

Citizens of the European Union in the Czech Republic

Survey analysis report

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Prague, January 2021

The survey is carried out as part of the project “Reinforcing the activities of the Public Defender of Rights in the protection of human rights (with the aim of establishing a National Human Rights Institution in the Czech Republic)”, No. LP-PDP3-001. This project is financed from the EEA and Norway Grants 2014-2021 and the State budget of the Czech Republic.

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1. BASIC INFORMATION

	Project name:	Citizens of the European Union in the Czech Republic
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	Name:	Office of the Public Defender of Rights
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	Contact person:	Mgr. et Mgr. Marína Urbániková, PhD., Head of the Research Department
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2. INTRODUCTION

2.1 Definition of the focus group

In accordance with the specifications, the focus group was defined as citizens of EU Member States other than the Czech Republic who currently reside in the Czech Republic and carry out dependent activities in the country (regardless of whether they are recorded as employees or self-employed persons), and are 18 years or older. The focus group respects the quotas specified below (p. 14).

2.2 Objectives

The survey aims to examine the experience of migrant workers from the European Union and their family members currently residing in the Czech Republic, in various areas of life: in particular, in the areas of work and employment, healthcare and dealing with authorities. The survey aimed to identify barriers in the individual areas, with special emphasis on work and employment, including employment via employment agencies.

3. REFERENCES

The aim of this chapter is to:

- a. outline the general framework for this study in terms of the broader context provided by statistical data of the Czech Statistical Office, the Foreign Police, the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, the Ministry of Industry and Trade, and any other entities collecting data concerning the presence of foreign nationals in the territory of the Czech Republic;
- b. compare the outputs of this study with recent research projects focusing on similar topics, and identify any links, confirmations and discrepancies in the topics compared.

3.1 Statistical information

The latest statistics available as of 31 December 2019 confirm a clear predominance of four selected countries (Slovakia, Poland, Romania and Bulgaria) among EU countries whose citizens are the most represented on the Czech labour market.

Table 1 indicates that citizens of these four countries occupy the top positions in the list of EU countries in terms of the number of people employed in the Czech Republic, and out of this number, those registered at labour offices and with a valid trade licence, as well as with regard to the number of people with a permanent residence in the Czech Republic.

Employees with Slovak citizenship form a majority (53%) of all EU employees in the Czech Republic (31% of all foreign workers in the Czech Republic). At the end of 2019, workers from Poland made up almost 12% of all EU workers employed in the Czech Republic (7% of all foreign workers in the Czech Republic); workers from Bulgaria accounted for 9% of EU workers (5 % of all foreign workers in the Czech Republic) and the share of Romanian workers was 11% for EU (6.5% of all foreign workers). The mentioned foursome of countries accounting for the highest number of citizens working in the Czech Republic is followed, from among EU countries, by Hungary and Germany (albeit with a substantial gap).

Table 1 – Employment and residence of foreigners according to citizenship as of 31 December 2019 (Source: CSO, 2019)

Country	Employed foreigners total	of which		Residing foreigners total	of which	
		registered at labour offices	with a valid trade licence		permanent residence	employment/residence ratio
Total foreigners	715 651	621 870	93 781	593 366	299 453	1,21
Total EU-28	419 730	383 264	36 466	245 292	92 509	1,71
of which:						
Belgium	939	800	139	846	263	1,11
Bulgaria	37 546	35 720	1 826	17 183	5 714	2,19
Denmark	437	358	79	466	124	0,94
Estonia	280	247	33	246	78	1,14
Finland	517	416	101	440	87	1,18
France	4 738	4 073	665	4 409	1 200	1,07
Croatia	2 157	1 741	416	3 041	2 000	0,71
Ireland	799	587	212	923	241	0,87
Italy	5 851	4 750	1 101	5 682	1 885	1,03
Cyprus	105	84	21	176	66	0,6
Lithuania	2 037	1 894	143	840	366	2,43
Latvia	1 208	1 091	117	656	150	1,84
Luxembourg	40	34	6	29	7	1,38
Hungary	19 982	18 941	1 041	7 675	1 115	2,6
Malta	64	48	16	48	10	1,33
Germany	8 366	5 321	3 045	21 478	4 541	0,39
Netherlands	1 968	1 640	328	3 325	893	0,59
Poland	49 080	46 430	2 650	21 767	10 906	2,25
Portugal	1 273	1 172	101	747	144	1,7
Austria	1 929	1 430	499	3 672	1 129	0,53
Romania	46 724	44 669	2 055	16 824	4 298	2,78
Greece	1 981	1 734	247	1 782	675	1,11
Slovakia	220 987	201 952	19 035	121 278	53 045	1,82
Slovenia	473	394	79	509	194	0,93
Spain	3 126	2 689	437	1 804	411	1,73
Sweden	760	585	175	1 114	301	0,68
United Kingdom	6 363	4 464	1 899	8 332	2 666	0,76
Other countries	295 921	238 606	57 315	348 074	206 944	0,85
total						
of which:						
Ukraine	167 038	144 114	22 924	145 153	86 831	1,15
Vietnam	34 668	13 935	20 733	61 910	52 441	0,56
Russia	20 358	16 912	3 446	38 010	21 995	0,54

Source: MoLSA, MoIT, the Foreign Police

Table 2 – Employment of foreign nationals in administrative regions as of 31 December 2019 (Source: CSO, 2019)

Administrative region	Employed foreigners total		of which			
			registered at labour offices		with a valid trade licence	
	total	of which women	total	of which women	total	of which women
ČESKÁ REPUBLIKA	715 651	262 733	621 870	232 717	93 781	30 016
Capital City of Prague	249 667	104 618	212 422	91 547	37 245	13 071
Central Bohemia Region	111 029	34 951	100 406	31 564	10 623	3 387
South Bohemian Region	23 541	7 562	20 740	6 685	2 801	877
Plzeň Region	63 570	23 130	57 994	21 333	5 576	1 797
Karlovy Vary Region	17 639	7 806	12 986	5 980	4 653	1 826
Ústí Region	27 931	8 502	20 050	6 297	7 881	2 205
Liberec Region	21 708	8 559	19 059	7 818	2 649	741
Hradec Králové Region	25 040	7 893	22 484	7 172	2 556	721
Pardubice Region	26 525	9 094	24 303	8 498	2 222	596
Vysočina Region	14 103	4 320	12 604	3 887	1 499	433
South Moravian Region	71 890	26 326	64 363	24 173	7 527	2 153
Olomouc Region	13 537	3 896	11 245	3 274	2 292	622
Zlín Region	15 010	5 144	13 111	4 612	1 899	532
Moravian-Silesian Region	34 461	10 932	30 103	9 877	4 358	1 055

Source: MoLSA, MoIT

Of non-EU Member States, the highest numbers of workers are, by some margin, from Ukraine, followed by Vietnam and Russia. The number of Ukrainians permanently residing in the Czech Republic (almost 87,000) exceeds the aggregate of Slovaks, Poles, Bulgarians and Romanians with permanent residence in the country (little less than 74,000). The number of Vietnamese nationals with a permanent residence in the Czech Republic is the same as the number of Slovaks (53,000). The number of Russians permanently residing in the Czech Republic (almost 22,000) is approximately equal to the aggregate of Poles, Bulgarians and Romanians with permanent residence (just under 21,000).

If we turn our focus on the numbers of foreigners employed in the individual administrative regions of the Czech Republic, as indicated in Table 2, then Prague will clearly predominate, with one quarter-million of foreign workers (35% of the total number for the Czech Republic), followed at some distance by the Central Bohemian Region (16%), South Moravian Region (10%) and Plzeň Region (9%).

In contrast, the lowest numbers of foreign employees are in the Vysočina Region, Zlín Region and the Karlovy Vary Region (2 to 2.5%), i.e. regions, which belong among the smaller or smallest administrative regions in the Czech Republic also in terms of their population.

3.2 Research projects and analyses with similar topics

The following can be selected from research projects and analyses focusing on the lives and work of foreign nationals in the Czech Republic:

- » Survey of the social situation of foreign nationals in the territory of the Capital City of Prague (Poradna pro integraci, o.s. and Organizace pro pomoc uprchlíkům, o.s., 2010)
- » Foreign nationals in the Czech Republic according to the census (Czech Statistical Office, 2014)
- » Factors preventing the use of immigrants' qualifications on the Czech labour market (Prague Multicultural Centre, 2014)
- » Position and attitudes of migrants with long-term residence in the Czech Republic (Counselling Centre for Citizenship, Civil and Human Rights, 2014)
- » Results of a survey on the working conditions of citizens of Bulgaria, Romania and Moldova in the Czech Republic (Diaconia of the Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren – National Programmes and Services Centre, 2014)
- » Analysis of the current situation in the area of foreigner integration in the Czech Republic (Ministry of the Interior of the Czech Republic, 2016)

Given the differing objectives, and thus also the focus of the studies (topics under scrutiny and the phrasing of questions), different methodologies (focus group specification, quantitative vs. qualitative methods, data collection techniques, sample size and structure, etc.), the studies cannot be fully comparable. Moreover, the overview above shows that most of the studies were carried out 5 to 6 years ago. The present study "Citizens of the European Union in the Czech Republic" thus provides no information on developments over time or any direct comparison with the previous studies, but rather complements and elaborates on new topics and new information for a specifically defined focus group.

In spite of the above, it can be stated that the main problem areas where disadvantages are perceived and where discrimination might occur on the labour market are recurrent and persist. These are the same topics (difficulties in employing foreign nationals on the labour market – in job search; finding a job corresponding to the foreigner's qualifications and education; the work conditions in general, and specifically at employment agencies; non-compliance with the statutory duties of employers – failure to provide the agreed wages, failure to pay for overtime work and failure to pay for employees' social and health insurance; barriers in professional and career advancement; non-compliance with legal regulations in dismissal).

All these perceived disadvantages – manifestations of potential discrimination are also apparent from the results of the present study, i.e. also in the case of EU citizens. It could perhaps be assumed that EU citizens would enjoy better conditions in the Czech Republic than foreign workers from non-EU countries. While no direct comparison is at hand, the list of problems is nevertheless similar in the case of EU citizens in 2020.

Along with the labour market, foreign nationals feel disadvantaged in the long term on the real estate market and in housing in general, and to a lesser degree, also in the provision of healthcare services, and occasionally in education. However, these cases are only a matter of individual statements recorded within qualitative surveys and individual interviews; no quantification (data clearly describing the scope and depth of these problems) is available. The results of these research projects confirm that one of the main conclusions is still valid – that disadvantages are perceived and potential discrimination occurs especially in cases where the foreigner has no or limited knowledge of Czech.

4. METHODOLOGY

Based on the terms of reference, the study consists of two parts: quantitative and qualitative research.

The client and MindBridge Consulting a.s. established a joint team to co-ordinate the individual steps and ensure communication at all stages of the project's implementation.

4.1 Methodology of the quantitative part

Method, sample size and length of the questionnaire

To achieve the objectives of the study's quantitative part and to cover all the fundamental topics, MindBridge Consulting carried out a detailed **quantitative study on a sample of 1,021 respondents** using an approved **questionnaire** and a **quota sampling** method.

The research questionnaire was prepared by the client and finalised by MindBridge Consulting in accordance with the specifications so as to cover all the defined topics and reflect the focus group. The average **duration** of the interviews was **19 minutes**.

English, Romanian, Bulgarian and Polish versions of the questionnaire were drawn up based on the approved Czech version.

Data collection technique

All quantitative research parts were based on data collection by means of an interview, i.e. a procedure in which the information required is obtained in direct interaction with the respondent. All the interviews in the quantitative research were conducted in the form of **personal interviews (face to face)**.

A face-to-face interview is one of the most frequent methods of quantitative marketing research and/or public opinion polls. As the name indicates, the interviewer communicates with the respondent face to face. This is a “one-on-one” controlled interview aimed to determine the respondent’s attitudes and reactions.

A face-to-face interview is usually longer than interviews in telephone or online surveys. Another advantage lies in the interviewer’s physical presence, which makes it easier for the respondent to stay focused. Face-to-face interviews also make it possible to use incentives, such as printed question cards with a list of possible answers, leaflets, photographs of packaging or actual products, logos, etc. However, the interviewer must refrain from influencing the respondent in any way. In order for the research results to be relevant, it is necessary to avoid making suggestions or excessively explaining the individual questions.

In this survey, the interviewer was allowed to provide the respondent with the relevant language version of the questionnaire or the respondent was able to look into the questionnaire during the interview (this is generally not admissible in a face-to-face interview). The vast majority of the interviews took place in the Czech language with the support of questionnaires in other language versions. In exceptional cases, the interview was held directly in English or in Polish.

In view of the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic and the Government’s epidemiological measures, “self completion” and online data collection methodologies were at hand as backup options (permitted by the client; again, in all language versions), but none of these backup methodologies were eventually used; consequently, 100% of the sample was carried out through face-to-face interviews as described above.

Project implementation procedure

A **questionnaire** was designed for the defined focus group, commented on and finalised in the preparatory phase. In view of its structure, selection of the suitable type of questions and specification of the precise formulations, also using pilot questionnaires, the questionnaire served as the basic underlying document – along with question cards and quota breakdowns – for field data collection by the interviewers.

Selected and trained interviewers addressed and questioned the respondents based on a **quota breakdown** reflecting the individual socio-demographic and geographic characteristics (see the table below) and according to the project manager’s instructions. The quota breakdown was specified by the client and was based on statistical information from the Czech Statistical Office regarding the structure of foreign nationals from EU countries working in the Czech Republic at the end of 2019 (see chapter 3.1 Statistical information).

Once an interview was completed, the data were checked, processed and analysed for the relevant part of the project.

The work by interviewers and co-ordinators was checked continuously during the questioning and data processing, along with checks of the questionnaires and data, including compliance with the quotas for attaining the required structure and size of the sample.

Control

The quality of the interviewers’ work was controlled in dual form. The first round of **control focused on the logical and substantive accuracy of the data obtained**. This was followed by a **request for feedback from the respondents**. The objective of the control system is to provide the client with maximum-quality data, while guaranteeing compliance with the minimum number of respondents.

Coding and processing (semi-)open questions

The answers to open questions were assigned to other answers and the respondent’s socio-demographic characteristics so that they could be sorted according to these characteristics. Extracts of open questions were drawn up based on the first 30% complete interviews; these were used as a basis for **the coding key** according to the frequency of certain spontaneous answers, or according to repeated key words. The coding key is a list of codes assigned to the most frequently occurring spontaneous answers, with synonyms or related / similar statements in terms of meaning ascribed to them based on logical links. The coding key (with a certain modification) was then used for coding all open questions.

The final statistical processing of open questions – quantification took place absolutely identically (processing and sorting) as for the answers to closed questions, where detailed “verbatim” (respondents’ authentic statements) were available for detailed analysis of the given question and primarily for the interpretation of results.

Data acquisition

Once field data collection was completed, the **data were acquired through a pair of mutually independent operators** using a special program. The thus-acquired data were **subsequently checked by a supervisor**, who remedied any variances in the two acquisitions (based on inspection of the physical questionnaires).

The acquisition SW is always set to permissible (expectable) values (e.g. limitation of response codes).

Computer technology was then used for a substantive and logical check, a check of completeness and the logic of jumps and filters, search for extremely low and high values (comparison with the questionnaire value) and also a check of the data file consistency. The data were analysed for validity and reliability, and inconsistent responses were removed from the resulting data.

Data analysis description

MindBridge Consulting uses **SPSS** (IBM SPSS Statistics 20) for **data processing**, and the resulting data files are in the .sav or .sys format; the MS Excel .xlsx format is also used.

The analysis procedure started with a descriptive analysis and first- and second-level sorting, and ended with an explanatory analysis. A frequency analysis was used predominantly, supplemented for all the questions by second-level classification – contingency tables, which made it possible to determine whether the answers differed in individual socio-demographic or socio-economic groups.

The data analysis focused in detail on the whole basic sample and also on supplementary sub-samples (partial samples) drawn up in the form of separate work analyses. Data interpretation was based on commenting

Selected parameters of quantitative research – structure of the quantitative research sample

questioning method*:	face-to-face questioning
focus group (FG)*:	EU citizens (outside the Czech Republic) working in the Czech Republic
sample size*:	1 021 respondents
selection method*:	quota sampling
nationality (citizenship)*:	52% Slovakia, 14% Poland, 11% Romania, 9% Bulgaria, 14% remaining EU countries (except the Czech Republic)
region*:	35% Prague, 17% Central Bohemian Region, 8% Plzeň Region, 10% South Moravian Region, 30% remaining administrative regions
education category:	7% primary education (including incomplete education), 40% secondary, without graduation examination, 34% secondary, with graduation examination, 19% higher and university education
age categories:	5% 18–24 years, 32% 25–34 years, 31% 35–44 years, 23% 45–54 years, 9% 55 years and older
sex (gender)*:	65% men and 35% women
period of implementation:	November – December 2020

(*parameters and quotas according to the specifications)

on the differences in the results as compared to the base (total) determined at a 99% (or 95%) statistical significance level.

4.2 Methodology of the qualitative part

Method, sample size and length of the script

To achieve the objectives of the study's qualitative part and to cover all the fundamental topics, MindBridge Consulting carried out **30 semi-structured in-depth interviews** based on an approved **script**.

The script was prepared by the client and finalised by MindBridge Consulting in accordance with the specifications so as to cover all the defined topics and reflect the focus group. The average **duration** of the in-depth interviews was **51 minutes**.

English, Spanish, Romanian, Bulgarian and Polish versions of the script were drawn up for the interviewers (moderators) and interpreters based on the approved Czech version.

Data collection technique

All qualitative research parts were based on data collection in the form of a **semi-structured in-depth interview**.

In view of the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic and the Government's epidemiological measures, **9** in-depth interviews were carried out using the **Skype or Zoom** application (on request of the respondent and with the client's consent). **A total of 21 interviews were carried out face-to-face**.

Project implementation procedure

A **script** was designed for the defined focus group, commented on and finalised in the preparatory phase. In view of its structure, selection of the suitable topics and estimated time allowance, the script became the basic underlying document for the work of interviewers (moderators) in field data collection.

Selected and trained interviewers (moderators) proceeded in addressing and questioning the respondents according to the set **criteria**. Thus, in accordance with the specifications, the respondents were divided into 3 groups (ten respondents each): 1) agency workers (employees of an employment agency); 2) foreign workers from Poland, Romania and Bulgaria; 3) foreign workers from other EU countries (i.e. except for Poland, Romania, Bulgaria, Slovakia and the Czech Republic).

In the recruitment of respondents for the semi-structured in-depth interviews, MindBridge Consulting a.s. co-operated with the client and further entities (in particular, the South-Moravian Foreigner Integration Centre; "Most Pro" Pardubice; Co-ordination Centre for Foreigners in the Kvasiny Industrial Zone; Brno City Hall), which mediated contact with a part of the respondents.

A total of 5 interviewers (moderators) conducted the interviews; the study analyst (both parts) carried out personally 24 interviews and the remaining 6 interviews were conducted by 4 interviewers (moderators).

Before the commencement of each interview, the respondent was asked – in line with the GDPR and the code of ethics for market research and public opinion polls – to provide written consent to making an audiovisual recording of the interview, which served as a basis for the analysis. A transcript of each recording was subsequently made in Czech or English.

The interviews took place in Prague, Pardubice, Brno, Rychnov nad Kněžnou and Mladá Boleslav. Given the Government's measures to combat the Covid-19 pandemic, it was relatively difficult to find suitable premises for face-to-face in-depth interviews. MindBridge thus used its own offices, as well as premises of the Brno City Hall and of the Co-ordination Centre for Foreigners in the Kvasiny Industrial Zone, and some interviews were also conducted in a restaurant or the respondent's household.

A total of 12 interviews were carried out in Czech without an interpreter and 6 in English without an interpreter, 5 were interpreted from/to Bulgarian, 4 from/to Polish, 2 from/to Romanian and 1 from/to Spanish. The condition laid down in the specifications that at least 10 interviews be conducted in a language other than Czech or Slovak was thus met.

Each respondent in the qualitative part received a compensation for the interview (CZK 300). One respondent refused to accept the compensation.

Selected parameters and sample structure for the qualitative research

questioning method*:	semi-structured in-depth interviews (in-depth interviews - IDI)
focus group (FG)*:	EU citizens (outside the Czech Republic) working in the Czech Republic
sample size*:	30 respondents
nationality (citizenship)*:	9 Polish, 4 Romanian, 6 Bulgarian, 3 Hungarian, 3 Italian, 2 Dutch, 1 Spanish, 1 Greek, 1 Croatian
employment relationship*:	10 agency workers; 20 regular employees
work categories (current positions in the Czech Republic):	14 plant and machine operators (on a manufacturing line), 2 scientists, 2 administrative workers, 2 teachers, 2 IT professionals, 3 professional officers/managers, 1 logistic expert, 1 consultant, 1 real estate broker, 1 financial specialist, 1 employee in gastronomy
duration of stay/work in the Czech Republic:	10 cases: up to 3 years, 8 cases: 3-5 years, 4 cases: 5-10 years, 8 cases: over 10 years
age categories:	4 persons up to 30 years, 9 31-40 years, 11 41-50 years, 6 over 50 years
sex (gender)*:	17 men and 13 women
period of implementation:	November 2020 – January 2021

(*parameters and quotas according to the specifications)

5. RESULTS OF THE STUDY – QUANTITATIVE PART

— This chapter describes the survey results focusing on the signs of a disadvantage for (potential discrimination against) EU citizens on the Czech labour market.

5.1 Areas of disadvantage on the labour market

This chapter analyses the individual areas of the labour market – job search; remuneration; assignment of work; (career) advancement; learning opportunities; dismissals, and other areas in terms of various parameters and aspects related to the foreigners working in the Czech Republic. The criteria / features were, in particular: citizenship – EU country; sex (gender); age; education; type of residence; duration of residence; type of employment contract; employment via an agency or directly with the employer; work assignment / position / category; administrative region where the work is performed; the level of knowledge of the Czech language, etc.

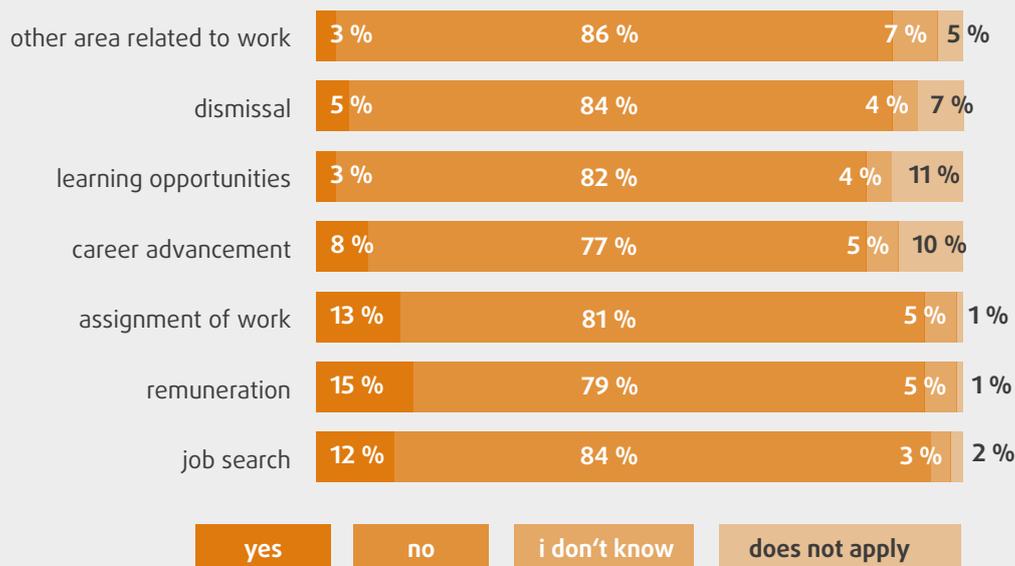
5.1.1 AREAS OF DISADVANTAGE ON THE LABOUR MARKET – OVERALL

In this subchapter, we first identify those areas that can be considered the most problematic for the whole focus group of EU citizens working in the Czech Republic.

Chart 1 – Areas of disadvantage on the labour market – overall

Q 1: “Have you ever felt you’re being discriminated [against] at work during your stay in the Czech Republic because of your nationality or citizenship? We are interested in knowing if you have felt that you were treated less favourably in comparison to the Czech employees because of your nationality or citizenship (including the limited knowledge of Czech or a foreign accent). Have you ever felt you’re being discriminated [against] in any of the following areas?”

Base: EU citizens working in the Czech Republic; n=1 021



From among the areas of the labour market presented to the respondents in the survey which we asked the respondents about, three were identified which concerned almost all EU citizens working in the Czech Republic and where the relatively highest proportions of disadvantages / potential discrimination were identified.

These include the areas of **job search, remuneration and assignment of work**. In these areas, the overall incidence of disadvantages was between 12 and 15% (job search 12%, assignment of work 13%, remuneration 15%). In other words, 12 to 15% of the EU citizens working in the Czech Republic stated that they had felt disadvantaged in these areas during their stay in the Czech Republic due to their nationality or citizenship (including knowledge of the Czech language or foreign accent), i.e. that they had been treated less favourably than Czech employees

Based on the respondents’ answers, issues related to **learning opportunities and (career) advancement** do not apply to all EU foreigners working in the Czech Republic. Approximately one tenth of them stated that these areas were not of concern for them and approximately 5% were unable to comment on the learning opportunities and career advancement. Unavailability of possible career growth or advancement, as well as unavailability of learning opportunities in employment were most apparent among workers from Romania. This does not refer directly to a feeling of disadvantage (this will be broken down by the countries in the next subchapter), but the share of answers “does not apply” was significantly higher among Romanian respondents. They were assigned to positions and jobs where advancement and learning are generally not expected, either by the employer or by the employees themselves. A certain disadvantage or discrimination was felt by 8% of the respondents with regard to options for career advancement and by 3% in terms of learning. On the other hand, the lowest ratios of a perceived disadvantage in career advancement (6%) was recorded for citizens from other EU countries outside Slovakia, Poland, Romania and Bulgaria.

