



## ИЗВЕСТИЯ НА БЪЛГАРСКОТО ГЕОГРАФСКО ДРУЖЕСТВО JOURNAL OF THE BULGARIAN GEOGRAPHICAL SOCIETY

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### The current state of immigrant integration policies in the European Union

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#### ABSTRACT

#### Key words:

immigrants, immigrant's crisis, EU policies, integration of immigrants, migrants

Last few years the topic of immigrant's crisis in Europe is one of the top priorities for European union. The scope and the matter of this problem is very important, as it relates to finance, politics and the future of the old continent. The importance of the problem is mainly related to its scale. Previously the European parliament stated that the current migration crisis is the worst since World War II. In 2015 and 2016 alone, more than 2.5 million people applied for asylum in the EU, while more than 2,030 people are thought to have lost their lives in the Mediterranean in the first six months of 2017 alone. The aim of the publication is to make a quick overview of the current state of immigrant's integration policies in the European Union. The publication includes the newest data regarding the integration of immigrants in EU. Part of it are Eurostat data base from the last few years and the latest survey of Eurobarometer 469 (April 2018). Also, there are presented the latest analysis on the topic, regarding the integration of immigrants. The purpose of this publication is to show the importance of the problem and the policies of the EU which are attempting to solve the issues. The importance of the integration of immigrants will grow in future for sure. Opinions of the EU citizens are shown in the publication and they illustrate that there are still some significant variations in perception of immigrant integration. This would be a big opportunity and a challenge for the EU. The role of the policies of the Union is to improve the approaches of the countries and to help them to create a smooth process of the integration.

Last few years the topic of immigrant's crisis in Europe is one of the top priorities for European union. The scope and the matter of this problem is very important, as it relates to finance, politics and the future of the old continent.

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Actually, immigration has always have been part of the social, economic and cultural life of Europe. The retrospection shows that for many reasons the old continent has always been attractive to immigrants through the human history. Of course, each of the periods has had its positive and negative consequences for the development of Europe to reach the present day when the European Union must face the new challenges.

Based on an analysis regarding an Eurostat data the current demographic situation in the EU-28 is characterized by continuing population growth. While the population of the EU-28 as a whole increased during 2016, the population of 10 EU Member States declined. The latest information available is also of interest, as 2016 was the second year (since the series began in 1961) when there was a slight natural decrease in the EU-28. The population change

(positive, with 1.5 million more inhabitants) was therefore due to net migration.

On 1 January 2017 the population of the EU-28 was estimated at 511.8 million inhabitants, which was 1.5 million more than a year before. The increase in population numbers during 2016 was smaller than that recorded during 2015 when the population of the EU-28 had risen by 1.7 million.

Over a longer period, the population of the EU-28 grew from 406.7 million in 1960 to 511.8 million in 2017, an increase of 105.1 million people. The rate of population growth has slowed gradually in recent decades: for example, the EU-28's population increased, on average, by about 1.5 million persons per year during the period 2005–17, compared with an average increase of around 3.3 million persons per year during the 1960s.

Net migration in the EU-28 increased considerably from the mid-1980s onwards, while the number of live births fell, and the number of deaths increased. The gap between live births and deaths in the EU-28 narrowed considerably from 1961 onwards. In recent years, the difference between births and deaths (the natural change in population) has been very low and — as noted above — a natural decrease in population numbers was recorded since 2015 when the number of deaths passed the number of births. Since the number of deaths is expected to increase as the baby-boom generation continues to age, and assuming that the fertility rate remains at

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<sup>1</sup>Migration in Europe, 30-06-2017 <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/headlines/society/20170629STO78632/migration-in-europe>

a relatively low level, negative natural population change (more deaths than births) could well continue. In this case, the EU-28's overall population decline or growth is likely to depend largely on the contribution made by migration.

Strongly linked to the projected trend of a decreasing EU population is the growing share of older individuals. The share of persons aged 65 years and older of the total EU population doubled from 1950 to 2015, rising from 8.9 % to 19.2 %. Over the coming decades, the EU ageing trend is projected to continue. By 2050, the share of persons aged 65 years and older is projected to be between 27 % ('high fertility' scenario) to 33 % ('low fertility' scenario), and might further increase to 41 % by 2100 under low fertility assumptions (Figure 1). Ageing populations are also projected to become a global phenomenon in the coming decades — for example, assuming the 'medium fertility' variant, the global share of persons aged 65 and older is projected to rise from 8.3 % currently to 16 % by 2050 and 23 % by 2100.

