

Press Release

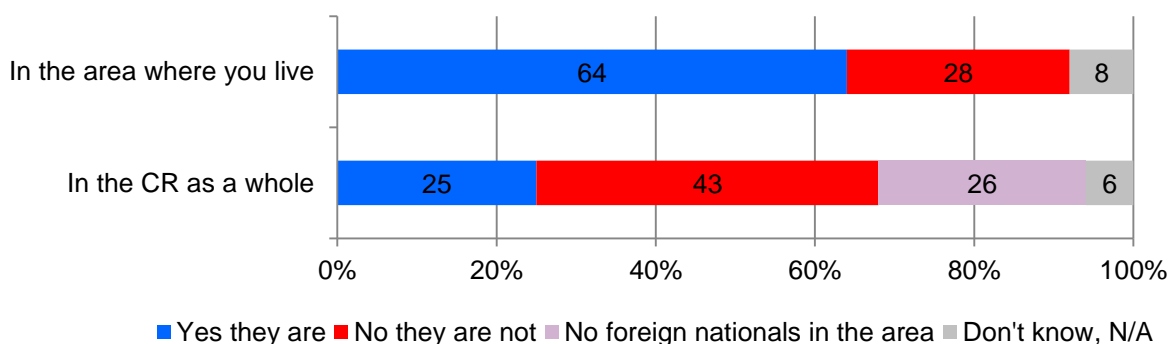
The Czech public's views on foreign nationals – March 2017

- ⊙ The majority of the Czech public (64%) think that foreign nationals recently arrived in the Czech Republic pose a problem for the country. However, when respondents are asked about foreign nationals living in the area where they live, the share of people who take this view is much smaller (25% say that foreign nationals pose a problem).
- ⊙ Respondents agree most (67%) with the statement that foreign nationals residing long term in the CR are the reason for the rise in crime. Only a very small share of respondents disagree with this statement (9%), while one-fifth (20%) are on the borderline between agreement and disagreement.
- ⊙ The share of people who believe that foreign nationals are responsible for overall rising unemployment significantly decreased since the last survey (a decrease of 12 percentage points).
- ⊙ In a long-term perspective there were significant changes over the course of the observed period in the distribution of the opinion that foreign nationals residing long term in the CR pose a threat to the Czech way of life, with an increasing share of respondents agreeing with this statement starting in 2015 up to the present (33% in 2014 to 49% in March 2017).

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➤ In its March survey the Public Opinion Research Centre presented respondents with a set of questions examining the public's attitudes towards foreign nationals. Respondents were asked specifically about foreign nationals living in the CR and foreign nationals living in the area where they live. The survey aimed in part to map how Czechs view foreign nationals and the position in society they associate with them.

Figure 1. Are recently arrived foreign nationals a problem...? (%)



Note: For the item 'in the area where you live' respondents were also presented with the option 'N/A, no foreign nationals live in my area' as a response, which was not offered for the item 'in the CR as a whole'.

Source: Public Opinion Research Centre, Institute of Sociology CAS (CVVM SOÚ AV ČR, v.v.i.), Our Society (Naše společnost), 6-19 March 2017, 1045 respondents aged 15 and over, face-to-face interviews.

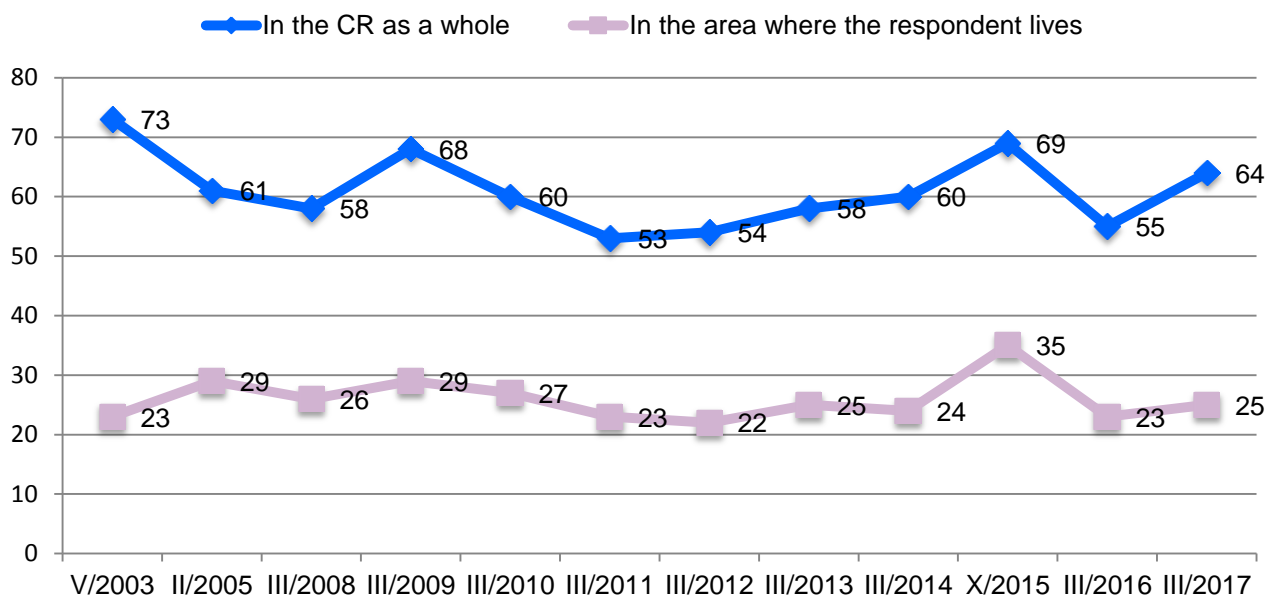
The majority of the Czech public (64%) consider recently arrived foreign nationals to be a problem in the Czech Republic as a whole. When asked about foreign nationals in the area where they live, however, a much smaller share of respondents take this view (25% say that foreign nationals in their area are a problem). More than one-quarter (28%) do not view recently arrived foreign nationals as a problem for the CR and 43% claim that foreign nationals in the area where they live are not a problem. A significant share (26%) of respondents state that there are no foreign nationals living in their area (see Figure 1).

