



# FWSS

Foreign Workers in Social Sector

## Summary analytical report of the survey in selected EU countries

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# INTRODUCTION

The presented report from the survey on the employment of foreign workers in social services was prepared within the framework of the European project Foreign Workers in Social Sector, funded by the Erasmus+ programme (project No. 2021-1-CZ01-KA220-VET-000025630). Its aim is to promote the employment of foreign workers in the social care sector, contributing to their subsequent integration, by proposing new measures, recommendations and training programmes for managers of social service organisations.

## 1. PARTICIPATING ORGANISATIONS

The Foreign Workers in Social Sector project involves 6 partner organisations from 5 European countries: the Czech Republic, Greece, Belgium, Austria and France.

The Centre for Development Activities of the Union of Employers' Associations of the Czech Republic (CRA UZS) from the Czech Republic became the project promoter and coordinator of the implemented activities. The following organisations participate in the project on behalf of the participating countries:

- ❖ **AKMI ANONIMI EKPAIDEFTIKI ETAIRIA (AKMI)** from Greece,
- ❖ **Association of Social Service Providers of the Czech Republic (APSS CR)** from the Czech Republic,
- ❖ **Federation of European Social Employers (Social Employers)** from Belgium,
- ❖ **SERVICE MENSCH GmbH / Volkshilfe Niederösterreich (Service Mensch)** from Austria,
- ❖ **ELISFA** from France.

### 1.1 CENTRE FOR DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES OF THE UNION OF EMPLOYERS' ASSOCIATIONS OF THE CZECH REPUBLIC

Centre of Development Activities of Employers' Union of the Czech Republic (CRA UZS) is a sister implementing organisation of Union of Employers' Associations of the Czech Republic (Union), which is one of the biggest employers' unions in the Czech Republic. The Union associates and represents 69 employer associations and important employers, representing more than 14,700 companies and their 600,000 employees. Among all the associations of employers, it has a lead position in representing public services and modern energy producers. In the area of public services, it represents sectors of healthcare, social care, education, culture, and non-profit organizations. In the modern energy sector, it is renewables, accumulation, cogeneration and smart grids. It also represents sectors of insurance companies, financial services, banking, industry and public administration.

CRA UZS is focused on project activities, conferences & education events and supporting activities for the Union. According to its statute, the Centre for Development is in charge for following activities:

- ❖ represents the interest of its members and participates in the creation and implementation of economic and social policy of the Czech Republic, especially by preparing expert documents and development concepts of economic and social policy;
- ❖ identifies common interests of members and promotes them in cooperation with state and local government bodies, trade unions, other employers' organizations and foreign partners;
- ❖ organizes and develops educational, scientific and research activities;
- ❖ provides services especially in the field of research, education, capacity building, equal opportunities, pilot verification procedures or application of innovations;
- ❖ organises and develops conceptual and counselling activities in the field of employment, public services and social dialogue;
- ❖ supports the efficient, high-quality and sustainable provision of public services;
- ❖ organizes the establishment of professional relations between Czech and foreign entities in the form of round tables, seminars, conferences etc.;
- ❖ cooperates with other employers', business and professional unions to shares common interests;
- ❖ monitors and evaluates world trends, especially in the field of public services and uses the acquired knowledge for their development;
- ❖ actively cooperates in its field with foreign entities.

## 1.2 AKMI ANONIMI EKPAIDEFTIKI ETAIRIA

The Institute of Vocational Training AKMI was founded back in 1989 and today it is one of the leading Vocational Training Institutes in Greece providing post-secondary education. Every year, approx. 14,000+ active students are enrolled with the aim to study one of the 107 specialties, in more than 340 laboratories offered in 6 cities across Greece. Excellency has been proven for AKMI S.A. multiple times with International and National Awards, including Golden Award of Facility Design and Laboratory excellence and Golden Award for providing access to the labour market services in the 2017 Education Business Awards! Success has been acknowledged with the Diamonds of the Greek Economy Award 2016, a significant distinction where AKMI was for its educational excellence, a high level of infrastructure and equipment and business innovation that brought it to the country's largest educational strength. Innovation has been approved through the Global Education Innovation Award in 2015 from PRAXIS MMT, while all Studies have been accredited from the European Foundation of Quality Management (EFQM). AKMI also has numerous accreditations from different institutes and sectors e.g., Alain Ducasse Education, Pearson -The world's leading learning company, ITEC - Education & Media Services, AHLEI - American Hotel & Lodging Educational Institute etc.

### 1.3 ASSOCIATION OF SOCIAL SERVICE PROVIDERS OF THE CZECH REPUBLIC

Association of Social Services Providers Czech Republic (APSS ČR) was founded in 1991. It is the largest professional organization that associates social care providers in the Czech Republic - over 1200 organizations (2813 registered social services):

- ✿ residential and daily care homes for elderly, for people with disabilities and with special needs,
- ✿ homeless shelters,
- ✿ services for addicted people,
- ✿ daily centres for children and youth etc.

Its main objective is development and improvement of the quality of social services. APSS ČR represents and defends interests of its members, mediates and spreads abroad scientific and research knowledge into social care providers activities, passes home and foreign experiences, educates and informs. APSS ČR provides legal services, organises national and international congresses, professional conferences, educational programmes and campaigns. APSS ČR realized in the last 10 years up to 30 national and international projects with 10 European countries. APSS ČR publishes professional literature and a specialized magazine *Social services*. Currently, APSS ČR has 22 permanent employees and more than 103 external lecturers and other staff. APSS ČR is also the biggest Educational Institution in the country. It is a member of European Ageing Network (EAN), European Social Network (ESN), Federation of European Social Employers and European Federation of National Organisations working with the Homeless (FEANTSA).

