

Press Release

Public opinion on foreign nationals settling in the CR – March 2017

- ⊙ Approximately two-fifths (39%) of Czech citizens feel that there are too many foreign nationals living in the Czech Republic. One-half of the public thinks that the number of foreign nationals in the country is adequate (50%).
- ⊙ More than three-quarters of respondents (78%) stated that foreign nationals should be permitted to reside in the Czech Republic only under certain conditions.
- ⊙ The reasons deemed most acceptable for permitting foreign nationals to reside in the CR were study and work experience (76 % *definitely + somewhat agree*) and family reunification (65%).
- ⊙ Respondents felt that the least acceptable reason for letting foreign nationals reside in the CR was just because they like the country and want to live there.

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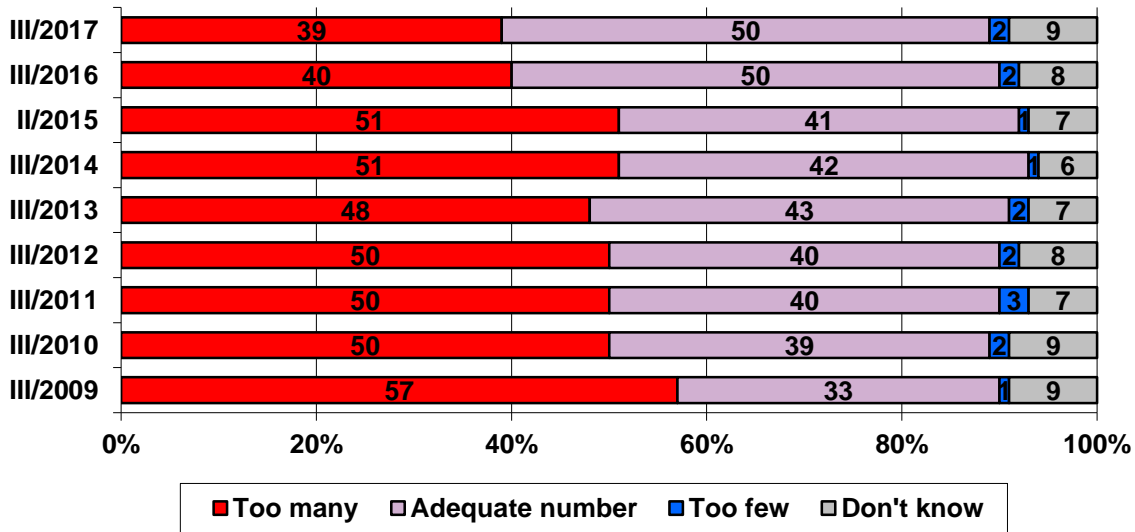


In March 2017 the Public Opinion Research Centre at the Institute of Sociology CAS examined within the frame of its regularly fielded Czech Society survey the Czech public's opinions on foreign nationals residing long term or permanently in the Czech Republic. The survey specifically focused on opinions about the number of foreign nationals living in the CR, whether foreign nationals should be permitted to reside long term in the CR and under what conditions, and to what degree foreign nationals should adapt to Czech customs.

As Figure 1 shows, approximately two-fifths (39%) of Czechs believe that there are too many foreign nationals living in the Czech Republic. One-half of Czechs (50%) think that the number of foreign nationals residing in the country is adequate, and only a small number of people (2%) think that there are too few foreign nationals in the country; 9% of respondents did not know how to answer this question and chose to respond 'don't know'.

Between 2010 and 2015 the public's opinion on the number of foreign nationals residing in the Czech Republic remained relatively stable, with approximately one-half of respondents consistently indicating there are too many foreign nationals in the country. Last year, however, the share of people with this opinion significantly decreased (by 11 percentage points) and the belief that the number of foreign nationals currently residing in the country is adequate became the dominant opinion in the Czech population. This year's survey confirmed last year's results. Like last year, the view that the number of foreign nationals in the Czech Republic is adequate is the opinion of the largest share of people since 2009, when this question was included in the survey for the first time.

Figure 1. Opinions on the number of foreign nationals residing in the CR¹



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.