Approximately one tenth did not deal with a possible disadvantage in **dismissals** (7% do not consider this relevant and 4% do not know). In total, 5% of the EU citizens working in the Czech Republic felt injustice or a disadvantage on grounds of their nationality, citizenship or language skills with regard to dismissals.

5.1.2 AREAS OF DISADVANTAGE ON THE LABOUR MARKET – ACCORDING TO INDIVIDUAL CHARACTERISTICS

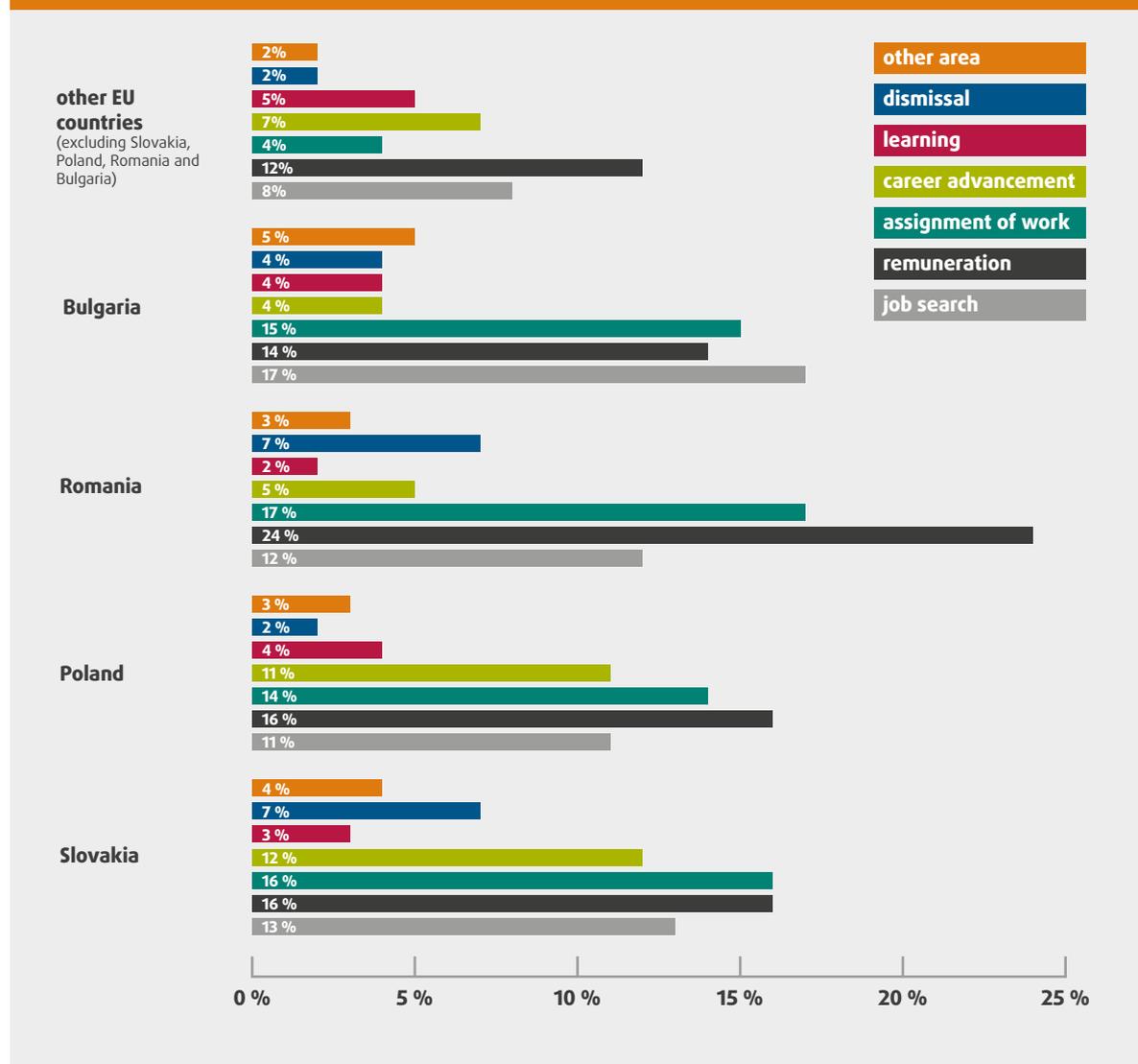
If we analyse only those cases where EU citizens working in the Czech Republic actually felt a certain disadvantage as compared to Czech employees (disregarding answers “does not apply” and “I do not know”, i.e. based on “yes” and “no” answers), it is clear that the biggest problem of perceived discrimination on the Czech labour market lies, in the foreigners’ view, specifically in remuneration of Romanian nationals. **A total of 24% Romanian workers employed in the Czech Republic feel a disadvantage in the area of remuneration.**

It holds in general that feelings of disadvantage in the areas of assignment of work and job search on the Czech market are more frequent among citizens of selected countries (Slovakia, Poland, Romania, Bulgaria – 11 to 17%) than among the citizens of other EU countries (4% and 8%, respectively) – see Chart 2.

Chart 2 – Areas of disadvantage on the labour market – according to citizenship

Q 1: “Have you ever felt you’re being discriminated [against] at work during your stay in the Czech Republic because of your nationality or citizenship? We are interested in knowing if you have felt that you were treated less favourably in comparison to the Czech employees because of your nationality or citizenship (including the limited knowledge of Czech or a foreign accent). Have you ever felt you’re being discriminated [against] in any of the following areas?”

Base: EU citizens working in the Czech Republic who felt the given manifestation of disadvantage (response “yes”) = disregarding answers “I do not know” and “does not apply”, supplement to the answer “no”; n=1 021 (Slovakia n=530, Poland n=139, Romania n=114, Bulgaria n=94, other EU countries n=144)



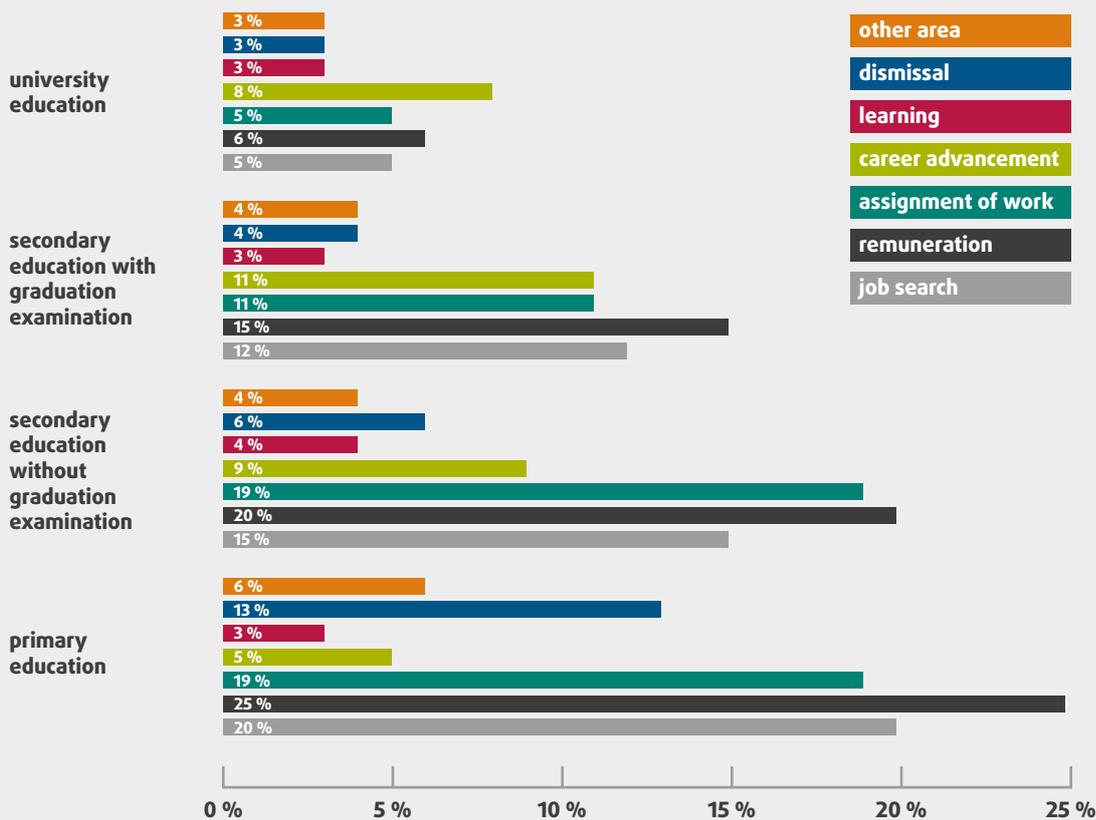
If we analyse the individual areas of the labour market in the Czech Republic in terms of the level of education of workers from EU countries (see Chart 3), it can be seen, as could perhaps be assumed, that discrimination tends to be more perceived by less educated foreign workers.

Indeed, a feeling of discrimination in all areas is significantly lower among university-educated EU workers than among those with secondary education without graduation examination or with merely primary education. The difference is then statistically significant especially in the areas of remuneration (25% primary vs. 6% university), job search (20% primary vs. 5% university), assignment of work (19% equally for primary and secondary without graduation exam vs. 5% university), and dismissals (13% primary vs. 3% university).

Chart 3 – Areas of disadvantage on the labour market – according to education categories

Q 1: “Have you ever felt you’re being discriminated [against] at work during your stay in the Czech Republic because of your nationality or citizenship? We are interested in knowing if you have felt that you were treated less favourably in comparison to the Czech employees because of your nationality or citizenship (including the limited knowledge of Czech or a foreign accent). Have you ever felt you’re being discriminated [against] in any of the following areas?”

Base: EU citizens working in the Czech Republic who felt the given manifestation of disadvantage (response “yes”) = disregarding answers “I do not know” and “does not apply”, supplement to the answer “no”; n=1 021 (primary n=75, secondary without graduation examination n=408, secondary school with graduation examination n=342, university n=196)



Education is closely related to the work position or assignment – work category (see Chart 4). While a feeling of disadvantage is rare among professionals, technicians and associate professionals (1 to 6 % across the areas under scrutiny), the numbers expressing perceived disadvantage at a workplace or on the labour market are significantly higher for plant and machine operators, assemblers and especially elementary occupations. In these two categories, the “highest risks” are involved in the area of remuneration (elementary occupations – 27%), assignment of work (23%), as well as job search (20%) and dismissal (11%).

However, remuneration is an area with a significantly higher (above-average) occurrence of perceived disadvantage also in the category of skilled agricultural, forestry and fishing workers (33%).

Education and work categories are also predetermine to a considerable degree the way a foreign worker is employed in the Czech Republic, whether directly with the employer (regular employee) or via an employment agency, and there is also a link to the type of legal relationship (full/part-time job and type of contract) between the employer and the employee.

There are significant differences between employees hired by an employment agency and regular employees, especially with regard to remuneration and assignment of work. The results of this study show that a feeling of disadvantage as compared to Czech colleagues in the area of remuneration is significantly stronger among employees hired by an employment agency (26%) than among regular employees (13%). In the area of assignment of work, a manifestation of potential discrimination was noted by 22% of EU workers hired by an employment agency (as compared to 12% for regular employees).

In the case of employees working on the basis of an agreement to complete a job or an agreement to perform work, a disadvantage is generally perceived more frequently in comparison to their Czech colleagues than among EU workers directly employed in a full- or part-time job. The most significant difference is in the area of remuneration, where a disadvantage is felt by up to 24% of the EU citizens working in the Czech Republic on the basis of an agreement to complete a job or an agreement to perform work (compared to 16% full-time employees and 3% part-time employees). The situation is significantly different for EU citizens who work as self-employed in the Czech Republic. The feelings of disadvantage are statistically much less significant in this group of foreigners than for employees and those who work based on an agreement to complete a job/ agreement to perform work.

There are no significant differences among EU citizens working in the Czech Republic who belong to age categories of 25-34, 35-44 and 45-54 (see Chart 5). The perception of a disadvantage on the labour market is different in the youngest and the oldest categories of foreign nationals. Among the youngest foreigners (18-24 years), feelings of disadvantage are generally lower in the individual areas (up to 8% in all the areas), and even zero with regard to career advancement (which, however, corresponds to the fact that given their age, these respondents are generally new on the labour market). The area of assignment of work forms an exception to this rule, as up to 18% of the youngest workers from EU countries feel disadvantaged in this regard (as compared to 11-14 % for the category of 25-54 years). A worse result (22%) in the area of assignment of work was recorded only for the highest age category of 55+. EU workers employed in the Czech Republic who are over 54 years of age feel disadvantaged in practically all the areas of the labour market as compared to Czech workers. In addition to the above-mentioned area of assignment of work, there is also a significantly stronger feeling of discrimination in the area of career advancement (19% for 55+ years vs. 8-9 % for 25-54 years), in the area of dismissal (11% for 55+ vs. 3-7 % for 18-54 years), and learning opportunities (8% for 55+ vs. 2-4% for 18-54 years).

Chart 4 – Areas of disadvantage on the labour market – according to work categories

Q 1: “Have you ever felt you’re being discriminated [against] at work during your stay in the Czech Republic because of your nationality or citizenship? We are interested in knowing if you have felt that you were treated less favourably in comparison to the Czech employees because of your nationality or citizenship (including the limited knowledge of Czech or a foreign accent). Have you ever felt you’re being discriminated [against] in any of the following areas?”

Base: currently economically active EU citizens working in the Czech Republic who felt the given manifestation of disadvantage (response “yes”) = disregarding answers “I do not know” and “does not apply”, supplement to the answer “no”; n= 972 (professionals n=92, technicians and associate professionals n=118, clerical support workers n=44, service and sales workers n=218, skilled agricultural, forestry and fishing workers n=31, craft and related trades workers n=92, plant and machine operators, and assemblers n=235, elementary occupations n=142)

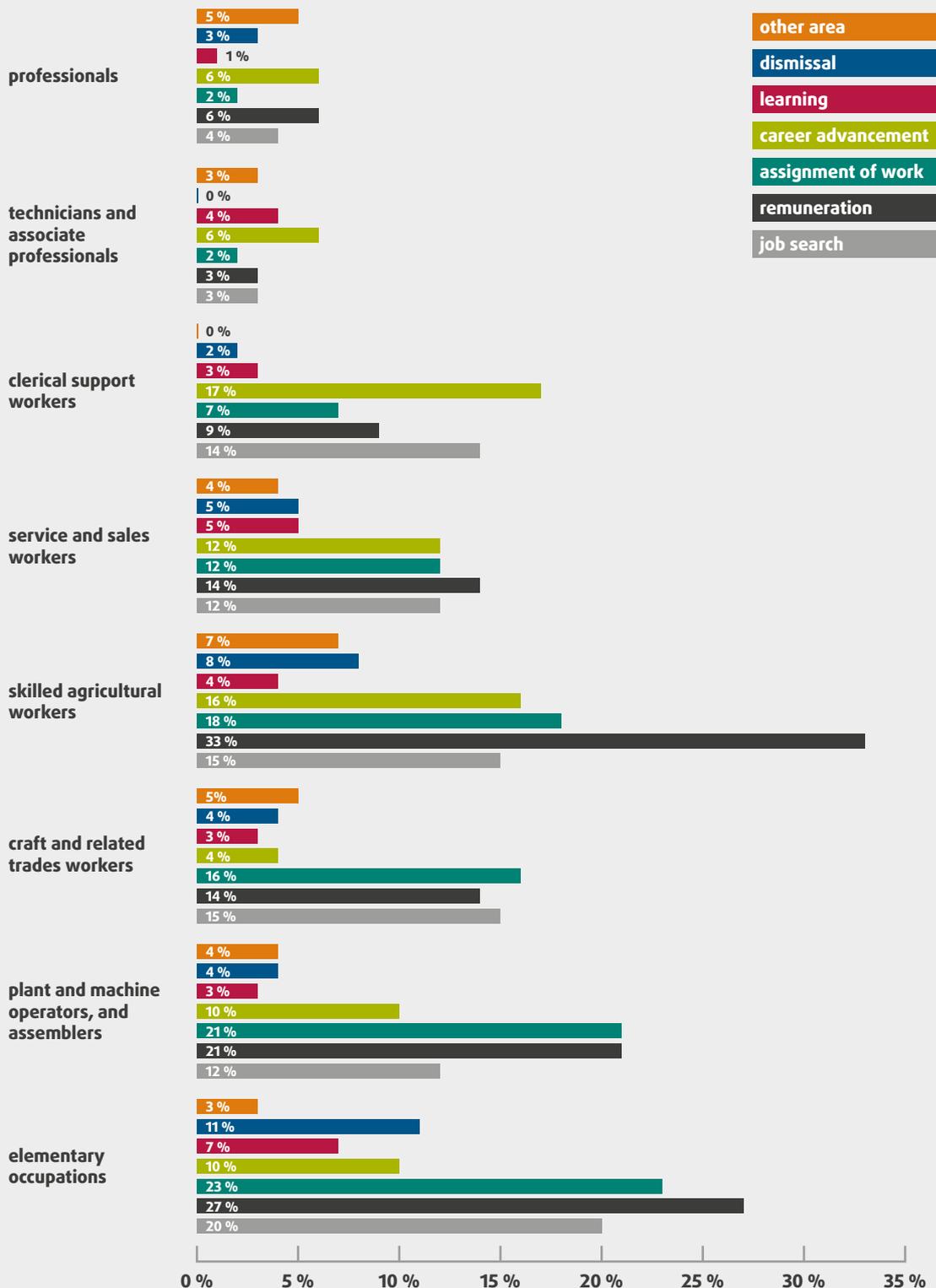
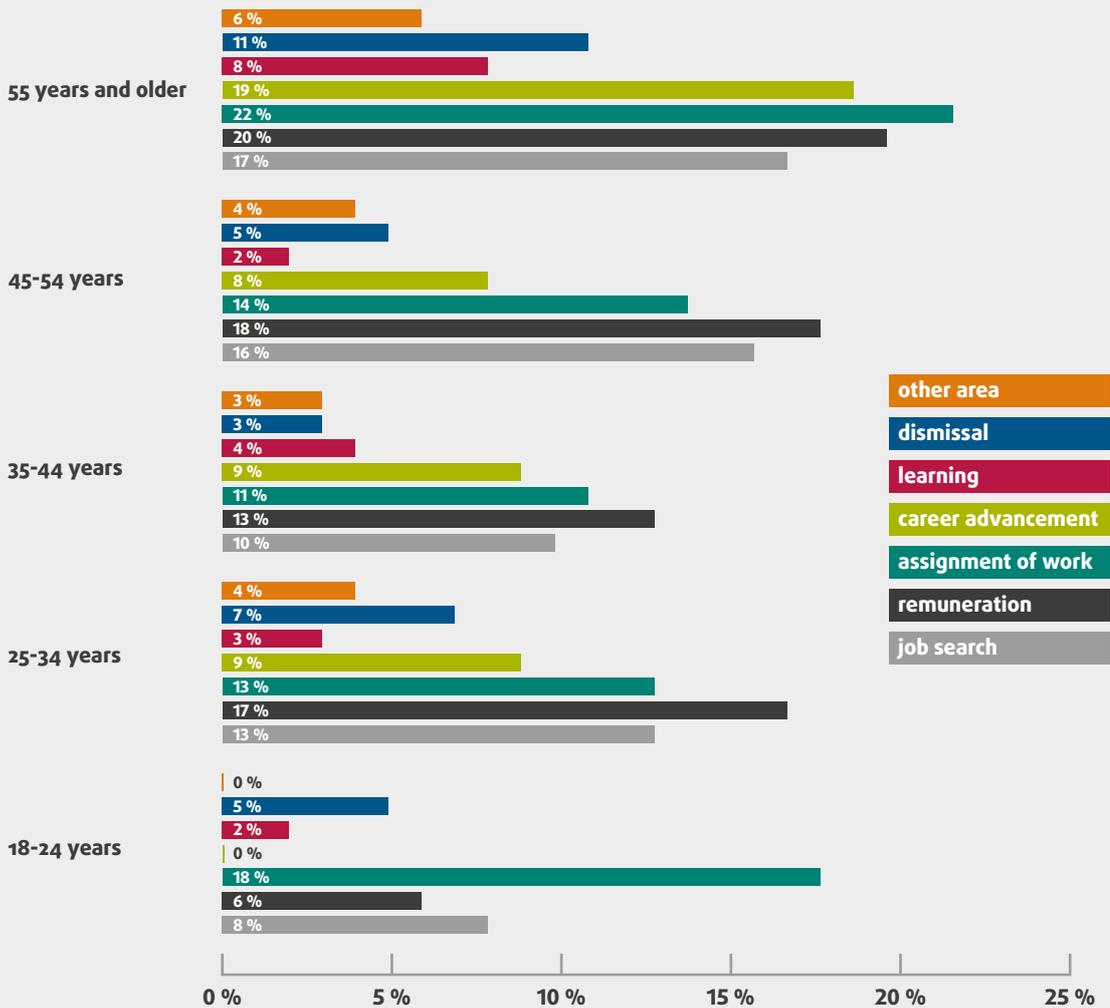


Chart 5 – Areas of disadvantage on the labour market – according to age categories

Q 1: “Have you ever felt you’re being discriminated [against] at work during your stay in the Czech Republic because of your nationality or citizenship? We are interested in knowing if you have felt that you were treated less favourably in comparison to the Czech employees because of your nationality or citizenship (including the limited knowledge of Czech or a foreign accent). Have you ever felt you’re being discriminated [against] in any of the following areas?”

Base: EU citizens working in the Czech Republic who felt the given manifestation of disadvantage (response “yes”) = disregarding answers “I do not know” and “does not apply”, supplement to the answer “no”; n=1 021 (18-24 years n=53, 25-34 years n=323, 35-44 years n=315, 45-54 years n=237, 55+ years n=93)



In terms of sex (gender), there are no statistically significant differences between foreign male and female workers from the EU. A slight difference can only be seen in perceived disadvantages on grounds of nationality, citizenship or language in the area of career advancement (8% for men vs. 12% for women) and job search (11% for men vs. 15% for women).

The occurrence of a feeling of disadvantage on the labour market also relates to a certain degree to the level of knowledge of the Czech language. In the case of those EU citizens who work in the Czech Republic and have achieved the highest (5th) level of knowledge of the Czech language – they speak fluent Czech (based on self-assessment), feelings of disadvantage are less frequent. This is true especially of the area of remuneration (11% vs. 17-19 % for lower Czech language skills) and assignment of work (9% vs. 17-18% for higher levels of knowledge of the Czech language: 3-4). Respondents who self-assessed their knowledge of Czech at level 2 or even 1 – neither understanding nor speaking Czech – are also likely to be significantly less

able to evaluate the whole topic of disadvantage or discrimination, especially in a situation where they do not speak or understand even English or any other world language.

When assessing the degree or frequency of perceived disadvantage based on the length of stay or duration of work in the Czech Republic, there are no statistically significant differences in the results for individual categories (0–2 years, 2.5–5 years, 5.5–9 years and 10 years or more). Only in the area of learning opportunities is there a greater degree of perceived disadvantage for foreigners from the EU with the shortest period of stay in the Czech Republic (0 to 2 years), specifically 8%.

Similarly, no statistically significant differences were found in comparison of the results based on the type of stay (permanent, temporary, not reported) in the occurrence of perceived disadvantage on grounds of nationality or citizenship. Nonetheless, it can be stated in general that in all the areas of the labour market under scrutiny, the occurrence of perceived disadvantage is slightly lower for employees with permanent residence than for those with temporary residence.

A comparison of the individual administrative regions of the Czech Republic where foreign workers from the EU are employed indicates a relatively higher incidence of perceived discrimination on the labour market in the aggregate of other administrative regions (i.e. other than those on which the study focused primarily, i.e. Prague, Central Bohemia, Plzeň and South Moravian Regions), especially in the area of remuneration (22% vs. 7–16% in the four selected administrative regions).

5.1.3 EXPERIENCE – CASES OF PERCEIVED DISADVANTAGE

Those respondents who stated at the beginning of the interview that they had encountered some disadvantage on the Czech labour market were asked to describe their negative experience. In most cases, this was a very brief explanation of their feeling of disadvantage in the given area of the labour market; the respondents always described the situation falling within a certain category (area) in their own words as shown in Chart 6. In some cases, these were spontaneously narrated stories where a disadvantage was felt in several areas – a combination of being assigned an inferior, harder work, coupled with lower remuneration, etc.

Overall, based on spontaneous answers, the situations described most frequently concerned the area of **assignment of work** (performance of different / inferior / harder work than that assigned to Czechs, other than agreed in advance (on commencement of work) – 33%; work not corresponding to the qualifications and/or education of the foreign employee – 6%). These situations were described primarily by employees with secondary education, but without graduation examination, working the position of plant and machine operators, and assemblers. In contrast, this was significantly less frequent for EU citizens other than from the four selected countries (Slovakia, Poland, Romania, Bulgaria).