### 1.4 FEDERATION OF EUROPEAN SOCIAL EMPLOYERS

The Federation of European Social Employers represents the voice of employers in the field of social services at European level and is identified by Eurofound as the most significant employer's representative in the private sector part of social services. The Social Employers understand social services to comprise all care and support services, including for older persons, persons with disabilities, children, and other excluded or disadvantaged persons. The Federation's objectives are to strengthen the position of employers in social services at European and national level, establish common positions between members, and negotiate with European Trade Union Associations, representing workers in social services. By doing so, the Social Employers contribute to quality service provision and quality jobs. The Social Employers currently has 29 members from 18 countries. Together, the member organisations employ well over 2 million people. The Federation is run by a secretariat based in Brussels, employing one full time employee, one part-time employee and one unpaid staff on a part-time basis.

## 1.5 SERVICE MENSCH GMBH

SERVICE MENSCH GmbH is a non-profit company with limited liability that was founded in early 2002, focusing on providing services in health care, nursing & aging service, child care, refugee care and professional training. SERVICE MENSCH GmbH's social mandate is to improve, preserve and support people's living situations. The basic attitude is based on the equality of all people and is expressed in the work of their employees.

## 1.6 ELISFA

ELISFA represents employers of 3600 non-profit organisations (childcare, community houses, social community development):

- ❖ in an established social dialogue negotiates the National Collective Agreement and professional training priorities with trade-unions,
- ❖ provides support and tools to the employers regarding labour law and employers' duties and responsibilities,
- ❖ promotes actions of employers and their organisations to public authorities.

## 2. OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY OF THE SURVEY

### 2.1 OBJECTIVES OF THE PROJECT

Among other things, the project set two sub-objectives:

- ✿ comprehensive coverage of the issue of employment of foreigners in the social services sector, including identification of significant barriers that have a negative impact on the employment of foreign workers;
- ✿ drafting recommendations, based on a review of the results achieved, taking into account good practice from individual countries.

### 2.2 SURVEY METHODOLOGY

In order to meet the above-mentioned sub-objectives, the **legislative basis** for the employment of foreign workers was firstly elaborated in each partner country and then two **online questionnaire surveys** were conducted on the issue, both among social service providers and among foreign employees working in social services. The results obtained were subsequently refined and complemented by the conclusions from **in-depth interviews** with both groups. The findings were then discussed in a **focus group** to which the employer respondents were invited.

Subsequently, each project partner, i.e. for each participating country, prepared an analytical study – a **country report** according to a predetermined outline. The results for each country were presented and discussed at the **Transnational project meeting** of all participating organizations. This meeting took place on November 22-23, 2022 in Prague in Czech Republic and was attended by all partner organizations.

At the end of the first project activity Analysis in partner countries, two summary reports were prepared - **Summary analytical report of the survey** and **Summary report of the survey**. Both documents are available in English. In the national language of a specific country, reports are available on the websites of individual partner organizations and are freely accessible. These summary reports contain country reports on individual countries.

### LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK FOR THE EMPLOYMENT OF FOREIGN WORKERS

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A basic overview of the legislation regulating the employment of foreign nationals in the territory of each participating country and related legislation was carried out from the perspective of whether they are EU, EEA and Swiss citizens or third-country nationals. In particular, attention was paid to the type of residence, visa requirements and work permits.



## QUESTIONNAIRE SURVEY

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**The survey of social service providers** was carried out via an online questionnaire (see Annex 1), which was sent to a large number of providers. Among the providers contacted were organisations providing all types of social services (homes for the elderly, residential homes, care services, personal assistance, etc.) and providing both outreach (outpatient) and residential services. The aim of the survey was to obtain responses from at least 50 providers in each participating country.

The survey mapped specific experiences with the employment of foreign workers. For employers who already employ foreign workers, the focus was on the recruitment of foreign workers, the positions they hold, the reasons for employing foreign workers, their evaluation in terms of work performance and activities to help the integration of foreign workers. Employers who do not employ foreign workers were asked about the reasons for not using foreign workers. For both groups of employers, the possibilities of employing foreign workers in the future and the need for training in the employment of foreign workers were then monitored.

**The survey among foreign workers** was also conducted in the form of an online questionnaire (see Annex 2). In some countries, staff were also given the opportunity to send their answers in writing on pre-prepared questionnaires to the relevant partner organisation involved in the project. The contacting of foreign workers was done through the participating employers. They were asked by the partner organisation to provide their expatriate workers with a link to the online questionnaire or to provide them with the questionnaire in written form. The questionnaire was completely anonymous, only at the end the employees could provide a contact email or phone number in case they were interested in participating in the in-depth interviews. The aim of the survey was to obtain responses from at least 50 people in each participating country. For expatriate workers, the survey looked in particular at:

- ✦ the reasons that led to your decision to work abroad
- ✦ specific experience of getting a job as such (obtaining a work permit, demonstrating competence, etc.),
- ✦ experience of working in social services,
- ✦ language skills and courses,
- ✦ integration into society, the attitude of the neighborhood, etc.

## IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS

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**In-depth interviews with social service providers** (at least 10 structured interviews in each participating country) were conducted with selected representatives from among the respondents to the above questionnaire survey. Employers who were interested in participating in the in-depth interviews could contact the relevant partner organisation themselves or were approached and asked to participate. The in-depth interviews were held in person, by videoconference or by telephone and complemented or extended the results obtained by the questionnaire survey.

Also, in the case of **interviews with foreign workers**, the aim was to obtain a minimum of 10 guided interviews in each participating country. As the staff questionnaires were completely anonymous, only those who expressed an interest in being interviewed participated in the in-depth interviews. In the event of insufficient number of interviews, each partner organisation invited the employers to ask their foreign staff members to be interviewed. In-depth interviews were conducted in person, by videoconference or by telephone without the presence of the employer, and only the foreign worker and the employee of the partner organisation conducting the interview were present at any time to avoid any influence from the employer. Here again, the interviews complemented and extended the area covered by the survey.

