



# THE CZECH REPUBLIC COUNTRY PROFILE

## DRIM

Danube Region  
Information  
Platform for  
Economic  
Integration of  
Migrants

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## SHORT INTRODUCTION

Immigration into Czechia contributes to the gradual long-term growth of foreign population within the country. The immigrants are mostly motivated by the perspective of integration into the Czech labour market, so it is closely tied to the economic situation of the country. While the number of foreign inhabitants (and workforce) grew throughout most of the last two decades, it dropped significantly as a result of the 2008 economic crisis. The recent economic boom has contributed to the historical maximum of the foreign (immigrant) population of Czechia.

The most numerous groups of immigrants come from Ukraine, Slovakia, Vietnam and Russia. While Ukrainians, Slovaks and Russians can easily learn Czech, which enhances their ability to at least partially integrate into the local population, Vietnamese people struggle to learn the language and have a highly different cultural origin, which complicates their (esp. in the case of the 1st generation of immigrants) ability to socially integrate into the local population (but the Vietnamese people are basically successful in integrating economically).

## TABLE WITH BASIC INFORMATION

Capital: <b>Prague</b>
Official language(s): <b>Czech</b>
Population (end of year 2016): <b>10,578,820<sup>1</sup></b>
Foreigners as percentage of total population (end of year 2016): <b>4.7%<sup>2</sup></b>
Percentage of foreigners in the labour force (end of year 2015): <b>7.7%<sup>3</sup></b>
Unemployment rate (end of year 2016): <b>5.2%<sup>4</sup></b>
Degree of urbanisation, number of cities over 100,000 inhabitants: <b>73% (end of year 2015), 6 cities over 100,000 inhabitants (beginning of year 2016)<sup>5</sup></b>
Country's accession to the EU and the Schengen Area: <b>1 May 2004 (EU), 21 December 2007 (Schengen Area)</b>

<sup>1</sup> Czech Statistical Office, 2017a.

<sup>2</sup> Czech Statistical Office, 2017b.

<sup>3</sup> Czech Statistical Office, 2017b.

<sup>4</sup> Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, 2017.

<sup>5</sup> Czech Statistical Office, 2017a.

## THE MIGRANT POPULATION

The migrant population in Czechia has been growing gradually since the early 1990s. While in 1991, there were only about 38,000 foreign citizens in Czechia, their number has increased to 496,413 persons in December 2016, which was the highest number of foreign-born citizens living in the territory of Czechia throughout modern history. This trend was interrupted only between the years 1999 to 2000 and 2008 to 2010 as a result of the economic crisis and significant job cutbacks.

According to the 2011 census, there were 422,276 foreign citizens living in Czechia (with a total of 10,436,560 residents). Altogether, there were 695,362 foreign-born residents in Czechia (6.7% of the total population), among them 289,573 were born in Slovakia.

Table 1: Basic statistics of the foreign population living in Czechia in 2000-2015

Indicator / Year	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
<b>Foreigners (EU citizens)</b>	89,311	96,535	112,560	133,230	148,154	139,373
<b>Foreigners (non-EU citizens)</b>	164,983	181,777	208,896	259,085	289,411	293,130
<b>Foreigners with refugee status</b>	1,623	1,799	1,887	2,030	1,933	2,097
<b>Foreigners total</b>	<b>255,917</b>	<b>280,111</b>	<b>323,343</b>	<b>394,345</b>	<b>439,498</b>	<b>434,600</b>
<b>% of foreigners in population</b>	2.5	2.7	3.1	3.8	4.2	4.1
<b>N° of applications for international protection</b>	5,459	4,021	3,016	1,878	1,656	1,258
<b>N° of granted subsidiary protections</b>			33	186	141	30
<b>Illegal migration of foreigners - revealed<sup>6</sup></b>	26,129	14,545	10,793	7,549	3,829	4,457

<sup>6</sup> Revealed = registered by the Authorities

Indicator / Year	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Foreigners (EU citizens)	137,830	153,763	163,137	173,593	184,511	195,499
Foreigners (non-EU citizens)	286,461	280,390	272,809	265,596	264,856	269,171
Foreigners with refugee status	2,132	2,166	2,130	2,347	2,556	2,892
<b>Foreigners total</b>	<b>426,423</b>	<b>436,319</b>	<b>438,076</b>	<b>441,536</b>	<b>451,923</b>	<b>467,562</b>
% of foreigners in the population	4.0	4.2	4.2	4.2	4.3	4.4
Nº of applications for international protection	833	756	753	707	1 156	1 525
Nº of granted subsidiary protections	101	261	149	256	295	399
Illegal migration of foreigners - revealed <sup>6</sup>	2,987	3,360	3,595	4,153	4,822	8,563

Source: Czech Statistical Office, 2017b

By the end of 2016, the most populous groups of foreign citizens residing in Czechia were the following (in order from most to least populous): Ukraine, Slovakia, Vietnam, Russia, Germany, Poland, Bulgaria, Romania, USA, Mongolia (Ministry of the Interior, 2017).