A more in-depth analysis revealed some socio-demographic differences behind opinions on the number of foreign nationals residing in the CR: People who claim to have a good living standard, students, people with higher education, and respondents who rank themselves on the right side of the political spectrum are inclined to say the number is 'adequate'. From the perspective of political preferences, this opinion is also more often held by people who in an election would potentially vote for the Czech political party ANO.

People who claim their standard of living is poor, respondents who rank themselves on the left side of the political spectrum, respondents with lower secondary education or vocational education, people who choose not to vote and have no party preference or people who in an election would support the SPD party (Freedom and Direct Democracy Party) more often state that there are 'too many' foreign nationals in the country.

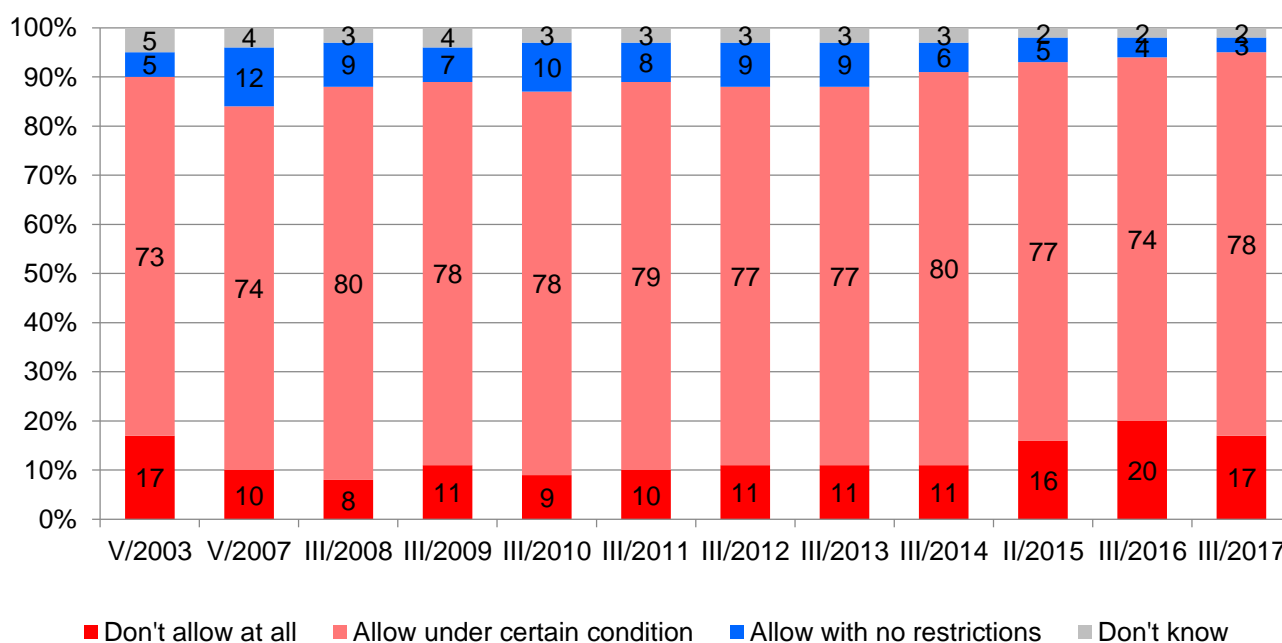
In the survey we also sought to learn whether respondents had among their friends or acquaintances any foreign nationals who have been residing long term in the CR.² We found that 34% of Czechs aged 15 and over have foreign nationals among their friends or acquaintances. Respondents whose friends include foreign nationals living in the CR more often indicate that the number of foreign nationals residing in the CR is reasonable.

We also surveyed whether people thought foreign nationals should even be permitted to reside long term in the CR. More than three-quarters of respondents (78%) selected 'only under certain conditions' as their response from amongst the options they were given. Only 3% of Czechs think that foreign nationals should be allowed to reside in the CR without any restrictions. Conversely, just under one-fifth state (17%) that foreign nationals should not be allowed to reside in the CR at all.

¹ The question read: 'Do you think that the number of foreign nationals currently residing in the CR is ...' The response options were: too many, roughly enough, too few.

² The question read: 'Do you have any friends or acquaintances who are foreign nationals and have been residing long term in the CR? Yes, No.'

Figure 2. Allowing foreign nationals to reside long term in the CR³ (%)



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.

