. He/she will be under supervision. Regarding the living and working conditions, the volunteer will be instructed about the general personal safety precautions immediately after arriving in the country and later during the on-arrival training. During this training possible crisis situations and ways to solve them will be analyzed interactively. To be more specific, certain areas can be considered as more risky than others. For example, many tasks of the volunteers will be carried out outdoors, thus one should be ready for minor physical injuries, bodily reactions to nature (plants, insects, animals). Volunteers will be instructed to take precaution wherever and whenever necessary. The experience local staff will be of assistance most of the time.

Another area is the social one. While hoping for the best, one can never know if the complicated cultural/social integration of foreigners will go as smoothly as planned. All people are different, often driven by various emotions, and not always compatible with one another. Special attention to this topic will be given during the training cycle of EVS, but it will also be the task of mentors to guide the young people through this. Mentors will be those people who will be able to tell if volunteers need extra help and what can be done from the side of other EVS and the staff to make things work out in the best possible way.

As mentioned during regular meetings with the mentors volunteers will have time and space to reflect on their EVS lives in different aspects.

Allowance/food money

Monthly food allowance of 110 Euro will be provided.

Monthly allowance (pocket money) of 80 Euro will be provided.

If necessary, transport expenses from the accommodation to work and back will be covered directly to the volunteer upon presenting of travel tickets/receipts. Alternatively a monthly bus ticket or bicycle can be provided. This also applies to travel expenses incurred in attending official EVS trainings or meetings.

International travel expenses to the volunteer will be reimbursed upon presenting travel related financial documents (tickets, invoices, boarding passes, receipts, and other proof of payment) and in line with the travel budget foreseen in the project application are presented to the coordinating organization.

Accommodation:

The volunteer will live in a flat or house in a private room with shared cooking and washing facilities.

In cases, when there is no possibility to rent a flat (no flats available for rent, the rent exceeds the budget etc), the coordinating organization commits itself to accommodate the volunteer in a dormitory in a private room with all necessary living conditions and of adequate standards.

Coordinating organization commits that in the accommodation place volunteer will be provided:

With Internet, with his own bed, a writing table and a seat, a wardrobe, also with all necessary kitchen tools (plates, table tools, pots, pan, pallet, ladle, glasses, cups etc.) and with necessary domestic appliances (fridge, cooker, washing machine).

About Lithuania

Lithuania is a green and flat land in the north of Europe, ashore the Baltic Sea. It is one of three Baltic countries, and shares borders with Latvia, Byelorussia, Poland and Russia (Kaliningrad). The country is full of preserved natural landscapes, woods, lakes and rivers, and has an unique sea side, with Curonian spit, a sandy peninsula, isolating the Curonian sea from the Baltic sea.

Though Lithuania was mentioned already in 1009, now it is a young republic, trying to recover from a grinding occupation of Soviet Union. The independence was retrieved only in 1990, but the history of Lithuanian statehood started already in XIII century, when Mindaugas, the first and only kind of our country, gained the crown. The history of Lithuania is erratic, full of mighty victories and severe events. Today's Lithuania is a small country, but in historical maps you can find it the biggest country in the Europe, or not existing at all. Today the country, still under impact of 50 years soviet occupation, tries to blend into the economic and cultural space of Europe Union.

As one of the countries in Europe, baptized at the latest, Lithuania preserved much of pagan traditions, and folk traditions are still alive in villages. The cultural life prospers in all the bigger cities.

Area: 650 200 sq. km.

Population: 3 390 000 (year 2006)

Coat of arms and flag:



Language:

Official language– Lithuanian, which is the member of Baltic language group (other 2 members are Latvian, and dead Prussian language). It is the most archaic language from all the Indo-European languages.

Religion:

Lithuania is considered to be very religious country, sometimes named as "The land of Virgin Mary". Today 79 percent of Lithuanians consider themselves as Roman Catholics.

Currency:

The currency of Lithuania Republic is Lithuanian Litas (1 Euro = 3,45 Lt). In the year 2009 Euro should be introduced in Lithuania.

Political system:

Lithuanian Republic is the parliamentary democracy. The head of state is The President. Executive authority is Prime minister and the cabinet, and the legislative power is in the hands of Seimas (the parliament)

Neighbors

Latvia (land border – 588 km, sea border – 22 km)

Byelorussia (border – 677 km)

Poland (border – 104 km)

Russia (Kaliningrad) (land border – 255 km, border in Curonian sea – 18 km, sea border– 22 km)

Seaside:

Whole shore is 90 km long. The most unique part of seaside is the Curonian split – the peninsula, which starts in Kaliningrad and creates the Curonian sea.

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EX-volunteer: Giovanni Caci from Italy:

My first time in Lithuania, no, my first time living in North Europe. When my sending organization send me an e-mail when they said that the coordinating organization pick me I had a mix of emotions. I was happy because I came from 3 months of doing nothing and I really don't like be stopped in one place and that was a great opportunity to work in a big and important National Park that is what I'd like to do in the future. On the other hand I was preoccupied because Lithuania in my imagination was a really cold place with cold people and I was going to live in a little village when in Italy I live in a very big a chaotic city. Besides living your family and friends it's never easy also when you already did. When I arrived the impact with the cold wasn't so ugly like I imagined and the other volunteers were all very nice. The house when I live is really wonderful, it seem like a fairytale house: wood house inside the forest and the snow, something magic.



My house in Marcinkonys

Because of the snow there isn't a lot of work to do in the forest so I do little works in office and I study a lot about the fauna and the flora of the park to be prepared when summer comes and I'll be a guide for the tourists.

One great thing that we did as volunteers is doing a lesson about some species of bird in the school for kids. We tried to explain them how these species live to intrigue them about the nature around. They made



some paper bird (they are always kids) and they enjoyed a lot. Then we went to put some artificial nest on the trees so they had a real contact with the nature of their village and the way how to preserve it. Initially I felt very uncomfortable because I'm not very good with kids besides they don't speak English so other people translated what I said so there wasn't a direct contact, but when I started to speak they took attention to the images and the voices of the bird that I showed. I helped to make the paper birds too so I also enjoy that day and I felt like a real teacher (great sensation).

↑ Teaching children to make paper birds



← Putting artificial nest on the trees

After one month of cold (and one month of sickness), really cold (until -18°) Easter come and we were invited to the ethnographical museum to decorate some eastern eggs with the help of some candles.

This is something typical here in Lithuania and also if I'm not good to draw, but I tried.



Me and Masha trying to decorate eggs



The final result

Marcinkonys is a wonderful village in the middle of the Dzukija national park so the thing that I much love is the real contact with the nature: beautiful bird wake up you in the morning, the air is good and always smell like pine and the time that out my door house I saw a fox was a great emotion for me.. there I know that I was in a special e peaceful place. This village conserve his tradition and promote an ecologic tourism, so I know that I'm going to do a lot of thing that I never do like skiing, cut wood, canoeing in the river and many other things.