Examples of spontaneous answers (the area of assignment of work) – quote: “the afternoon shift is often very hard all week, and they want a morning shift right away and one has no time to rest”; “they forced us to work 12 hours, very hard shifts without a break”; “all I have is an unqualified, low-paying job”; “we Slovaks are treated as only slightly less stupid than Ukrainians and Arabs in Czech hospitals”; “I have a high school diploma, but nobody cares at work”; “I’m a qualified nurse, but here I’m in the kitchen or collecting dirty linen for the hospital laundry”; “the work assigned to me is unsafe”; “I have retrained, but didn’t improve financially”; “we are assigned worse and more demanding work than Czechs”; “harder work is left to foreigners”; “Czechs always assign themselves lighter work”; “with a high school diploma, I should be in some kind of senior position”; “Czechs treat Romanians as Romanians, as dumb and inferior to Czechs, lots of work, little time off”; “the foreman assigns worse jobs to me than to Czechs”; “I don’t stay at one place in the factory, I’m everywhere I’m needed, I constantly need training for new positions”; “transferring from one branch to another without asking the foreigner for approval”; “when I refuse to comply with nonsensical demands and they send me back to Slovakia”; “if one is not a professional, one as a foreigner has to accept worse jobs for less money”; “they order us to do extra weekend shifts or, as a compromise, twelve-hour shifts”; “I am assigned more harder work than Czechs”; “sometimes I have to fill in for someone else without being paid for it”.

A situation where a foreign worker receives **lower wages** than a Czech worker and than originally promised also concerns approximately one third (32%) of those who feel disadvantaged on the labour market. A total of 12% of those who feel discrimination on the labour market complain about **unpaid overtime work**. Most often, overtime work is not paid for (according to their own statement) to Romanian workers.

Examples of spontaneous answers (the area of remuneration) – quote: “they didn’t pay me for working overtime”; “I work in a shop and have to stay overtime a lot, and the company sometimes doesn’t pay me for this”; “the amount I got paid for working overtime did not match the agreed remuneration”; “problems in payment for overtime hours and extra shifts ordered”; “they don’t want to pay for overtime hours, they pay for extra shifts or shifts on public holidays as for a regular weekday”; “I don’t get paid for overtime work, I receive less money in bonuses than Czech women”; “our employer owes us money and has now cut our hours”; “I waited long for my wages and then received less than agreed”; “I was not granted a higher tariff for overtime work on Saturday, like Czechs”; “the employer failed to pay on time and the agreed amount of wages”; “lower hourly rate compared to Czech employees”; “they give me money on the side, not as official income”.

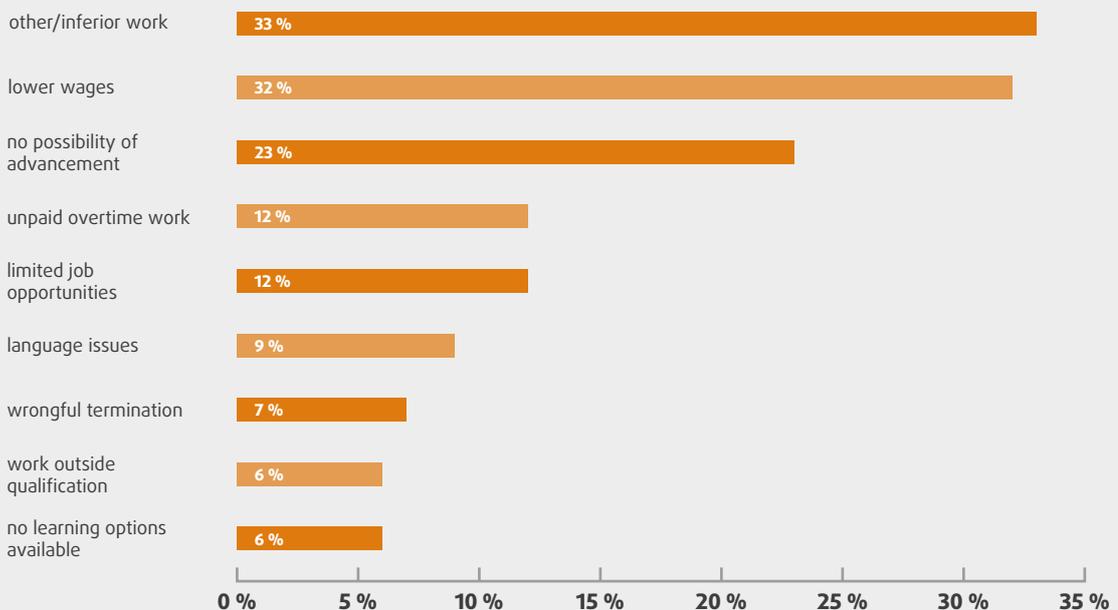
Stories describing **limited options of advancement**, slow career growth, shift to “better” work, preference for Czechs in promotion – these were spontaneously told by a total of 23% of the respondents. They include primarily workers with university education and clerical workers. This situation is significantly less frequent for Romanian workers.

Examples of spontaneous answers (the area of career advancement) – quote: “I do menial jobs in spite of my qualification”; “I have no chance at promotion or working in a senior position”; “a Czech citizen with less experience was promoted”; “they hired a Czech woman for a position I applied for; they didn’t hire me, because I’m Slovak”; “an application for a higher position was rejected several times, a foreigner was never included in the selection procedure”.

Chart 6 – Experience – cases of perceived disadvantage

Q 2: Please describe your experience with discrimination in areas mentioned in the previous question.

Base: EU citizens working in the Czech Republic who felt the given manifestation of disadvantage (response “yes”) = disregarding answers “I do not know” and “does not apply”, supplement to the answer “no”; n=318



Among other stories, similar complaints were raised as regards troubles in **job search** (12%) – “difficult to find a job”, “Czechs were preferred in the interview”.

Furthermore, approximately one tenth (9%) of the situations concerned **language barriers** that caused a feeling of disadvantage among foreign workers – “non-compliance with the conditions of work assignment”.

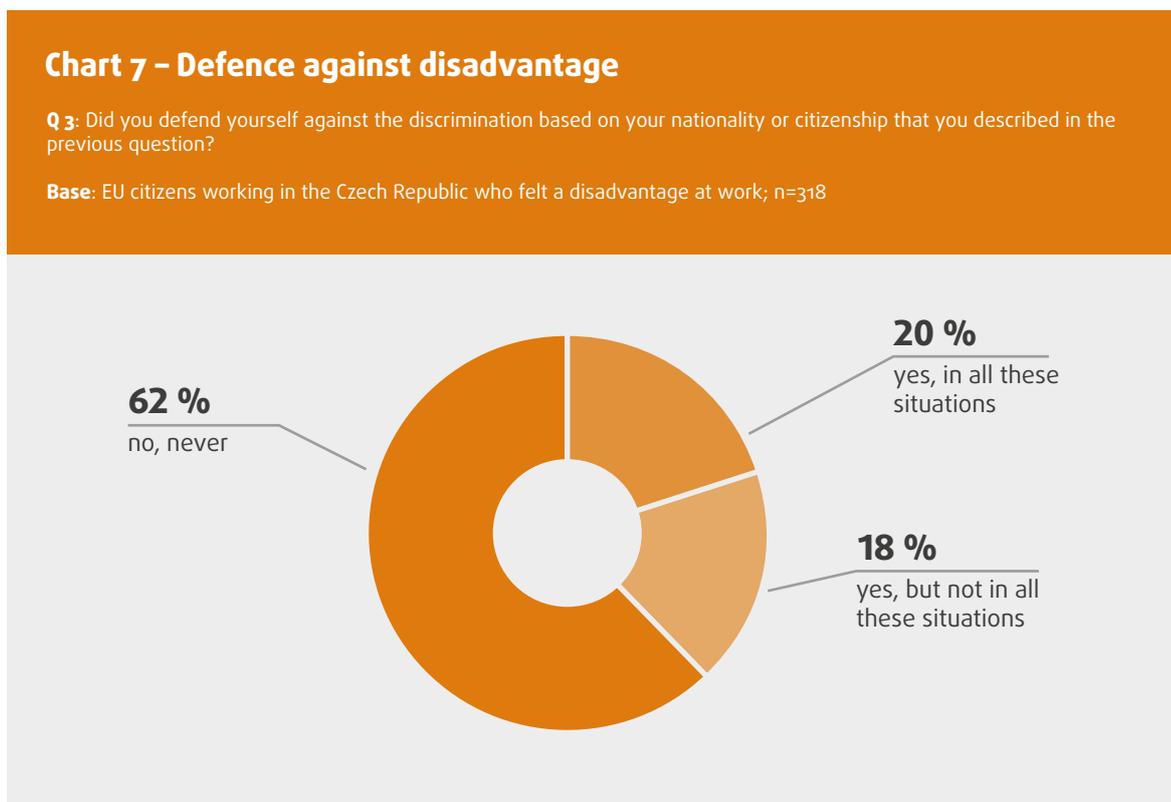
because of a language barrier”; “I am a teacher, the headteacher refused me unless I spoke only Czech”; “I was reproached for my poor pronunciation, they did not want to work with me”; “they refused me, because I didn’t understand enough”; “I was initially slowed down by my poor knowledge of Czech; when I spoke to someone on the phone, I was not successful”; “because of my poor pronunciation and writing skills, I had problems to get a higher post and a better paid job”; “there were problems with my supervisor, she said she didn’t understand me”; “they laughed at the way I spoke”.

A total of 7% of the respondents told stories of **wrongful or unlawful termination** – “they would first dismiss foreigners and only then Czechs”; “they dismiss Slovaks first”; “they make me redundant when there is no work; they would not give me a regular employment contract”; “when the project was ending, they dismissed foreigners first and kept their Czech workers”.

A total of 6% of the respondents pointed out the **unavailability of** learning opportunities at the workplace or at the assigned positions and work – “not enough language courses to improve Czech”; “learning options were offered to Czechs and not to Slovaks”; “limited offer of training for foreigners”; “I was promised courses to improve my qualifications, but I eventually had to pay for them myself”. These were most often university-educated people in the position of technicians and associate professionals.

5.1.4 DEFENCE AGAINST DISADVANTAGE

A total of 62% of the EU citizens working in the Czech Republic who felt disadvantaged on the labour market due to their nationality or citizenship took no steps towards their defence, steps towards achieving a remedy or at least addressing the situations they described.



One fifth (20%) of the “victims” defended themselves in some way in all the cases where they felt a disadvantage and a further less than one fifth (18%) defended themselves in some cases and situations (not in all of them).

Approximately every second (51%) foreign worker who has taken steps to defend him/herself against potential discrimination on the labour market on grounds of nationality or citizenship deals with the situation him/herself, i.e. has not turned to anyone for support and assistance.

In 44% cases, the foreign workers addressed the disadvantage on the labour market with their superior, or turned generally to their employer.

It is quite rare for the person concerned to address some other entity – 7% turned to a trade union, and 2% each sought redress with the support of a non-profit organisation, an integration centre and a lawyer, respectively.

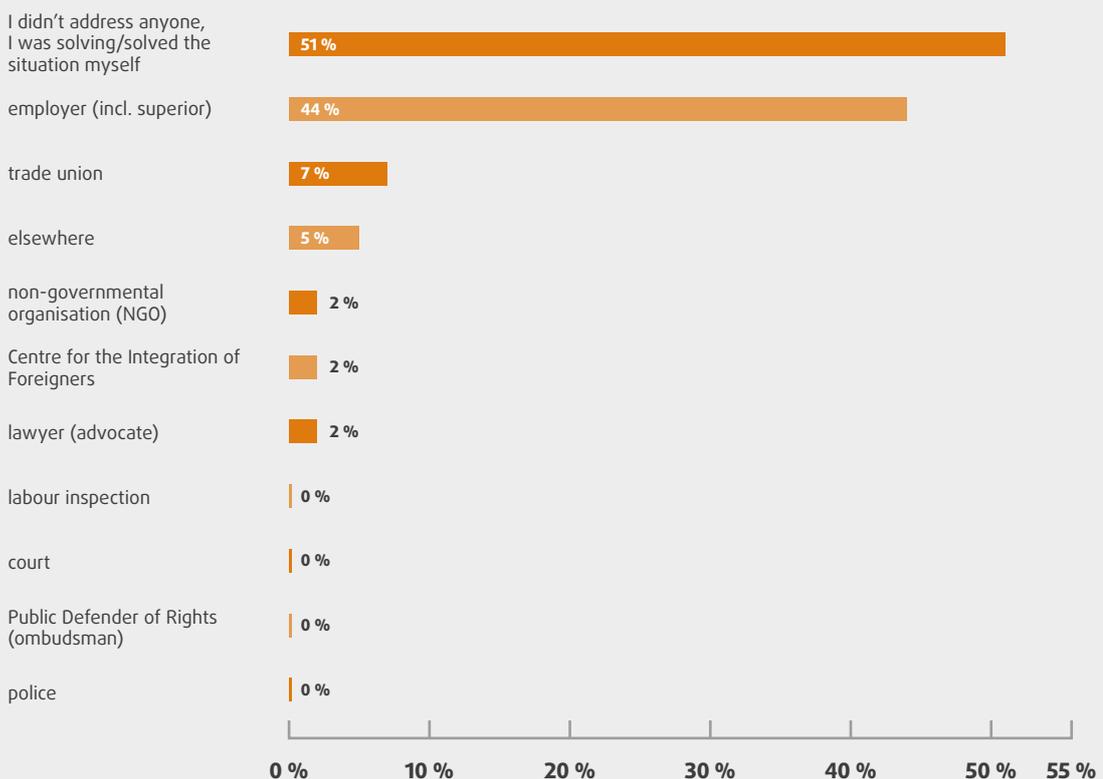
None of the EU citizens working in the Czech Republic dealt with perceived discrimination on the labour market on grounds of nationality or citizenship by presenting the case to a labour inspection authority, a court, the ombudsman or the police.

A total of 5% of the respondents referred their case to an entity other than mentioned above. These were either their employment agency, colleagues, friends, accommodation providers / accommodation facility managers.

Chart 8 – Where foreigners turn for help in case of a disadvantage

Q 4: Who did you report the incident or make the complaint about the discrimination to? Please specify all the places/organisations you contacted.

Base: EU citizens working in the Czech Republic who felt a disadvantage at work and sought redress – defended themselves; n=120



Those who decided to address their situation were satisfied with the way their case was addressed (solved) in 57% of cases. About one quarter (23%) respondents were satisfied with the way all the situations were addressed (solved) and about one third (34%) were satisfied in most of the situations.

Another roughly one quarter of the respondents (23%) were or are dissatisfied with the way most of the situations where they felt discrimination were addressed (solved) and 13% were dissatisfied with the result or course in all of the cases.

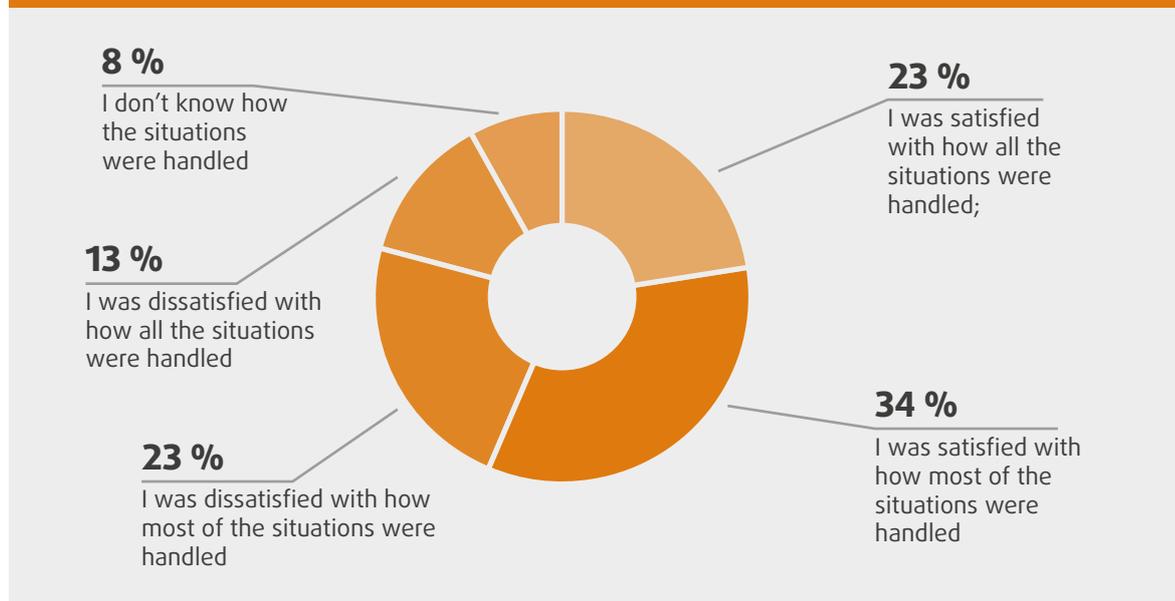
Less than tenth (8 %) had no idea about the result or process.

Those EU citizens we questioned who felt disadvantaged on the labour market in the Czech Republic due to their nationality and/or citizenship and were dissatisfied with the way their situation(s) was solved – i.e. were dissatisfied with the result – explain the negative result and their dissatisfaction by pointing out they did not succeed because no remedy or positive change was achieved (35%); their wage, pay or remuneration was not settled (28%); they received a response in the sense “you can be glad that you have a job” (“I was told that I could be glad to have a job as there were other people interested in it”) (14%); the case ended either by their termination or forced resignation from the position/job (9 %), or otherwise, usually without further specification – “if I continued complaining, they would not give me a job”, “I don’t want to discuss it”, “I admit I speak little Czech” (11%).

Chart 9 – Satisfaction with the handling of cases of disadvantage

Q 5: “Were you generally satisfied with how the situation(s) were (being) handled?”

Base: EU citizens working in the Czech Republic who felt a disadvantage at work and sought redress – defended themselves; n=120



Those foreigners who decided not to take any steps to defend themselves in cases where they were disadvantaged on the Czech labour market most often (49%) explained their passivity or resignation by their belief that reporting the case would not help anything; nothing would have happened, nothing would have changed.

Approximately one fifth of the respondents (22%) did not deal with the situation because they considered it too trivial and not worth reporting; in substance, they considered it normal and predictable or expected. This statement was especially encountered among disadvantaged foreigners who had permanent residence in the Czech Republic.

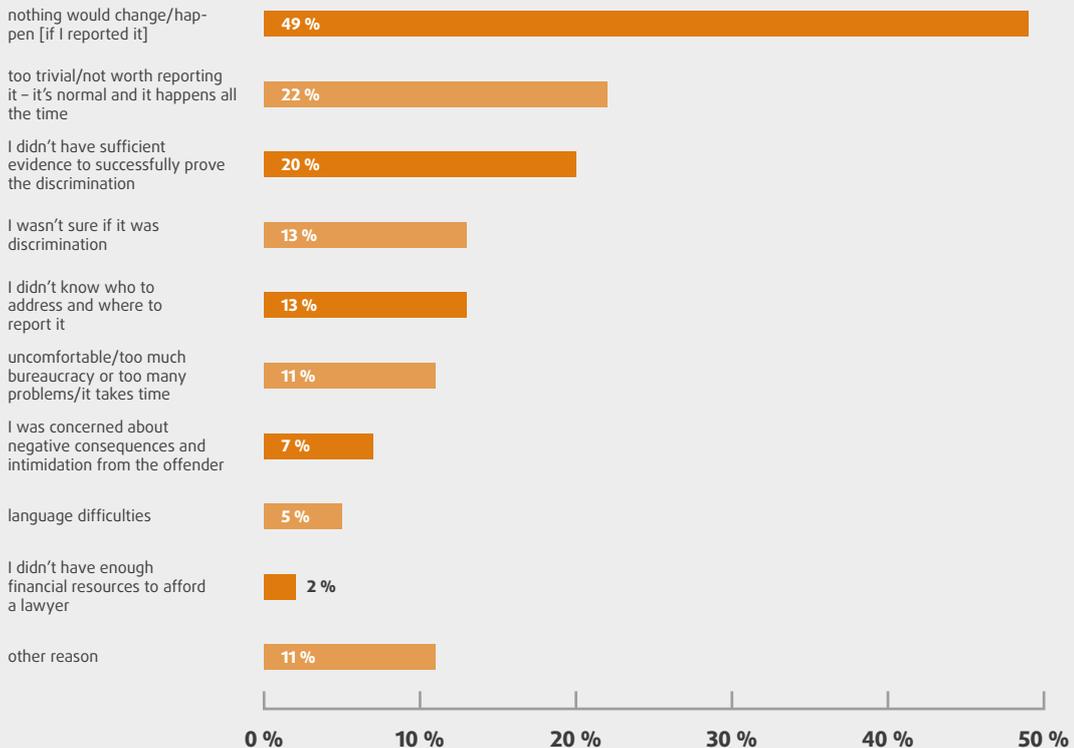
A further fifth of those who experienced a feeling of disadvantage did not address the situation because they did not have enough evidence to successfully prove their case.

In 13% of cases, the decision not to deal with the situation was explained by the foreigner by being unsure whether he/she had been discriminated against, and a further 13% did not know where to ask for help.

Chart 10 – Why the workers did not seek help when they were disadvantaged

Q 6: “Why didn’t you seek help and report the incident? Please select all the reasons that led to your decision.”

Base: EU citizens working in the Czech Republic who felt a disadvantage at work and did not seek redress – did not defend themselves; n=198



Approximately one tenth (11%) of the respondents consider the potential solution to discrimination too bureaucratic, entailing many problems and consuming too much time. Consequently, they give up on seeking a solution – defence.

Fear of negative consequences and intimidation from the perpetrator of discrimination was expressed by 7% of the foreign workers concerned. Language or financial reasons for passivity – giving up on defence in discrimination was mentioned by 5% and 2% of the respondents, respectively.

Other reasons than those mentioned above were given by approximately one tenth (11%) of the respondents, but these reasons were only specified in about 3 cases – as concerns about being dismissed; that the situation was, in fact, normal; and that the question of remuneration was in the employer’s competence anyway.

5.1.5 INCIDENCE OF CASES AND MANIFESTATIONS OF DISADVANTAGE

In the following part of the research interview, the respondents commented on 22 situations entailing a potential disadvantage for foreigners on the labour market in the Czech Republic. Naturally, not all the situations concerned all the respondents. Those with the highest shares of answers “does not apply” or “I do not know” (10-25%) were related to experience with the employment agency, issues with the provision of accommodation by the employer or agency, redundancy situations, and offers of training and promotion to a higher position. For all other statements, the aggregate of answers “does not apply” and “I do not know” ranged between 3 and 9%. All the results are given in Chart 11.

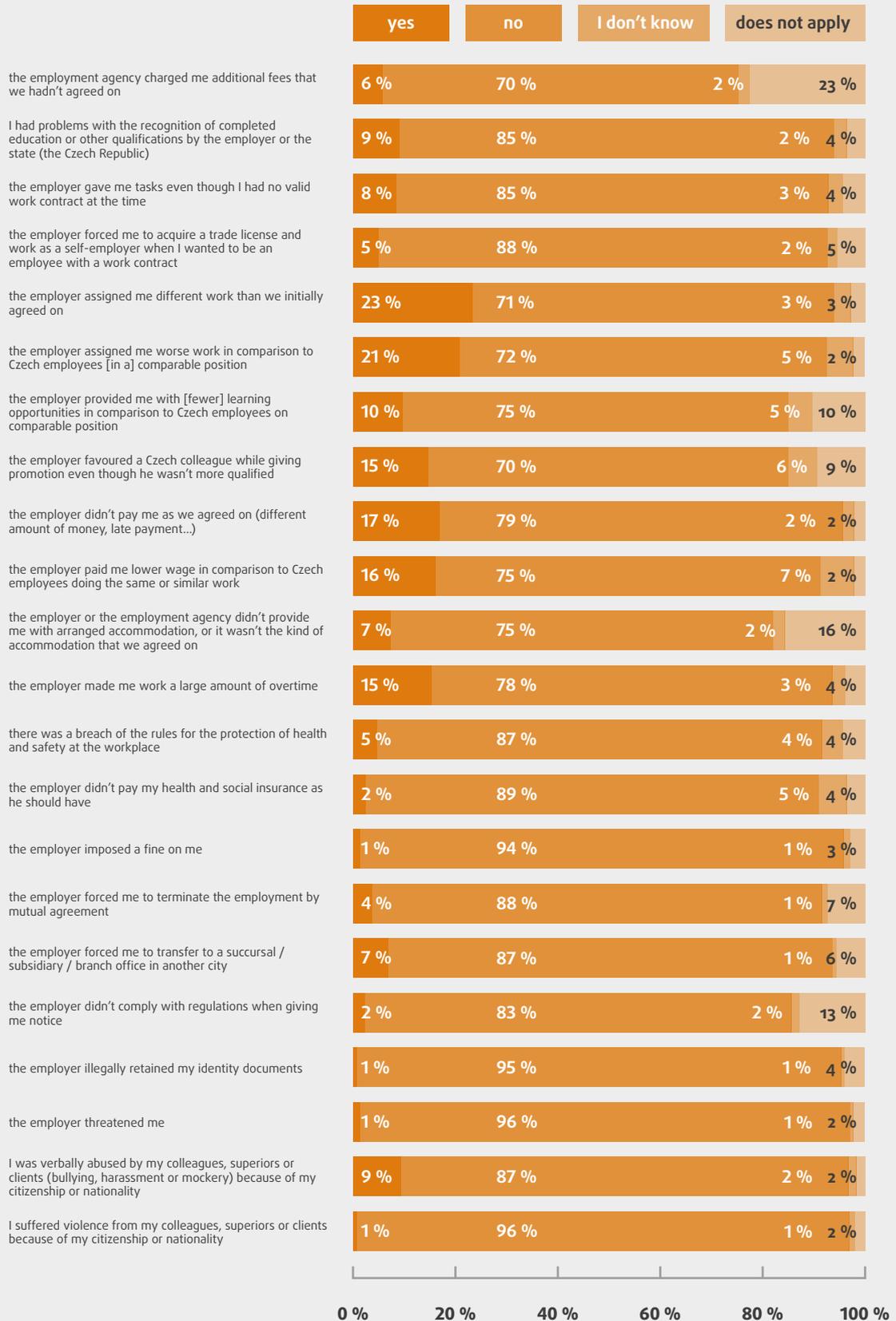
Therefore, if we focus only on statements describing situations where the respondent stated unambiguously whether or not he/she had encountered them (answers “yes” and “no”), we can rank them in order based on the share of “yes” answers, and draw up a chart of the most frequent situations – manifestations of perceived discrimination on the Czech labour market due to different citizenship or nationality (including possible language barriers). We thus measure the answers of those respondents for whom the given situation is relevant and compare only the assessment of whether or not they encountered a manifestation of disadvantage in the given situation. These results are shown in detail in Chart 12.