The sex structure of the migrant population overall is relatively balanced. According to the Czech Statistical Office (2017b), the percentage of men by the end of 2015 was 56.4% (262,196 persons), while the percentage of women reached 43.6% (202,474 persons) (foreign citizens with refugee status excluded). Among the migrant population, about 10.2% were aged under 14, with most people being of the active working age (84.9%) and only 4.9% of the post-productive age (over 65). The most numerous age category is between 30 and 39 (27% of the total foreign population).

The slight majority of applicants for international protection since 2000 came from European non-EU countries (39,463 out of 69,784 in total). Among those, a significant number of applicants came from Ukraine and Russia (from both countries the peak of applications preceded the accession of Czechia to the EU), Moldova and Belarus. A significant minority of applicants came from Asian countries (24,800), with high numbers of applicants from Vietnam, India, China, Afghanistan, Georgia, Armenia and Mongolia. There were only small numbers of applicants from other continents. In 2015, there were 1,525 applications for international protection submitted and only 71 persons were granted asylum (Czech Statistical Office, 2017b).

# THE CZECH REPUBLIC

## COUNTRY PROFILE



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<http://www.interreg-danube.eu/drim>

At the end of 2016, 38% of foreign citizens were living in Prague. Beside Prague and its metropolitan zone and the second biggest city in the country – Brno, there is a higher concentration of foreigners especially in other cities (and their vicinity) that have a high number of manufacturing jobs, which cannot be occupied by the local population (Pilsen, Mlada Boleslav, Liberec) and also in locations with a traditional concentration of certain national/ethnic groups (e.g. the Russian population in Karlovy Vary). In general, more foreign citizens can be found in the central and north-western part of the country than in other parts.

In the 2015/16 academic year, there were 42,220 foreign students enrolled at Czech universities.

## LABOUR MIGRANT POPULATION

Table 2: Labour migrant population in Czechia in 2000-2015

	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>
<b>Foreigners total</b>	<b>255,917</b>	<b>280,111</b>	<b>323,343</b>	<b>394,345</b>	<b>439,498</b>	<b>434,600</b>
<b>Registered at the Labour Office of the CR</b>	107,984	151,736	185,075	240,242	284,551	230,709
<b>Foreigners holding a trade licence<sup>7</sup></b>	65,219	67,246	65,722	68,785	77,158	87,753
<b>Foreign labour force (total)</b>	173,203	218,982	250,797	309,027	361,709	318,462
<b>Share of foreign workforce in the total labour force</b>	3.4	4.2	4.8	5.9	6.9	6.0

	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>
<b>Foreigners total</b>	<b>426,423</b>	<b>436,319</b>	<b>438,076</b>	<b>441,536</b>	<b>451,923</b>	<b>467,562</b>
<b>Registered at the Labour Office of the CR</b>	215,367	217,862	NA	NA	260,999	323,244
<b>Foreigners holding a trade licence<sup>2</sup></b>	90,983	93,059	91,040	85,887	83,569	83,862
<b>Foreign labour force (total)</b>	306,350	310,921	NA	NA	344,568	407,106
<b>Share of foreign workforce in the total labour force</b>	5.8	6.0	NA	NA	6.5	7.7

Source: Czech Statistical Office, 2017b, 2017c

Labour migrant population constitutes the vast majority of total foreign population, so its development determines the overall trend of foreign population growth. Among the labour migrant population, there is a relatively high share of entrepreneurs (trade licence holders). Entrepreneurship is quite widespread among Vietnamese, Ukrainian and

<sup>7</sup> Trade license holders = entrepreneurs.

Slovakian nationals. According to the Czech Statistical Office (2017c), the most popular sector among the labour migrant population is the manufacturing industry, followed by administrative and support service activities, the trade sector and construction (end of year 2015).