## **FOCUS GROUPS**

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Discussion of the results obtained from the surveys was conducted in a focus group in each country with at least 10 employers who participated in the survey. Participation was also open to foreign employees if they were interested. During the meeting, the results of the questionnaire survey and in-depth interviews between employers and employees and the key findings from the overall survey were presented to the focus group participants. A discussion among all participants followed and at the end the most important findings and facts were summarised and recommendations were proposed.

## **COUNTRY REPORT**

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At the end of the survey, each partner country prepared an analytical study according to a predetermined outline, including:

- ✦ analysis of the legislative environment for the employment of foreign workers in the country,
- ✦ the results of both questionnaire surveys,
- ✦ results of in-depth interviews with employers and expatriate employees,
- ✦ conclusions from the focus group,
- ✦ suggestions and recommendations for the country.

## **SUMMARY SURVEY REPORT**

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The last part of the analysis in the partner countries is the creation of a summary survey report, i.e. a summary international report, containing results and conclusions from all country survey reports.

## 3. LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK FOR THE EMPLOYMENT OF FOREIGN WORKERS

### 3.1 EU/EEA AND SWISS NATIONALS

Very simply, if an EU/EEA and Swiss citizen or his/her family member wants to work in the countries under review, he/she can work **without a work permit**, just like a national - **he/she has free access to the labour market**.

#### **OBLIGATIONS OF THE EMPLOYER**

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The employer is obliged to inform the relevant institution about the employment of a foreigner (EU/EEA or Swiss citizen) no later than on the day of commencement of work - **information obligation**.

In addition to the information obligation, the employer or the legal or natural person to whom the EU citizen or his/her family member is posted has a **registration obligation**. In practice, this is an obligation to record certain personal data about the employed or posted EU citizen or his/her family member. The scope is almost identical to the data that an employer or a legal or natural person is obliged to notify to the designated authority as part of their information obligation.

### 3.2 NON-EU/EEA AND SWISS NATIONALS

On the other hand, a non-EU/EEA or non-Swiss citizen (a third-country national) in the countries surveyed **do not have free access to the labour market**, with a few exceptions. He/she can only work provided that he/she has obtained a **work permit together with a valid residence permit or a relevant (employment) card**.

#### **EMPLOYEE CARDS**

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The issuance of **cards** is applied to facilitate access for selected groups of foreign nationals. There are several types of cards (blue, green, red-white-red, etc.) and they are mostly intended for skilled persons in professions for which there is not enough suitable labour on the local labour market. The card most often entitles the foreigner to work for the employer in the job and place of work for which the card was issued.

This simplified approach is often applied to citizens of former colonial states.

#### **RESIDENCE PERMIT**

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On the basis of Regulation (EC) No 810/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council (Visa Code), **short-stay visas** are granted for stays of up to 90 days in the Schengen area. In addition to other cases, short-term visas are granted, for example, for employment or

seasonal employment, where a third-country national is issued with an employment permit entitling him/her to work for an employer listed in the permit.

Foreigners who want to stay for more than 3 months for employment purposes must apply for a **long-term residence permit**. It should be added that a foreigner from a third country may, as a rule, apply for **permanent residence** after 5 years of continuous temporary residence in the territory of the State. Holders of this permit then have free access to the labour market. Persons who have been granted asylum or subsidiary protection may also be included in the same group.

## **PERMISSION TO WORK**

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In principle, it is only possible to obtain a **work permit** together with a valid residence permit or relevant (employment) card for a specific job with a specific employer. In most cases, this must be a job for which there is no suitable "home-grown" candidate available in the long term. The employment permit is usually issued for a limited period (max. 2 years). It can be extended, even repeatedly, on application.

## **OBLIGATIONS OF THE EMPLOYER**

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The employer is obliged to inform the relevant institution in writing (via a standardised form on entry into employment) of the foreigner's entry into employment no later than on the day of entry into employment (the so-called **information obligation**). At the same time, the employer is obliged to inform the institution in writing (using a standardised form) that the foreigner who has been issued with a work permit or relevant card:

1. hasn't started work,
2. has left employment before the expiry of the period for which the permit was issued,  
or
3. employment has been terminated by notice or agreement, or
4. employment was terminated by immediate dismissal.

When employment is terminated by notice, agreement or immediate termination, the employer must also state the reason for the termination.

The employer is obliged to keep a **register of the foreigners it employs**. At the same time, it is obliged to keep copies of the documents proving the foreigners' lawful residence for the duration of the employment and for 3 years from the end of the employment of the foreigner.

In the case of employment of a foreigner, the **employer is obliged to offer the foreigner the working and wage conditions customary for a citizen of the country in the same job classification** according to the applicable legislation or in accordance with collective agreements or employment contracts.

## 4. EMPLOYERS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS EMPLOYING FOREIGN WORKERS

The employment of foreign social workers in the EU countries surveyed reflects the existing situation in each country. Their presence in social services is more frequent in countries where:

- ✿ clients of social services are people with an immigration background, especially in cases where they have not fully acquired the language of the country where the service is provided;
- ✿ a language that is known as a world language, i.e. spoken in more than one country and often taught in schools (English, French, German);
- ✿ multiple languages are spoken.

This is because direct care workers communicating with social service clients must have a good command of the language of the clients. When dealing with clients, it is not possible to allow misunderstanding of the information being communicated due to poor language skills. The situation is made more difficult by the fact that social services clients are mainly elderly and disabled people.

The number of foreign workers is also strongly influenced by the fact that positions where a lower level of language proficiency would not be such problem are not attractive to many foreign workers - these are lower paid positions.