The overall results (displaying all four possible answers – “yes”, “no”, “I do not know”, “does not apply” – Chart 11) thus show the significance of the given situation (incidence of perceived discrimination) in the whole set of EU citizens working in the Czech Republic, as well as the share of foreign nationals who are not affected by the situation. In contrast, within assessment of the actual “yes” and “no” answers (Chart 12), the individual situations are only evaluated by those who have experienced them, encountered these situations and can thus assess them. This is thus a ranking of areas and situations according to the intensity of the perceived discrimination, but regardless of the “size” or “frequency” of the incidence of the situations as such. This can be a situation where discrimination is felt very often, but the situation itself concerns only a very small number of foreigners (others “do not know” or the situation does not affect them). Nonetheless, it is clear from the data above and from Chart 11 that more than 75 % of the respondents expressed a strong (“yes” or “no”) opinion in some way, and on average, the statements or situations described concerned about 95 % of all the respondents.

Chart 11 – Incidence of cases of perceived discrimination – aggregate

Q 7: People from other countries of the European Union may encounter various problems while working in the Czech Republic. Have you encountered them while working in the Czech Republic as well?

Base: EU citizens working in the Czech Republic; n=1 021



As shown in Chart 12, the most frequent cases of perceived discrimination on the Czech labour market on grounds of citizenship or nationality, which occur in the range of 16–25 % of the situations concerned, are as follows:

- » assignment of work other than agreed (25%);
- » assigning worse work than to Czech workers in a comparable position (23%);
- » failure to pay wages (salary) in the agreed amount or by the agreed deadline (18%);
- » payment of lower wages (salary) than to Czech employees doing the same or similar work (18%);
- » prioritising Czech workers in promotion, although they were not better qualified (17%);
- » ordering a large amount of overtime (16%).

Assignment of work other than agreed was mentioned by one quarter (25%) of EU workers working in the Czech Republic. Among Romanian workers, this disadvantage was perceived in up to 39% of cases, and has been encountered by one third (33%) of workers with secondary education without graduation examination, one third (33%) of workers working on the basis of an agreement to complete a job/agreement to perform work, 35% of those recruited by an employment agency, (roughly) one third of workers in elementary occupations (33%), and plant and machine operators, and assemblers (35%), and more than one half (52%) of skilled agricultural, forestry and fishing workers.

Assignment of worse work than to Czech workers in a comparable position was also experienced by approximately one quarter of foreigners (23%). Again, this situation is more common especially for Romanian workers (33%), foreigners with secondary education but without graduation examination (30%), foreigners working on the basis of an agreement to complete a job/agreement to perform work (36%), workers recruited by an agency (35%) and those with the lowest qualifications – elementary occupations (33%), and plant and machine operators, and assemblers (32%).

Failure to pay wages (salary) in the agreed amount or by the agreed deadline is a concern for 18% of foreign workers. These include, in particular, Romanian workers (28%), workers with secondary education without graduation examination (23%), foreigners who have resided in the Czech Republic for 2 to 5 years (23%), foreigners who are currently economically inactive (32%), agency employees (23%), plant and machine operators, and assemblers (25%), and skilled agricultural, forestry and fishing workers (37%).

Payment of lower wages (salary) than to Czech employees doing the same or similar work also occurred in 18% cases. These cases more frequently apply to foreigners with secondary education without graduation examination (23%), employees working on the basis of an agreement to complete a job/agreement to perform work (26%), agency employees (26%), and employees in the lowest positions of elementary occupations (27%), and plant and machine operators, and assemblers (24%).

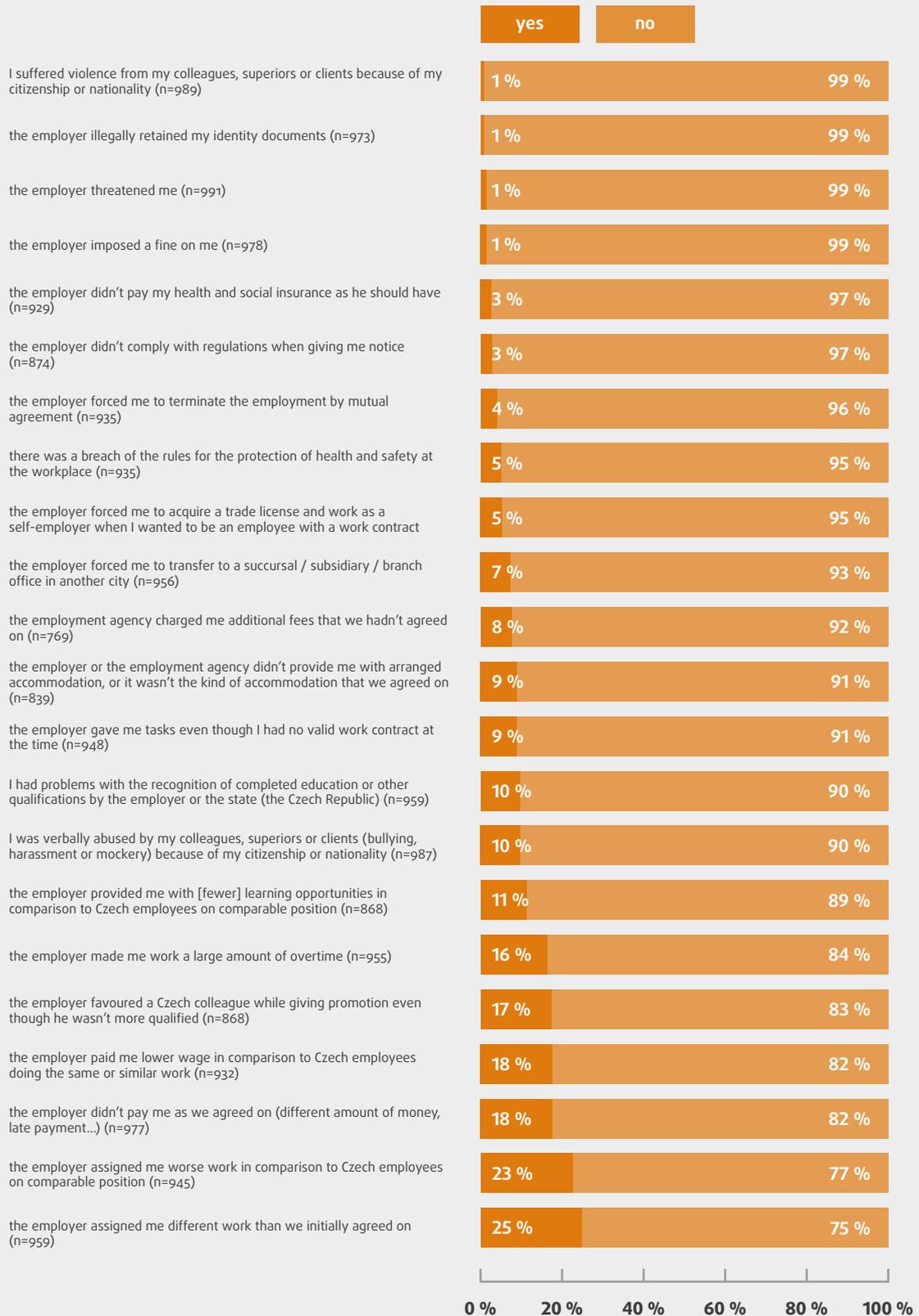
Prioritising Czech workers in promotion, even though they were not better qualified, was a case of perceived discrimination for 17% of foreign workers, especially employees aged 55+ (27%).

Ordering a large amount of overtime pertains to a total of 16% of foreign workers. This is higher than average for workers with secondary education without graduation examination (21%), workers who have been working in the Czech Republic for 2-5 years (22%), and agency workers (22%).

Chart 12 – Incidence of cases of perceived discrimination (only for “yes” and “no” answers)

Q 7: People from other countries of the European Union may encounter various problems while working in the Czech Republic. Have you encountered them while working in the Czech Republic as well?

Base: EU citizens working in the Czech Republic who assessed the given manifestation of disadvantage = disregarding answers “I do not know” and “does not apply”; n=see the captions in the chart



Less frequent are situations where discrimination is perceived on the Czech labour market due to citizenship or nationality – the frequency of these cases ranges between 5-11 %. These situations are described as follows:

- » **the employer provided me with [fewer] learning opportunities in comparison to Czech employees [in a] comparable position** (11%) – incidence: especially among workers aged 55+ (25%), agency workers (17%), and workers in elementary occupations (18%);
- » **I suffered violence from my colleagues, superiors or clients because of my citizenship or nationality** (10%) – incidence: especially among workers aged 55+ (17%);
- » **I had problems with the recognition of completed education or other qualifications by the employer or the state (the Czech Republic) (10%)** – incidence: especially among workers aged 55+ (17%), with secondary education with graduation examination (15%), among currently economically inactive foreigners (24%); **the employer gave me tasks even though I had no valid work contract at the time** (9%) – incidence: especially for workers from Romania (18 %), employees with primary or secondary education without graduation examination (17% and 13%, respectively), currently economically inactive foreigners (23%), employees working on the basis of an agreement to complete a job/agreement to perform work (17%), agency workers (14%), skilled agricultural, forestry and fishing workers (26%);
- » **the employer or the employment agency didn't provide me with arranged accommodation, or it wasn't the kind of accommodation that we agreed on** (9%) – incidence: especially among Romanians (16%), employees aged 55+ (18%), agency workers (15%), plant and machine operators, and assemblers (17 %);
- » **the employment agency charged me additional fees that we hadn't agreed on** (8%) – incidence: especially among Romanians (23%), employees with primary education (17%), foreigners with the 1st and 2nd degree of knowledge of Czech (17% and 12%, respectively), currently economically inactive foreigners (18%), employees working on the basis of an agreement to complete a job/agreement to perform work (18%) and those recruited by an employment agency (15%);
- » **the employer forced me to transfer to a succursal / subsidiary / branch office in another city** (7%) – incidence: especially among people with primary education (14%) and service and sales workers (12%);
- » **the employer forced me to acquire a trade license and work as a self-employer when I wanted to be an employee with a work contract** (5 %) – incidence: especially for people aged 55+ (15%), and foreigners living and working in the Czech Republic for 10 years and more (10%) and currently self-employed persons (15 %);
- » **there was a breach of the rules for the protection of health and safety at the workplace (the employer didn't provide me with personal protective equipment such as gloves, protective goggles, respirator...)** (5%) – incidence: especially among Romanian workers (11%).

With regard to the remaining situations, the incidence of perceived discrimination was less than 5%: the employer forced me to terminate the employment by mutual agreement (4%); the employer didn't comply with regulations when giving me notice (there was no reason for the notice, the employer didn't observe the notice period, etc.) (3 %), the employer didn't pay my health and social insurance as he should have (3%), the employer imposed a fine on me (1%), the employer threatened me (1%), the employer illegally retained my identity documents (ID card, passport, residence permit...) (1%), I suffered violence from my colleagues, superiors or clients because of my citizenship or nationality (1%).

5.2 Residence of EU citizens in the Czech Republic

This chapter deals with the length of stay, type of stay and planned length of stay in the Czech Republic by the EU citizens who formed a sample in the quantitative part of this study.

5.2.1 LENGTH OF STAY, DURATION OF WORK IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC

From among the EU citizens interviewed who are currently staying in the Czech Republic, 16% of them have been present in the Czech Republic for up to 2 years of age, 36% have been living in the Czech Republic for a period from 2 to 5 years, 25% between 5 and 9 years, and 23% for 10 years or more.

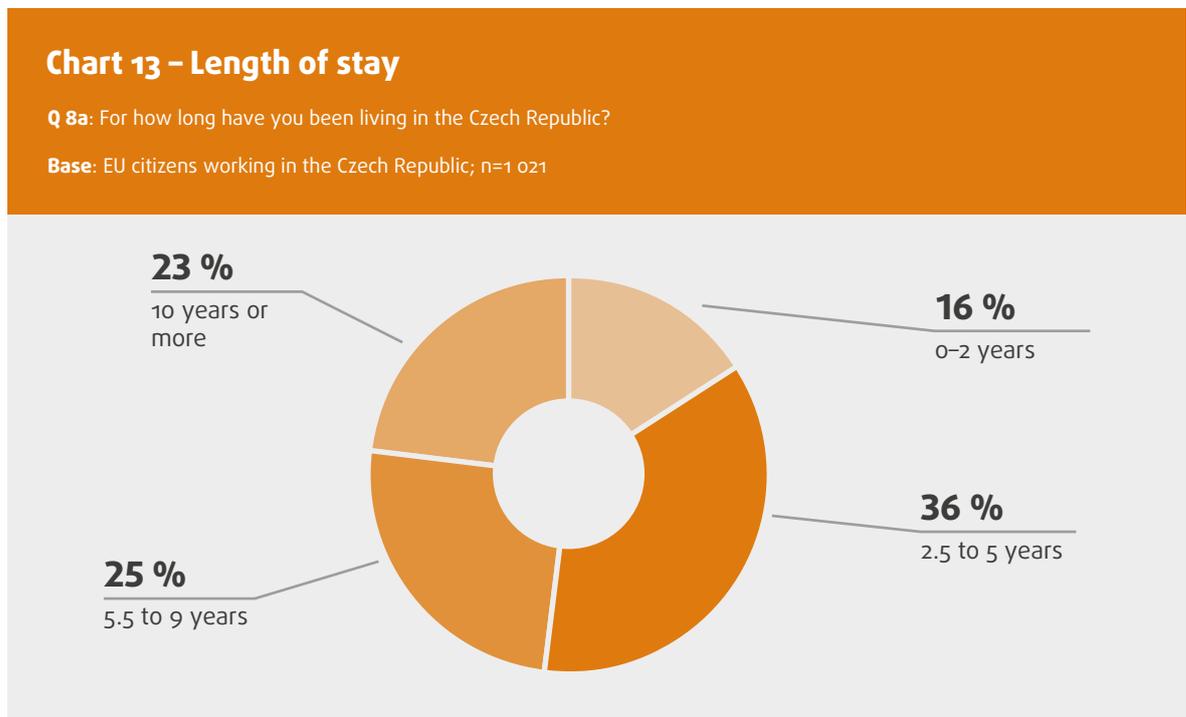
On average, the EU citizens interviewed have been living in the Czech Republic for 7 years (the median is 5 years).

As expected, the highest share of long-term stays in the Czech Republic (over 10 years) was recorded for Slovak citizens (29%), and the relatively shortest overall stay and length of work in the Czech Republic for Romanians (average of 5.3 years and median of 4 years). EU citizens from countries other than Slovakia, Poland, Romania and Bulgaria most often stay in the Czech Republic for 2 to 5 years (46%).

The shortest stays (up to 2 years) were (again as expected) determined for citizens aged 18-24 (51%) and 25-34 (24%). Generally (and logically), the higher the age, the longer the stay. This means a period of stay in the Czech Republic exceeding 10 years can be expected primarily of citizens aged 45-54 (46%) and 55+ (48%).

If we seek a link between the length of stay and the highest completed education of a foreign worker, it is clear that people with primary education stay more frequently in the Czech Republic for up to 2 years (35%) while, on the other hand, workers with university education tend to stay more than others for over 10 years (48%).

Foreigners with temporary residence in the Czech Republic stay for shorter periods (up to 2 years – 23%, 2-5 years – 48%; median of 4.8 years). Foreigners with permanent residence tend to stay longer (5-9 years – 31%, 10+ years – 46%; median of 10.5 years).



The situation is similar with regard to the relationship between the length of stay and knowledge of the Czech language. Respondents with the lowest level of knowledge of the Czech language (they practically do not speak or understand Czech) tend to stay in the country only briefly (up to 2 years – 54%, average of 3.4 years); in contrast, foreigners fluent in Czech usually stay for 10 years or more (40%, average of 9.4 years).

Employees working in the Czech Republic on the basis of an agreement to complete a job or agreement to perform work tend to stay shorter in the Czech Republic (up to 2 years – 25%, 2 to 5 years – 50%, average of 4.8 years). On the other hand, self-employed foreigners regularly stay 10 or more years (60%, average of 10.6 years).

Also employees recruited in the Czech Republic by an employment agency tend to stay in the Czech Republic more briefly (up to 2 years – 23%, 2 to 5 years – 58%, average of 4.7 years).

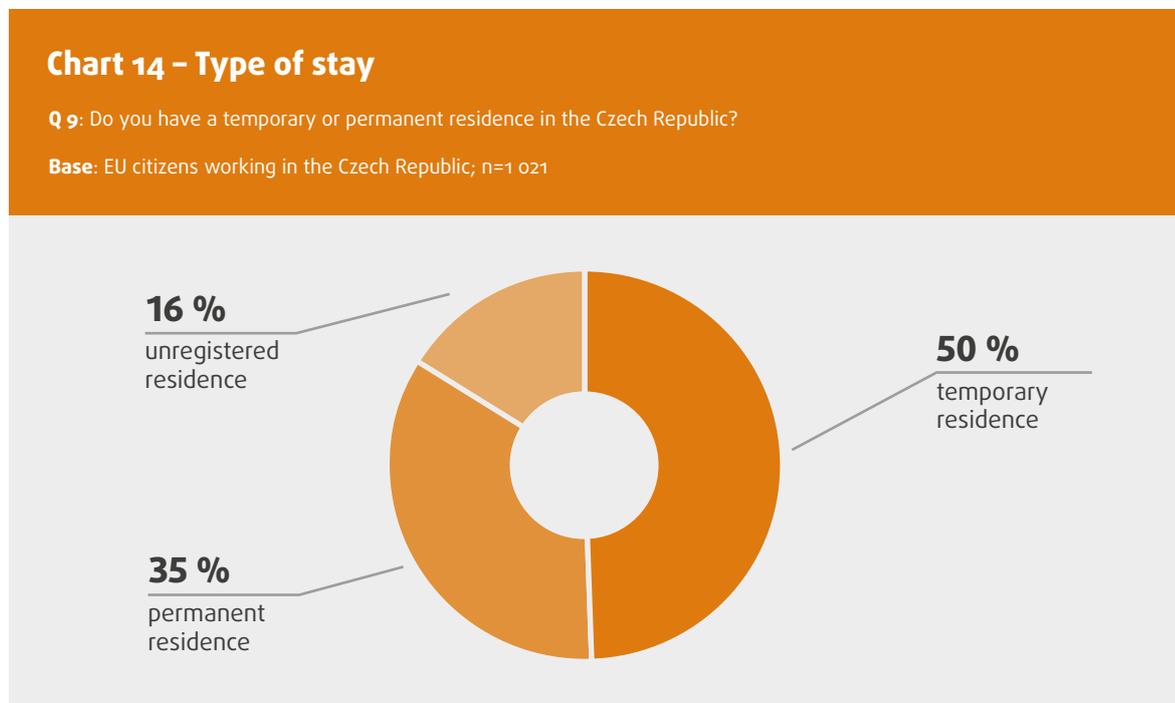
If we analyse the length of stay in the Czech Republic in relation to the work assignment – i.e. the position or job category, it can be seen that the lowest positions (elementary occupations) have the shortest stays in the Czech Republic (up to 2 years – 34%, average of 4.3) and the most skilled workers – technicians and associate professionals, and professionals – usually stay for 10 or more years (34 and 47%, respectively, average of 8.5 and 10.5 years, respectively).

There is a negligible difference between the length of the stay and the duration (length) of work in the Czech Republic (the average length of the stay of 7 years, with a median of 5 years vs. the average duration of work of 6.6 years, with a median of 5 years).

5.2.2 TYPE OF STAY IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC

Every second respondent – EU citizen working in the Czech Republic (50%) has a temporary residence in the Czech Republic; 35% have a permanent residence and 16% have neither permanent nor temporary residence registered in the Czech Republic.

The foreign nationals interviewed who work in the Czech Republic without a registered permanent or temporary residence include, in particular, those who are in the Czech Republic only shortly – 22% of foreign nationals residing in the Czech Republic for up to 2 years, and employees working on the basis of an agreement to complete a job or an agreement to perform work (24%). These are often employees who work in the Czech Republic, but do not know what type of contract or agreement they have, or whether they are employed via an employment agency or directly with the employer. The share of those not registered for residence in the Czech Republic decreases with higher education (primary education – 24% vs. university education – 16%).



Temporary stay is more common among younger foreign workers (18–25 years of age – 64%, 25–34 years of age – 63%). In contrast, permanent residence prevails among older workers (45–54 years of age – 46%, 55+ years of age – 43%). Nonetheless, even in these highest age categories, almost one fifth are not registered for residence in the Czech Republic.

Foreign workers with lower education are more often registered for temporary residence in the country (primary education – 59%, secondary education without graduation examination – 57%), as compared to

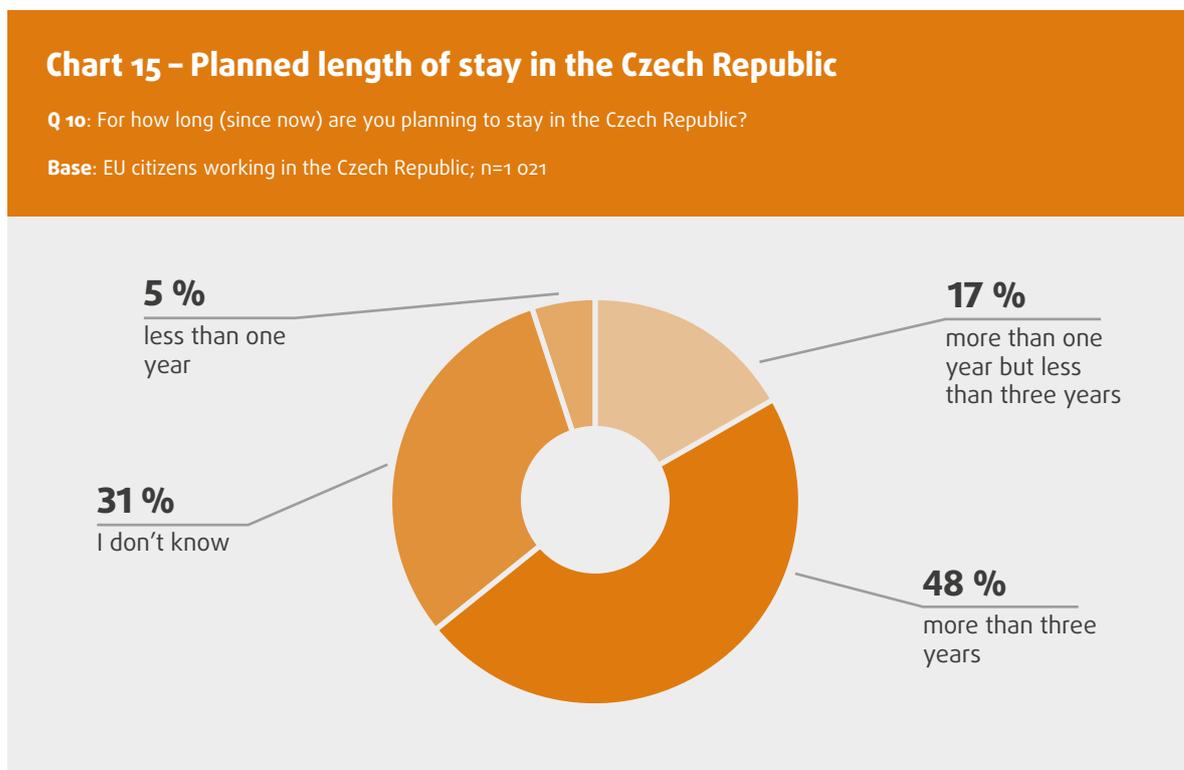
workers with secondary graduation and university diploma, where the shares of those with temporary and permanent residence are more balanced. Nevertheless, temporary residence still predominates among “secondary school graduates” (47%, vs. 38% with permanent residence). University graduates already tend to have permanent residence (49%), rather than temporary residence (35%).

The type of stay is closely related to the length of stay in the Czech Republic. In the case of foreign nationals staying in the Czech Republic for up to 2 years or for 2 to 5 years, temporary residence clearly prevails (70% and 67%, respectively), while the respective shares of temporary and permanent residence are basically equal in the case of foreigners staying in the country for 5 to 9 years (43% vs. 44%). Permanent residence predominates only for EU citizens who spend 10 or more years in the country (69% vs. 16% with temporary residence). However, it is also worth mentioning the 16% of foreigners who have been in the Czech Republic for 10 years or more but still have not registered their residence.

Temporary stays clearly prevail among employees working on the basis of an agreement to complete a job or an agreement to perform work (63%), recruited by an agency (68%) and those in lower positions – elementary occupations (59%), and plant and machine operators, and assemblers (58%).

5.2.3 PLANNED LENGTH OF STAY IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC

Almost one third (31%) EU citizens working in the Czech Republic were unable to answer the question “For how long (since now) are you planning to stay in the Czech Republic?”. Almost one half (48%) of the EU foreigners interviewed are planning to stay in the Czech Republic for another three years. A further 17% of respondents are planning to spend 1–3 years in the country and only 5% of respondents plan to end their stay in the Czech Republic within 12 months.



The planned length of stay (from now on) does not differ significantly among citizens of Slovakia, Poland, Romania and Bulgaria; however, among citizens from other EU countries, the ratio of planned stay for a further 1–3 years (27%) is significantly higher and, at the same time, the share of answers “I don’t know” is significantly lower (22%). These are probably more often pre-arranged working stays.