### THE SHARE OF PERSONS AGED 65 YEARS AND OLDER IN EU

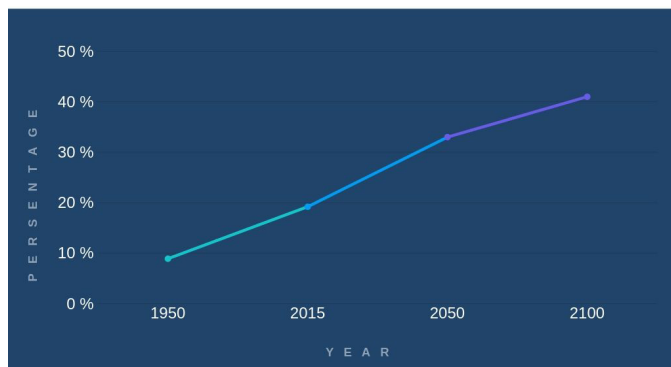


Figure 1. The share of persons aged 65 years and older in EU.

Population trends across EU member countries are more complex, with the population of some countries projected to decrease significantly, while others are projected to increase between now and 2100. Thus, the national level assessment of this indicator is limited to exploring some of the most striking trends according to the 'medium variant' scenario. For example, by around 2050 Germany is projected to be replaced as the most populous EU member country by the United Kingdom. As the UK's population increase is based, in part, upon substantial levels of immigration, it is an example of how migration might play a role in determining developments in population size across European countries over the coming decades. Other currently populous EU countries, such as Romania, Poland and Italy, are projected to experience a continuous and significant drop in population.

A comparison of changes in total population from 2010 to 2100 across the EU-28 and EEA member countries shows that eastern European countries in particular, but also countries such as Germany or Portugal, are projected to be affected by large-scale population decreases (see Figure 6). In contrast, the population size of many northern and western European countries is projected to rise. Particularly large increases are projected for Ireland, Luxembourg, Norway, Sweden and Switzerland, in part driven by assumptions about

immigration and increased life expectancy.

There are no EU policies directly regulating Europe's population size and structure. There are, however, a number of relevant initiatives. For example, in light of the ongoing demographic changes in Europe (such as an ageing population, low fertility rates, changing family structures and migration), the European Commission issued a Communication, "The demographic future of Europe – From challenge to opportunity", which identified five key policy responses to manage demographic change

1. Supporting demographic renewal through better conditions for families and improved reconciliation of working and family life;
2. Boosting employment – more jobs and longer working lives of better quality;
3. Raising productivity and economic performance through investing in education and research;
4. Receiving and integrating migrants into Europe; and
5. Ensuring sustainable public finances to guarantee adequate pensions, health care and long-term care.

This strategy was renewed in 2009 with a new Communication, "Dealing with the impact of an ageing population in the EU". Aspects of this were included in Europe 2020, the European Commission's growth strategy. One example of the Europe 2020 umbrella activities aimed at addressing European demographic trends is the Ambient Assisted Living Joint Programme (AAL JP), intended to support industry in providing services and products for an ageing population.<sup>3</sup>

Why this information is so important for the matter of immigration? As the analysis shows European union currently is in situation that the demographic, economic, social and cultural future depends partly of the migration. That is why and this problem of integration of migrants in it's territory is one of the main priorities for the European union.

Based on the published information issued by Eurostat, the statistical office of the European Union, with data, broken down by citizenship and country of birth, on a wide range of indicators related to the labour market outcomes that in 2015 in the European Union (EU), the proportion of people economically active (employed and unemployed) stood just below 70% for non-EU citizens aged 20 to 64 (69.8%), while the activity rate was above 77% for citizens of the reporting country (77.3%), referred to as "nationals". A similar pattern is observed in most EU Member States. In detail, non-EU citizens aged 20 to 64 were faced with a notably higher unemployment rate and lower employment rate than nationals. The picture was very different when analyzing the labour market situation of nationals compared with that of citizens of another EU Member State.