### 4.1 RECRUITMENT OF FOREIGN STAFF

It can be concluded that **targeted recruitment of foreign employees has not been carried out in social services**, and if it has, it is mainly in cases where there is a shortage of suitable labour available on the regional (local) labour market. However, it should be added that the interviews clearly showed that the management of organisations operating in social services are not well aware of the possible sources of targeted outreach to the group of potential employees - foreigners in social services.

However, organization do not oppose the employment of foreigners in general. In the recruitment process, the ability of the individual to perform the position is always assessed, including the degree of language proficiency required, i.e. in relation to the clientele of the establishment requesting the position. Thus, it may be that the vacancy requires a language other than that commonly spoken in the country. It even seems that this language requirement pattern will increase in the future. The reason for this is the ever-increasing number of social service clients with a migration background, where knowledge of their native language or culture is often a considerable advantage.

**Foreign employees are therefore only recruited for positions for which they have sufficient competences, including language skills.**

In recruitment, as elsewhere, the main use is made of references, recommendations for specific people from current or former employees, colleagues from the social or health sector. Social service providers only use the services of (foreign) recruitment agencies in the most urgent cases, and are certainly not favouring them.

In spite of the above, it must be admitted that the **willingness to employ foreigners depends to some extent not only on the situation on the labour market, but also on the attitude of the management of the organisation, which may be influenced/encumbered by existing prejudices.** If the management believes that employing foreigners is associated with (dangerous) threats, whether due to the necessary administrative tasks (obtaining a work permit and its extension, nostrification diploma, registration) or cultural and social aspects, then in most cases foreign workers are considered as an unnecessary "burden", an unwanted risk. The perception is different if the foreigner has already been granted permanent residence or even accreditation of his/her education. Coming from the same cultural background is also an advantage.

## 4.2 POSITIONS HELD BY FOREIGN WORKERS

Foreign workers in social services work mainly in support positions, where it is often not necessary to have a good knowledge of the language and to have the appropriate educational qualifications. This fact is to some extent also related to the recognition of education in the country of origin, especially in the case of citizens from so-called third countries - see below. This hypothesis is consistent with the link established between the length of stay in the 'host' country and the position held, where it can be seen that as the length of stay in the 'host' country increases, so does the number of people doing professional work.

## 4.3 REASONS FOR EMPLOYING FOREIGN WORKERS

As already mentioned, for most organisations the most important reason for employing foreign workers is the **lack of adequate labour in the regional labour market.**

**Time flexibility and specific skills proved to** be important reasons. It should be added, however, that time flexibility is not insignificantly influenced by whether or not the foreign worker has a family or children in the country of employment. If so, this group is no different from 'home' workers in terms of flexibility.

**Lower wages as a reason for employing foreign workers has not been confirmed.** Most social services organisations have uniform salary tables, with wage regulations applicable to all employees, regardless of whether they are foreigners or not. In addition, the same remuneration is required by the law.

## 4.4 EVALUATION OF FOREIGN EMPLOYEES

According to the representatives of social service providers, foreign workers working in social services do not behave differently from domestic workers - some are better, some are worse. The length of time required for their full incorporation into the work process corresponds to this. This can be influenced to some extent not only by the level of qualification and education already achieved, but also by the level of language proficiency.

Representatives of social service organizations across countries agree that foreign workers in the majority:

- ✦ are interested in integrating into society;
- ✦ are accepted by colleagues and clients without any major problems;
- ✦ are interested in learning the language of the country where they work;
- ✦ have a small absence rate;
- ✦ have a low fluctuation rate;
- ✦ they appreciate their work more;
- ✦ are more reliable workers;
- ✦ are willing to do work that "domestic workers" are not interested in;
- ✦ are generally limited by their level of language proficiency.

In addition to this, they also believe that the culture or religion of the foreigners they employ does not have a significant impact on their work performance, although, particularly in countries with employees from North Africa and Asia, individual cases of negative impact have been reported.

## 4.5 ACTIVITIES FACILITATING THE INTEGRATION OF FOREIGN EMPLOYEES

If an organisation employs a foreign worker, it is in the organisation's best interest to ensure that the worker is as well prepared as possible to perform the job. Employers therefore set up various integration activities to help manage the performance resulting from the position for which the foreigner has been hired. As it turns out, these are usually not using the existing system in the country for this purpose, but activities set up based on the sensitivity of the managers in the organisation.

In practice, the organisation first tries to integrate the foreign employee with a view to "safe" work performance, and then provides various courses to help improve his/her skills. In most cases, as in the case of a home worker, a mentoring method is used.

As long as the language is not mastered to the necessary extent, they try to choose such logistics of work that the client is not endangered or the quality of the service provided is not reduced. The organisations therefore also set up various measures to help the client acquire the language more quickly. Among the measures applied in practice, approaches that were noted by the management of the organisations in the course of the surveys carried out, for example:

- ❖ the inclusion of foreigners in individual work teams is "rationed" - e.g. only one foreign worker is present in a group at one time,
- ❖ communication between workers in their native language is prohibited in the workplace.

Current staff who have at least some knowledge of the language of the incoming employee are also used for integration. For example, the involvement of a "liaison", i.e. a person from outside the organisation who assisted with the translation of necessary instructions/documents related to the performance of the work into a language understandable to the incoming employee, was also mentioned.

Support for self-study by an existing 'home' employee of the organisation was also noted. The employer has enabled this person to re-acquire the foreign language skills of newly arrived foreigners, which can facilitate the entry of foreigners into the organisation.

In addition to the above, some organisations also help foreign employees to secure housing, to help them place their children in school, to communicate with the authorities, etc. It should be noted, however, that the extent of the support provided depends on the "set-up" of the organisation's management.