We then looked at whether some characteristics of respondents have an effect on opinions on this issue. People with a university education indicate that foreign nationals are not a problem in the Czech Republic as a whole more than do people with lower secondary or vocational education (39% compared to 24%). People who declare a low standard of living and people who rank themselves more on the left side of the left-right political spectrum more often see foreign nationals residing in the Czech Republic as a problem.

No significant differences are observed according to sex or age in how people view foreign nationals.

It is also interesting to look at the Czech public's view of foreign nationals in the country in the light of other attitudes they have towards foreign nationals. People who have foreign nationals as friends or acquaintances indicate significantly more often that foreign nationals in the Czech Republic are not a problem, and this tendency is confirmed also in the case of respondents' views on foreign nationals in their area. Perceiving foreign nationals as a problem relates also to how open respondents are to foreign nationals being allowed to reside long term in the country. Among people who see foreign nationals as a problem for the Czech Republic as a whole there is a significantly larger share (88%) who also would not offer foreign nationals any opportunity to reside long term in the country than there is among people who do not view foreign nationals as a problem (10%). Similarly, people who view foreign nationals as a problem are also more inclined to believe that foreign nationals should adapt to local customs.

Figure 2. People who view recently-arrived foreign nationals as a problem – time comparison (%)



Note: Changes since October 2015 are caused both by changes in the attitudes of the Czech public and by the different context in which the question was posed in the questionnaire.

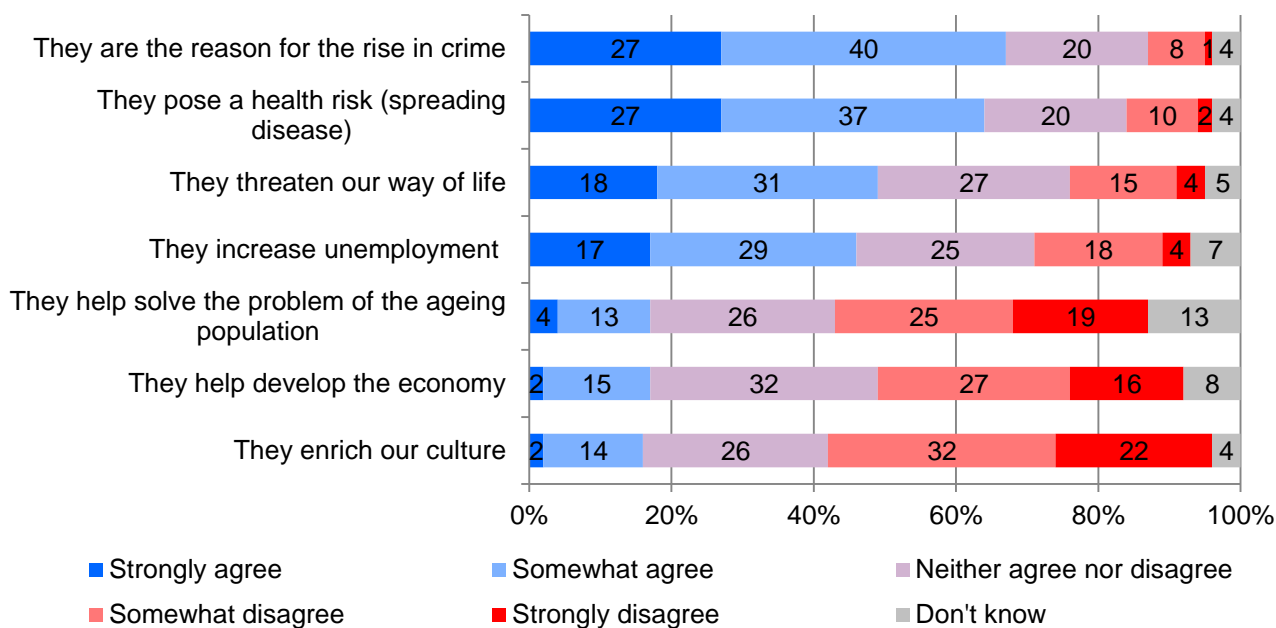
The difference to 100% at each point in time measured is made up of the responses 'no, they are not', 'don't know', and in the case of foreign nationals in the area where the respondent lives also 'N/A'.