Looking in detail at their respective situation on the labour market, the employment rate for non-EU citizens aged 20 to 64 in the EU stood at 56.7% in 2015, while it was 70.6% for nationals. The share of employees with a temporary contract was higher for non-EU citizens (21.4%) than for nationals (12.9%). The pattern was the same for the proportion of part time employment, which was more widespread amongst non-EU citizens (28.3%) than amongst nationals (18.4%). For unemployment, the rate for non-EU citizens aged 20 to 64 (18.9%) was more than twice the level for nationals (8.7%). However, the share of people unemployed for 12 months or more was slightly lower for non-EU citizens (49.5%) than for nationals (50.7%) (Figure 2).<sup>4</sup>

Directive 2003/86/EC sets out provisions on the right to family reunification. Since the 2008 implementation report concluded that it was not fully and correctly applied in the Member States, the

<sup>2</sup>Population and population change statistics [http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Population\\_and\\_population\\_change\\_statistics](http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Population_and_population_change_statistics)

<sup>3</sup><https://www.eea.europa.eu/data-and-maps/indicators/total-population-outlook-from-unstat-3/assessment-1>

<sup>4</sup>Migrant integration in the EU labour market in 2015 - <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/2995521/7437901/3-06062016-AP-EN.pdf/225c8b96-2345-470d-8b87-c76a16525aa2>

Commission published a communication, in April 2014, providing guidance to the Member States on how to apply it. The EU's competence in the field of integration is limited. Existing instruments include the European Migration Forum (formerly European Integration Forum); the Website on Integration; and the network of National Contact Points on Integration. In July 2011, the Commission adopted the European Agenda for the Integration of Third-Country Nationals. More recently, in June 2016 the Commission put forward an action plan, setting out a policy framework and practical steps to help Member States integrate the 20 million non-EU nationals legally resident in the EU.<sup>5</sup>

The Plan provides a comprehensive framework to support Member States' efforts in developing and strengthening their migrant integration policies, and describes the concrete policy, operational and financial measures the Commission will implement. While it targets all third country nationals in the EU, it contains actions to address the specific challenges faced by refugees.

The Plan covers:

Pre-departure and pre-arrival measures - Actions to prepare migrants and the local communities for the integration process

The Commission will:

- Launch projects supporting pre-departure and pre-arrival measures for local communities, including in the context of resettlement programmes with a focus on priority third countries.

- Engage with Member States to strengthen cooperation with selected third-countries on pre-departure measures, including under La Valletta Action Plan.

Education - Actions to promote language training, participation of migrant children to Early Childhood Education and Care, teacher training and civic education

The Commission will:

- Provide online language assessment and learning for newly arrived third country nationals, especially refugees, through the Erasmus+ online linguistic support (100.000 licences for online language courses available to refugees for a period of three years).

- Support peer learning events on key policy measures such as

welcome classes, skills and language assessment, support for unaccompanied children, intercultural awareness, recognition of academic qualifications and integration into higher education.

- Support the school community in promoting inclusive education and addressing specific needs of migrant learners through the COM online platform School Education Gateway.

- Remove barriers to the participation of third country national girls and boys to early childhood education through the development of the European Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC), including assistance to ECEC staff to respond to the specific situation of families.

- Support the upskilling of low-skilled and low-qualified persons in the context of the New Skills Agenda for Europe.

Employment and vocational training - Actions to promote early integration into the labour market and migrants entrepreneurship

The Commission will:

- Develop an online repository of promising practices on integration into the labour market for refugees and, where there are good prospects of granting them protection, asylum seekers, as a source for policy makers in Member States.

- Under the New Skills Agenda for Europe:

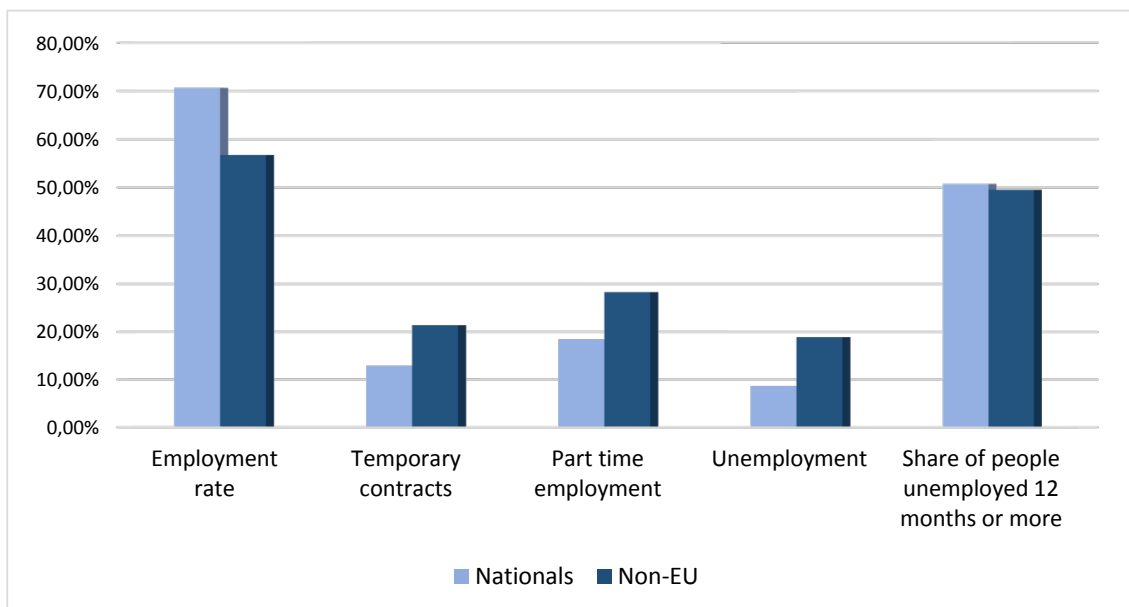
- develop a "Skills and Qualifications Toolkit" to support timely identification of skills and qualifications for newly arrived third country nationals

