



ESTONIA

How does multicultural diversity benefit Estonia?

Migration is a new fresh force for the country:

- ✓ It has been increasing its population thanks to a positive net migration that has counter-balanced the consequences of an ageing population
- ✓ The biggest groups of third-country nationals coming to Estonia are Russians and Ukrainians. In recent years, there have been also new arrivals from Asia, Afghanistan, America and Oceania.

Estonia has traditionally applied an annual immigration quota to labour migrants from third countries. Yet, since 2013, the country has been actively reforming and simplifying its legislation to attract qualified foreign workers. As of 2017, labour migrants coming to work in the ICT sector or in a start-up company are exempt from the quota. However, current measures might not be enough!

THE CHALLENGES?

- The absence of an active immigration policy that facilitates social integration.
- The ethnic and linguistic division of the society (Russian/Estonian) is a barrier for integration and segregates children
- Other obstacles are in relation to housing, residence permits and or access to loans
- In areas with a majority of Russian-speakers, newcomers have fewer opportunities to learn and practice Estonian and immerse themselves in Estonian society.
- Estonia is among the countries with the most negative attitudes towards immigration from outside the EU.



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A good number of initiatives and cultural programs aiming at welcoming foreign populations and better integrate them into Estonian society are in place:

- ✓ The project “Let’s Get to Know Each Other” aims at increasing the awareness of local communities about migration and adaptation processes, and to strengthen their feeling of unity and openness towards migrants.
- ✓ The “Cultural program for foreigners in Estonia” for recently arrived foreigners and other people of other ethnic backgrounds living in Estonia. The purpose is to allow people to understand better who they live next to, where they come from and their culture.
- ✓ The “An Open Beginning” prepares kindergartens for receiving children with migrant or refugee background and support the creation of a tolerant environment.
- ✓ “Peace in Exile” is a program offering psychosocial support for young women residing in refugee camps, to activate them and teach empowerment through creativity and visual arts.
- ✓ The “Youth Photographic Club” is a 3-month pilot project for 10 youngsters - 5 of them having a migrant background and 5 being local Estonians meeting twice a month to speak about photography and storytelling.

#KeyMessage: Mainstream migrants

To learn more about Estonia and the integration of newcomers, as well as these initiatives, be sure to look at the [research reports of the MAX project](#)!

If you would like to do your bit in supporting a welcoming multicultural society, follow like/share/contact [Johannes Mihkelson Centre](#) and the [MAX project](#) !