NEW IMMIGRANTS

FACT SHEET

The Monitoring of Integration in Estonian Society 2017 is the first analysis in Estonia where the settling of new immigrants is studied by using a large-scale quantitative survey. The survey considers new immigrants to be those individuals who have arrived in Estonia within the last five years, who were not born here and who have been issued with a residence permit, or who have registered their right of living in Estonia.

As expected, the Estonian language proficiency of new immigrants is very low in the first years of living in Estonia, but improves over time. Thus, Estonian language learning tends to be quite effective, although the proportion of those new immigrants whose proficiency is still passive or unsatisfactory after five years, is still high (approximately half of all new immigrants).

Everyday active interaction between new immigrants and Estonians tends to be restricted to the work- and school environment. Outside that, there tends to be remarkably little social interaction with Estonians.

Social interaction with Estonians in the last six months, % (Monitoring of Integration in Estonian Society 2017).

The biggest help in adapting to life in Estonia for new immigrants has come from friends from other ethnic backgrounds, colleagues or co-students, employer or university and Estonian friends – approximately a third of the respondents named one or several of these factors. 15% have received help from contacts made through social media, and 12% from state Welcoming Programme.

81% of respondents consider their overall experience of settling in Estonia to be better than average. 32% of new immigrants are planning to obtain Estonian citizenship in the future - such plans are less common amongst people from the member states of the European Union, and more common amongst people from third countries.

A fifth of new immigrants have participated in various associations or NGO’s, whilst approximately half of the respondents expressed their wish to do this in the future. Aspirations to participate in the activities of NGO’s were the most common amongst people from third countries.

Wish to stay in Estonia, all respondents, % (Monitoring of Integration in Estonian Society 2017)

Slightly more than half of the questionnaire respondents are currently in employment (56%), of whom two-thirds (69%) consider their position in the Estonian labour market to be relatively strong and who are confident that their current job position will remain in place over the next year. Only 3% of people in employment found it likely that they would lose their job within the next year.

From the selection of responses provided in the survey, more than a half of new immigrants found that the best thing about Estonia was the e-government with low levels of bureaucracy and fast administration (81%), nature and environmental protection (76%), and the existing legal system and individual freedoms (59%). Only between a third and a fourth of the respondents valued highly individuals’ opportunities to influence decision-making (25%), finding friends (34%) and the absence of racist and religious tensions (35%).
Aspects that new immigrants like about Estonia, all respondents, % (Monitoring of Integration in Estonian Society 2017)

- E-government, fast and little bureaucracy: 81%
- Nature and environmental protection: 81%
- There is rule of law, personal freedoms and democracy: 61%
- Can achieve desired lifestyle or quality of life: 57%
- Culture, social norms and values: 50%
- High-quality education: 46%
- Absence of interracial, ethnic or religious tensions: 46%
- Social relations, possibility to find friends and acquaintances: 42%
- People can influence decisions made in this country: 27%
- Other: 6%
- I do not like anything: 1%

More information here: www.kul.ee/et/EIM2017