- ensure that better information about qualification recognition practices and decisions in different countries is collected through the Europass portal

- improve the transparency and understanding of qualifications acquired in third countries, through the revision of the European Qualifications Framework.

- Provide specific support for early recognition of academic qualifications of third country nationals including refugees, including through enhancing cooperation between National Academic Recognition Information Centres (NARIC) centres and training staff in reception facilities.

- Launch projects (under the Asylum Migration and Integration



**Figure 2.** Employment rate, temporary contracts, part time employment, unemployment and share of people unemployed for 12 months or more for nationals and non - EU.

<sup>5</sup>Migration and Asylum: a challenge for Europe - [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/PERI/2017/600414/IPOL\\_PERI\(2017\)600414\\_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/PERI/2017/600414/IPOL_PERI(2017)600414_EN.pdf)

Fund and under the EU Programme for Employment and Social Innovation) promoting labour market integration of refugees, 'fast track' insertion into labour market and vocational training and labour market integration of women.

- Identify best practices to promote and support migrant entrepreneurship and fund pilot projects for their dissemination.

Access to basic services such as housing and healthcare

The Commission will:

- Promote the use of EU funds for reception, education, housing, health and social infrastructures for third country nationals.

- Strengthen cooperation with the European Investment Bank, to provide funding for temporary accommodation and health facilities for newly arrived third country nationals and social housing.

- Promote peer learning exchanges between Member States and cities in the form of study visits, peer reviews and sharing of best practices on how to address housing challenges, including geographical isolation and ghettoisation.

- Support best practices in care provision for vulnerable third country nationals and refugees, including women, children and older persons under the Health Programme.

- Develop pilot training modules for health professionals on health for third country nationals and refugees, with a view to upgrade and strengthen the skills and capabilities of first line health professionals, and promote a holistic approach to health care of third country nationals and refugees.

Active participation and social inclusion - Actions to support exchanges with the receiving society, migrants' participation to cultural life and fighting discrimination

The Commission will:

- Launch projects to promote intercultural dialogue, cultural diversity and European common values through culture, films and arts (Creative Europe).

- Launch projects to promote social inclusion through youth and sport (Erasmus+).

- Propose to give greater priority, within the European Voluntary Service, to activities dedicated to integration of refugees and asylum seekers into their new host communities.

- Develop handbooks and toolboxes for practitioners on cultural awareness and expression; intercultural dialogue; active participation of third country nationals in political, social and cultural life and sports in the host societies; and the contribution of youth work.

- Launch projects under different EU funds promoting: participation in political, social and cultural life and sports; social inclusion through education, training and youth; preventing and combating discrimination, gender-based violence, racism and xenophobia, including hate crime and hate speech, and fostering better understanding between communities, including religious communities.

- Continue to work with the European Parliament and the Council towards the adoption of the anti-discrimination directive.

The plan also presents tools that will strengthen coordination between the different actors working on integration at national, regional and local level:

- National Contact Points on Integration will be upgraded into a European Integration Network with a stronger coordination role and mutual learning mandate through targeted learning activities such as study visits, peer reviews, mutual assistance and peer learning workshops

- The Network will promote cooperation with national authorities and local and regional authorities, civil society organisations and other EU level networks of Member States in connected policy areas (employment, education, equality, etc.)

- New Partnership under the Urban Agenda for the EU focusing on the integration of third country nationals, where the Commission, Member States, cities and civil society representatives will develop together concrete actions. This work was reinforced by the launch of a political round-table between the Commission and European cities.