Source: Public Opinion Research Centre, Institute of Sociology CAS (CVVM SOÚ AV ČR, v.v.i.), Czech Society (Naše společnost).

Looking at the data in a long-term perspective, we see that compared to the survey in March 2016 the share of respondents who consider recently-arrived foreign nationals to be a problem in the Czech Republic as a whole has grown (by 9 percentage points). Conversely, there has been no significant change in respondents' view of recently-arrived foreign nationals in the area where they live.

Respondents were then asked to indicate the degree to which they agree with a set of statements about foreign nationals living in the Czech Republic (see Figure 3). The largest share of agreement (67%) is with the statement that foreign nationals residing long term in the Czech Republic are the reason for the increase in crime. Only a very small share of respondents express disagreement with this statement (9%), while one-fifth (20%) is on the borderline between agreeing and disagreeing. A significant majority of the Czech public take the view that foreign nationals are a health risk for the Czech Republic (64% agree), and approximately one-tenth (12%) of respondents do not agree with this statement. Roughly one-half (49%) of respondents think foreign nationals pose a threat to their way of life and just under one-fifth (19 %) do not think they pose such a threat. More than one-quarter (27%) neither agree nor disagree with this statement. A total of 46% of respondents believe that foreign nationals residing long term in the CR are the cause of unemployment. Only a small share of respondents agree with the positive statements about foreign nationals residing long term in the CR, with 17% agreeing that foreign nationals in the country help to solve the problem of the ageing population and help develop the economy. The smallest share of agreement (16%) is with the statement that foreign nationals enrich Czech culture.

Figure 3. Opinions on foreign nationals residing long term in the CR (%)¹



Source: Public Opinion Research Centre, Institute of Sociology CAS (CVVM SOÚ AV ČR, v.v.i.), Czech Society (Naše společnost), 6–19 March 2017, 1045 respondents aged 15 and over, face-to-face interviews.

While in the 2017 survey the strongest feeling about foreign nationals residing in the CR is that they are the source of rising crime, in 2016 the strongest feeling was that they pose a health risk. That feeling has decreased since March 2016 by 5 percentage points to end up in second place in 2017. Since the 2016 survey the belief that foreign nationals generate unemployment has significantly decreased (a decrease of 12 percentage points). The results for the other items are similar to the results in 2016.

¹ The question read: 'Tell us, how much do you agree or disagree with the following statements: Foreign nationals residing long term in the Czech Republic: a) enrich our culture, b) cause increased unemployment, c) are the reason for the rise in crime, d) help solve the problem of the ageing population, e) pose a health risk (spreading disease), f) help to develop the economy, g) threaten our way of life.' The response options were: strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, somewhat disagree, strongly disagree.

In a long-term perspective there were significant changes in the distribution of opinions over the observed period, particularly with respect to the perception that foreign nationals residing long term in the CR are a threat to the Czech way of life, as the share of respondents agreeing with this statement has been growing since 2015 up to the present time (33% agreement in 2014 compared to 49% in March 2017). Conversely, since 2014 the share of respondents who believe that foreign nationals cause increased unemployment has been decreasing (a difference of 24 percentage points). Despite the fact that there is currently a stronger tendency to view foreign nationals as the source of rising crime, the share of people with this opinion is not the highest it has ever been in the observed period, as the greatest amount of agreement with this opinion was recorded in March 2009 (74% compared to the current 67%), and the current level is the third-highest percentage recorded in the observed period.