There is a statistically lower share of responses “more than three years” among the youngest foreigners

(18–24 years – 28%, 25–34 years – 37%). Members of the 45–54 age group, on the other hand, predominantly (59%) plan to stay in the Czech Republic for more than 3 years.

The higher the degree of education, the lower the share of undecided and “I don’t know” answers (43% with primary education vs. 18% with university education). EU workers with a university degree plan to stay in the country for more than three years in 63% of cases.

The longer the stay in the Czech Republic, the longer the plan. Foreign workers staying in the Czech Republic for up to 2 years mostly plan to stay for a maximum of 3 years (45%). From among people from the EU who have been staying in the Czech Republic for 10 or more years, 73% plan to live in the Czech Republic for a further more than 3 years.

As expected, among those who have temporary residence in the Czech Republic, the planned time to be spent in the Czech Republic is shorter (up to a maximum of 3 years – 32%), while among foreigners with permanent residence in the Czech Republic, the concept of staying in the Czech Republic for a further 3 or more years is clearly predominant (71%). A total of 42% of workers without registered residence in the country do not know how long they will stay in the Czech Republic.

Further presence in the Czech Republic is closely linked with the foreign worker’s ability to speak (and understand) Czech. While 50% of workers rating their knowledge of Czech at one of the two lowest levels plan to stay in the Czech Republic for a maximum of further 3 years, those fluent in Czech clearly want to stay more than another 3 years (62%).

Foreign workers now employed based on an agreement to complete a job or an agreement to perform work plan to spend less time in the Czech Republic (up to a maximum of 3 years – 35%). On the other hand, 61% of foreign self-employed persons plan to stay in the Czech Republic for over 3 years.

Shorter stays in the country are planned mainly by workers in lower positions. A total of 10% of workers in elementary occupations plan to end their stay in the Czech Republic within no more than 12 months (more qualified workers and workers in higher positions consider ending their stay within 12 months only in 5% of cases). On the other hand, 70% of highly qualified professionals plan to stay in the Czech Republic for another 3 or more years.

5.3 Conditions and arrangements for residence and work in the Czech Republic

This chapter deals with knowledge of the Czech language, type of employment and employment relationship, the position held, conformity of this position with qualifications and education, and provision of health insurance for the EU citizens who formed the sample for the quantitative part of this study.

5.3.1 COMPETENCE IN CZECH

As to the level of knowledge of the Czech language, the respondents were asked to rate themselves on a five-point scale, where level 1 meant “I don’t understand the language at all and I don’t speak it” and 5 was “I understand without any problems and speak the language fluently”. A total of 40% of the respondents assigned themselves the highest mark for their competence in Czech. According to “self-assessment”, 2% of respondents are completely lacking knowledge of the Czech language; another 6% rated their knowledge of the Czech language at level 2.

Proficiency in the Czech language is largely related to the nationality of the foreign worker. A total of 60% of Slovak citizens working in the Czech Republic rated their knowledge of the Czech language with the highest mark. For citizens of other EU Member States, the highest level (i.e. 5) was mentioned by 13 to 14 % Romanians and people speaking other non-Slavic languages, and by 21 to 23 % Bulgarians and Poles. Apart from Slovaks, other respondents usually rated their knowledge of Czech at level 3. Lower marks (1 or 2 – worst knowledge of Czech) tend to be used by Romanians (22%) and citizens of other countries outside the four selected ones (15%).

Language skills directly relate to education. Among people with primary education, knowledge of Czech is at level 1 or 2 in 20% and at level 5 in 16% of cases. In the case of foreigners with university education, the lowest level knowledge (1 or 2) applies to 10% and the highest level (5) to 58%.

One quarter (25%) of respondents staying in the Czech Republic for up to 2 years have knowledge of the Czech language at one of the two lowest levels; in contrast, those staying in the country for 10 or more years have level 5 competence in Czech in 68% of cases.

While 13% of the foreigners interviewed who do not have a registered residence in the country and 10% of those with a temporary residence in the Czech Republic are practically unable to understand Czech (level 1 or 2), for those who have a permanent residence in the Czech Republic, this number is only 1%, and on the other hand, 59% speak Czech fluently (level 5 – according to their self-assessment).

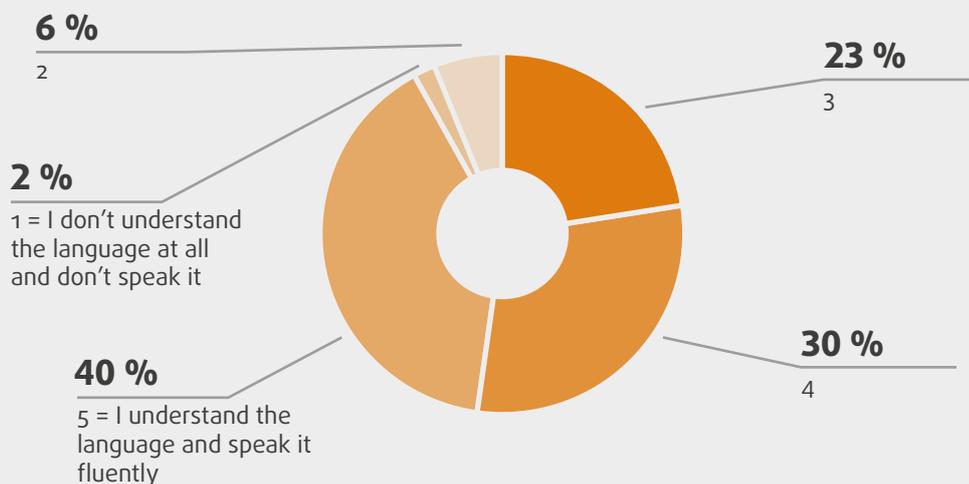
Almost one half (48%) of respondents who are regular employees hired directly by the employer rate their Czech language skills at the highest level. In the case of workers recruited via an employment agency, level 5 was mentioned by only 16%.

The highest knowledge of the Czech language (level 5) is present among the highest positions and the best qualified workers – professionals (65%), technicians and associate professionals (59%). On the other hand, 18% of workers in elementary occupations have virtually no knowledge of Czech (level 1 or 2).

Chart 16 – Competence in Czech

Q 11: How would you rate your knowledge of Czech on scale from 1 (I don't understand the language at all and I don't speak it) to 5 (I understand without any problems and speak the language fluently)?

Base: EU citizens working in the Czech Republic; n=1 021



5.3.2 TYPE OF EMPLOYMENT

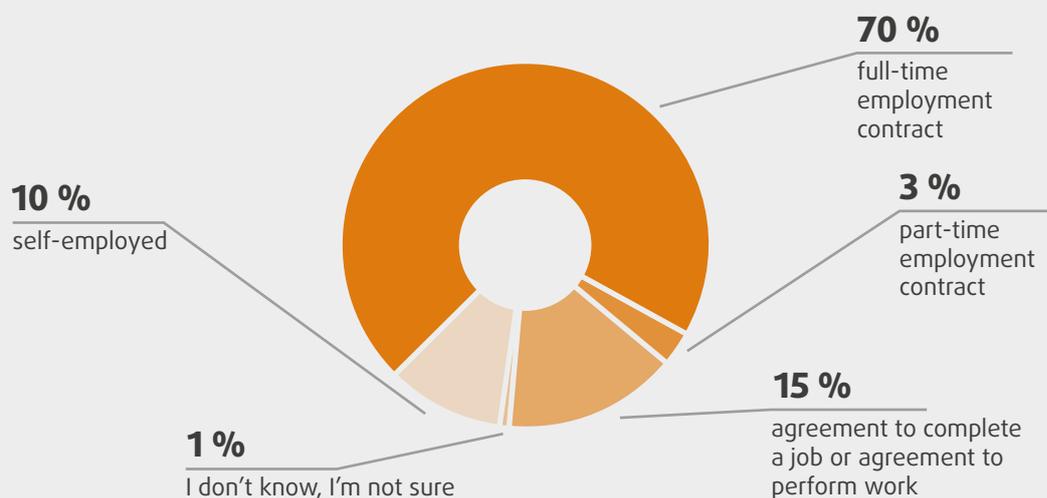
From among all the foreign workers from the EU living in the Czech Republic we interviewed, 95% are currently economically active. We further asked this group about the type of their current employment (full-or part-time regular employment; agreement to complete a job or an agreement to perform work; self-employed), the type of the current employment relationship (directly with the employer or via an agency), their current work category – the position to which they belong, and whether their current work corresponds to their qualifications.

For 70% of the EU citizens interviewed, their work in the Czech Republic is based on a full-time employment contract. A total of 3% of foreign workers from the EU have a part-time job and 15% work on the basis of an agreement to complete a job or an agreement to perform work. One tenth of the foreigners work in the Czech Republic as self-employed persons.

Chart 17 – Type of employment

Q 13: Do you work as an employee (with an employment contract or an agreement) or as a self-employed worker?

Base: EU citizens working in the Czech Republic who are currently economically active; n=972



Up to 78% of Slovaks in the research sample work in the Czech Republic based on a full-time employment contract. In contrast, the share of full-time employees is much smaller for Romanians (47%). Romanian workers tend to be more frequently hired using agreements to complete a job and to perform work (41%), and there are also cases where the employee has in fact no idea what type of contract/agreement (if any) he/she signed (5%). The share of self-employed workers is much higher among citizens from EU countries other than the four selected ones (22%).

The share of agreements to complete a job and to perform work is statistically higher among the youngest workers aged 18-24. The highest proportion (19%) of self-employed workers can be found in the 45-54 age category.

While full-time employment predominates (53%) among people with primary education, this share is significantly lower than for higher education categories; moreover, the share of agreements to complete a job and to perform work is statistically more significant among people with primary education (39%), as is the share of those who have no idea or are uncertain about the legal basis of their employment relationship with the employer (6%). The proportion of self-employed people is significantly higher (24%) among university-educated citizens working in the Czech Republic.

Agreements to complete a job and to perform work are more frequent among workers who have been in the Czech Republic only briefly (up to 2 years – 24%, from 2 to 5 years – 21%); in contrast, the share of these agreements is only 5% for people living in the country for 10 or more years, where self-employed persons constitute 27%.

These agreements are common especially among foreign nationals who do not have a permanent or temporary residence registered in the Czech Republic (24%), where the share of full-time employment is simultaneously the lowest – 57% (as compared to 70% and 76%, respectively, for workers with temporary residence).

Work performed directly for the employer (regular employees) is usually based on a full-time employment contract (86%). While 59% agency workers' employment contracts (employment relationships) are full-time, 36% of them work on the basis of an agreement to complete a job or an agreement to perform work.

At the same time, based on a comparison of job categories, full-time employment relationship is the least usual among the least qualified workers (elementary occupations) (53%), while the most frequent basis for work in this category is an agreement complete a job or to perform work (37%); these workers also most

often lack knowledge or certainty about the legal basis for their labour-law relationship (4%). Agreements to complete a job and to perform work are also significantly more frequent for skilled agricultural, forestry and fishing workers (36%). Almost 100% of clerical positions are based on full-time employment even for foreign workers; the share of self-employed people is significantly higher among professionals (39%).

5.3.3 TYPE OF EMPLOYMENT

From among those foreign workers interviewed who are not self-employed, 7 out of 10 are employed directly with their employer as “regular employees” (69%). The remaining 3 out of 10 (30%) work via an employment agency. Approximately 2% of the foreign nationals are uncertain about this.

A total of 2 out of 10 (21%) Slovaks are recruited via an agency. For Poles and Bulgarians, this equals 4 out of 10 (39% and 42%, respectively), for Romanians, 5 out of 10 (52%), and for citizens of other EU countries, 2-3 out of 10 (25%).

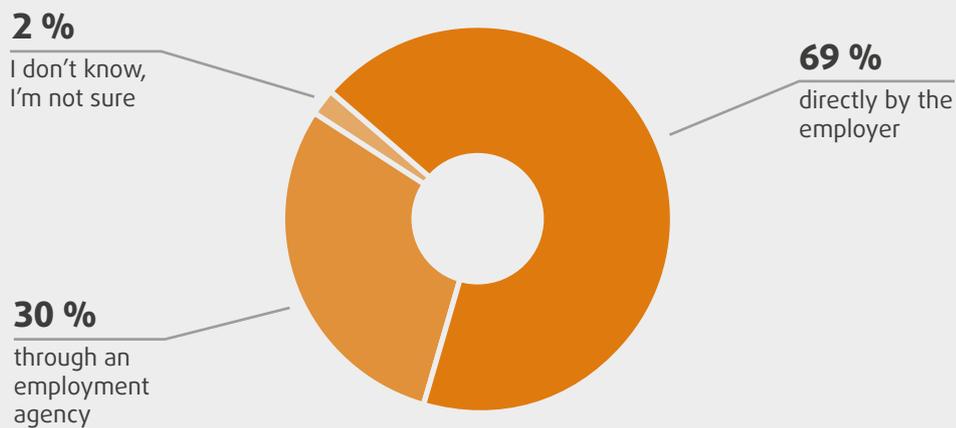
Among younger foreigners, there is a significantly higher share of those who work via an employment agency (18-24 years of age – 49%, 25 to 34 years of age – 41%) than for older workers (up to 85% of 55+ workers are regular employees and only 14% of them work via an agency).

Similarly, the share of agency employment is significantly higher for workers with lower education (primary education – 60%; secondary education without graduation examination – 40%) than for better educated workers (up to 97% of workers with a university degree are regular employees and only 2% work via an agency).

Chart 18 – Type of employment

Q 14: Are you employed directly by the employer or through an employment agency?

Base: EU citizens working in the Czech Republic who are currently economically active and are not self-employed; n=873



Foreign workers working via an employment agency are more frequent among those living in the Czech Republic for a short period of time (up to 2 years – 41%; 2-5 years – 37%), while accounting for only one tenth among foreigners living in the Czech Republic for 10 years and more (10%).

While 18% foreigners with permanent residence are recruited via an agency, this share is 38% for those with temporary residence. A total of 5% of foreigners who do not have a permanent or temporary residence in the Czech Republic do not know what their employment relationship is, whether they are regular or agency employees.

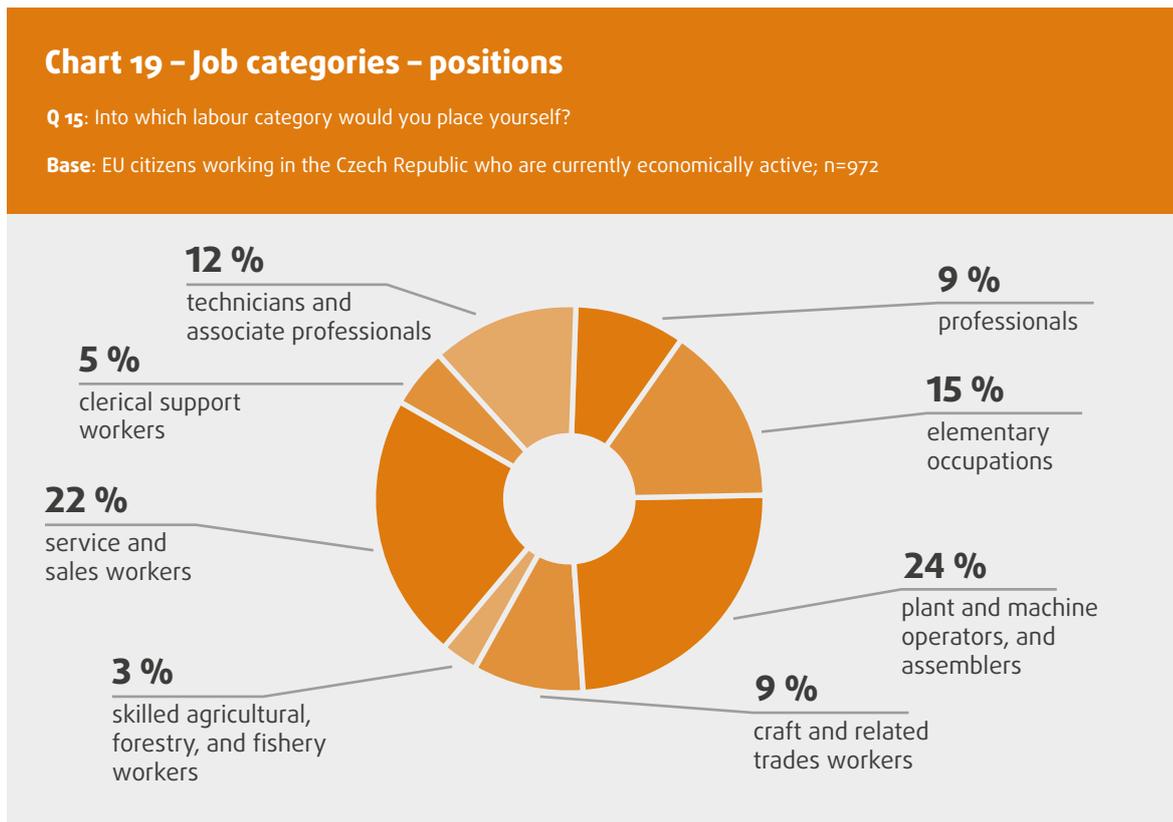
If a foreign worker is fluent in Czech, he/she is usually a regular employee (87%). On the other hand, those foreigners who have the greatest difficulty to communicate in Czech work directly for their employer in 5-6 out of 10 cases; others with poor Czech language skills are usually dependent on an agency.

In 76% of cases, full-time employees are regular employees. A total of 62% of people who work based on an agreement to complete a job or an agreement to perform work are agency employees.

Almost 100% of the most qualified positions (clerical support workers, technicians and associate professionals, professionals) are regular employees. In the lowest-skilled categories of elementary occupations, plant and machine operators, and assemblers, about one half of the positions are directly with the employer and half through an agency.

5.3.4 JOB CATEGORIES – POSITIONS

The EU citizens interviewed currently work in the Czech Republic in various positions, from the lowest qualifications: elementary occupations (15%) and plant and machine operators, and assemblers (24%), to highly qualified technicians and associate professionals (12%) and professionals (9%). A total of 22% of foreign workers work in services and sales. Approximately one tenth (9%) of the foreigners interviewed work in the country as craft and related trades workers.



Slovaks are employed in the Czech Republic more than citizens of other EU countries as service and sales workers (27%) or clerical support workers (7%). Poles work in the Czech Republic as plant and machine operators or as assemblers (37%), in elementary occupations (23%) and in services and sales (21%). Workers from Romania and Bulgaria are mainly in elementary occupations (RO – 33%, BG – 23%) and also plant and machine operators, or assemblers (equally, 31%). Bulgarians are more likely than Romanians to fill positions in services and sales (16% BG vs. 9% RO), craft and related trades workers (13% BG vs. 8% RO), but also skilled professionals (10% BG vs. 4% RO). Workers from Bulgaria hold slightly more qualified posts in the Czech Republic than Romanians. Workers from other EU countries (other than the four selected ones) are most often highly qualified technicians and professionals or skilled professionals.

There is a statistically significant difference between men and women among the foreigners interviewed only in terms of job categories. As expected, men are more frequent than women among plant and machine operators, and assemblers (31% men vs. 11% women) and also among craft and related trades workers (14% men vs. 2% women); the opposite is true of services and sales (13% men vs. 40% women) and clerical support workers (3% men vs. 9% women).

Among the youngest foreign workers aged 18-24, there is a significantly higher share of elementary occupations (27%) and especially service and sales workers (43%). Workers aged 35-44 and 55+ are then more frequent than younger ones in the positions of technicians and associate professionals (17-20%) and those aged 45 to 54 more frequently work in the Czech Republic as professionals (14%).

The lowest education groups of foreign workers are (naturally) more likely than better educated to work in less qualified positions – elementary occupations (primary education, 66%), plant and machine operators, and assemblers (secondary education without graduation examination, 39%), and craft and related trades workers (secondary education without graduation examination, 15%). People with a secondary graduation certificate are more frequent than other education groups in positions of service and sales workers (33%) and clerical support workers (9%). People with a university degree can be found to a greater extent among technicians and associate professionals (41%) and professionals (41%).

Workers who have only been in the Czech Republic for a short period of time are more likely to be those with the lowest qualifications in elementary occupations (31%); in contrast, there are significantly more technicians and associate professionals (18%) and professionals (19%) among foreigners who have lived in the Czech Republic for 10 years or more.

Foreign nationals with permanent residence have generally higher qualifications, including a higher share of highly skilled professionals (16%), than foreigners with a temporary residence in the Czech Republic.

There is a higher share of elementary occupations (37%) among foreign workers who do not speak Czech well (the lowest levels of knowledge – 1 or 2), while on the other hand, foreigners who speak Czech fluently (the highest level – 5) are significantly more likely to be employed as technicians and associate professionals (18%) and professionals (15%).

Foreign workers hired in the Czech Republic based on an agreement to complete a job or an agreement to perform work are more often than others in elementary occupations (35%). A total of 36% of foreigners in the research sample who work as self-employed in the Czech Republic are highly skilled professionals.

Agency employees are most often hired in the Czech Republic for elementary occupations (27%) and plant and machine operators, and assemblers (43%). Those foreigners who are employed in the Czech Republic as regular employees directly with the employer are more frequent than others (agency employees) in clerical positions and among technicians and associate professionals.

5.3.5 WORK VS. QUALIFICATION OF THE EMPLOYEE

The respondents who are currently active were asked whether they believed their current position matched their education and qualifications. Almost three quarters (73%) of them responded that their work corresponded to their education and qualifications. On the other hand, one fifth (20%) of foreign workers in the Czech Republic believe that the current job is not in line with their education and qualifications. A total of 7% are unable to respond – they do not know.

Eight out of 10 Slovak citizens (78%) and workers from EU countries other than Poland, Romania and Bulgaria (83%) consider their current position to be in line with their education and overall qualifications. Among Poles, this is about 7 out of 10 (66%), for Bulgarians, 6 out of 10 (63%) and for Romanians, only 5 out of 10 (52%). As many as 36% Romanians are convinced that their current job in the Czech Republic does not correspond to their education or qualifications, and roughly one tenth (11%) Romanians are unable to respond.

Especially the youngest employees (18-24 years) and those who have been in the Czech Republic for up to 2 years, as well as workers in elementary occupations, are more likely than others to be unable to assess the situation and answer the question.

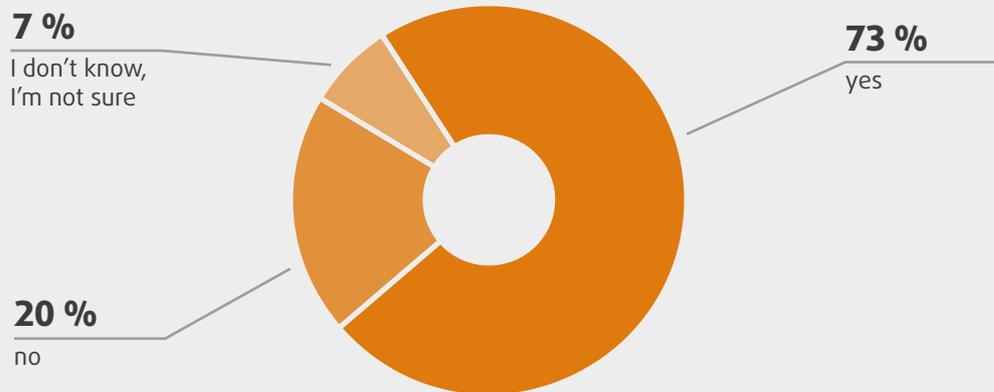
A significant part of those foreigners who work in the Czech Republic on the basis of an agreement to complete a job or an agreement to perform work (41 %), those hired via an agency (32%), workers in elementary occupations (44%) as well as skilled agricultural, forestry and fishing workers (39%) are not convinced about the conformity of their current position with their education and qualifications.

A total of 90% of workers with university education are confident that their current job corresponds to their education and qualifications. Technicians and associate professionals as well as skilled professionals are convinced about this in 98% of cases.

Chart 20 – Work vs. qualification of the employee

Q 16: Do you think that your current job corresponds to your level of education and qualification?

Base: EU citizens working in the Czech Republic who are currently economically active; n=972



5.3.6 HEALTH INSURANCE

According to their own statement, 92% of the EU citizens working in the Czech Republic have a valid health insurance card or a substitute card, 3% admit that they lack valid health insurance, and 5% do not know/are not sure.

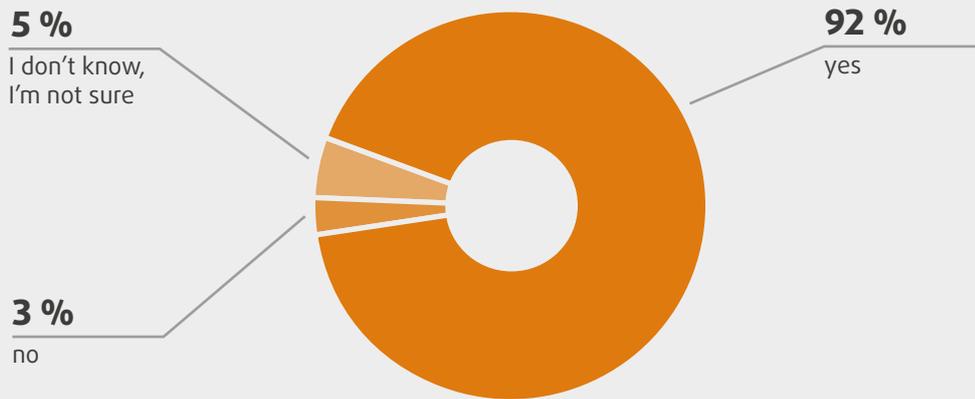
The highest degree of uncertainty is among Romanians (16%) and Bulgarians (11%). A further 4% of Romanians and Bulgarians concede that they do not have valid health insurance. In contrast, the share of Slovaks with a valid health insurance card is 95%; for Poles, this equals 94%, and for other EU countries, 92%.

