

FOREIGNERS IN WARSAW

SUMMARY RESULTS

August 2019

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INTRODUCTION

The number of foreigners living in Warsaw is gradually growing. The data made available by the Warsaw City Hall in March 2019 indicated almost 38 thousand foreigners registered as residents of Warsaw (which means 24 per cent increase vs. the data from September 2018). Although it is unknown how many foreigners actually live in Warsaw, statistical data illustrate the trends: the number of foreigners is growing dynamically. This poses new challenges for the city as regards integration understood as a bilateral process of mutual adaptation of both immigrants and the society in the economic, social, cultural, and political aspects.

The success of integration depends both on the good will and engagement of the foreigners adapting to their new environment, and on the readiness of the society to accept the newcomers and their families.

METHODOLOGY AND DATA SELECTION

In July and August 2019, *Biuro Badań Społecznych Obserwator* carried out research aimed at determining the attitudes and needs of residents of Warsaw with respect to integration, as well as establishing guidelines to develop adequate measures and programmes to facilitate integration. Because integration is a bilateral process involving both foreigners and the accepting society, it was important to see the perspective of both parties: the foreigners and the local residents of Warsaw.

The core objectives of the study focus around three main issues: finding out about the residents' opinion on the broadly understood process of immigrant integration, finding out about the foreigners' opinion on the integration from the immigrant perspective, and compare the perception of both parties with respect to the integration and social inclusion processes.

An additional aim of the project was to find out about the opinion on the Warsaw Multicultural Centre which houses Warsaw-based organisations that gather foreigners and operate for the

benefit of migrants and multiculturalism. The Centre offers, among others, free legal and job consulting, psychological aid, and Polish language classes.

Due to the absence of complete information about the structure of foreigners staying in Warsaw, the sample selection relied on the available information on foreigners resident in Warsaw (demographic and registered address data), which led to the formation of the wave zero, namely the initial group of respondents from various countries, who facilitated contact with other foreigners in further waves of the research until the target number of interviews had been achieved.

According to the assumptions, within wave zero, we acquired persons from Ukraine, Vietnam, Belarus, Russia, France, India, China, the United Kingdom, and the USA (representatives of the countries included in resident address statistical data). The interviewers included persons speaking Russian, English, and Vietnamese, which facilitated contact with the respondents.

The survey involved foreigners who stay in Poland for purposes other than tourism, e.g. for educational, occupational, and business purposes. In total, 500 interviews with foreigners from 51 countries were held, with the highest percentage of the Ukrainians (42 per cent).

The survey among the residents of Warsaw was carried out by phone and involved 506 people (representative sample of residents corresponding to the real structure of sex, age, and education).

RESULTS

Among the foreigners, men prevailed, comprising 52 per cent of the respondents. Among the residents, women prevailed, totalling 55 per cent of the sample.

As regards the age structure, the group of foreigners included predominantly young people aged 18-34 (54 per cent) and 35-54 (39 per cent). The percentage of the oldest respondents, over the age of 55, among the foreigners is low, as they constitute just 7 per cent (vs. 40 per cent among the local residents).

The education structure also differed in both surveyed populations: the group of foreigners was dominated by people with high school education (43 per cent), whereas residents of Warsaw predominantly included people with university education (60 per cent).

Over half of the foreigners (54 per cent) assessed their material situation as average, whereas the largest group of residents declared being well-off (43 per cent).

Among the foreigners, the percentage of employed people is remarkably high, totalling as much as 87 per cent (which is understandable since the Ukrainians – who form the largest group of foreigners in Warsaw – are predominantly economic migrants). As a comparison, the percentage of the employed among the local residents totalled 75 per cent. Foreigners most frequently work from 41 to 60 hours per week (41 per cent), whereas residents from 31 to 40 hours (40 per cent).

One in three foreigners has found work below their qualifications, whereas the percentage of such people among the residents is just 7 per cent.

Work adequate to qualifications divides the Ukrainians into two groups: 51 per cent declare that they have found work according to their qualifications, while 47 per cent below their qualifications. The survey also shows that as many as 90 per cent of foreigners from within the EU work according to their qualifications, whereas this percentage is much lower among the foreigners from non-EU countries, totalling 67 per cent.

The key to integration for foreigners is speaking the language, which is often a passport to a better life, as it helps in finding a better job, making friends, and acting efficiently in the social space.

The survey has improved our knowledge on Polish language skills among the foreigners living in Warsaw. The results indicate that fluency in speaking Polish is declared by 31 per cent, whereas poor and extremely poor speaking skills by 26 per cent of foreigners. Only 2 per cent of foreigners cannot speak any Polish. The percentage of foreigners who cannot read and write in Polish totals 9 per cent. Over half of the respondents (55 per cent) have had the opportunity to learn Polish, and 90 per cent of them used this opportunity.

As regards integration with the local residents, there are positive conclusions: foreigners establish social relations with the local residents – as many as 78 per cent have Polish friends, most of them (86 per cent) spend their leisure time with them or visit them at home (85 per cent).

The Warsaw Multicultural Centre, a place supporting intercultural and civic integration with the local residents of Warsaw, is known by almost half of the foreigners (47 per cent) and 38 per cent of the local residents. Over half of the local residents who are familiar with the Warsaw Multicultural Centre have visited the place, with 85 per cent positively assessing its activity.