The public's opinions on this question remained relatively stable for a long period and there were no significant changes between 2008 and 2014. However, in 2015 and again in 2016 we observed an increase in the share of respondents who stated that foreign nationals should not be allowed to reside long term in the CR at all. The results of the current survey are similar to those in 2015 and there has been a slight increase (by 4 percentage points) since 2016 in the share of respondents stating that foreign nationals should only be allowed to reside in the CR under certain conditions. The decrease in the share of respondents who are against allowing foreign nationals to reside at all in the CR is on the edge of statistical error.

The opinion that foreign nationals should not be allowed to reside in the CR at all is more common among men, people who describe their living standard as poor, those who rank themselves firmly on the left side of the political spectrum, and people who would vote for the KSČM (Community Party of Bohemia and Moravia) or the SPD in elections. This opinion is also more common among people who have no friends or acquaintances among foreign nationals. Conversely, those in favour of allowing foreign nationals to reside in the CR under certain conditions tend to be people who describe their living standard as good, are between the ages of 45 and 59, rank themselves on the right side of the political scale, supporters of the political party ANO, and people who have foreign nationals residing long term in the CR among their friends or acquaintances. The share of people who think that foreign nationals should be allowed to reside in the CR without any restrictions is very low across almost all groups of the population.

³ The question read: 'In your opinion, foreign nationals should...'. The response options were: not be allowed to reside long term in the CR at all, be allowed to reside long term in the CR under certain conditions, be allowed to reside in the CR long term without restrictions.

All the respondents were also asked whether people should be allowed to settle in the CR because they want to do so. More than two-thirds (67%) of citizens do not agree with this, of which 28% *strongly disagree* and 39% *somewhat disagree*. Conversely, only around one-quarter of respondents (26%) do agree, 3% *strongly* and 23% *somewhat*.

In comparison with the previous survey, which was conducted in March of 2016, there was an increase of 9 percentage points in the share of respondents who agree that anyone who has the intention to move to the Czech Republic and live there should be allowed to, and conversely a decrease by 11 percentage points in the share of those who disagree with this proposition. The current results are thus comparable to the results from February 2015.

Table 1. Allow people to reside permanently (%)⁴

	2/05	3/08	3/09	3/10	3/11	3/12	3/13	3/14	2/15	3/16	3/17
Strongly agree	3	6	5	5	6	6	5	4	4	2	3
Somewhat agree	25	36	29	36	34	31	31	30	23	15	23
Somewhat disagree	43	34	39	36	38	39	40	36	35	42	39
Strongly disagree	22	17	21	17	16	18	19	26	32	36	28
Don't know	7	7	6	6	6	6	5	4	6	5	7
Yes/No	28/65	42/51	34/60	41/53	40/54	37/57	36/59	34/62	27/67	17/78	26/67

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.

Those who strongly disagree with allowing foreign nationals to reside in the CR without restrictions more often include men, people with a poor living standard, respondents over the age of 60, respondents who rank themselves firmly on the left side of the political spectrum, and SPD voters. This response is also more often chosen by people who do not have any foreign nationals as friends or acquaintances and believe that there are already too many foreign nationals living in the Czech Republic now.