Since a vast majority of the foreign population consists of a foreign labour force, we can assume that the geographic distribution of the foreign labour force is similar to the distribution of the foreign population as a whole. The foreign labour force is concentrated in the Prague and Brno metropolitan zone as well as in other bigger cities and their surroundings, where there is a high supply of manufacturing jobs (Pilsen, Mlada Boleslav, Liberec). A specific trend is the concentration of the Vietnamese population along the German (esp. Saxony) border, where they run retail and other service facilities for German clients.

## POLICIES AND APPROACHES TO (LABOUR) MIGRANTS

The integration policies of Czechia have existed since the 1990s and are regularly updated. The recent [Updated Policy for the Integration of Foreign Nationals](#) has been approved by the Government of the Czech Republic in January 2016. The Policy relies on the involvement of a number of ministerial departments (the Ministry of the Interior; the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs; the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports; the Ministry of Industry and Trade; the Ministry of Health; the Ministry for Regional Development and the Ministry of Culture) as well as other partners (non-governmental non-profit organisations and foreign nationals' organisations, regional and local governments, academic sphere, etc.). A Report on the Implementation of the Policy for the Integration of Foreign Nationals is presented to the government on an annual basis.

The policy for the integration of foreign nationals is focused not only on supporting the integration of legally residing foreign nationals into society but especially on the prevention of possible problems within immigrants' communities and their relationships with the majority. All the integration policy activities aim to avoid the formation of closed immigrant communities, social isolation and the social exclusion of foreign citizens. The goal is to maintain social cohesion and a harmonic conflict-free coexistence of all inhabitants of the country. The tools aimed at achieving this consist of increasing the knowledge of the Czech language among immigrants (e.g. through government-sponsored language courses), economic and social self-sufficiency (e.g. through spreading information about labour market conditions and rules among foreigners with special attention given to foreign jobseekers registered at the Labour Office of the Czech Republic), socio-cultural orientation within society (e.g. through adaptation and integration courses), and enabling good relationships between communities (e.g. by

supporting common activities of foreigners and the majority population, and intercultural dialogue).

Although the integration policy is a long-term Government agenda in Czechia, the country still struggles to offer favourable conditions for the integration of immigrants in some fields. According to MIPEX (2017), Czechia offers slightly unfavourable conditions for the integration of immigrants in the fields of political participation and education.

## OVERVIEW OF INFORMATION SERVICES FOR MIGRANTS

The most comprehensive information service for foreigners is the [Public Administration Portal](#) that gives an overview of important areas of life and work in the Czech Republic. The website exists only in the Czech and English language. Czech.cz is the official website of the Czech Republic run by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, providing general information about the country, working, living, business, tourism, and culture in the country. The [website](#) is accessible in English, French, German, Russian and Spanish. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs gives information regarding entry, residence and visa. This [website](#) is accessible in Czech and English.

Furthermore, Centres for the Support of the Integration of Foreigners are a network of governmental regional integration centres. Their [website](#) is accessible in Czech, English, Russian, Mongolian and Vietnamese. Useful information for foreign jobseekers about the rules and options in the Czech labour market can be found at the Labour Office of the Czech Republic. Its [website](#) is accessible in Czech, English, and Russian. Information regarding education in general, the recognition of qualification and education in the Czech Republic, Czech language exams, and the Czech Life and Institutions Exam (for permanent residence and citizenship applicants) is available at the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports under section “EU and International Affairs”. The [website](#) is accessible in Czech and English.



## KEY STAKEHOLDERS (STATE/INTERNATIONAL/NGO SECTOR)

### Public institutions:

- Ministry of Foreign Affairs: Information regarding entry & residence, visa information, [http://www.mzv.cz/jnp/en/information\\_for.aliens/index.html](http://www.mzv.cz/jnp/en/information_for.aliens/index.html)
- Ministry of the Interior: migration policy, asylum policy, integration, rules and requirements, registration of foreigners/immigrants, <http://www.mvcr.cz/mvcren/article/immigration.aspx>
- Centres for the Support of the Integration of Foreigners: network of governmental regional integration centres, <http://www.integracnicentra.cz/>
- Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs: employment of foreigners, green cards, etc., [https://portal.mpsv.cz/sz/zahr\\_zam](https://portal.mpsv.cz/sz/zahr_zam)
- Labour Office of the Czech Republic, <https://portal.mpsv.cz/upcr>
- Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, <http://www.msmt.cz/eu-and-international-affairs>

### NGOs:

- Centre for Integration of Foreigners, <http://www.cicpraha.org/en/aktuality/aktuality.html>
- META, o.p.s.: support of foreigners in education and labour integration, <http://www.meta-ops.cz/en/>

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