Foreigners' opinions on the local residents of Warsaw are indeed positive: 47 per cent believe they are kind and understanding, 42 per cent perceive them as tolerant towards foreign cultures, and almost one in three believes that they are helpful with the formalities. The foreigners' negative opinions regarding the local residents of Warsaw are definitely less frequent.

What is alarming is the rate of insults or abuse because of one's origins: 44 per cent of foreigners in Warsaw have experienced such behaviour.

A vast group of foreigners (38 per cent) do not benefit from any cultural or educational offer in Warsaw. The most popular events from which the foreigners have benefitted predominantly included municipal events such as picnics, concerts (35 per cent), or generally available attractions organised in the city.

The survey indicates that the local residents of Warsaw are tolerant: as many as 71 per cent have nothing against the presence of immigrants in their direct neighbourhood, whereas over half of the respondents believe that immigrants are necessary for work in Poland (57 per cent) and should be able to settle in Poland regardless of their origin (54 per cent).

Only one third of the respondents among the local residents agreed with the opinion that the country of origin matters: for 64 per cent of the local residents this does not matter. As many as 78 per cent of the local residents declare having a foreigner as an acquaintance (almost the same percentage was recorded for the foreigners: 76 per cent).

Only 18 per cent of the local residents would not accept a foreigner as a family member. The most frequent justification for this is prejudice (28 per cent) and cultural differences (25 per cent). Local residents perceive foreigners as people who remain in their own group (76 per cent), are calm (62 per cent), and do not interfere with the Poles (56 per cent). One in four respondents was a witness to an incident involving foreigners, most frequently including a fight (42 per cent) or argument (22 per cent).

Over half of the local residents (58 per cent) have no prejudice against other nationalities, whereas 9 per cent refused answering this question or had no opinion in this respect.

Among the most frequently rejected groups were, usually in conjunction, the Arabs and the Muslims (21 per cent).

Among the foreigners from Asia and Africa, a significant percentage of students was recorded (23 per cent), much higher than in the other groups of foreigners. Their integration is just slightly lower than among the Ukrainians: 71 per cent of them have Polish friends.

CONCLUSIONS

Foreigners have a better opinion about the local residents than the latter have about themselves: almost half of the foreigners surveyed say that the local residents of Warsaw are tolerant, whereas just 29 per cent of the local residents expressed such an opinion.

The local residents of Warsaw are convinced that there should be tolerance lessons in Warsaw schools – such an opinion was expressed by as many as 76 per cent of local residents vs. 72 per cent of foreigners; therefore, the percentage was remarkably similar.

The sense of safety was similar among the local residents and the foreigners: on a scale from 1 to 7, the average for residents was 5.81 vs. 5.95 among the foreigners. Differences in particular refer to the highest score, 7: one third of the local residents assessed their safety this way compared to 13 per cent of the foreigners who felt absolutely safe.

Both the foreigners and the local residents feel at their ease in Warsaw: the percentage of positive opinions among the local residents and the foreigners is identical: 91 per cent. The assessment of the aesthetic values of the city is also similar in both groups of respondents: 91 per cent of the local residents and 95 per cent of the foreigners claim they like Warsaw.

A detailed analysis of the results indicates that the foreigners from within the EU are better educated than the others and that almost all of them (90 per cent) work according to their qualifications. The largest group of immigrants, the Ukrainians, is clearly split: half (51 per cent) work in line with their qualifications, whereas 47 per cent below their qualifications. Such a division among the Ukrainians is due to the size of the group, which includes representatives of various social groups (for example, the percentage of people with university education among the Ukrainians totals 21 per cent). The Ukrainians integrate well with the residents: 76 per cent of them have Polish friends.

The survey has shown that language skills correlate with the job performed, having Polish friends, and even the sense of safety. The better the Polish language skills, the better the job, in line with the qualifications, and the better the integration.

The best fluency in oral and written Polish is declared by people from within the EU, who seem to be the most coherent: the most educated, having good job in line with their qualifications, being fluent in Polish, having Polish friends (97 per cent have Polish friends), and feeling safe in Warsaw.

The results indicate that integration of foreigners in Warsaw is positive and encourages promotion of further measures to improve the process, such as further propagation of information about the Warsaw Multicultural Centre, also among the local residents, organisation of tolerance lessons in schools, or offering Polish language courses to foreigners.

Foreigners feel at their ease in Warsaw and have a positive opinion regarding its local residents, which are the preconditions for integration to become a fact, not only a postulate.

INDICATORS

47% - percentage of foreigners aware of the Warsaw Multicultural Center.

38% - percentage of residents aware of the Warsaw Multicultural Center.

76% - percentage of foreigners expecting tolerance lessons to be organised in Warsaw schools.

72% - percentage of residents expecting tolerance lessons to be organised in Warsaw schools.

47% - percentage of foreigners who believe residents of Warsaw are kind and understanding.

29% - percentage of residents who believe residents of Warsaw are kind and understanding to foreigners.

71% - percentage of residents who have nothing against the presence of immigrants in their direct neighbourhood.

91% - percentage of foreigners and residents who feel well in Warsaw.