- All EU funding instruments should be used to their maximum potential and in an integrated and strategically coordinated way thanks to Commission coordination

- New European Social Fund Transnational Cooperation Network on Migration brings together ESF Managing Authorities, social partners and other relevant actors to exchange experiences on how to best use ESF funding for integration

- Stronger EU financial support for integration under the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund in the 2017 draft budget.<sup>6</sup>

The EU promotes cooperation between the EU Member States so that immigrants throughout the Union have comparable rights and opportunities. Integration-related measures are mainly the responsibility of EU Member States.

Huddleston et al (2015) developed a comprehensive indicator, the Migrant Integration Policy Index (MIPEX), to measure and compare government policies to promote the integration of immigrants. The index is made up of 167 indicators to create a multi-dimensional picture of immigrants' opportunities to participate in society. It is important to note that the index measures policies, not outcomes.

Huddleston et al (2015) compares major economies' migrant integration scores in terms of health, permanent residence, education, access to nationality, family reunion, labour market mobility, anti-discrimination measures and political participation (MIPEX index). The labour market mobility score is intended to indicate whether migrants enjoy equal rights and free access to jobs. Huddleston et al (2015) emphasise the importance of this indicator, pointing out that most countries continue to invest in labour mobility reform. The family reunion, access to nationality and permanent residence indicators deal with the criteria that need to be met for migrants to reunite with their families, obtain nationality or become a permanent resident of the host country. The education indicator covers access to education and whether the needs of migrants are addressed. The health score is an indicator of healthcare coverage and easiness of administrative procedures, among other factors. The political participation score captures indicators such as the rights of migrants to take part in elections and the political freedoms available to them. Lastly, the anti-discrimination score gives information on how well protected immigrants are against racial or religious discrimination. Overall, the EU scores rather poorly compared to Canada, Australia and the United States, especially in education. Canada leads on the anti-discrimination, labour market mobility, family reunion and permanent residence indicators. The EU scores relatively high only on permanent residence, which reflects the development of initiatives such as invest in citizenship programmes in most EU member-states. In their book (People on the move: migration and mobility in the European Union, Bruegel 2018.), Batsaikhan, Darvas and Gonçalves Raposo, based on analysis, state that major improvements are needed in the EU in all other policy areas, in line with the findings of Huddleston et al (2015).

The leaders in Europe on the basis of their overall scores are Sweden, Portugal and Finland. Sweden's labour market indicator score is the world's highest and Sweden is second ranked worldwide after Australia for the education indicator. Authors suggests great diversity within the EU, with central and eastern European countries ranking relatively poorly. They have noted however that the Migrant Integra-

<sup>6</sup>Europe: Integration Action Plan of Third-Country Nationals launched - <https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/news/europe-integration-action-plan-of-third-country-nationals-launched>

tion Policy Index, which primarily measures policies, sometimes contradicts the output-based indicators. For example, Belgium ranks fairly high on the Migrant Integration Policy Index (fourth among EU countries), while Belgian immigrant results in terms of their labour force participation, staying on in education and other educational scores were very weak. The overall Belgian Migrant Integration Policy Index score is pushed up by good scores in the permanent residence, access to nationality and anti-discrimination categories, but Belgium scores quite low on its health and education policies. The integration of migrants and refugees is affected by societal attitudes and cultural identity in host countries, with favourable attitudes being shown towards to others that share cultural characteristics. The implications of this cultural affinity bias range from the decisions to grant citizenship to immigrants to the integration of second and third-generation migrants in society. While one would expect that socio-economic differences between migrants and non-migrants would disappear over generations, second-generation migrants still experience forms of racism and have lower expectations of finding a job compared to non-migrants, which cannot be explained by their socio-economic status. Institutional differences, in educational systems for example, help explain differences in integration of second-generation immigrants in different European countries. Success in integrating migrants is, to some extent, related to countries' historical experiences with migration and/or previous colonial links. While countries such as France, Germany, the Netherlands, Sweden and the UK have long histories of immigration and experience with social integration, Greece, Italy and Spain only became destination countries during the late 1990s and have only comparatively recently implemented integration policies. A national identity strongly linked to religion also affects the degree of tolerance and integration in Greece, Italy and Spain. Nonetheless, France is often described as an assimilationist country, whereas Germany and the United Kingdom take what is called a multicultural approach. Whether integration policies are multiculturalist or assimilationist can be described by the national conceptions of identity. Dumont et al (2016) presents several proposals for better integrating migrants. Recommendations include providing swift activation and integration services to migrants that are likely to receive approval for their stay, facilitating labour market access and promoting equal access to integration services. The report points out that the needs of refugees are significantly diverse, requiring diversity and flexibility of responses.<sup>7</sup>