#### 4.6 REASONS FOR NOT USING FOREIGN WORKERS

In the case of non-employment of foreign workers in the organisation of social service providers, the main reason is that persons of other nationalities simply did not apply for the job. It is therefore not a classic barrier to employment. Similarly, this is the case when there is sufficient available labour on the local labour market. This fact does not allow, with a few legal exceptions, the admission of third-country nationals.

The real barriers to employing foreign workers from the perspective of social service providers are the reasons listed below (*the order of the barriers listed below is according to their importance as monitored by the research*):

- ❖ the organisation has no experience of employing foreign workers;
- ❖ the organisation does not have an entity to help make all the related arrangements;
- ❖ the organisation is concerned about problems arising from a lack of language proficiency;
- ❖ the organization is concerned about the non-acceptance of foreign staff by the facility's clients;
- ❖ the organisation is concerned about the administration involved in employment;
- ❖ the organisation is concerned about problems related to the different culture or religion of foreign workers.

In the interviews, two key themes were highlighted by the organisations, namely the **recognition of qualifications/training** and the **extension of work permits**.



## RECOGNITION OF QUALIFICATIONS/TRAINING

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Difficulties with the recognition of qualifications are particularly experienced by those organisations that employ foreigners in positions where professional qualifications must be documented. This is particularly the case for non-EU, EEA and Swiss nationals. Organisations believe that it is an unnecessarily time-consuming, highly rigid process with significant financial costs for employees. In addition, additional examinations and internships are often required.

## EXTENSION OF WORK PERMITS

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Often, foreign workers first work for organisations with a short-term residence permit, which entitles them to work for up to 3 months. If the work exceeds 3 months, then a long-term residence permit must be obtained. The process of obtaining a long-term residence permit is lengthy and the organisation is exposed to a high risk that, after having adequately integrated the foreign worker into its structures and prepared him/her for (safe) work performance, the foreigner will have to stop working for the organisation because his/her residence permit will not be processed in time.

## 4.7 POSSIBILITY OF EMPLOYING FOREIGN WORKERS IN THE FUTURE

In the future, as the demand for social services grows, organisations operating in the social services sector are aware of the need to engage a larger number of staff, which can be covered from among citizens of other countries. Thus, they consider the employment of foreign workers as a possible solution to the expected (and nowadays even in some regions long-standing) shortage of workers in the sector.

In this context, however, it is required:

- ✦ simplifying the existing administrative process involved in employing foreign workers,
- ✦ then setting up functional support for organisations
- ✦ and, last but not least, support for language courses at the workplace.

The above is also reflected in the fact that although most employers have no preferences regarding the origin of foreign employees, thanks to the significantly easier access to the labour market for EU, EEA and Swiss citizens, these are preferred by a significant number of employers. Provided, of course, that the required qualifications are met.

Similarly, most organisations do not have a set preference in terms of a type of employment relationship. However, if they do, it is mainly a preference for the employee to enter into an employment relationship directly with their organisation.

## 4.8 EDUCATION ON THE EMPLOYMENT OF FOREIGN WORKERS

A peculiarity is that most representatives of the surveyed organisations did not show any interest in obtaining training on the issue of employing foreign workers. However, in the subsequent interviews and focus groups, interest was already registered, even among representatives of those organisations that did not declare interest in the questionnaire

survey. It can even be argued that most of the representatives interviewed would welcome training.

Interest in the following topics was monitored:

- ✦ the legal framework related to the employment of foreign workers;
- ✦ possible ways of recruiting potential employees in the country of origin;
- ✦ a detailed presentation of the employer's administrative procedure for employing foreign workers, including an overview of important actors who can be contacted with specific questions or problems;
- ✦ presentation of examples of good practice in employing foreign employees, including their recruitment, integration into the team, mentoring, etc.
- ✦ cultural, social, religious and other differences of foreign workers.

## 5. ATTITUDES OF FOREIGN WORKERS TOWARDS WORKING IN SOCIAL SERVICES

The social services sector, especially in larger cities, is not sufficiently saturated with domestic labour, which gives room for the employment of foreign workers. However, the number of foreigners actually employed is in line with the requirement of these jobs for a high level of language proficiency, especially in the spoken word. The local dialect is a particular problem.

### 5.1 REASONS FOR WORKING ABROAD

If we take into account the consequences of the invasion of Ukraine by Russia and the influx of refugees into the Czech Republic and Austria in particular, then it can be concluded that the interest in working in another country on the part of foreign workers in social services is driven mainly by economic motives. These are then reinforced by family or friendship motives, when the first arrivals are followed by their family members and friends.

Knowledge and affinity of the native language and the language of the "host" country, as well as similarity of culture, play an important role in the decision-making process.

### 5.2 WORK PERMITS, DIPLOMA NOSTRIFICATION

#### WORK PERMIT

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Who needs/does not need a work permit is determined by national legislation in each country. However, as the survey showed, the procedure for obtaining a permit in all partner countries is unnecessarily **lengthy, administratively demanding and limiting** for potential employees **in getting a job**. It was also noted that the process often has an **uncertain outcome**, which negatively affects both potential employees and employers.

#### NOSTRIFICATION<sup>1</sup>

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Although foreign workers (those who need nostrification) do not consider the process of education nostrification to be complicated, they admit that they would hardly be able to

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<sup>1</sup> **Nostrification**: is the official recognition of the validity of a qualification obtained abroad (e.g. recognition of the validity of a foreign certificate or diploma by domestic authorities). This means that the level of foreign education (primary, secondary, higher vocational or even university) is recognised as equivalent to the corresponding level of domestic education. If an international treaty so provides, only a certificate of recognition of the equivalence of the foreign certificate is issued instead of a decision on nostrification.

manage the process on their own at the time of their arrival in the host country without the help of their environment, employer, intermediary agency or other (non-profit) organization. This is especially the case if the potential employees have a language barrier or if they come from a different socio-cultural background.

