



SURVEY OF NEW IMMIGRANTS TO ESTONIA

Survey conducted among the Estonian population and immigrants

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INTRODUCTION

The surveying of respondents for the study described in this report took place in two stages: first, as part of an omnibus study of the population from 9 to 23 August 2016 and then as an online survey of immigrants from 28 October to 17 October 2016.

The purpose of the study was to determine the following:

Among permanent residents:

- Information about organizations dealing with migration and contacts with them
- Experience assisting people who have migrated to Estonia
- Assessment of the support network for immigrants
- What sources of information on migration topics do people trust

Among new immigrants:

- Information about organizations dealing with migration and satisfaction with them
- Financial assistance and needs for information, where to obtain assistance in either cases
- Interest in the Estonian language and culture
- Plans to tie one's future with Estonia and satisfaction with local life
- Assessment of the support network for immigrants
- Media space and trusted information sources on migration topics
- Opinion regarding the human rights situation in Estonia

The size of the sample in the Estonian population survey is 1,003 respondents. In the case of the immigrants, the sample consists of 600 respondents.

The study report provides a separate overview of the results for both target groups in the form of both text and graphic data.

PREFACE TO THE STUDY

Because of the European migrant crisis, issues related to immigration are increasingly in the public eye. According to the results of a Eurobarometer poll¹, EU inhabitants believe that the issues related to migration are the greatest challenges the European Union faces. Around three-fourths of the Estonian population considers immigration the European Union's biggest problem. One-third considers it the main challenge at the national level as well.

In recent years, EU member states have issued an average of 2 to 2.6 million first-time residence permits per year to immigrants from third countries.² The greatest share of migration is undertaken for family reasons, followed by work and studies. Then there are the EU citizens who live in other EU countries – 15 million of them as of 2015. Work and family reasons are also the main factors behind migration among EU citizens.³ About 15% of the Estonian population are foreign nationals.

In recent years, an average of 6,000 people per year have moved to Estonia from EU member states and third countries. Primarily, they come to Estonia to work or to join their family members. People who have lived in Estonia for five years and less are termed new immigrants⁴. Studies show that the attitude taken toward third-country immigrants in Estonia tends to be more cautious than in many other European countries⁵ and that Estonians support a conservative immigration policy. The most important consideration for people in Estonia is that people adopt the lifestyles characteristic of Estonia and have professional skills needed by Estonia and a good education.

In Estonia, the term integration most commonly refers to the Russian-speaking population, but the success of integration also hinges on how well new immigrants adapt to life in Estonia. It will be important to consider both the expectations and needs of the new immigrants and become familiar with the opinions and attitudes of permanent inhabitants of

¹ [Eurobarometer \(2016\). Spring 85](#)

² Eurostat

³ COM(2013) 837 final, Free movement of EU citizens and their families: five actions to make a difference

⁴ Anderson, B. & Blinder, S. (2014). Who Counts as a Migrant? Definitions and their Consequences. The Migration Observatory at the University of Oxford.

⁵ Ainsaar, M., Beilmann, M. (2016). Attitudes of Estonian Population towards New Migrants from the Third-Countries in the European Social Survey Data. University of Tartu.

Estonia.⁶ Obstacles and opportunities posed by adaptation of new immigrants have been studied quite extensively in recent years, but these have mainly been focus groups and other qualitative analyses. This study is the first quantitative survey of the population where the new immigrants themselves are included.

The study provides an overview of how well organizations that deal with immigration issues are known by the population as well as people's level of interest in learning about language and culture of Estonian inhabitants who speak other languages. The study also provides an appraisal of the support system for new immigrants and points up which channels are most trusted as sources of information about the migrant crisis. For the first time, the study asks new immigrants for their opinion about protections for human rights in Estonia.

⁶Ubakivi-Hadachi, P. (2015). Uussisserändajad. Eesti ühiskonna lõimumismonitooring 2015 (New immigrants. Estonian society integration monitoring)