Table 1. Opinions on foreign nationals residing long term in the CR – a time comparison (%)

	Agree / Neither agree nor disagree / Disagree							
	III/09	III/11	III/12	III/13	III/14	II/15	III/16	III/17
They are the reason for the rise in crime	74/17/6	70/20/7	62/24/10	67/23/6	65/25/7	66/22/9	66/22/8	67/20/9
They pose a health risk (spreading disease)	71/16/9	58/22/16	54/24/16	54/28/13	58/26/13	57/24/15	69/17/11	64/20/12
They threaten our way of life	36/30/28	33/32/29	32/29/33	33/35/28	33/37/27	42/30/23	53/25/16	49/27/19
They increase unemployment	72/17/8	64/22/11	64/21/11	68/19/10	70/20/8	65/18/13	58/23/13	46/25/22
They help solve the problem of the ageing population	25/23/34	22/29/36	25/25/35	26/30/32	23/29/37	23/25/39	17/30/41	17/26/44
They help develop the economy	24/33/33	20/36/36	21/35/34	19/37/36	19/36/37	16/35/42	16/31/44	17/32/43
They enrich our culture	25/30/41	26/33/37	25/31/39	25/36/36	25/32/40	22/29/46	17/27/52	16/26/54

Note: The percentages given are for the sum of responses 'strongly agree' and 'somewhat agree', the response 'neither agree nor disagree', and the sum of responses 'strongly disagree' and 'somewhat disagree'. The response 'don't know' makes up the difference to 100%.

Source: Public Opinion Research Centre, Institute of Sociology CAS (CVVM SOU AV ČR, v.v.i.), Czech Society (Naše společnost).

Technical parameters of the survey

<i>Survey:</i>	<i>Czech Society, v17-03</i>
<i>Survey by:</i>	<i>Public Opinion Research Centre, Institute of Sociology, Czech Academy of Sciences</i>
<i>Project:</i>	<i>Czech Society – Continuous Public Opinion Research Project of the Public Opinion Research Centre, Institute of Sociology, Czech Academy of Sciences</i>
<i>Field survey dates:</i>	<i>6–19 March 2017</i>
<i>Sampling method:</i>	<i>Quota sampling</i>
<i>Quotas:</i>	<i>Region (NUTS 3 Regions), size of place of residence, sex, age, education</i>
<i>Data source for quota sampling:</i>	<i>Czech Statistical Office</i>
<i>Representativeness:</i>	<i>Population of the Czech Republic over the age of 15</i>
<i>Number of respondents:</i>	<i>1045</i>
<i>Number of interviewers:</i>	<i>259</i>
<i>Data collection method:</i>	<i>Face-to-face interviews conducted by interviewers with respondents - combined CAPI and PAPI questioning</i>
<i>Research instrument:</i>	<i>Standardised questionnaire</i>
<i>Questions:</i>	<i>OV.45, OV.184</i>
<i>Press release code:</i>	<i>OV170426</i>
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A quota sample replicates the structure of the basic population of the study (in this case the population of the Czech Republic over the age of 15) by setting quotas for different parameters. In other words, a quota sample is based on the same proportion of persons with the selected characteristics. We used data from the Czech Statistical Office to create the quotas. In our surveys quotas are set for sex, age, education, region, and community size. The sample is thus selected so that the percentage of men and women in the sample corresponds to the share of men and women in each region of the CR. Similarly the sample reflects the corresponding shares of the population in individual regions in the CR, citizens in different age groups, people with different levels of education, and people in different sizes of communities.

A representative sample is a sample from the total population whose characteristics can be validly inferred to apply as the characteristics of the population overall. In our case this means that respondents were selected with a view to generalising the collected data as applicable to the population of the Czech Republic over the age of 15.

The Public Opinion Research Centre (CVVM) is a research department of the Institute of Sociology, Czech Academy of Sciences. Its history dates back to 1946, when the Czechoslovak Institute for Public Opinion Research began operating as part of the Ministry of Information. The current CVVM emerged in 2001 when its predecessor (IVVM) was transferred from the Czech Statistical Office to the Institute of Sociology. Its incorporation within an academic institution provides a guarantee of high professional standards and quality, and as part of an academic environment the CVVM is required to fulfil criteria that ensure it meets the highest professional standards. The CVVM's work is centred on the Czech Society research project, in the frame of which it examines public opinion by conducting ten surveys annually on a representative sample of the population over the age of 15, with approximately 1000 respondents participating in each survey. The questionnaire's omnibus format makes it possible to cover a wide array of topics. Political, economic, and other generally social topics are regularly added to the survey. The surveys include both repeat questions, whereby it is possible to observe phenomena over time, and new topics that reflect current events. The long-term and continuous nature of this project focused on surveying public opinion is unique in the Czech Republic.

This work was supported by the AV21 Strategy of the Academy of Sciences under the 'Global Conflicts and Local Contexts: Cultural and Social Challenges' research programme.