Interestingly, respondents said that many official forms cannot be understood even after several years in the host country.

In general, **the process of nostrification seems unnecessarily long and costly for newcomers** (verification of the diploma and its official translation).

### 5.3 WORK IN SOCIAL SERVICES

Foreign employees are interested in working in social services, despite the fact that they have no experience in this field. As the results of the survey showed, **about half of the employees had no experience in this work before their employment.** These were mainly people performing support activities. It should be added that the results for individual countries varied, e.g. only 30% of respondents in the Czech Republic had experience of working in social services before starting their (current) job, BUT almost half of the respondents had already used their qualifications in social services.

Most respondents learn about the possibility of employment in social services from their friends or acquaintances. In the case of people who have been employed in the host country for a longer period of time, the source of information is usually an advertisement, or the respondent simply looks up the facility and goes to ask about employment in person or sends a written inquiry. The services of an employment agency are rarely used.

Employees' entry into their jobs is supported by the employer both by assigning a mentor - an experienced employee - and by providing training for the job. In most cases, however, this is a "normal" onboarding that is given as needed to each new employee.

A positive finding is the interest of foreign employees in improving their qualifications for work in social services, not only informally through various courses, but also formally, when the level of education is increased.

Foreign workers generally praise the work in social services. They highly rate the quality of the working environment as well as the quality of relations with their superiors and colleagues. However, they are less satisfied with their financial remuneration, which most would welcome to be higher (a general problem throughout the sector).

### 5.4 LANGUAGE COURSES

Foreign employees, quite logically, if they have little or no knowledge of the language of the host country, seek out language courses that can help them improve their language skills. In particular, free language courses available on the market are used. However, most of them focus only on the basics of the language. Many therefore rely more on self-study (reading, listening to TV, radio), practical life at work and, if necessary, especially in connection with the

granting of permanent residence, then use the services of private (paid) language agencies, teachers.

A separate chapter is the ability to understand the regional dialect, which clients often speak and which foreign workers are unable to understand without a longer stay in the host country.

## 5.5 INTEGRATION INTO SOCIETY

In the context of the integration process, foreign workers are appreciated for their approach not only by employers, but also by organisations that assist foreigners with integration. Assistance is provided with housing, with kindergarten/school for children, with the authorities, etc. Considering the small scale of services provided, which is conditioned by limited financial possibilities, foreign employees themselves are often interested in helping their newly arrived compatriots and are involved in setting up/providing integration activities. It should be added, however, that the arrival of most foreigners tends to be applied in a snowball method, whereby expatriates help each other and therefore do not use of integration activities much (which is to some extent also a consequence of the limited availability of services).

The vast majority of foreign workers working in social services were not discriminated in their workplace on the basis of nationality, ethnic origin, culture, religion, skin colour, etc.

## 6. RECOMMENDATIONS

### 6.1 RECOMMENDATIONS FROM REPRESENTATIVES OF SOCIAL SERVICES PROVIDERS

- ❖ on the part of the state, or agencies or employment offices, to create a comprehensive document that clearly and concisely describes the employer's procedure set by national legislation in the case of recruitment of persons from abroad;
- ❖ on the part of the state to simplify the administrative procedures for employing foreign workers, especially low-skilled workers;
- ❖ on the part of the state, agencies or employment offices to set up a free advisory service for employers who are interested in employing foreign workers or already employ them;
- ❖ on the part of the state, with regard to the shortage of health care workers on the labour market, to set up new functional tools and measures to help attract relevant foreign workers to the structures of social services; with regard to ensuring safe work in human care, to set up conditions for the (central) creation of basic procedural materials and rules for the social services sector in the worker's native language;
- ❖ on the part of the state to support (financially) the implementation of language courses for foreign workers, which are supplemented by specific vocabulary used in certain professions;
- ❖ on the part of the state to support the creation of a lexicon containing terms regularly used in particular sectors and fields;
- ❖ on the part of the state to support (free) educational activities for employers that address the issue of workplace relations where a foreign employee is present (differences in culture, customs, perceptions ...);
- ❖ in view of the increasing shortage of relevant staff, consider setting conditions enabling providers to achieve a deeper knowledge of the employment of foreigners, in particular through the transfer of examples of good practice between individual organisations operating in social services. In particular, attention should be focused on:
  - ❖ possibilities and functional ways of reaching potential employees in the country of origin,
  - ❖ the application of the statutory process for the employment of foreign workers in social services,
  - ❖ effective ways of integrating foreign employees into the organisation's structures,
  - ❖ Effective ways of coping with the language barrier,
  - ❖ knowledge of regional actors helping with integration,
  - ❖ describing cultural differences and bridging them in practice.

## 6.2 RECOMMENDATIONS FROM FOREIGN WORKERS

- ❖ on the part of the state to speed up the process of recognition of education and provide support during the procedure;
- ❖ on the part of the state to provide assistance/support in dealing with official documents related to more than just residence and work permits;
- ❖ setting up a central information point (i.e. an easily accessible website) for all foreign applicants, with all relevant employment-related information;
- ❖ Ensuring that there are enough free and effectively set up language courses that really 'move participants forward' in their language learning;
- ❖ on the part of the state to support the production of a clear brochure in various languages that covers important topics in a nutshell, the knowledge of which will contribute significantly to the integration of the individual into society:
  - ❖ the rights and obligations of workers in your country;
  - ❖ issues related to housing (e.g. that the deposit is not paid in cash, that it is necessary to check the land registry, whether the landlord is really the owner ...)
  - ❖ education-related issues (supply of formal and non-formal education, funding ...);
  - ❖ social insurance (sickness insurance, pension insurance ...)
  - ❖ health services
  - ❖ family policy, etc.

