



SURVEY OF NEW IMMIGRANTS TO ESTONIA

Survey conducted among the Estonian population and immigrants

Turu-uuringute AS

August/October 2016

Pärnu mnt 102, 11312
Tallinn
Tel 585 29 700
post@туру-uuringute.ee
www.turu-uuringute.eu

Turu-uuringute AS

CONCLUSION

The main finding of the survey conducted among the Estonian population and new immigrants were the following:

- The immigrants who have arrived in Estonia in the last six years are mainly people with high educational attainment (although the high percentage could have been a product of the survey format, which was an online questionnaire), and came here mainly due to their work or for family reasons. A very small share have requested and received international protection – only 1% of the immigrants who arrived in the period in question. One part of the immigrants came for various personal reasons, among them are immigrants who came seeking a higher standard of living.
- The predominant share of immigrants works – there are rather few unemployed or non-employed persons.
- The majority of the immigrants came to Estonia from the European Union region, with a fewer share of those from outside the European Union.
- 10% of immigrants have needed financial support from the state during this period, 5% of them on more than one occasion. To a greater extent, however, they have needed various sorts of information from local inhabitants. Of those who need financial aid, 70% have received it. They are also quite satisfied with the assistance they have received from Estonian inhabitants when it comes to information – 94% of those in need of assistance received the information they needed.
- Immigrants take a keen interest in Estonian language and local culture and traditions. The actual level of language proficiency is not very high in the case of a majority of immigrants, but there are some who are fluent in Estonian (3%). Citizens of Finnish origin have the highest Estonian proficiency.
- 76% of immigrants sees their future as being tied to Estonia and there are just as many of those who would recommend their acquaintances to come to live in Estonia. Those who have come to Estonia from countries outside the European Union are more likely to wish to settle here permanently. These findings show that immigrants have a high level of satisfaction with life in Estonia. Satisfaction with the support network for immigrants is high – 58% are content.
- Comparing the media space inhabited by Estonian residents and immigrants, we see that they are quite different. 23% of permanent residents follow international media channels at least once a week; 58% of immigrants do so. For the most part, permanent residents follow local news channels. For immigrants, they most often tune into the news from their country of origin.
- Surprisingly, when it comes to migrant crisis topics, immigrants trust nearly all of the information sources more than do the Estonian permanent residents on average. The biggest differences in trust were seen in the case of the Estonian government, ministries/government offices and the foreign media, which are trusted by immigrants by 20% more than by local inhabitants. Friends and acquaintances were considered by both groups to be the most trusted source of information.

Inimõiguste instituut

- The organizations operating in Estonia for assisting immigrants and refugees are little known among both local permanent residents and immigrants, as mostly people lack contact with them.
- 6% of permanent residents have dealt directly with assisting immigrants and predominantly it is considered important that immigrants' children go to the same schools as Estonian children.
- Although immigrants are largely very satisfied with life in Estonia, they do cite as a shortcoming the low tolerance from some Estonian residents regarding foreigners and people of different races, as there is disparaging and occasional violence aimed at foreigners in everyday situations.

AFTERWORD

Although permanent Estonian residents consider immigration issues to be challenges at both the EU and national level, interest in activities related to immigrants is relatively low. The study results show that only one-tenth of permanent residents was able to name any organizations that assist immigrants and refugees. This holds true for new immigrants as well. The organizations are little-known among them as well.

Integration is a two-way process and requires effort from both Estonians and other national groups. A significant part of integration lies in people taking an interest in each other's language and culture. Slightly less than one-half of Estonian permanent residents are interested in learning more about the cultures of other national groups and one-third have taken part in the events held by another national group living in Estonia. The interest of new immigrants in the Estonian language and culture is significantly higher, although many of them have lacking Estonian proficiency. As an important aspect supporting integration; the study found that most Estonian residents and immigrants hope their children will attend the same schools.

Estonian permanent residents generally consider it difficult for immigrants to adapt in Estonia, and 10% of permanent residents would be "definitely" prepared, and 50% "somewhat" prepared, to themselves assist immigrants.¹ According to the results of this study, a total of 6% of permanent residents have dealt in some fashion with assisting immigrants (such as donating things or money, volunteering etc). New immigrants say they have needed help most in everyday situations and nearly all of them have received the help they needed. Estonian permanent residents said they couldn't evaluate the immigrant support system due to lack of experience and precise information about the topic. The new immigrants themselves rated the support networks as more or less sufficient.

As a significant share of permanent residents do not have daily contacts with people of different nationality, the media is often their only source for information on immigration topics. Comparing the media space inhabited by Estonian residents and immigrants, we see that they are quite different. For the most part, permanent residents follow local news channels while immigrants most often tune into the news from their country of origin and follow social media. There are few common media channels followed by both Estonian permanent residents and immigrants. Permanent residents and new immigrants trust their friends and acquaintances most for information on the migrant crisis; immigrants consider

¹Ainsaar, M., Beilmann, M. (2016). Attitudes of Estonian Population towards New Migrants from the Third-Countries in the European Social Survey Data University of Tartu.

Estonian ministries and government institutions more trustworthy than did the Estonian residents.

Although immigrants are largely satisfied with life in Estonia, they do cite as a shortcoming the low tolerance from some Estonian residents regarding foreigners in everyday situations. Only 15% of immigrants surveyed said they felt their human rights were violated. It should be borne in mind that many of the cases cited could not actually be classified as human rights (the figure for Estonian residents was 6% of the entire population in the 2016 study). The description of situations that violate human rights shows that many of these are related to intolerance, and do not directly constitute human rights violations. In spite of this, three-fourths of immigrants see their future as being tied to Estonia and there are just as many of them who would recommend their acquaintances to come to live in Estonia.