THE LITHUANIAN FLAG

LITHUANIA is a Baltic country with a strong statehood tradition which stems from the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, later the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, with a widespread presence of heraldry and symbols which are a source for a single, distinctive and unique symbol that would represent the Lithuanian nation - today's Lithuanian flag (Lietuvos valstybes veliava).

STATE (HISTORIC) FLAG

According to the book Banderia Prutenorum, written by Jan Długosz in the XV century, two flags were used during the period of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania:

The first one is red, with a knight on horseback, in Lithuanian known as Vytis, and in Polish as Pogon Litewska. It was first used as a military flag, and later as the national flag of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. In 2004, this flag was adopted as the state flag of the Republic of Lithuania. In practice, it has a ceremonial use, and is flown on sites that are historically associated with the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, for example, on the island castle of the old Lithuanian capital Trakai.

The second one is red, with the symbol known as the „Pillars of Gediminas“. This flag was flown by noble families in Lithuania. Today, the symbol can be found on the reverse of Lithuanian coins.

NATIONAL FLAG

During the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, in the struggle for national revival, the need arose for a separate Lithuanian flag. The Lithuanian Supreme National Council of 1794 decided that the National Guardsmen in Vilnius should wear blue-green markings. The blue color represented stability, and the green - hope. After the partition of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, today's

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territory of Lithuania fell under the Russian Empire. The Grand Assembly of Vilnius in December 1905 brought demands for greater autonomy within the Empire. To opt out of any association with communist revolutionary movements, and to move away from the old Grand Duchy of Lithuania in which other, mainly Slavic peoples lived, the Parliament did not accept the flag with the Vytis.

According to the contemporary tradition of three-striped flags after the French Revolution, a need for designing a new flag has arisen. In 1917, the Vilnius Conference, which laid the foundation of the independent Lithuanian state, the question on the national flag of Lithuania was raised. A special commission consisting of Žmuidzinavičius, Daugirdas and Basanavičius brought forward the proposal - a flag with three vertically aligned stripes - yellow, green and red, and in canton the Arms with the Vytis. However, the Lithuanian Constitution of 1922 does not mention any Arms, and thus the flag of Lithuania which is still used today came into existence.

FLAG OF THE LITHUANIAN SSR
After the annexation by the USSR, the use of the national Lithuanian flag in the Lithuanian SSR was banned, and it was replaced with a generic Soviet flag – a red field, in the canton a composition of the letters „LIETUVOS TSR“ and the hammer and sickle symbol, which was in use from 1940 to 1953, when it was replaced by a flag with three stripes, red with a height of 2/3, white with height of 1/12 and green with height of 1/4, in the canton the mandatory hammer and sickle symbol, with a red star, bordered in yellow above them. This flag was officially used until 1988, when the Supreme Soviet of the Lithuanian SSR, influenced by supporters of independence - Sajudis, excluded it, and two years before the restoration of Lithuanian independence proclaimed the yellow-green-red tricolor as the official flag of the Lithuanian SSR.