# ATTACHMENTS

**Annex 1 - Questionnaire for employers - social service providers**

**Annex 2 - Questionnaire for foreign employees working in social services**



**ANNEX 1 - QUESTIONNAIRE FOR EMPLOYERS - SOCIAL SERVICE PROVIDERS**

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**Foreign Workers in Social Sector  
QUESTIONNAIRE  
Employers**

Dear Madam, dear Sir,

as part of the Foreign Workers in Social Services project, we are trying to identify major barriers in the employment of people from other European Union countries and third countries. This will help us to set up measures that will facilitate their integration and ensure maximum use of their potential. Therefore, we would like to ask you to fill in this questionnaire.

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**1. Please indicate the name of your organisation:**

.....

**2. Please indicate the contact person (name, job position, e-mail):**

.....

**3. Please indicate the type of service (multiple answers are possible):**

- residential care (with accommodation)
- ambulant care (without accommodation)

**4. Please indicate the number of employees (full time equivalents) in your organisation:**

- up to 50 employees
- 51 to 250 employees
- 251 to 500 employees
- over 500 employees.

**5. Do you have foreign workers (i.e. persons with other nationalities) working in your organisation - working under employment contract or through an employment agency?**

- yes (next questions 6 - 12)*
- no (next questions 13)*

**THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS APPLY TO THOSE WHO ANSWERED YES (question no. 6 - 12)**

**6. Please indicate the number of**

**A. foreign workers with employment contract** (full time equivalents) in your organisation: .....

- a. from EU, EEA and Swiss nationals: .....
- b. from third country nationals: .....
- c. refugees (e.g. Ukraine, Syria etc.) .....

**B. foreign workers working provided by an employment agency** (full time equivalents): .....

**7. How did the employment of foreign workers in your organisation "came about" (multiple answers are possible)?**

- we approached an intermediary organisation (e.g. a recruitment agency)
- we were approached by an intermediary organisation / supporting service for migrants
- the foreign worker applied for a job with us on his/her own
- we found the foreign worker and approached him/her (e.g. on the basis of an employee's recommendation)
- other, please specify: .....

**8. In which positions do foreign workers work in your organisation?**

Name of position	Own employees	Agency workers
care givers (carer, care assistant, home care workers etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
social workers (community social work, child, family, school social work etc)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
health workers (nurse, medical doctor, nutrition	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
pedagogical workers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
technical, administrative and economic workers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
operational workers (professionals in support functions)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
managers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**9. On a scale of 1 - 5, please rate the importance of reasons listed below that led/are leading to the involvement of foreign workers in your organisation. (Scale 1 = not significant reason, 5 = very significant reason)**

- |  |   |   |   |   |   |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| <input type="radio"/> lack of "local" workforce        | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| <input type="radio"/> their greater (time) flexibility | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| <input type="radio"/> their higher qualification       | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| <input type="radio"/> their lower wage demands         | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| <input type="radio"/> their specific skills            | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| <input type="radio"/> other reason .....               |   |   |   |   |   |

**10. On a scale of 1 - 5, where 1 = strongly agree and 5 = strongly disagree, please indicate your level of agreement with the statement that foreign workers:**

- |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| <input type="radio"/> are accepted by service users without problems                    | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| <input type="radio"/> are accepted by their colleagues without problems                 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| <input type="radio"/> have lower salary demands   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| <input type="radio"/> value their jobs more   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| <input type="radio"/> are willing to do work that "local" workers are not interested in | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| <input type="radio"/> are more reliable employees                                       | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| <input type="radio"/> have a low fluctuation rate                                       | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| <input type="radio"/> are well qualified for the job                                    | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| <input type="radio"/> have a low rate of absenteeism                                    | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| <input type="radio"/> are interested in learning the language                           | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| <input type="radio"/> are interested in integrating into society                        | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

- their knowledge of the language limits their work performance  
1      2      3      4      5
- their work performance is limited by their qualifications  
1      2      3      4      5
- their access to work is limited by difficulties of recognition of their qualifications  
1      2      3      4      5
- their work performance is affected by their cultural or religious requirements  
1      2      3      4      5

**11. Do you take any actions to facilitate the integration of foreign workers at the workplace? (e.g. language training, vocational training, etc)**

- From
- Yes
- If yes, please specify .....

**12. Do you take any actions to facilitate the integration of foreign workers outside the workplace (e.g. provide support to secure housing, facilitate family integration, etc.?)**

- No
- Yes

If yes, please specify: .....

THE FOLLOWING QUESTION APPLIES TO THOSE WHO ANSWERED NO (question no. 13)

**13. On a scale of 1 - 5, please rate the importance of reasons listed below that led/lead you not to have foreign workers in your organisation. Scale 1 = not significant reason, 5 = very significant reason.**

- we have enough "local" workforce      1      2      3      4      5
- we have no experience of employing foreign workers  
1      2      3      4      5
- we have bad experience with employing foreign workers  
1      2      3      4      5
- it is easier when foreign workers are employees of employment agency or another company      1      2      3      4      5
- we are worried about problems arising from a lack of language skills  
1      2      3      4      5
- we are worried about problems related to culture/religion  
1      2      3      4      5
- we are worried about non-acceptance by service users  
1      2      3      4      5
- we are worried about non-acceptance by colleagues  
1      2      3      4      5
- we are worried about the difficulty of the administrative process  
1      2      3      4      5
- we have not been approached by any organisation that would arrange this  
1      2      3      4      5
- no foreign worker has applied for a job with us      1      2      3      4      5
- other, please specify: .....