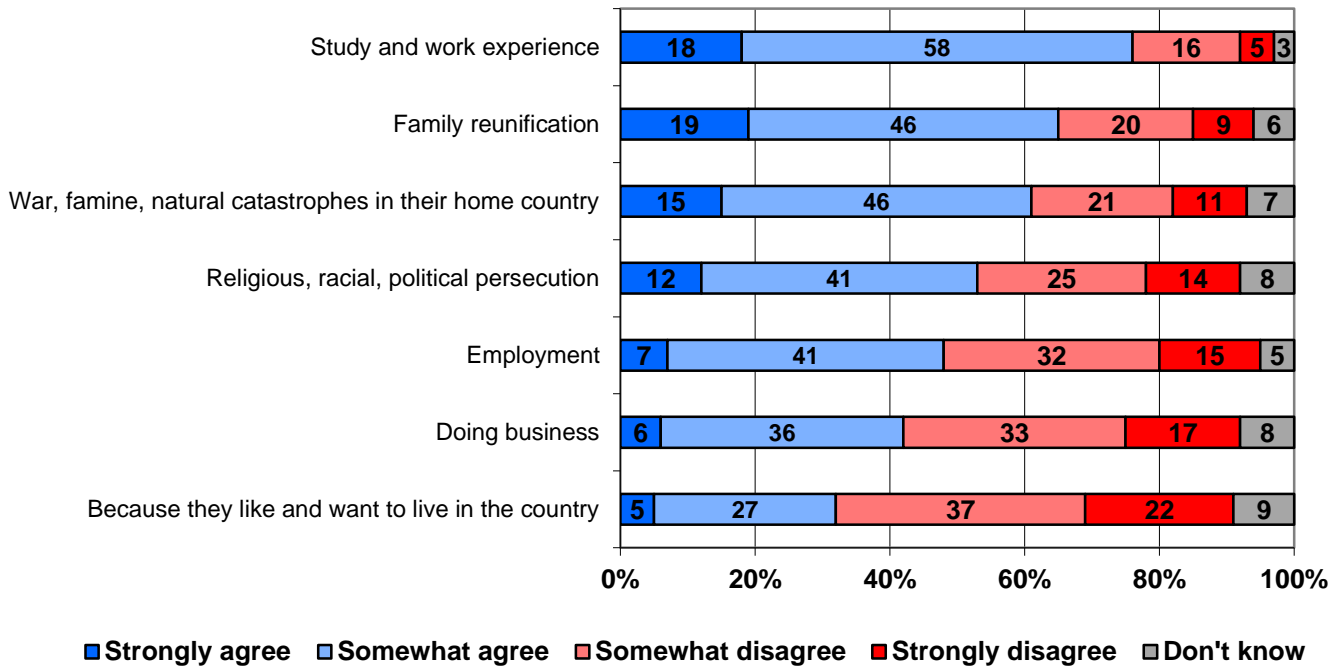
Conversely, the opinion that anyone who wants to come and live in the CR should be allowed to is more often found among students, people with a good living standard, people who rank themselves firmly on the political right, and respondents who indicate that the number of foreign nationals currently residing in the Czech Republic is adequate.

Another question focused on how acceptable the Czech public feels various reasons are for the country to accept immigrants (see Figure 3). The most acceptable reasons for allowing foreign nationals to reside in the CR are for the purpose of study and work experience (76% *strongly + somewhat agree*) and family reunification (65%). Approximately three-fifths of Czechs also agree with allowing immigrants to reside in the CR on the grounds of war, famine, or natural catastrophes in their country (61%) and the absolute majority of respondents were open to admitting foreign nationals persecuted in their home country for religious, racial, or political reasons (53% of respondents agree with allowing foreign nationals to reside in the CR for these reasons, 39% disagree).

The Czech public is divided roughly in half over the question of granting foreign nationals residence for the purpose of work, with 48% of respondents agreeing and 47% disagreeing. The majority of respondents disagree with granting foreign nationals residence for the purpose of doing business (42% of respondents agree, 50% disagree). Respondents think that the least acceptable reason for allowing foreign nationals to reside in the CR is that they just like and want to live in the country. Approximately one-third of respondents (32%) agree with granting residence for this reason and almost three-fifths disagree (59%).

⁴ The question read: 'Do you believe that anyone who wants to come and live in the Czech Republic should be allowed to?' The response options were: strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree.

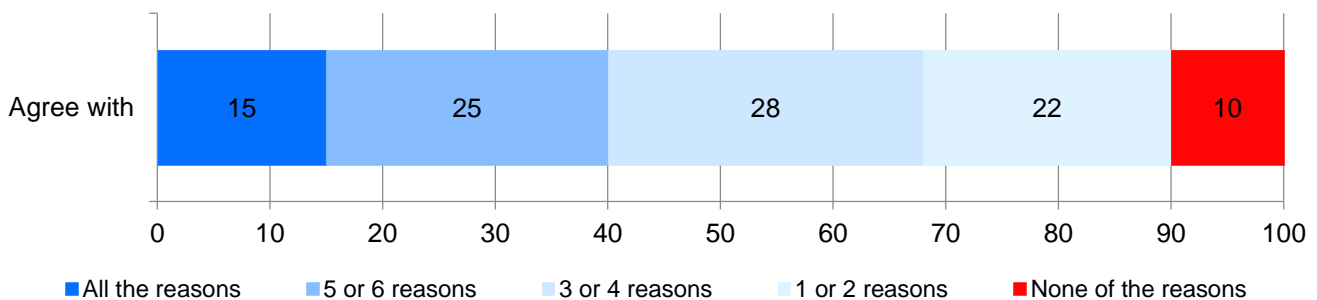
Figure 3. Reasons for allowing foreign nationals to reside in the CR⁵



Sourcej: 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 over the age of 15, face-to-face interviews.