Those without insurance or without knowledge of how their health insurance is arranged are especially the youngest foreign workers aged 18–24 (4% have no insurance and 15% do not know), workers with the lowest education (primary school – 7% + 17%), those with the shortest stay in the Czech Republic (up to 2 years – 7% + 9%), foreigners who do not have a registered residence in the Czech Republic (7% + 16%), foreigners who have the greatest difficulty communicating in Czech or do not speak Czech at all (lowest level of Czech language skills: 1 or 2 – 7% + 19%), economically inactive persons (6% + 14%), employees working on the basis of an agreement to complete a job or to perform work (7% + 13%), elementary occupations (4 % + 14%).

Chart 21 – Health insurance

Q 17: Do you have a valid health insurance (a valid health insurance card or a replacement card)?

Base: EU citizens working in the Czech Republic; n=1 021



6. RESULTS OF THE STUDY – QUALITATIVE PART

This chapter describes the findings made in the qualitative part of the project as regards the manifestations of perceived discrimination – from among 30 individual in-depth interviews and in four basic areas: employment, including special focus on employment agencies; healthcare; authorities and other governmental and public institutions; education – educational institutions.

6.1 Disadvantages at work

- “... it is set up in such a way that foreigners are here and Czechs are there; there is certainly always some difference, in treatment and in the remuneration and also in evaluation, if there is some evaluation based on which someone receives a financial reward, some bonus, some evaluation, it is always different when it comes to foreigners.”
(quote: Bulgarian, age 55+, plant and machine operator)

The above quote is representative of a widespread feeling among a significant number of foreigners living and working in the Czech Republic. Other statements by the respondents show that feelings of disadvantage are almost always related, to a greater or lesser extent, to language difficulties.

6.1.1 LANGUAGE DIFFICULTIES

One of the main phenomena accompanying the feelings of disadvantage among foreign workers in the Czech Republic, especially those who work in the country through an employment agency, who have zero or little knowledge of Czech (they usually stay in the Czech Republic for a relatively short period of time, and they are mainly from Romania), are **language difficulties (a language barrier)**, which can already be perceived in **job search and then upon commencement of work**. Although a language barrier in the sense of ignorance or lack of knowledge of the Czech language can potentially stand in the way of foreign workers from all EU Member States (except perhaps Slovaks and possibly Poles; but even they mentioned a feeling of disadvantage because of inadequate knowledge of Czech – especially written language), it is relevant primarily for workers in blue-collar positions, and especially coming from the Balkans. Foreigners from Western Europe naturally

also struggle with Czech, but their language skills are on a completely different level, especially thanks to English. Moreover, their efforts to overcome communication issues caused by lacking knowledge of the Czech language contribute to their integration in the working environment, where English tends to be the main or secondary language of communication. Consequently, their handicap associated with lacking competence in Czech does not have such fundamental impacts and manifestations as in the case of employees from the East.

- “When it came to finding a job, I felt that not being Czech was a disadvantage.”
(quote: Italian, 35-44 years of age, IT specialist)
- “Finding a job – it was hard, very hard. (...) I couldn’t communicate well in Czech. (...) There were a lot of Hungarians in our factory, but they ran away quickly. Well, because of the language. They had hard time speaking the language. But they had hard time only with the language, as they couldn’t communicate and they couldn’t last two or three months. They ran away.”
(quote: Hungarian, 45-54 years of age, welder)
- “... it was a problem without Czech, it was a huge problem to find a job.”
(quote: Pole, 35-44 years of age, initially plant and machine operator, now teaching assistant)
- “... people I know who are foreigners and work in the Czech Republic, they do so only because their employers speak English. Because if they didn’t, they probably wouldn’t get a job.”
(quote: Spaniard, 35-44 years of age, employee of a multinational company)
- “... it’s mainly the language, and I think I know that communication can be a bit difficult at times, that if you have a team of, I don’t know, ten people and you’re looking for an eleventh person, then you’ll rather hire a new employee who is Czech or at least speaks Czech than a foreigner, I don’t know, from France or Italy, who doesn’t speak Czech. So I think this is sort of discriminating, but I would say from experience that sometimes just the main language of the team is taken into account, which is not quite fair...”
(quote: Pole, 25-34 years of age, administrative worker in a multinational company)
- “... the foreman should pay more attention to having an interpreter at work (...) when dealing with some important stuff, (...) they are not always helpful in these things.”
(quote: Romanian, 35-44 years of age, plant and machine operator)
- “... if those people can hear that one speaks at least a little bit of Czech, they’ll be happy to help or are just more pleasant, but I think that someone who just isn’t even interested in learning Czech and expects everyone to speak English will have a hard time, that it’s also about adapting a bit...”
(quote: Pole, 25-34 years of age, administrative worker in a multinational company)
- “She (a friend from Romania, with a father from Syria) had a bit of a problem, (...) and only during the first year, because she couldn’t cope with the language, they said that he was from Taliban and stuff and a terrorist, and so on ...”
(quote: Romanian, 25-34 years of age, initially a co-ordinator, now financial analyst)

Even if a worker is satisfied with his/her job, he/she finds it very frustrating that his/her supervisor (the foreman) is unable to communicate with him/her, that the process of work assignment takes too long without an interpreter, and if the worker does not understand the assignment accurately, this causes great uneasiness and fear that the task will not be completed as assigned.

The worker is then very stressed that if the task assigned is not completed correctly or fully, if there is any breakdown or the product is defective, if the task takes too long, he/she will be penalised or fined, his/her wages cut and, in the worst case, even dismissed.

- “... the information is not accurate enough to avoid some problems later.”
(quote: Romanian, 35-44 years of age, plant and machine operator)

- “But it’s a big factory, there are a lot of employees, the interpreter is not always at hand, so you have to wait for him to come and explain. But when the jumper or coach already knows that you understand some Czech, he shows it to you de facto ‘manipulatively’ and tries to explain in Czech. It would be better to have an interpreter to explain it all properly.”
(quote: Bulgarian, 35-44 years of age, plant and machine operator)
- “... not exactly the best communication, like there’s not always an interpreter and then something goes wrong and, of course, the workers get the worst of it, yes, and then there’s a threat of a fine or getting fired, which means getting kicked out of the hostel and stuff like that, which is stressful for them, but it’s like not entirely their fault, it’s because of the poor communication, you just explain it to them, but without an interpreter, and if something goes wrong, they’re the ones who get the worst of it.”
(quote: Romanian, 35-44 years of age, plant and machine operator)

Agency employees greatly fear any violation that might be attributed to an individual worker, even if it is not the worker’s fault, or if the relevant instruction was given to them orally, inaccurately, without interpreting.

6.1.2 REMUNERATION

Although foreigners are not always able to compare their wages fully and directly with those of Czech employees, some examples of disadvantages in the area of remuneration are quite obvious; in other cases, this is not a question of comparing wage levels, but rather of being paid less than promised, paying wages “on the side”, etc.

- “Theoretically, I had a deal, but ... it was not at all what they promised and the Czech who promised and gave me the job cheated, and cheated a lot. Yes, he didn’t pay what he promised, he gave me a different job than he promised, and... he didn’t pay about 40% of my wage. (...) I am a teacher and I worked as a headteacher for fifteen years (...) I have three university degrees, and also have a ... driving licence, practically in all categories, all groups. I went (to the Czech Republic) as a bus driver. Well, I slept in the bus, I was promised a hotel ... no one booked anything and I slept in the bus when it was -3°C outside.... That was a terrible experience for me. (...) I had a thousand crowns... and I was supposed to live on it for a month. I got one thousand crowns once for the whole month, I had to live on that. (...) I asked for a contract from the very first day (...) I didn’t get one (...) I’m in a managerial position, but I have a contract – that’s also interesting, in Czechia – as a blue-collar worker, working in a workshop.”
(quote: Hungarian, 45-54 years of age, driver, dispatcher, “manager”)
- “.. in the Czech Republic, about 20 to 40% of wage is not taxed – is paid on the side. And not only to foreigners, it’s the same for Czechs; I was quite surprised, as this reminded me of Ukraine. (...) The basic wage is 30 to 50% lower than for Czechs. The base is smaller right away, from the beginning.”
(quote: Hungarian, 45-54 years of age, driver, dispatcher, “manager”)

6.1.3 WORK DEMANDS AND MENTAL PRESSURE

The **work demands and the mental pressure** are omnipresent from day one. Many of the difficulties and pitfalls that a worker has to go through during the first days of employment are certainly the same as for Czech “novices”, but the position and situation of foreign workers is usually much more challenging.

- “... you come to the factory and they train you. And from the very first day, before they show you your first jobs, they ask you to be quick. One can’t handle things from day one like someone who has been doing this for a long time. You get used to it, but you have to mentally adapt and take it easy ...”
(quote: Bulgarian, age 55+, plant and machine operator)

The reason for the mental pressure and difficulties experienced by foreign workers lies not only in the mentioned language barrier, but also in the generally significantly weaker position of a foreigner, who has been removed from his/her social, cultural and ethnic environment. In the case of people in low-skilled positions and usually also those with low degree of education, their behaviour is fundamentally influenced by existential motives followed by the worker him/herself or his/her family. Any threat to their job, and thus

their income, any complication at work or related to work, is thus significantly more stressful for foreigners because, among other things, their ability to defend and stand for themselves is diminished by the language barrier, lack of knowledge of the environment (society as a whole, the employer's organisation, trade unions, etc.), lack of knowledge of the legal / legislative protection of employees.

These situations are further exacerbated by **manifestations of workplace bullying**, which under normal conditions would or might not have the "nationality discrimination" connotations. However, due to the reasons and causes described above, these groups of foreign workers (especially newcomers, usually with lower education, or in low-skilled positions) are easy and frequent targets of bullying and other signs of disadvantage at the workplace (usually a smaller operation, not a large multinational company).

→ "Yes and bullying normally as in a collective. Except I didn't have Facebook back then, I didn't care. And I was looking for something one day and discovered I did have a Facebook page. They simply set up a Facebook page for me, and put ugly pictures there. That was a really horrible experience to begin with. They simply took pictures of me during my shift. I wasn't used to working nights, I'd worked in an office all my life. I have a degree in economics-accounting, so I wasn't used to working three shifts at all. So for me to start a three-shift operation was a disaster. But I told myself I had to start somehow, because nobody would give me an office job. So I went to work on a line. I was ready – they told me I'd have to work with my hands – I was ready for it. But I wasn't prepared for people to be so mean. They just made me a Facebook page, like my own page, took pictures of me at work. My colleagues posted these sleepy pictures of me, early in the morning, when I was running on fumes."

(quote: Pole, 35-44 years of age, initially plant and machine operator, now teaching assistant)

→ "Yes, that I didn't know... yes, they mocked me for not knowing Czech, for not knowing, for not keeping up – that wasn't true, I did keep up, like no matter what, you know. (...) I simply walked away, I couldn't make it, mentally and possibly also physically..."

(quote: Pole, 35-44 years of age, initially plant and machine operator, now teaching assistant)

→ "... that I was new, that they took advantage of the fact that I didn't know, I had no idea how things worked here, yes. They simply already felt secure, solid, that they had like a permanent job here as they had a contract for indefinite term."

(quote: Pole, 35-44 years of age, initially plant and machine operator, now teaching assistant)

6.1.4 WORK ASSIGNMENT

Foreign workers feel disadvantaged **in the assignment of work**; they are very **often transferred from one workplace to another, from one job to another**, which means constant learning; lower performance (failure to meet the standards or higher scrap rate) and a lower chance of specialisation and stable work (thanks to which they could work in a higher comfort, and yet at a higher pace, better quality, etc.).

→ "... I'm like a buddy, I work three lines. But a Czech never has more than one line. The same buddy, and he only runs one line. (...) I didn't want to die here (...) on three lines. Others can work one line and be fine and go home. (...) Yes, for the same money."

(quote: Hungarian, 45-54 years of age, welder)

→ "... what I did there, just that dirty job where I was in overalls every day, and suddenly they told me I would be transferred to some other place (...) 'Well, you've done something, so move on', so I just said: I'm not such a dork and do and ... I just said I guess the experience gave me enough..."

(quote: Pole, 45-54 years of age, self-employed real estate broker)

→ "... a foreigner has to be like... she has to know every job and ... for example, an operator didn't arrive, and they wouldn't send a Czech there, they would send someone like a Bulgarian, while Czechs are assigned to a single post from the beginning, and stay there ... and that's an easier position (...) They just say the operator is not here, you have to fill in, if you protest you can go, if you don't like it. (...) 'You're a foreigner, you have to do what we tell you', so you have no choice."

(quote: Bulgarian, 35-44 years of age, plant and machine operator)

- “Czechs work eight hours, we work twelve (...) that’s an order (...) holidays, Saturdays, Sundays and night work are paid the same money, this is not like Czechs (...), the same money as if it were a weekday (...) she doesn’t speak much Czech, so if something doesn’t suit her, she can’t comment and say what she wants to do or not to do, unlike Czechs. Which means that if something is ordered and she doesn’t like it, she just has to do it because she can’t defend herself. Because of the language.”
(quote: Romanian, originally from Moldova, 25-34 years of age, plant and machine operator)
- “... when they increased the speed of that belt, they got it anyway, same situation. The foreman comes and sets the speed even higher on the machine and they say at that point: (...) ‘Put the speed back because we can’t keep up, or give us support, more people here on the line because we can’t keep up’ and at that point they have to work twice as hard and they’re more tired, and still can’t defend themselves.”
(quote: Romanian, originally from Moldova, 25-34 years of age, plant and machine operator)
- “Czechs are more like... well ... they get better jobs than we do. (...) but what you can hear from Czechs you know ... how should I say this ... those words ... ‘You’ve come to take our jobs’”
(quote: Bulgarian, 25-34 years of age, plant and machine operator)
- “... no Czech will stay in this job. And this is beginning to really bother me, because Czechs will just sit there and I don’t want to ... you know (smiles faintly) ... they sit there, and work ... a week or two and begin complaining “My arms hurt ...”
(quote: Bulgarian, 25-34 years of age, plant and machine operator)
- “And he (the foreman) simply says, you know ‘Well, M., go back to your post’, and this is beginning to bother me, you know... On the one hand, you know, I am glad to know the job and be one of the best there , but on the other hand, just... (...) ‘Our arms hurt, we don’t want to: M., you go there’, and so they (Czechs) do other, easier jobs (...) well, they are most often slower ...”
(quote: Bulgarian, 25-34 years of age, plant and machine operator)
- “... the co-ordinators tried this on me and I turned around and said ‘No’ and he said: ‘You have to take a sixteen-hour shift’ and I say: ‘Do I? Where is it written that I have to? Is it in my contract?’ And it is illegal anyway, isn’t it...”
(quote: Bulgarian, 25-34 years of age, plant and machine operator)
- “... he told me I was supposed to help in the kitchen, which is peeling potatoes, washing dishes and cleaning the kitchen, yes... but I was supposed to help cooking... it didn’t work out, it fell apart, and the cook says to me, ‘You are no good, you know’; so he dumped it in the bin and I cried like... (...) I was just really hurt. (...) it was terrible for me, I was so humiliated, like never before ... it was so humiliating ... and it wasn’t like... I don’t know, like I felt stupid ...”
(quote: Bulgarian, 25-34 years of age, plant and machine operator, story from her previous job)
- “And there is no TV, no anything, and you can see nothing and feel nothing and hear nothing. And you work twelve to sixteen hours a day. And work 370 hours a month. 370 hours.”
(quote: Hungarian, 45-54 years of age, welder)

6.1.5 EMPLOYER’S UNLAWFUL PROCEDURES AND PRESSURE ON FOREIGN WORKERS

There are also **unlawful procedures and pressure exerted on foreign workers**, forcing them to behave “differently” to keep their jobs, to act contrary to the regulations and laws.

- “I suffered an accident at work and they talked me into not signing anything, that of course I would keep working, well I would go on sick leave then, but I would go back to work – it wasn’t true. They simply – I was sick for a long time. I had my hand injured, something just snapped in it and I came to work the next day, after getting some treatment, I thought I would work. Of course, I couldn’t work with the brace, they couldn’t give me any job where I could work with one hand, so I went on sick leave. I wanted to keep my job because I liked it there, but unfortunately... After some time, when my contract was about to end, two gentlemen came from the office to tell me that my contract was actually about to end and they would not renew it. And that was when I was ending my sick leave. (...)

Well, so I actually gave up just to keep my job, I gave up full wage + compensation ...”

(quote: Pole, 35-44 years of age, initially plant and machine operator, now teaching assistant)

6.1.6 LIMITED CAREER GROWTH AND ADVANCEMENT

Manifestations of potential discrimination are “visible” (often a feeling of disadvantage, which, however, is very difficult to prove) with regard to **limited career growth and advancement**, or at least advancement to some other, better, easier or more interesting job.

- “... if anyone had a chance of promotion, it was Czechs. And this has changed the way it did, because Czechs no longer (smirk) work much.”
(quote: Pole, 45-54 years of age, plant and machine operator)
- “I’m sure that if he wanted to get the post, a promotion, directly in this company, this would probably be more difficult, because this requires a very good knowledge of Czech.”
(quote: Pole, 45-54 years of age, logistics operator)
- “... because you are a foreigner and they treat you as a foreigner, they are already preventing you from getting more important and better jobs, where you’d be better paid, even if good Czech is not needed there, and language should not be a problem.”
(quote: Bulgarian, age 55+, plant and machine operator)
- “But I felt that because I was even better educated than others, because my boss had, let’s say ... a Master’s degree, and I already had a PhD in philosophy, and that was already a problem.”
(quote: Bulgarian, 45-54 years of age, interpreter)
- “... even an agency worker can get a better post. But he has to bribe the co-ordinator and go through the co-ordinator. (...) Maybe not like in a hierarchy, but he will say that there are harder and better ones, and transfers you to an easier post. Like that you would have an easier job.”
(quote: Bulgarian, age 55+, plant and machine operator)
- “And to become one of the five in a senior position, it is not important whether you are a regular or agency employee, but rather whether you are Czech or a foreigner. Very seldom will a foreigner get such a position. It’s almost 98% impossible to become a foreman if you are a foreigner, for example.”
(quote: Bulgarian, age 55+, plant and machine operator)
- “... if she wanted to grow in the hierarchy and there were three candidates and one of them was Czech or Slovak, she would have no chance of getting the job. They usually make it an issue if you don’t speak good Czech (...) they just don’t want foreigners (...) and for this position, they also want English and she knows English, for example, so ... it would be an advantage for her that she speaks English. But it is more likely because she is not Czech or Slovak.”
(quote: Bulgarian, 35-44 years of age, plant and machine operator)

Some foreigners who have education and an ambition to achieve a relatively fast career advancement, getting higher managerial posts, feel disadvantaged compared to Czech colleagues, even in multinational companies, especially if the local management is Czech.

- “... the company management did not act fairly when it failed to keep its promises and agreements. In fact, my colleague (Czech) became my team leader and then my manager. The management was more accommodating to her and favoured her over me. (...) I was there for 5 years and I didn’t get anywhere. My salary went up by, I don’t know, about 1.5%, which is a laugh.”
(quote: Italian, 35-44 years of age, IT specialist)

6.1.7 DISMISSAL

Further, not quite obvious manifestations of perceived discrimination, or feelings of disadvantage (which again are very difficult to prove) occur in **dismissal** of employees.

- “What they did – at the beginning of the pandemic, they let all the Poles go.”
(quote: Pole, 35-44 years of age, plant and machine operator)
- “... one doesn’t know what rights one has, for example ... whether they can terminate his contract themselves or ... and that’s why you are primarily foreigner, you live in uncertainty, in a rental flat... When they tell you something like that, you will rarely go against them ...”
(quote: Bulgarian, 35-44 years of age, plant and machine operator)

A combination of bullying and feelings of disadvantage, caused often by hidden manifestations of potential discrimination, eventually result in frustration, demotivation and often even serious health problems among foreign workers.

- “And now, when they arrived in Czechia and started working, let’s say, twelve hours a day, around the clock, and he collapsed and even ended up in a psychiatry ward. (...) He was diagnosed with schizophrenia. He takes medication and gets injections every month. And he’s waiting for temporary residency, hoping that he might get some disability pension or something.”
(quote: Bulgarian, age 55+, plant and machine operator – telling a story of his son, 25-34 years of age)

6.1.8 WORKING THROUGH AN AGENCY

From the sample of EU citizens who took part in the survey, Romanians, Bulgarians, Poles, as well as Ukrainian Hungarians from Transcarpathia with a Hungarian passport and Moldovans with a Romanian passport are most likely to **work in the Czech Republic through an agency**. These are mostly people with low or completely different qualifications (cook), with a low level of education (exceptions are university graduates – currently a welder or bus driver), who usually also have low-qualified jobs or work as plant and machine operators – at a belt, on a line, often in larger or large factories of multinational companies.

For workers who are newly arriving in the Czech Republic, often without any contacts with their compatriots who arrived earlier and/or who do not speak Czech, an **agency** is practically the only way to find and get a job in the Czech Republic, or the only solution they are aware of and dare to use.

- “An agency always offers some work. Even if it’s not in a factory, somewhere else, and gives you some kind of a minimum that you need to live on here. On the other hand, if one were to achieve something more, on his own, without an agency, one would need good language skills and know how the system works here, so that he could look for a job and find it on his own.”
(quote: Bulgarian, age 55+, plant and machine operator)
- “... my husband even paid them to get him a job here, and everything would be coming up roses ...”
(quote: Bulgarian, 25-34 years of age, plant and machine operator)

Along with a job, an agency will provide transport, accommodation and interpreting. Only after some time will the workers find out that these services, other promised services and benefits, financial rewards and the work assigned are often at a (significantly) lower level than that of other workers (especially regular employees, Czechs), or that many of the promises have not been kept or have been “twisted”, conditioned in various ways, etc.

“So the agency pays for the accommodation, actually there is a condition that one should work at least one hundred and fifty hours (a month), yes, if he is below that, the employee himself pays for something (...) that he lives with his family somewhere else, and so he only receives a housing allowance of three thousand on top of wages (...). If the cost is more than three thousand, he has to pay the extra.” (quote: Romanian, 35-44 years of age, plant and machine operator)

Employment agencies also employ Czechs, but to a lesser extent.

- “... 90 percent of agency workers are foreigners and ten percent are Czech. But these are mostly homeless people and alcoholics and they work through an agency because the agency will offer them accommodation. And there are agencies that offer, they like take a thousand five hundred just to accommodate them.”
(quote: Bulgarian, age 55+, plant and machine operator)

Agency workers, however, usually feel little or no support from “their” employment agency. Workers often live in belief that the co-ordinators, interpreters and the whole agency have made some kind of a previous arrangement with the employer as to what agency workers would be offered, provided, explained, interpreted, etc. and how – that there is some form of interconnection between the interests of the agency and those of the factory management as regards agency workers.

- “... even if they know the laws or procedures, they won’t advise you. They won’t help you in your situation.”
(quote: Bulgarian, age 55+, plant and machine operator)
- “Yes, it was structured in such a way that no one really understood it. I went to see the foreman, I told him I had a problem ... I don’t know what it is, whether they’re deducting or stealing money from me, and he says the agency gives and the agency takes ... quite unpleasant, you know.”
(quote: Pole, 45-54 years of age, logistics operator)
- “... there are good and bad employment agencies here, but I know for a fact that they work with the police and with the foreign police because the foreign police... they don’t know about many things that are going on here (breaking the law). Huge violations of the law and they (the foreign police) don’t see it, don’t want to see it and don’t want to deal with it. So I think – corruption ...”
(quote: Hungarian, 45-54 years of age, driver, dispatcher, “manager”)

There are frequent problems (contrary to agency promises and sometimes possibly even contracts) with the work assigned, unpaid overtime work, problems with accommodation and rates for accommodation, and failure to pay health and social insurance.

- “It is also a big problem that when these agencies are looking for employees, they naturally, logically, initially promise more than they’re able to deliver – the amount of wages, the amount of bonuses, ... extras – they won’t say how much they will take from you (...) we have an accommodation allowance of 3,500, so ... half a year, and 1,500 for transport, so the agency will give and take 5,000 from you. But it doesn’t say at the beginning that what they will give, they will take from you later.”
(quote: Pole, 45-54 years of age, logistics operator)
- “Now she is happy, but she used to work through this agency... and they immediately gave her an employment contract to start with, but I think it was not a regular contract but some sort of agreement to perform work or something like that, and she didn’t have health insurance and she didn’t even know that and then she had to pay CZK 8,000 to VZP for health insurance. (...) it’s the agency’s fault, the co-ordinator knew that she was coming here... coming with her child and her husband – or with her partner, and that she was going to live here, and she didn’t expect a temporary contract, but a normal contract, and she said it was the agency’s fault. They simply didn’t explain to her what kind of contract it was and that such a contract did not involve health insurance. (...) the contract was in Czech, it was not translated into Bulgarian.”
(quote: Bulgarian, 35-44 years of age, plant and machine operator)
- “He didn’t want to pay me (my last salary) and my husband didn’t get it at all... (...) They didn’t pay (for overtime work), so, well, I made myself heard ...”
(quote: Bulgarian, 25-34 years of age, plant and machine operator)

6.1.9 AGENCY WORKERS VS. REGULAR EMPLOYEES

For many **foreign agency workers**, a comparison with Czech agency workers (who are usually quite rare) is not as important and “controversial” as a **comparison with regular employees**, who have a contract directly with their employer – it is irrelevant whether they are Czechs, their compatriots or other foreigners.

If workers come to the Czech Republic to work and already have their family members or friends and acquaintances here, they usually try to avoid an agency and get hired directly – become regular employees. This is also the desire of almost all the workers who already work via an agency in the Czech Republic. This, by way of exception, is not true of employees of “better” agencies that co-operate e.g. with a well-known / major multinational company. These workers have very decent wages even via an agency, have the chance

of some career advancement, and benefit from transparent conditions and contracts.