**14. For the future:**

- we are open to employ foreign workers (*next questions 15 to 16*)
- we will give preference to "local" employees (*next question 17*)
- we will not employ foreign workers (*next question 17*)

THE FOLLOWING 2 QUESTIONS APPLY TO THOSE WHO ANSWERED "we are open" (question no. 15-16)

**15. From what countries would you prefer foreign workers as your employees:**

- citizens of the EU, EEA and Switzerland
- citizens of third countries
- refugees (e.g. from Ukraine, Syria etc.)
- we have no preference

**16. What kind of employment relationship would you prefer with foreign workers:**

- an employment relationship with the employee
- using the services of an employment agency
- being supported by a service dedicated to foreign workers integration
- we have no preference

**17. Would you be interested in attending a training course on the topic of employing foreign workers, i.e., how to remove barriers and create equal opportunities for foreign workers, understand specific needs and facilitate their integration into the labour market.**

- Yes.
- Rather yes
- No.

**Space for your comment, clarification:**

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

## ANNEX 2 - QUESTIONNAIRE FOR FOREIGN EMPLOYEES WORKING IN SOCIAL SERVICES

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### Foreign Workers in Social Sector QUESTIONNAIRE Employees

Dear Madam, dear Sir,

as part of the **Foreign Workers in Social Services** project, we try to identify the fundamental barriers that you, as foreign workers, face to access and participate in the labour market. By completing this questionnaire, you will help us better understand your needs and create a better working condition for foreign workers in the country you live in. The questionnaire is anonymous.

---

#### I. TELL US ABOUT YOURSELF

1. Please indicate your country of origin: .....

2. You are:

- male
- female

3. How old are you:

- up to 25 years
- from 26 to 35 years
- from 36 to 45 years
- from 46 to 55 years
- 56 years and more

4. Your highest educational attainment:

- primary (including incomplete)
- secondary education
- university degree / tertiary education
- other (trainee, apprentice, ...), please specify.....

5. What was the reason for your decision to work abroad? (Multiple answers are possible.)

- financial reasons
- poor prospects in your country
- family / friend reasons
- study / education
- political reasons / security issues / war / environment
- other, please specify: .....

**6. What was the reason you went to work in .....? (Multiple answers are possible.)**

- family / friends
- knowledge of the language
- close culture
- interest in living in this country
- bilateral conventions that facilitate migration in this country
- other, please specify: .....

**II. TELL US ABOUT YOUR CAREER, SKILLS AND TRAINING**

**7. How long have you been working in this country? (a sum for all jobs)**

- under 1 year
- from 1 to 5 years
- more than 5 years

**8. Did you have experience of working in social services before you started your current job?**

- Yes
- No

**9. Did you benefit from any support - other than language - to enter to your job?**

- I have been asked what I can do professionally or/and passed some professional tests.
- I have been trained in my current job.
- I have been trained on culture / habits / legal framework of the country
- I have been supported by a colleague in charge of doing so or by an external service.

**If you answered yes to one of these questions, has it been useful for you and tell us why?.....**

**10. Do you use your qualifications in your current job?**

- Yes
- No

**11. Please indicate your job position in your current job**

- care giver (carer, care assistant, home care worker, etc.)
- social worker (community social work, child, family, school social work, etc.)
- health worker (nurse, medical doctor, nutritionist, etc.)
- pedagogical worker
- technical, administrative and economic worker
- operational worker (professional in support functions).
- Manager

**12. How did you find your current job (Multiple answers are possible.)**

- advertisement
- from a job agency in your home country
- from a job agency in ....
- from a support agency for foreign workers
- from a friend / relative
- other, please specify: .....

**13. Was it difficult for you to get a work permit?**

- I did not have to provide any document
- Another person/a job agent took care of the permit for me
- No
- Yes

If YES, why: .....

**14. Was it difficult for you to provide proof of the necessary education/degree?**

- I didn't have to provide any proof
- Another person/a job agent helped me with the documentation
- No
- Yes

If YES, why: .....

**15. How satisfied are you at your current job? (Scale 1 = not satisfied, 5 = very satisfied)**

- |  |   |   |   |   |   |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| <input type="radio"/> working environment          | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| <input type="radio"/> relationship with colleagues | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| <input type="radio"/> relationship with managers   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| <input type="radio"/> salary                       | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

**III. TELL US ABOUT LANGUAGE ASPECTS**

**16. How would you rate the level of your knowledge of .... language? (Scale 1 = low level, 5 = excellent level)**

- |                                 |   |   |   |   |   |
|---------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|
| <input type="radio"/> speaking  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| <input type="radio"/> listening | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| <input type="radio"/> reading   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| <input type="radio"/> writing   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

**17. Have you been involved in any activities to help improve your language skills (multiple answers are possible):**

- language course provided by the employer
- language course outside your job
- training on job specific vocabulary and language
- help / mentoring from one specific person or your colleagues
- Other, please specify ....

**IV. TELL US ABOUT YOUR LIFE IN THE HOST COUNTRY**

**18. Have you experienced any kind of discrimination at work (due to your nationality, ethnicity, culture, religion, skin colour, etc.)**

.....

**19. Was it difficult for you to find housing?**

- Yes
- No
- No, I did not have to arrange housing
- No, my housing was provided by the employer

**20. Have you received any kind of support facilitating your integration into the new place of residence?**

- Yes, through my employer
- Yes, outside my job
- From
- Other, please specify .....

**V. TELL US WHAT COULD BE DONE TO IMPROVE YOUR SITUATION**

**Space for your comment, clarification (e.g. what other support do you need or miss, what are the barriers associated with your integration, what could be done to improve your situation etc.):**

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

If you are interested in sharing with us more in a face to face conversation, please indicate your contact information (name, phone or email) or please contact ..... **tel., email** and we will get back to you. The research will be anonymous and will help to identify the barriers to employment, the main problems, etc. By participating in the research, you can also help foreign workers get a job in another country and solve employment problems.





**FWSS**

Foreign Workers in Social Sector