

# THE EMIGRATION POTENTIAL OF RUSSIA AND LITHUANIA: Recent Survey Results<sup>1</sup>

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A recent public opinion poll indicates that nearly seven million residents of Russia want to leave the Soviet Union forever. The poll, based on face-to-face interviews conducted in February 1991 among a randomly selected sample of 811 adults in Russia and 509 adults in Lithuania, also suggests that Lithuanian residents are only half as eager as Russian residents to leave their republic. Lithuanian resistance to emigration is based largely on a more optimistic assessment of that small republic's economic and political future.

Respondents in both countries were asked whether they would like to go with their families to one of the developed Western countries and, if so, for what length of time. As can be seen in

Table 1, some 4.6 percent of the residents of Russia said they want to leave forever — proportionately, nearly twice as many as Lithuanian residents. Calculated as a percentage of Russia's population of 147.4 million, that amounts to about 6.8 million residents wanting to emigrate permanently. More Russian than Lithuanian residents want to go to the West for shorter periods of time too.

In both republics the desire to emigrate permanently varies with the age, optimism, gender, educational level and residence of respondents. The Russian and Lithuanian residents most likely to want to emigrate permanently are under 45 years of age and share a pessimistic outlook on their republic's economic and political future. The

tendency to desire permanent emigration is also slightly stronger among men, the better educated and residents of urban centers (see Table 2).

The main reason why Russian residents are keener than Lithuanian residents to emigrate permanently lies in the gloomier economic and political prospects of Russia. Thus, Table 3 shows that when asked whether their republics will be completely undeveloped or highly developed economically in five years, 67.6 percent of the Lithuanian residents, but only 41.3 percent of the Russian residents, gave an optimistic reply. Moreover, while fewer than a tenth of the Lithuanian residents could not answer that question, over a fifth of the Russian residents found it difficult to

Table 1 "Would you like to go with your family to one of the developed countries of the West for some months? a year or two? five to ten years? forever?" (in percent)					Table 2 Percent answering "yes" to emigration "forever"		
	Some Months	1-2 yrs.	5-10 yrs.	Forever		Russia	Lithuania
Lithuania	48.3	21.4	7.3	2.4	Age <45	6.5	3.7
Russia	61.2	30.3	13.1	4.6	45+	2.0	0.5
Table 3 "What do you think the level of economic development of your republic will be in five years?" (in percent)					Political outlook		
		Russia	Lithuania		pessimistic	8.4	2.6
Developed (optimistic)		41.3	67.6		optimistic	4.1	2.4
Undeveloped (pessimistic)		37.8	24.7		Economic outlook		
Hard to say, no answer		20.9	7.9		pessimistic	8.9	2.9
Total		100.0	100.2		optimistic	3.7	1.8
Table 4 "What in your opinion will the political system of your republic be in five years?" (in percent)					Gender		
		Russia	Lithuania		male	5.5	2.5
Democratic (optimistic)		36.8	80.8		female	3.8	2.2
Dictatorial (pessimistic)		31.4	9.1		Education		
Hard to say, no answer		31.7	10.2		elementary	4.4	0.8
Total		99.9	100.1		secondary	4.4	3.4
					higher	4.9	0.0
					Residence		
					provincial	4.0	1.2
					urban	4.8	2.9