Virtually all the foreign workers who worked through an agency were found to have worse working conditions than regular employees. However, the interest in obtaining a regular position – a better job with higher remuneration and additional financial and non-financial benefits – is suppressed by (existing or only perceived) obligations to the agency and the fear of violating them.

Even where supervisors are interested in keeping an agency employee – they would like him or her to become a regular employee (“part of the team”), it is often impossible or highly stressful for the worker to cope with this situation.

- “... he should work five years for an agency and then he can become a part of the team. (= become a regular employee)”
(quote: Romanian, 35-44 years of age, plant and machine operator)
- “... the agency has a contract with the factory and states that if they leave the job, the factory has no right to employ them within one year. Only after that period.”
(quote: Romanian, originally from Moldova, 25-34 years of age, plant and machine operator)
- “It takes at least six months for a person to be able to move from one agency to another. (...) Her husband, for example, used to work through an agency, but now he started working directly for the company. In that case, he had to wait for just a month. It is faster to move from an agency to a company. But from an agency to an agency, you have to wait for six months.”
(quote: Bulgarian, 35-44 years of age, plant and machine operator)

Agency workers are afraid of making any “slip”, because they know (or believe) that the agency could dismiss them for a “breach of loyalty” or of their **contract, which they are often not acquainted with**, and they would be forced to return to their home country (usually Romania).

Indeed, agency workers who do not speak Czech are often unaware of their rights; they don’t know what contract they have and what they are or are not entitled to under the contract. Many of the essential points of their labour-law relationship are only based on a verbal promise made by the agency. This often leads to great disillusionment and frustration on the part of the worker and a feeling of being helpless and hopeless.

- “... an agency often promises apparently better conditions, saying, for example: ‘I’ll give you a hundred crowns an hour, and some allowances for housing, transport and some clothes or something.’ ... and then, when the paycheck comes in, they look, it’s actually there, it’s just that the hundred goes to transportation, it is not always there ...”
(quote: Romanian, 35-44 years of age, plant and machine operator)
- “That was no problem until work became scarce. When there is no work, a bus comes, collects people, takes them to Bulgaria and tells them: ‘When there is work, a bus will come and bring you back again.’ (...) the agency does not have any strong commitments towards its workers. It can simply send you back at any time and then invite you – there is no notice. They will tell you right away: ‘We don’t need you,’ and there are no commitments.”
(quote: Bulgarian, age 55+, plant and machine operator)
- “...when you’re a regular employee, (...) they don’t expect you to work that fast and meet the standard or anything like that. They put more pressure on agency employees. And he says that it’s not written anywhere in the contract of an agency worker that he has to keep up with some standard. But he’s forced to do so or he’d be fired. (...) If the foreman said, like, ‘I don’t want that worker because, for example, he doesn’t meet the standard,’ the agency can’t protect him in any way and has to pull him out of that position.”
(quote: Bulgarian, age 55+, plant and machine operator)

The rights, positions and posts of agency workers and regular employees are different, which often leads even to a kind of segregation.

- “Even the foremen told them ‘please don’t contact the agency staff too much’. When they already became regular employees they were told not to communicate with agency workers. That there is a divide. (...) when one works through an agency, the relation of foremen to agency workers is even worse. And they also make more demands and the agency can’t protect them in any way. The agency just gives them a job, but it doesn’t have any relationship like that it would influence the relation as for, let’s say, regular employees towards agency workers.”
(quote: Bulgarian, age 55+, plant and machine operator)
- “... they met in a pub where the tables were set for the company’s Christmas party and they arrived there and my husband says to his friend: ‘Hey can’t you see, they’re like your colleagues.’ And they were about to sit down with them, they had a beer in their hands, and they said: ‘You can’t sit here, this is only for regulars.’ (...) in Bulgaria, such discrimination ... in Bulgaria, it doesn’t matter what nationality you are, there are Turks working there, Gypsies, we have Bulgarian Turks – we have Turks as a minority – and when you are in a collective, it doesn’t matter what kind of person you are, and we don’t have such agencies, there is no such thing, it’s always a collective and it’s taken as a whole.”
(quote: Bulgarian, age 55+, plant and machine operator)
- “... people who didn’t work because of the coronavirus, the companies were closed – via an agency, they received 60% of their wages, people who were company/regular employees received 80% of their wages.”
(quote: Bulgarian, 35-44 years of age, plant and machine operator)
- “The agency got 300 CZK/hour and the production worker normally received 70 CZK/hour. That’s how it was. And people normally in production got 88.”
(quote: Romanian, 25-34 years of age, initially a co-ordinator, now financial analyst)

Reduction or a loss of earnings or even loss of employment is such a threat especially for unqualified foreign agency workers that **they often do not approach anyone with their commonly legitimate demands or even simple questions, and thus voluntarily prolong and/or exacerbate potential workplace discrimination** from the agency, not only for themselves, but also for other workers in similar situations.

- “... the contract looks a little different and I think that one is in somewhat weaker position than a person employed directly by the company. (...) It’s more about the fact that if we decide we want to save money and we need to downsize, the first person to get fired will be a person employed through an agency. (...) I would say that job security is the biggest issue.”
(quote: Pole, 25-34 years of age, administrative worker in a multinational company)
- “... with the influence of the coronavirus, there is always, now for example, some certainty when one works for the company. The moment there are any layoffs, the first ones to go – for whom there is no work – will be agency workers.”
(quote: Bulgarian, 35-44 years of age, plant and machine operator)
- “... when (...) there wasn’t enough work, there were lines where only Czechs worked, so those lines remained in operation and those lines where there were Bulgarians, they just sent them home. (...) Bulgarians who worked through an agency were simply returned to Bulgaria for a month or two, and when there is work again, they bring them back to the Czech Republic.”
(quote: Bulgarian, 35-44 years of age, plant and machine operator)

However, in some situations, the lack of a “secure” job relationship with an agency is a big and really serious issue, especially when it comes to family, family members, starting a family, having children. It is often discovered only ex post facto in these situations that the **agency did not pay health insurance for the employee.**

- “During the two months (...) when his girlfriend got pregnant, they went back to the ... supervisor that they had to see a doctor, they arranged for an interpreter, they went, they arranged it, here was the confirmation that she was pregnant ... they said in a not very nice way that it would be better if she had an abortion to ... so that she could work ... keep working, they didn’t agree (...), when she was pregnant for four and a half months, they took her pass from her – the entrance card to (...) that she was being let go. Yes, and the next day she had to, if she was leaving her job, so like through the agency, it’s like

she has no longer a job and is being kicked out of the hostel. (...) Yes, at the moment when she was actually fired, she had actually worked eleven months at the agency.”

(quote: Romanian, 35-44 years of age, plant and machine operator)

- “... at the time, she had a contract for six months, like a fixed-term six-month contract. So, when the contract was about to end and they knew she was pregnant, they didn’t prolong the contract. We were there and asked whether they could extend the contract so that she would be given maternity leave, because she would otherwise not get it. They gave her another contract for a month, where she again didn’t meet the requirements, like for maternity leave. And when they gave her a contract for another month, they told her to sign that she was terminating the contract. And then she herself had to ... When she worked through an agency and she was – she was on sick leave already, it’s the agency’s responsibility to pass sick leave documents through her, like to social security, so they would pay the benefits, but they refused. So she had to send her sick leave documents personally by post to Ostrava, where the agency is based.”

(quote: Bulgarian, 35-44 years of age, plant and machine operator)

- “But when the baby was born, she just had to leave, because she was actually fired and he (her partner) wouldn’t be able to handle it, he would not earn enough ... here, like accommodation and family, and without maternity leave (...). The child was born in Romania and should be here, which didn’t happen because of the dismissal.”

(quote: Romanian, 35-44 years of age, plant and machine operator)

- “..., I had tonsillitis, soar throat, so I was in a hospital in Liberec and it cost me 15 thousand. It cost 15 thousand. But she (agency representative) paid what she told me, that she could not increase my wages, she was paying social and health insurance for me. And finally I became sick and I’m like, well, this should be paid for, there should have been some kind of health insurance or something. There wasn’t.”

(quote: Hungarian, 45-54 years of age, welder)

There were repeated complaints or **doubts and suspicions regarding serious violations of the legal procedures** by some employment agencies.

- “They even sometimes had thirty days of twelve-hour shifts. No weekends, no breaks. They told them if you don’t want it, then ... (...) they looked (the workers) like vampires. They (the agency officials) said “Who doesn’t like it, can go back to Bulgaria’.”

(quote: Bulgarian, age 55+, plant and machine operator)

- “... he works through an agency, it’s a different agency, so there he gets 95 crowns an hour, he has an accommodation allowance and a nine-crown bonus per hour. (...) He believes that the agency will not insure him for eight hours of work, but for four.”

(quote: Bulgarian, age 55+, plant and machine operator)

- “... a lot of Bulgarians working under an agency... a lot of Bulgarians, as a matter of fact, have problems not with health, but with social insurance ... for retirement ...”

(quote: Bulgarian, 25-34 years of age, plant and machine operator)

- “... they give you a contract and the contract is always for a fixed term. (...) They can’t extend it three times, that’s the law, they have to give you a contract for an indefinite term. (...), the agency keeps changing their, like... they quit and start a new agency with a new name and re-hire all those employees, under a new name, new identification number... (...) they changed their name and company every six months, sometimes every three months, and each time they’d employ the same people under a new name. Every six months, they received a new contract through a “new” agency – it was the same one, but with a different name. We found out, for example, that my husband didn’t have two ... more, almost three years of social insurance. At the time when the agency changed, they registered people for social insurance but didn’t pay for it.”

(quote: Bulgarian, age 55+, plant and machine operator)

To resolve the above-mentioned **problems with social insurance**, foreigners turned to the District Social Security Administration.

- “Dozens of people lack this and the authorities know about it, we personally were at the social insurance authority, like colleagues, friends who were here through an agency, they also didn’t have it. We were there, we reported it and the response was always, ‘Oh, we know, it’s the agency...’ (...) And it’s always the agency. There’s some clause in the new company, but the agency already has some reputation, they know about it. But then we didn’t see anything else, somehow it’s passed on somewhere and it’s not addressed in any way.. We just wonder why some other authorities that could investigate this aren’t involved, and somehow deal with these irregularities.”
(quote: Bulgarian, age 55+, plant and machine operator)

Another problem experienced by foreign workers (especially agency workers) is a complicated **access to education**, including lessons in the Czech language.

- “... there was registration for Czech language lessons and when one wanted to apply, he was told by the foreman that since he was an ag ... like an agency worker, he would not be able to get it. (...) And that the Czech foreman told him that, like told him off in a way, that as he worked under an agency, what was Czech actually good for in his case.”
(quote: Pole, 45-54 years of age, logistics operator)
- “No, none, no training, nothing.... regulars go for training and they have more money...”
(quote: Pole, 35-44 years of age, plant and machine operator)

Enforcement of workplace safety can also be more challenging in the case of agencies, and there can also be inequalities and potential discrimination in this area.

- “So I say, ‘I am not your slave.’ I came to work for them as a high-category welder, like, and they gave me a mask worth six hundred. Chinese. I tell them, look, there’s a Czech there, and he cannot weld really, and has a 12,000 crown helmet. Speedglas, Swedish helmet. And they have a helmet. And I got one for six hundred. (...) ‘Because you are an agency worker. For you ...’ (...) And I say to him: ‘I’m telling you, I’m not a slave, and if I lose my sight in half a year’, how much sight did I lose? I don’t even know. I didn’t go to see a doctor. But my sight’s gone a little ...”
(quote: Hungarian, 45-54 years of age, welder)

6.1.10 ACCOMMODATION OF AGENCY WORKERS

Accommodation is a specific topic for agency workers. As has already been indicated in the previous text and in the quotes, accommodation is an area where agencies make a lot of promises which they later do not keep, the principles based on which housing allowances are paid, and the costs of accommodation deducted from wages are often not transparent, they are complex and confusing, are based on previously unknown or undisclosed rates, etc.

- “And the worker’s hostel was arranged by the agency. Like... I paid CZK 7,000 for a bed... now I have a whole flat for CZK 6,500. CZK 7,000 for a single bed ... and these could be rooms where there were several beds... four or five people in one room. And one toilet for the whole floor.”
(quote: Pole, 45-54 years of age, logistics operator)
- “Twice they offered her to become a regular employee, but she gets a housing allowance from the agency, which the company doesn’t give to regular employees, and because of that, she hasn’t gone ... to work directly for the company yet.”
(quote: Bulgarian, 35-44 years of age, plant and machine operator)
- “What I see as the biggest problem for foreigners, Bulgarians, Romanians, is finding accommodation. I’ve been looking for some other accommodation for three months now and can’t find one. (...) So the owners don’t want to accommodate... to accommodate foreigners. (...) Agencies offer a worker’s hostel. If you disagree, you’re on your own. (...) They sent me an advert, and I called and every time I said we were a Bulgarian family, I was denied. They said ‘Well, the owner doesn’t want a foreigner’ or ‘Well, we have to make arrangements, we’ll see’ and the second time you call they say it’s already taken or ‘Someone called before you’”
(quote: Bulgarian, 35-44 years of age, plant and machine operator)

- "... the hostel was a disaster ... just crazy and I took my child with me, yes, so my daughter ... she was nine years old, so it was just a disaster. (...) Well, it was, it couldn't even be called a hostel... it was like a pub and that's where you live, yes ... there were supposed to be ... there was a bathroom and a toilet, just women, men ... we just had one room, there were just beds and in the other... just in the other room were men, in the other room were men, right, there... so it was just us two... women, you know. So the toilet was shared, the bathroom was shared, the water was like... I had to wait for the guys to shower and then like... so it was like... and then we waited."
(quote: Bulgarian, 25-34 years of age, plant and machine operator)

In the most serious situations, some of the foreign workers turned to NGOs that focus on issues of foreign workers, advise them and represent their interests. The foreigners either pass on the contact details of non-profit organisations among themselves, or they find out about their services only when they start attending Czech language courses provided by these organisations, or when interpreters provide awareness raising and advocacy regarding employees' rights in co-operation with such a non-profit organisation.

In general, however, foreigners tend not to tackle problems involving manifestations of potential discrimination at the workplace, and if they do, they rarely seek help from another entity.

6.2 Disadvantages at healthcare facilities

There are practically no feelings of disadvantage among the respondents in the qualitative part of the survey (EU citizens) in contact with healthcare facilities, doctors and healthcare personnel in general in the Czech Republic. The Czech healthcare system is highly valued by the foreigners interviewed, and not only Poles, Romanians and Bulgarians, but also foreigners from other EU countries – even from Western Europe – tend to be amazed by the functioning of the Czech healthcare system, the short appointment times, the quality of examinations and the overall provision of health services in the Czech Republic.

During the interviews, the respondents mentioned the poor state of healthcare in the respondents' countries, with very long waiting times for examinations and surgeries, very difficult access to medical care, corruption, high official and unofficial prices for treatment and surgeries, etc. The experience with the Czech healthcare system was very positive in all these parameters.

- "... she lately understands better Czech. So when she goes to the children's doctor, for example, the doctor speaks to her slowly. If she needs to show her a medicine, she will probably look it up and show it to her."
(quote: Bulgarian, 35-44 years of age, plant and machine operator)
- "... so in 2012 he had a surgery in the Czech Republic and he says he was pleasantly surprised that in the hospital, because he is a Muslim, they asked him what kind of meat he would like. That they knew he wasn't allowed to eat pork and they asked. And that really struck him."
(quote: Bulgarian, age 55+, plant and machine operator)

When a more serious examination, procedure or surgery is involved, the foreigner arranges for an interpreter or, in some cases, the hospital itself seeks interpreting services.

- "During treatment. The health insurance company even paid fifty-three thousand for interpreting."
(quote: Bulgarian, age 55+, plant and machine operator)

English-speaking foreigners try to find English-speaking doctors in online databases. In some cases, the contact details of English-speaking or Ukrainian physicians (for Romanians and Hungarians speaking Ukrainian) are passed on among the foreigners themselves. Foreigners who work mainly in multinational companies, those in higher positions, have medical care arranged through their employers, sometimes at private clinics, in medical facilities already specialising in foreign clientele (Canadian Medical), where it is always possible to communicate with the staff at least in English. Nonetheless, negative experience with these facilities (professional, i.e. medical, not related to discrimination) has also been mentioned by the respondents – foreigners.

In case of a more serious examination or surgery, a foreigner who speaks little Czech and has no knowledge of

English is often “accompanied” (frequently by a compatriot with better language skills or by a Czech colleague).

- ... when I went to the hospital in Ústí for an examination, I admit I asked my Polish friend who had lived in the Czech Republic for nine years to come with me, just to be sure ...”
(quote: Pole, 35-44 years of age, plant and machine operator)
- “... there was a situation, because I have problems with my heart, I got sick once, so my supervisor immediately called an ambulance, they took me to a hospital; I have to praise the approach of the hospital in Rychnov, and what was also very interesting was that Mrs. A, who sort of arranged this, was also concerned what would happen once they discharged me from the hospital, she gave me her phone number, so this is also an example of a humane, positive attitude and it’s not about indifference to what would happen afterwards.”
(quote: Pole, 45-54 years of age, plant and machine operator)

Similar to other areas, foreigners also encounter cases of individual failures in Czech healthcare. Sometimes, sentiments were expressed openly:

- “... the doctor commented rather rudely on where my friend came from, but it’s quite strange because my friend is from Slovakia ...”
(quote: Pole, 25-34 years of age, administrative worker in a multinational company)
- “... Well, she scolded us that foreigners were coming, she couldn’t work normally and why were they coming, why didn’t they go to their homeland and so on...”
(quote: Hungarian, 45-54 years of age, originally a driver, now a “manager”)

but more often (as follows from the respondents’ testimonies) covertly:

- “So it was a problem to find a paediatrician for her daughter and they were always refused because ... they had no capacity, they couldn’t register another child.”
(quote: Bulgarian, 35-44 years of age, plant and machine operator)
- “They were at the GP’s office and he told them, stated that there were no places, and at the same time a Czech came inside to register as a new patient.”
(quote: Romanian, originally from Moldova, 25-34 years of age, plant and machine operator)
- “You can hardly find a doctor to register with. It took us almost a whole year to find a doctor.”
(quote: Hungarian, 45-54 years of age, driver, dispatcher, “manager”)

Further stories of individual negative attitudes shown by doctors or medical staff towards foreigners cannot be unambiguously described as manifestations of discrimination, because such situations are also experienced by Czech patients (being forced to wait in the waiting room, occasional very rash reactions from the staff when a patient knocks on the door of the surgery, strong reprimands for failing to comply with the treatment regime, trips to a wrong medical workplace – emergency room, outpatient clinic, hospital in a different region, etc.).

In some cases, however, more serious problems are experienced by foreigners, often only when they reach a medical facility in the Czech Republic. These problems are related to their work, the contractual relationship with their employer and late realisation that health (or social or sickness) insurance premiums have not been paid on their behalf.

- “But that was a problem because she couldn’t make arrangements, and she would thus give birth, let’s say, without insurance, which is terribly expensive.”
(quote: Bulgarian, 35-44 years of age, plant and machine operator)
- “... she found out she was pregnant, so she told her employer, who started pressuring her in various ways to quit her job. Because they thought she knew she was pregnant and got herself employed. And then, when she had health problems, she already had to stay at home, then she had to chase them for about two months to get them pay for her sick leave. To submit the papers. (...) she signed the contract, but they still didn’t register her for health insurance. And they had to run after them a lot to make them do it, and then they did what they did because they didn’t know the laws. And they had to pay for all

the medical treatments from their own pocket. (...) The first two check-ups cost 14,000. And then they already made the registration for health insurance, so it was covered by the insurance.”

(quote: Romanian, originally from Moldova, 25-34 years of age, plant and machine operator)

6.3 Disadvantages at authorities and other public administration bodies

The experience of foreigners with Czech authorities does not differ fundamentally from that of Czech citizens in many ways. The complexity and lack of clarity of the system of applications and forms, reluctance, red tape, incompetence, coupled with minimal powers and the air of “importance”, and even arrogance shown by officers towards the citizens. All of this is aggravated by a fundamental language barrier, often greater on the part of the officer than of the client. It is often very difficult to determine in these situations whether or not discrimination has occurred.

- “An official just sees a weird surname and talks to you like you’re an idiot.”
(quote: Pole, 35-44 years of age, initially plant and machine operator, now teaching assistant)
- “When I go to an authority, there’s always a problem. (...) they’re ‘superrude, superrude!’ (...) Well, I think there’s probably some ... I don’t know ... racism, I don’t know whether this is ... it’s probably not the right word, but a certain type of hatred towards foreigners, because I’ve experienced many times that people shouted at me ... (...) I asked someone ‘Do you perhaps speak English?’ and I heard something like ‘No! I am Czech!’”
(quote: Dutch, 35-44 years of age, scientist)
- “You could succeed with the authorities, but you really need good Czech, at least some standard Czech, but you still can’t fill out all the documents you’d need to achieve anything.”
(quote: Bulgarian, age 55+, plant and machine operator)
- “... if you want to live here longer and need to deal with Czech authorities, well ... without English, like with my Czech, I would be a bit afraid to deal with some of the more formal things and without Czech, I can’t imagine.” (quote: Pole, 25-34 years of age, administrative worker in a multinational company)
- “The problem is when you have to go to the authorities and get something done, like some administrative problem or legal stuff, it’s difficult to find people who speak English at those places. (...) Every time I have to go to a place like this, I go with my wife (who is Czech).”
(quote: Spaniard, 35-44 years of age, employee of a multinational company)
- “And I also met one – ‘ok, you don’t speak Czech and that’s not my problem, I won’t communicate with you anymore ...’”
(quote: Italian, 35-44 years of age, scientist)

The most recurrent and perhaps the most significant problems experienced by foreigners are **with the foreign police / asylum department** (foreigners mostly do not distinguish between these two institutions and call them simply “foreign police”), especially at the beginning of their stay in the Czech Republic, when they have very little or zero knowledge of Czech and are not prepared for the foreign police officers’ approach, which is often described by foreigners as shocking, aggressive, brutal, without the slightest effort to help, without the ability to explain anything, without any knowledge of English. Although there have recently been some voices mentioning partial improvements in both the system and the language skills of these officials, exceptions to the overall negative assessment are very rare.

- “... like I think the biggest shock (...) is the foreigners’ office or whatever it is; if you’re just applying for a temporary stay or permanent residence, you just have to go there and bring the paperwork and wait for the approval and so on and ... well, it was ... the experience was terrible because ... (...) there was just no information in English and the people who worked there didn’t speak much English either ... from what I know they don’t speak much ... they often just have no English, so information that was available for those people who just needed to sort something out, it was in Russian, Vietnamese and Czech, I think, but no English. (...) Well, no problem for me, because I already spoke Czech at such a level that we managed to communicate and ... but it was very unpleasant and I know that it has gotten

a little better, because when I was there I think ... there was even no ticketing system there or it was not possible to make an appointment in advance, it was just terribly embarrassing, so one came there at eight o'clock, and there was a huge crowd there, and then one simply waited in line ... (...) many people complained about this, that this is simply because they didn't speak even English, so it's quite ... I think it's quite a fail ..."

(quote: Pole, 25-34 years of age, administrative worker in a multinational company)

→ "She (my Romanian girlfriend) was there (at the foreign police) alone once, she tried to speak English, but that was quite a problem because almost no one spoke English. That was in Brno. And it was a problem because somehow it didn't work out and we had to go there again in a week, and I also went. When I was here today, everybody spoke English, here in Prague, there was no problem. But in Brno, when I was there, not a single person spoke."

(quote: Romanian, 25-34 years of age, initially a co-ordinator, now financial analyst)

→ "There's a joke told in the expat community regarding the foreign police / asylum department: Applicants for a job at the foreign police / asylum department are asked three questions during the interview: "Do you speak English?" 'No'; 'Do you like foreigners?' 'No'; 'Do you like to work?' 'No' - 'Great! You're hired.'"

(quote: Dutch, 35-44 years of age, scientist)

→ "... a cop talked to you there. And the cop didn't speak a word of English. So it was a little scary."

(quote: Italian, 35-44 years of age, IT specialist)

→ "And the foreigners' police in Brno, I don't know what it's like elsewhere, unfortunately, I looked, they usually treat people who stand in front of the door like cattle. (...) and that scared me a lot the first time. I'm not used to being treated like this. And I still don't have a birth identification number. I don't have a birth identification number and there's no way I can get it because I have two phone numbers where they don't answer the phone and there's no way I can get there either because I'm at work and the line there ... it took me half a day when I stood there ... I have a family to support."

(quote: Hungarian, 45-54 years of age, originally a driver, now a "manager")

→ "They were like almost aggressive, almost yelling at me that I had to go ... 'number, number!' (a ticket). I was like 'OK, fine, welcome to your new country'. So I got the ticket and waited there for an hour, but it was before the end of office hours and they just closed and I say, 'But I have a ticket here,' and they were like, 'Yeah, yeah, tomorrow, tomorrow.' (...) the next day I came in and he (an official) went through my papers and: 'Problem, problem!' (...) it was terrible, I sat there like, 'Oh yeah, what did I do?' (...) I've been there twice and definitely never want to go back. (...) especially if it's your first or second week here and you have this kind of experience, then you just want to go back where you came from. (...) Everyone has the same experience. No one wants to go to the foreign police."

(quote: Dutch, 25-34 years of age, consultant)

The situation is much better **at other authorities** (Labour Office, health insurance companies, etc.) – they are more accommodating. But some other offices are not prepared for foreigners – this is true of regions where there are very few foreign clients – a good result and smooth course of a visit to the office is hindered primarily by poor communication caused by a language barrier on both sides.

→ "When they first went to the labour office in Prague, they gave them documents for parental allowance and they told them that foreigners came here and made babies and you want Czech money. And don't reckon that if you're foreigners you'll get Czech money..."

