

RETURNEES

FACTSHEET

The state of Estonia supports the return of people who have lived abroad for a long time and their descendants to Estonia and their adaptation here. People who have lived outside Estonia for more than 10 years and who have Estonian citizenship or an alien's passport are called returnees.

In order to better understand the problems that returnees are facing during adaptation after their return, we included this target group in the survey Monitoring the Integration of Estonian Society (EIM 2020) for the first time in 2020.

The most common reasons for returning to Estonia are emotional and family-related ones. Forty-five percent of the returnees said that they feel at home in Estonia and 36% highlighted family-related reasons, e.g. joining their families, getting married or caring for a family member. Approximately a quarter of returnees returned to Estonia to live out their retirement.

ADAPTATION IN ESTONIA

Returnees generally feel good in Estonia. The majority are satisfied with the adaptation process (90% of Estonians, 82% of other nationalities) and they feel a strong connection to Estonia.

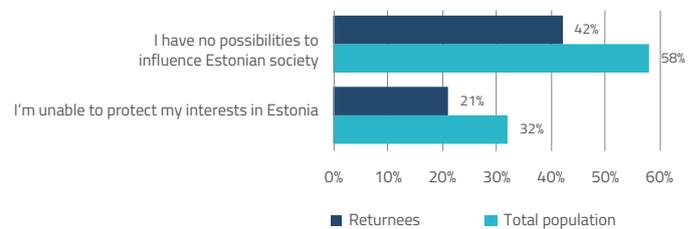
Upon adaptation, returnees get most of the help they need from their relatives, friends and other close contacts and only 8% of them have used the support services provided by the state. Thus, the majority of returnees either don't need these services or aren't aware of them.

PARTICIPATION IN SOCIAL LIFE

The returnees who participated in the survey are somewhat more optimistic about their opportunities to participate in social life than the total population of Estonia.

For example, whilst one third of the total population find that they cannot protect their interests, only one fifth of returnees feel the same. Returnees are also more hopeful about their opportunities to influence the society. However, the share of returnees who used their right to vote in the last parliamentary elections was significantly smaller (45%) than that of the total Estonian electorate (63%).

Figure 1. Attitude towards participation in social life, returnees vs total population.



Source: EIM 2020

SATISFACTION WITH THE ACCESSIBILITY OF SERVICES

Returnees are largely satisfied with the services provided by the state. Their rating of the quality of the official activities and proceedings in Estonia is higher (87%) than that of the rest of the population (80%), as is their opinion of law enforcement and security (94% vs 86%).

They are somewhat less satisfied with the accessibility of social assistance and care services (65% vs 73%). Fifty-eight percent of returnees who have used the services that support the adaptation and settling of returnees are satisfied with the accessibility of such services.

In the case of almost all services, the share of satisfied respondents is considerably smaller among the returnees living in Ida-Viru County than among the returnees living in Tallinn and elsewhere in Estonia. The only exception are social assistance and care services – the satisfaction of the returnees who've settled in Ida-Viru County with these services is higher than the average.

DIFFERENCES BASED ON NATIONALITIES

It must be kept in mind that returnees are not a homogeneous group: as is the case with the Estonian population in general, significant differences based on nationalities can be seen in their integration indicators as well.

Estonian returnees are considerably more optimistic about the sense of belonging, participation in social life and services than returnees of other nationalities.

For instance, the dissatisfaction of returnees of other nationalities in the case of services is caused by their inadequate command of the Estonian language. Thus, almost half (48%) feel that there isn't enough information about services in a language suitable to them, and 38% find that services are not provided in a language suitable to them.

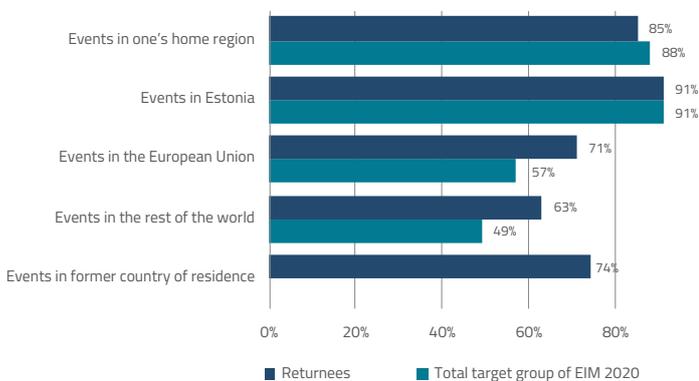
INFORMATION

Returnees are well informed about what is going on in their home area as well as elsewhere in Estonia, and they also keep themselves informed about events in their previous country of residence.

More than half of returnees are also well informed about events in the European Union and the rest of the world. This strongly sets them apart from the total population of Estonia, who are much less informed about these topics.

In addition to traditional media channels, returnees use social media often than general population.

Figure 2. Opinion of being informed (responses "Very well" and "Rather well"), returnees vs total population, %.



Source: EIM 2020

The majority (95%) of returnees feel good in Estonia. The majority of them also see their future in Estonia: 40% certainly don't want to settle permanently in another country and 33% would rather not do it. Only 2% of returnees are certain that they want to leave Estonia permanently.