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PRESS RELEASE

Johannes Mihkelson Centre organised web-event about migrants 'contribution to Estonian labour market

Panel discussion brought together experts from various fields

On April 27, NGO Johannes Mihkelson Centre organised a Diversity Dialogue Fora (DDF) in the form of an online panel discussion, about the role of migrants in the Estonian labour market and how to cope with the conditions generated by the COVID19 crisis.

"COVID-19 has had a significant impact on the situation of the Estonian labour market and has affected a lot the groups of society, who were already vulnerable before, including third-country nationals," commented Kristina Avdonina, organiser of the online panel discussion.

"The aim of our event is to become more aware of the changes that have taken place over the past year and we use the example of migrants to discuss how to support vulnerable group in the Estonian labour market," Avdonina added.

At the beginning of the event, Raul Eamets from the University of Tartu gave an overview of the results of the RITA-MIGRATION project including some migration policy recommendations in the field of the labour market. Some of the policy recommendations of Raul Eamets were:

- Estonia should pursue an active migration policy, not a passive migration policy.
- There is no one-size-fits-all migration policy. Countries that are constantly regulating migration policy are successful, because the situation on the labor market and the mobility of people is constantly changing. We should not fix it.
- The quota or migration limit could be flexible and adjusted according to the country's integration capacity.

In the panel discussion participated: Ali Adil (owner of Damak kebab, Zaiga ja Jiro Jiro Sushi restaurants), Anet Cassandra Tanneberg (Pipedrive), Annika Sepp (Ministry Of Social Affairs), Roomet Sõrmus (Estonian Chamber of Agriculture and Commerce), Anu Viltrop (Estonian

Refugee Council), Inga Rebane (Estonian Unemployment Insurance Fund), Kati Madisson (Estonian Unemployment Insurance Fund), Nuriyan Navruzova & Kirill Jasnov (owners of The Kurze restaurant).

They discussed how COVID-19 has affected labour market and existing opportunities over the past year, which areas of work have rather lost with this situation and which ones benefited from it. They talked about how to better support the most vulnerable people coping with the Estonian labour market, focusing on the situation of migrants.

Andrei Liimets moderated the event. People had the opportunity to ask additional questions to the panelists during the event. The questions were about the availability of Estonian language trainings, about refugee quotas and about the political views of Ukrainian seasonal workers (as they consume Russian mass media).

The main conclusions of the event and discussion were:

- Different organisations should focus more on how to increase the motivation of migrants to learn Estonian language.
- Migrants are not a homogeneous target group, we must approach each migrant group separately.
- The mental health of migrants is very important. It also affects working capacity, integration, language learning etc.
- As Estonian law generally does not permit dual nationality, many third-country nationals move on from here, for example to Finland. Often because the motivation to learn Estonian disappears when there is no long-term plan to stay in Estonia.

All the materials about Estonian DDF are available [here](#). The link to the panel discussion recording is [here](#).



The panel discussion in Estonia is organised by JMK (Johannes Mihkelson Centre) in the framework of MAX – Maximising Migrants’ contribution to society -, a project cofounded by the European Union’s AMIF Action Grant (AMIF-2017-AG-INTE821672).

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