In April 2018 the Special Eurobarometer 469 published a report named Integration of immigrants in the European Union. The report is based on a survey made through the citizens of EU. The results of this survey point to several significant tendencies in the EU, with both positive and negative messages and implications. One of the main findings show that around six in ten respondents interact with immigrants on a weekly basis and a large minority of Europeans have close ties with third-country immigrants, in the sense that they have them either as friends or family members. A majority of Europeans think that integration measures such as the provision of language courses, integration programmes, the promotion of intermingling of the host society's citizens and the immigrants in schools and neighborhoods and the granting of equal rights (i.e. to healthcare, education and social security) are likely to have a positive effect on the integration of immigrants. On the other hand, it is clear that many Europeans feel ill-informed about immigration and integration related matters - less than four in ten say that they are well-informed. There is also a significant lack of awareness of the real extent of immigration from non-EU countries into the EU, with many Europeans overestimating how many immigrants are present in their country.

On average in the EU, the proportion of immigrants is overstated by a ratio of 2.3 to 1. The largest overestimation occurs in Slovakia, where the proportion of immigrants is overstated by a ratio of around 14 to 1. On the other hand, respondents in Estonia, Croatia and Sweden the respondents' estimates of the proportion of immigrants is accurate. Overall in the EU, those with lower levels of education tend to give higher estimates of the proportion of immigrants in their country. There are also misconceptions regarding the number of illegally staying immigrants compared to those staying legally. Overall, there are also significant variations across EU countries in the extent of respondents' personal experiences with immigrants and their level of familiarity and comfort with them. The fact that Member States differ significantly in terms of the size and nature of migration flows also helps to explain why perceptions of the issues of migration and integration also vary across countries. With respect to general perceptions of and attitudes towards immigrants, these findings show that Europeans are significantly divided on the issue of whether immigration presents an opportunity or a problem. Europeans are around twice as likely to see immigration as a problem as they are to see it as an opportunity, while nearly a third see it as both of these things. There is a clear country divide on this issue, with over half of the respondents in Hungary, Malta, Greece, Slovakia, Bulgaria and Italy seeing immigration as more of a problem, while significant minorities of respondents in Sweden, Ireland and the United Kingdom view it as mainly an opportunity. There are also significant differences between age and education cohorts. Younger respondents, and those who are better educated, are more likely to see immigration as more of an opportunity, while older respondents and those with lower levels of education are more likely to see it as more of a problem. The overall picture is therefore an ambiguous one: seeing immigration as a problem may not mean hostility against migrants, but rather reflect a perception that governments are not managing the issue of immigrant integration in an adequate way. Indeed, significant proportions of respondents in all countries see immigration as both a problem and an opportunity. In addition, although large majorities think the role of the national governments are important for the successful integration of immigrants, they are somewhat sceptical about the extent to which their own governments have been able to foster it: in Estonia, Romania, the Netherlands, Spain, Lithuania, Poland, Denmark, Latvia, Sweden and the United Kingdom less than half of the respondents think that their government is doing enough to foster immigrants' integration. This is all the more important given that a majority of Europeans agree that the integration of immigrants is a necessary investment in the long run for their country. There is also a clear majority who see the EU's role as important and have a positive view of the actions that could be undertaken by the EU to support the integration of immigrants.<sup>8</sup>

The importance of the integration of immigrants will grow in future for sure. Opinions of the EU citizens show that there are still some significant variations in perception of immigrant integration. This is a big opportunity and a challenge for the EU. The role of the policies of the Union is to improve the approaches of the countries and to help them to create a smooth process of the integration.

As the immigrant integration policies are a national competence each country members, should understand that the immigrants are not only numbers, finance statistics and a manpower which will help the demographic crisis in EU, but this people would be part of the future of Europe, future of their country. Based on a current analysis we could assume that the way will be long and tough, but the investment in time, effort and resources is more than needed, as the history of EU is changing.

<sup>7</sup>Uuriintuya Batsaikhan, Zsolt Darvas and Inês Gonçalves Raposo: People on the move: migration and mobility in the European Union, Bruegel 2018.

<sup>8</sup>Integration of immigrants in the European Union - Report, Special Eurobarometer 469, April 2018

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