We also grouped the listed reasons together and examined them from the perspective of how many reasons for allowing foreign nationals to reside in the CR respondents did agree with (see Figure 4).

Figure 4. Number of reasons for allowing foreign nationals to reside in the CR that respondents agree with (%)



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.

⁵ The question read: 'Do you agree or disagree with the Czech Republic allowing foreign nationals to reside in the CR: a) for the purpose of family reunification, b) to do business, c) to work, d) because they like and want to live in the country, e) study and work experience, f) because they are persecuted in their home country for religious, racial, political, or similar reasons, g) because of war, famine, natural catastrophes in their country?' The response options were: strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, strongly disagree.

Approximately one-tenth of Czechs (10%) would not agree to allow foreign nationals to reside in the CR for any of the reasons listed in Figure 3. Conversely, around one-seventh of respondents (15%) would agree to allow foreign nationals to reside in the CR in the case of all seven reasons.

As the data in Table 2 show that compared to the previous survey in March 2016 there have been significant changes for all seven items. The biggest change was in the perception of 'employment' as a reason for allowing foreign nationals to reside in the CR, where the number of respondents who would agree to this increased by 9 percentage points from a year ago, which is a figure comparable to that in 2009 to 2014. Czechs are more open than they were a year ago to granting foreign nationals residence if they are being persecuted in their own country for religious, racial, or political reasons (the share of those who agree increased by 6 percentage points), because of war, famine, or natural catastrophes in their home country (agreement increased by 5 percentage points), for the purpose of study or work experience, and even because they like and want to live in the CR (agreement increased by 4 percentage points).

Table 2. Agreement/disagreement with allowing foreign nationals to reside in the CR for the following reasons – a time comparison

	5/07	3/09	3/11	3/12	3/13	3/14	2/15	10/15	3/16	3/17
Study and work experience	86/11	86/1	87/10	86/11	86/11	85/13	82/15	63/33	72/24	76/21
Family reunification	78/18	79/15	83/13	85/11	85/12	84/12	78/17	53/42	63/31	65/29
Because of war, famine, natural catastrophes in their country	-	-	-	77/17	77/17	74/19	66/27	57/36	56/36	61/31
Persecution for religious, racial, political reasons in their country	-	-	-	70/21	71/22	69/23	55/37	46/46	47/44	53/39
Employment	53/43	49/45	45/50	49/47	48/48	47/48	39/57	29/68	39/56	48/47
Doing business*	40/50	41/48	44/49	53/40	56/38	54/40	43/50	32/64	39/56	42/50
Because they like it in the CR and want to live there	-	-	-	48/44	45/47	47/44	35/56	24/69	28/64	32/59

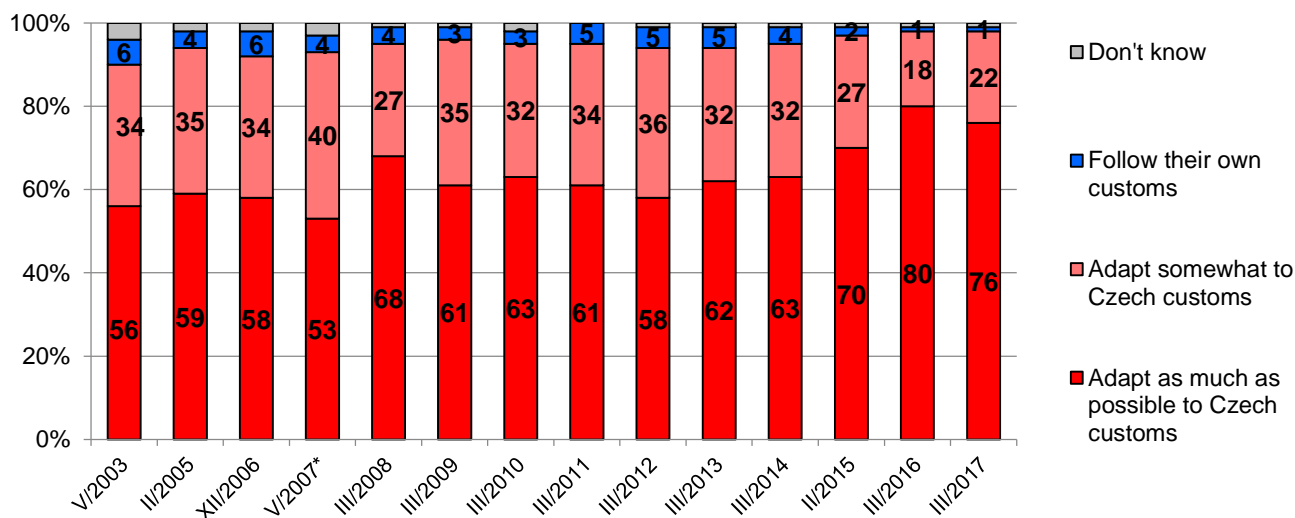
Note: The percentages in the table are the sums of the percentage shares *strongly agree* + *somewhat agree* and *somewhat disagree* + *strongly disagree*. The difference to 100% for each pair of percentages is made up of *don't know* responses.

*In 2007–2011 the item was worded *doing business on a trade license*.

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

In the March survey we were also interested in whether people thought foreign nationals residing long term or permanently in the Czech Republic should or should not adapt to Czech customs (see Figure 5).

Figure 5. Foreign nationals should adapt to Czech customs – a time comparison (%)⁶



Note: *) In 2007 a differently worded question was posed: 'Foreign nationals in the CR should: adapt as much as possible to Czech customs and lifestyle; adapt somewhat to Czech customs and lifestyle; be able to follow their own customs and lifestyle?'

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

Three-quarters of Czechs (76%) believe that foreign nationals should adapt as much as possible to Czech customs, more than one-fifth (22%) believe that they should somewhat adapt, and just 1% of the Czech population believes that they should be able to follow their own customs and lifestyle.

The number of people who believe that foreign nationals should adapt as much as possible to Czech customs has decreased slightly (by 4 percentage points) since the last survey in March 2016. Nevertheless, the current percentage is still the second-largest share recorded as holding the opinion that foreign nationals residing in the Czech Republic should adapt as much as possible to Czech customs. The share of Czechs who believe that foreign nationals should be able to stick to their own customs has remained marginal throughout the observed period.

Looking at socio-economic characteristics, people over the age of 60 and retirees are more likely to believe that foreign nationals should adapt as much as possible to Czech customs, as are people who do not have any friends amongst foreign nationals living in the CR and who believe that there are currently too many foreign nationals living in the country, and who believe that foreign nationals should not be allowed to reside long term in the CR at all.

⁶ The question read: 'In your opinion, foreign nationals in the Czech Republic should: adapt as much as possible to Czech customs; adapt somewhat to Czech customs, be allowed to follow their own customs?'

Technical parameters of the survey

Survey:	<i>Czech Society, v17-03</i>
Survey by:	<i>Public Opinion Research Centre, Institute of Sociology, Czech Academy of Sciences</i>
Project:	<i>Czech Society – Continuous Public Opinion Research Project of the Public Opinion Research Centre, Institute of Sociology, Czech Academy of Sciences</i>
Field survey dates:	<i>6–19 March 2017</i>
Sampling method:	<i>Quota sampling</i>
Quotas:	<i>Region (NUTS 3 Regions), size of place of residence, sex, age, education</i>
Data source for quota sampling:	<i>Czech Statistical Office</i>
Representativeness:	<i>Population of the Czech Republic over the age of 15</i>
Number of respondents:	<i>1045</i>
Number of interviewers:	<i>259</i>
Data collection method:	<i>Face-to-face interviews conducted by interviewers with respondents - combined CAPI and PAPI questioning</i>
Research instrument:	<i>Standardised questionnaire</i>
Questions:	<i>OV.44, OV.43, OV.47, OV.110, OV.186, OV.168a</i>
Press release code:	<i>ov170523</i>
Published on:	<i>23 May 2017</i>
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Glossary of terms:

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.