(quote: Romanian, originally from Moldova, 25-34 years of age, plant and machine operator)

→ "And it was the same at the social security office, they went there, he had some debts, from 2011. And the lady said, 'Well, that's not possible, he's got it here, I don't have to deal with this', etc. And she kept saying, 'I don't know what to do.'"

(quote: Romanian, originally from Moldova, 25-34 years of age, plant and machine operator)

→ "For example, at the registry office, when we were getting our paperwork for the wedding sorted, we had a lot of problems because they asked us for one document that exists under Czech law but does not exist in Spanish law. So we tried to explain that we couldn't give them the document because it

didn't exist and they just told us that if we didn't deliver, we wouldn't get married. And we had to go to the embassy to make them call the registry office in Brno and explain the situation. So this was very frustrating..."

(quote: Spaniard, 35-44 years of age, employee of a multinational company)

- "... I really do have permanent residence here. One time I didn't have the document with me and I pulled out some Italian document. I don't remember if it was an ID card or a passport, but the employee (of the Labour Office) was very strict and started to intimidate me that next time, if I don't have Czech documents, they will stop paying my support/benefits and kick me out of the Labour Office. (...) I had the feeling that she was about to call the security ..."

(quote: Italian, 35-44 years of age, IT specialist)

In some cases, a language barrier, lack of knowledge of the official procedures and often also unwillingness or inability on the part of the officials (not only in terms of language) to explain everything clearly, results in difficult situations where the foreigner gets disoriented and frustrated, disappointed, uncertain and often powerless with a feeling of helplessness.

- "... my wife has been granted a disability pension. But just the decision that she would receive it. But in order to receive it, she needs some decision from Prague or some paper from Prague, and also from the Bulgarian social security authorities. And that can take up to a year. They were like at the Labour Office to register her as a person who did not work. They said they couldn't register her. (...) that, as she has a disability pension, she couldn't receive anything from the state as an unemployed person. (...) Until then, she simply had no income."

(quote: Bulgarian, age 55+, plant and machine operator)

Some foreigners who are not fluent in Czech try to "do their homework" and prepare a Czech text with the contents of their request translated via Google Translate.

The situation is specific in regions close to the Polish border and generally anywhere there is a significant share of Polish workers employed in large companies in the Czech Republic (including Mladá Boleslav). Officials are thus a) more often confronted with Polish-speaking clients; b) they have some knowledge of Polish themselves (in the border region, due to more frequent contact with Polish tourists, more frequent visits to Poland and watching Polish TV during the Communist regime). In these regions, the capacity of the authorities to receive foreigners – Poles is much higher and Polish workers highly value this friendlier approach (including basic communication by many officials in Polish).

Experience with the Czech Police, customs and passport control is both positive and negative.

- "They had me wait for a good half an hour or hour outside in the cold (on New Year's Eve). And then they called me in and treated me like I was stalling them and wasting their time by reporting it (breaking into a car) because they weren't going to catch anyone anyway. They were really rude / mean (...) so the fact that someone stole stuff from my car was bad, but the way the police treated me was even worse."

(quote: Italian, 35-44 years of age, scientist)

6.4 Disadvantages in accommodation and at other service providers

In contact with non-governmental institutions, foreigners face certain disadvantages due to their citizenship or nationality when seeking their own **housing**.

- "The real estate agency just said right away that as far as Romanians were concerned, it would be a big problem to find anything."

(quote: Romanian, 35-44 years of age, plant and machine operator)

Many real estate agencies or even property owners either do not respond at all to inquiries about available property made in a foreign language or by foreigners in general. Or they say directly that they do not

accommodate foreigners in general, and specifically Romanians and Bulgarians, or do not offer them their services. In the end, the situation is usually dealt with through a Czech intermediary who has to arrange everything with the landlord or real estate agent in Czech, and sometimes provide a “guarantee” for the foreigner, etc.

→ “... the owners of those flats don’t actually want Romanians, families from Romania ... then I asked a friend for help, and his wife is Czech, and she managed to solve the problem ...”
(quote: Romanian, 35-44 years of age, plant and machine operator)

→ “... I think the biggest problem, like for someone moving from another country that is in the European Union, is perhaps housing and just dealing with the landlord or potential landlord (...) I looked it up in English and then when I was looking for a flat, when I already spoke a little bit of Czech and I was looking for it in Czech and just with Czech, you get a lot more offers, the offers are just in Czech, you can communicate in Czech with the owner, which is also a great advantage because flats are sometimes rented by people 50+ or 60+ who just don’t speak English, but it’s still difficult because the owners like to choose a Czech couple rather than some foreigner...”
(quote: Pole, 25-34 years of age, administrative worker in a multinational company)

Other non-governmental – commercial “institutions” that EU citizens working in the Czech Republic come into contact with regularly are banks and mobile phone operators. As regards banks, foreigners show a relatively high inclination towards Equa Bank and Fio banka. They repeatedly reason, for example, that in the case of Fio banka, this was the only place where they found complete information on opening an account online in English, and they did not manage the same in other banks.

Where there was a bad experience with generally poor quality services, bad approach to the customer – client (again, not necessarily discriminatory towards foreigners), the declared rationale or perceived explanation was the low unemployment rate in the Czech Republic, and therefore a small pool of suitable candidates for the given posts, insufficient motivation, low interest in working and keeping a job, and little appreciation of a job on the part of these employees.

6.5 Disadvantages in education and educational institutions

Only a small part of the respondents in the qualitative part of the study had any real experience with Czech education and educational institutions, especially language schools and Czech language classes provided by private entities, non-profit organisations or centres for the integration of foreigners.

Those survey participants – foreigners from the EU – who had been in contact with the Czech education system through their children evaluated positively and sometimes even appreciated the quality of Czech education as compared to the level in their home country (Romania).

Communication between parents (and children) from Bulgaria and the school is easier in cases where the headteacher or teacher used to learn Russian at school, and is thus able to also communicate in this language, along with Czech. In the case of a younger generation of teachers and parents, there is a potential advantage in knowing English.

→ “... we arrived when my son was ten, and he started going to school here and we expected the adaptation to be worse because he didn’t speak Czech; we tried to teach him but he didn’t want to, it was unnatural for him, so we took him to classes, he didn’t know a single word in Czech and at the beginning, the teacher tried to communicate in English and he made a friend right away...”
(quote: Bulgarian, age 55+, plant and machine operator)

The initial stage that the parents of children who are required to attend school have to go through – i.e., enrolling their children in primary school – takes place in the same standard way as for Czech children, or even above standard, when the school management or the teacher creates individual conditions for the newly enrolled child who does not speak Czech so that he or she can make up for his or her language handicap as soon as possible and join the children’s collective as quickly and easily as possible.

→ “He (the son) and her nephew were in the fifth grade and had not yet been issued a Czech birth identification number, but the headteacher made an exception and enrolled the children in school so they wouldn’t miss any classes until it was issued. She has had a good experience.”

(quote: Bulgarian, 35-44 years of age, plant and machine operator)

→ “My younger son was born here and couldn’t speak Czech at all until he was three; we spoke only Bulgarian at home. When he started going to school – kindergarten, we were afraid that there would be a language barrier. And if it were a Bulgarian school, if I were to compare, because my mother is a kindergarten teacher in Bulgaria and she told me that he is ... a bit hyperactive and hard to control. We admired the teachers, how they took the opportunity, how they tamed him and really tried to include him in the collective, and we never felt that he was causing them any problems or giving them any trouble.”

(quote: Bulgarian, age 55+, plant and machine operator)

As with feelings of disadvantage at work and elsewhere, the problem is greater in schools for those children who, for example, “stand out” with their darker skin and thus become more often the target of “children discrimination” and sometimes also of a “different” approach by the teacher.

→ “... we never felt any harassment or that he would feel like an outsider, but maybe the fact that we are, let’s say, light-skinned, that we have blue-eyed children, that plays a role. That we are more physically similar to Czechs. I had a girlfriend and she had a daughter attending a school here, and the lady is darker and so is her daughter. And just because she looks, excuse me, like a Roma woman, she’s already being treated differently.”

(quote: Bulgarian, age 55+, plant and machine operator)

→ “... she has a daughter and... she is darker and because of that she is probably perceived as... more like a foreigner, not only that she is Bulgarian, she doesn’t have many friends, according to the lady, the teacher also discriminates against her somehow, although it is not obvious. And she also thinks it’s wrong that it counts that the child has to start like even if she started from the first grade ... know everything one hundred percent like Czechs.”

(quote: Bulgarian, 35-44 years of age, plant and machine operator)

Experience from the Pardubice region shows that there is an assistance programme organised by non-profit organisations (Mosty PRO) for children of foreigners who have difficulty learning Czech or education in the Czech Republic in general, both in terms of basic orientation in the education system and all the necessary requirements for admitting a child to school, as well as directly in teaching – tutoring.

→ “And parents who needed some help could always turn to someone to help them with those issues. Moreover, Most even provides tutors and helps the children directly in teaching.”

(quote: Bulgarian, age 55+, plant and machine operator)

→ “People talk to each other, in factories, you know. That there’s this Most or they pass my contact to someone else and then they call and even they here, family usually comes, parents and then they bring the children later. And that’s why they have time to do all that, to create it, to learn how it works, to prepare the documents they need to get the child registered with the doctor, to school, to kindergarten.” (...) but in other cities, if the parent or grandparent doesn’t actively start dealing with it, no one will even know that the children are there and not going to school.”

(quote: Bulgarian, age 55+, plant and machine operator)

There have been individual issues that can be described as individual failures of a particular school, headteacher, teacher, parents of the child in question, or parents of other children, rather than systemic failures.

→ “He (son) simply didn’t want to go to school. And I thought it was strange, but then when I met his class teacher, it all became obvious. (...) I stood up at a parents-teacher conference and asked the parents when they talked about different nationalities and in a negative way, they talked like if the children were asleep. Because it’s not their fault – like they can’t blame the child, because the children reflect their parents’ behaviour ...”

(quote: Pole, 35-44 years of age, initially plant and machine operator, now teaching assistant)

- “The children, for example, don’t want to play with her or they say to her, ‘Go to your own country’ (...) and the teacher said that it’s normal for children to tell each other off like that... that it’s childish (...) there are no obvious signs like ... a hostility towards the child and overall she feels... it’s hidden like that and you have nothing to start with and how to prove it.”

(quote: Bulgarian, 35-44 years of age, plant and machine operator)

However, some of the foreigners’ requirements on the Czech school system or educational institutions in terms of providing Czech language classes can be described as rather “strict”, “demanding”, and occasionally even “naive”. These are cases of foreigners who often have low self-motivation to learn Czech, to integrate themselves and their children into Czech society, and they “blame” the “system” – the environment – for their current situation (they are unable to communicate, are not hired, etc.).

- “... the Czech Republic does nothing to integrate those people, it doesn’t offer Czech language courses, even Most (a non-profit organisation), which offers such classes, they are once a week and even though it’s cheap ... I mean the price of the course, one has to pay it anyway and the course is once a week, but that the state itself would offer Czech language lessons to foreigners ... this doesn’t exist, (...) it’s also a problem that the teachers are Czech, so when they explain Czech grammar or language, they explain it in Czech, and it is ... it’s hard to understand. According to her, there have to be Bulgarian teachers (...) in Prague, for example, there is a Bulgarian school where the classes are in Bulgarian.”

(quote: Bulgarian, 35-44 years of age, plant and machine operator)

On the other hand, there is a group of foreigners who are aware that living in another country requires a significantly greater effort on their part and on the part of their children just to communicate, to participate in everyday life and society in a way that is comfortable for them and also for the host country. They perceive an obligation to adapt to the conditions in the Czech Republic and not wait for what the Czech state, non-profit organisations, employers and further entities would offer. They are active in self-study of the Czech language and in becoming involved in social life in the Czech Republic.

- “It’s great that (the Foreigners’ Centre) offers free courses for foreigners. (...) I was really surprised that it was free. That’s unbelievable!”

(quote: Italian, 25-34 years of age, HR manager in a multinational company)

Especially for foreigners with a university degree, who however do not have the necessary knowledge of English and/or Czech, it is often very difficult to find a job in the Czech Republic that would correspond to their qualifications and education attained, and the process of recognising their university diplomas is also complex.

- “Recognition? Yes, but I am a biologist and biology is not just Latin; I don’t know the Czech names. Neither animals nor plants. (...) I also have a degree in psychology, but I found out that being a psychologist ... it’s hard to support a family. Nobody needs psychologists here in the Czech Republic. Totally nobody.”

(quote: Hungarian, 45-54 years of age, driver, dispatcher, “manager”)

- “... when someone comes in, comes to get their diploma recognised, I kind of had a problem with that. (...) that I should get it recognised by the Central Bohemian Region. So they only recognised my secondary school diploma and told me that I would have to take my university diploma to the relevant faculty – I studied at a faculty of education, so here at the faculty of education. And here, in my job, I had a smaller paycheck because my diploma wasn’t recognized. Then I applied to Charles University for the recognition of my university diploma. And it took about half a year before I got any response, and it was negative. (...) The rector of the faculty of education, he had a thousand reasons not to recognise it. So I was completely done with it and I was like, this is the last time, I’m not trying this anymore, right. And you’re unhappy because here at work, they asked for our university diploma if we wanted to keep the position, or you’re supposed to go and continue studying. I said, where should I study when I already have a degree? I was a wreck, because I told myself, I either have to study – I don’t have money for that, to pay some private college on my own. (...) I couldn’t resist and wrote a complaint and sent it directly to the Ministry of Education. And the Ministry of Education recognised my diploma.”

(quote: Croatian, 45-54 years of age, educator)

7. SUMMARY

EU citizens working and living in the Czech Republic get into situations where they face potential discrimination or at least a feeling of disadvantage as compared to Czech citizens. This study describes to what extent, to whom and in what areas this occurs. The focus of the study and its findings can be divided into four parts. Three of them – disadvantages perceived by EU citizens in Czech **education and healthcare**, and in contact with **authorities** – describe the experience of foreign nationals (only within the qualitative survey) through their “stories” and situations where they encountered a feeling of discrimination due to their citizenship or nationality. The fourth part then provides a view of the Czech **labour market**, not only via individual (qualitative) declarations that define the (mainly emotional) depth of the problems, but also based on reliable quantification of the problems – i.e. the extent and focus of the topics of perceived discrimination using reliable data from the quantitative part of the survey based on a representative sample of the focus group (EU citizens working in the Czech Republic) by citizenship, gender and region – the administrative region in the Czech Republic where the foreigners work.

The experience of EU citizens working in the Czech Republic with regard to education and healthcare and also Czech authorities was examined in the study only in its qualitative part, i.e. based on 30 semi-structured in-depth interviews. These are thus individual examples and experience that cannot be generalised to describe the situation of foreigners.

Education

As we are dealing with an adult population of foreign workers and also because many of them came to the Czech Republic to work without their families, contacts with the Czech education system were relatively seldom among the respondents of the qualitative part. This is relevant for a minority share of families who have immigrated to the Czech Republic with their children and for those respondents who have started a family in the Czech Republic. Save for exceptional cases (bullying of children because of their nationality, racial overtones in teacher’s actions), no disadvantage was commonly perceived in education because of citizenship, nationality or language. The children of EU citizens – respondents in the study – were enrolled in Czech schools without any apparent obstructions or problems, and their integration among classmates depends mostly on their own abilities, and abilities of their parents and parents of their classmates, always with the support of teachers, without there being any frequent, systemic or serious manifestations of potential discrimination.

Healthcare

A similar situation was described by the respondents in their contact with the Czech healthcare system. Even more strongly than in the area of education, the respondents – EU citizens living and working in the Czech Republic – expressed their admiration and appreciation for Czech healthcare. The quality of health services, short waiting times and the general availability of health services thanks to paid health insurance rank among the main advantages highlighted by the foreign workers interviewed with respect to the Czech healthcare system. Only rarely did the respondents mention individual verbal expressions of intolerance towards foreigners among Czech doctors or other medical staff. Nevertheless, some of the foreigners interviewed pointed out negative feelings caused by a refusal to register a new patient (foreigner) on grounds of allegedly full capacity, as a hidden manifestation of disadvantage or potential discrimination. In a number of cases, the respondents suspected that the physician referred to full capacity only to avoid difficulties in communicating with a foreigner in a language other than Czech, or generally because he or she did not want to deal with foreigners. According to the respondents in the qualitative part of the study, a language barrier poses a problem for foreigners in the area of healthcare. They claim that foreigners with higher qualifications in senior positions, having knowledge of English (but not of Czech) often deal with this problem by arranging for themselves, for example, private medical services provided in English directly with their employer or by seeking online doctors with whom they could communicate in English. In other situations (usually in the case of less qualified foreigners without any knowledge of English and Czech or in a specific contact with medical staff who do not speak English, e.g. during examination by a specialist doctor, during hospitalisation, etc.), the foreigners interviewed tried to have another person to accompany them and provide interpreting (in cases where interpreting was not included among the services provided by the medical facility).

Authorities

The more rare the contact between the foreigners inquired and the Czech authorities, the stronger the feeling of barriers in communication between foreigners and authorities / officers. Considering that a respondent (foreigner) entered the contact with the authority in the position of “the weaker party”, i.e. the one who is usually not familiar with the formalities, duties, official procedures, etc., and considering that the language skills of Czech officials are – according to the respondents – still very poor, the foreigners often had bad, unpleasant, frustrating, and sometimes humiliating experience. In general, a large number of foreigners come into contact with the Czech authorities during the initial period of their stay in the Czech Republic, when they are unable to orient themselves in the new environment and when their frequently non-existent or very basic knowledge of Czech further weakens their position vis-à-vis the authorities. Repeatedly mentioned was a (highly) negative experience with the foreign police or the asylum department. They are precisely the ones whom a foreigner meets at the very beginning of his or her stay in the Czech Republic and, according to testimonies of many EU citizens, their contact with the “Czech foreign police” was a highly unpleasant experience given the often rude and arrogant behaviour of the officials, without any apparent effort to help the client (foreigner) and without any ability to explain anything, especially due to the biggest handicap perceived by the foreigners at the foreign police – their lack of knowledge (often even basic) of the English language.

Labour market

From the perspective of foreigners living in the Czech Republic, the most problematic area in terms of feelings of disadvantage, or manifestations of potential discrimination, is the labour market – the workplace, the employer and especially employment agencies. Both qualitative and, for this area, quantitative results of this study confirm that the most serious and widespread is a feeling of disadvantage among low-educated groups of foreign workers in low-qualified professions, who also have a poor knowledge of Czech, have been in the Czech Republic for a relatively short period of time, and are thus more often than others employed by employment agencies. Employment agencies working for large (mainly manufacturing) companies recruit employees mainly from Poland, from the Balkans (Bulgarians and Romanians) and other non-EU countries from Eastern Europe (Ukraine, Moldova) and even Asia (Mongolia, Nepal, India, Vietnam).

The general problems experienced by foreign workers on the Czech labour market are further augmented in the case of agency workers. If we generally encounter problems faced by foreigners in the assignment of work, remuneration, limitations in career advancement, limitations in access to education, etc., these issues are much more serious and frequent in the case of agency workers, and are furthermore complemented

by specific topics related to accommodation, non-transparent employment relations (broken promises, unfavourable contracts), relations between agency and regular employees in companies, etc. In view of their profile (as described above), the ability of agency workers to defend themselves is relatively low (as compared to regular employees, as compared to Czechs, English-speaking foreigners, etc.). This weak position is often exploited and abused by agencies. Thus, foreign agency workers face problems, such as being assigned difficult, generally inferior work as compared to Czechs and other regular employees, more often than foreign “regular employees” and these problems are even more profound than in the case of foreign “regular employees”; the jobs are often below their qualifications and education, with lower wages, unreliable bonuses and overtime pay (or completely without these payments), and usually with no option to change their job or to achieve promotion, and without access to education.

Feelings of disadvantage among foreign workers (whether agency or regular employees) are most pronounced and most prevalent because of the language barrier. When an employee is confronted with the employer or agency without the ability to speak Czech or English (on one side or the other), the employee is dependent on an interpreter, who is not always available, whose services are relatively expensive, and whose impartiality is questionable precisely in the case of disputes with the employer (in cases where the interpreter is hired by the agency).

Probably the most serious cases are those where feelings of disadvantage or potential discrimination take the form of a) employer’s (usually employment agency’s) failure to pay health (and possibly also social) insurance premiums; or b) frequently unlawful “termination of the employment relationship”, and a situation where the foreigner is left without a job. Foreigners often discover that they have to pay for a health service themselves only when they need to use such a service because their employer has illegally (often for a long time) failed to pay health insurance for them or because their employment is based only on an “agreement to complete a job” (without the foreigner being able to notice this “nuance”). In the case of foreign workers, an unfavourable contractual relationship can lead to downright critical situations where, for example, a woman who informs her employer that she is pregnant is fired on the spot, has no resources and no entitlement to benefits under the Czech social system (compensatory allowance for pregnancy and maternity, maternity allowance, maternity leave, etc.), and even without accommodation.

As already stated in the introduction to this Summary, the importance of this study lies not only in confirming the seriousness of the topics of discrimination, a not only in their designation and description, but especially in quantifying their scope (incidence) and “detecting” specific manifestations for specific focus groups.

Three out of 10 EU citizens working in the Czech Republic have experienced some form of disadvantage during their stay, or have experienced a feeling of disadvantage on the Czech labour market (in any form, sometimes repeatedly and/or in a combination of several forms). Most often, such a disadvantage occurs in the areas of **job search, remuneration and job assignment** (individual instances are reported by 12–15% of EU citizens working in the Czech Republic).

When the selected groups of foreign workers are mutually compared by citizenship, disadvantage is most commonly perceived among **Romanian workers** (generally, but especially in remuneration – 24%). Feelings of disadvantage in job search and job assignment are significantly more frequent among foreign workers from the selected countries (Slovakia, Poland, Romania, Bulgaria) than among citizens of other EU countries.

The **proportion of workers who feel** disadvantaged on the Czech labour market **increases** when we move in our search for potential discrimination from more educated to **less educated workers** (among foreigners with primary education, the incidence of perceived disadvantage in the area of remuneration is up to 25%, job search 20%, job assignment 19%, and dismissal 13%).

A feeling of disadvantage is therefore more common among workers in the **least skilled positions** (elementary occupations and plant and machine operators, and assemblers, and skilled agricultural, forestry and fishing workers), especially in the area of remuneration (27–33%, depending on the specific position). It must be emphasised in this respect that the characteristics of the education attained are not always directly linked to the category of the foreigners’ current job positions (especially for employees from Eastern Europe). In the qualitative part of the project, cases were repeatedly encountered where foreigners were working in the Czech Republic in **positions outside the scope of their qualifications or (sometimes even far) below the level of their education and qualifications attained** (e.g. a qualified cook worked on a manufacturing line, university educated people worked initially or even in the long term in the Czech Republic in positions such as bus driver, welder, educator in a youth home).

Employees of employment agencies are more likely to feel disadvantaged (e.g. in remuneration, up to 26%, in work assignment, 22%) than regular employees (13% and 12%, respectively). Lower education, less qualified work and work via an agency are mutually related, just like the type of contract offered to these employees in the Czech Republic (a disadvantage perceived by 24% of workers employed based on **an agreement to perform work/agreement to complete a job**).

In terms of the workers' age, the **highest age category of 55+ is most often disadvantaged**, according to their own statements, and this is true virtually of all aspects of work and employment in the Czech Republic. The situation is specific for the youngest age category, 18–24 years, where the incidence of perceived disadvantage is relatively the lowest compared to older workers in individual areas, with the only exception for the youngest workers being the area of work assignment (where up to 18% feel disadvantaged).

Almost two thirds (62%) of EU citizens working in the Czech Republic who felt disadvantaged did not take any steps for their defence or remedy or at least to address the described situations of disadvantage based on their citizenship or nationality. Foreign workers who felt discriminated against but did not defend themselves were most often passive (49%) because they were **convinced that reporting the case would not help anything, nothing would change**. A total of 22% of the respondents gave up on dealing with their situation with reference to marginality of the problem, and claiming that it was “in fact normal”. A justification that there was not enough evidence to successfully prove the disadvantage was mentioned with roughly the same frequency (20%).

Approximately every second (51%) foreign worker who has taken steps to defend him/herself against perceived discrimination on the labour market on grounds of nationality or citizenship **deals with the situation him/herself**, i.e. has not turned to anyone for support and assistance. In 44% cases, the foreign workers addressed the disadvantage on the labour market with their superior, or turned generally to their employer. Those who decided to address the potential discrimination were satisfied with the way their case was addressed (solved) in 57% of cases.

The most frequent specific cases of perceived discrimination on the Czech labour market on grounds of citizenship or nationality which can be identified as the **main barriers** to equal conditions for foreign workers in the Czech Republic, are the following situations:

- » assignment of work other than agreed (25% of the respondents who commented on this manifestation of disadvantage, i.e. disregarding answers “I do not know” and “does not apply”, had encountered it during their work in the Czech Republic);
- » assigning worse work than to Czech workers in a comparable position (23%);
- » failure to pay wages (salary) in the agreed amount or by the agreed deadline (18%);
- » payment of lower wages (salary) than to Czech employees doing the same or similar work (18%);
- » prioritising Czech workers in promotion, although they were not better qualified (17%);
- » ordering a large amount of overtime (16%).

Almost one third (31%) EU citizens working in the Czech Republic interviewed in the survey were unable to answer the question “For how long (since now) are you planning to stay in the Czech Republic?” Almost one half (48%) of the EU foreigners are planning to stay in the Czech Republic for another three years. A further 17% of respondents are planning to spend 1–3 years in the country and only 5% of respondents plan to end their stay in the Czech Republic within 12 months.

As already mentioned, the language barrier and insufficient knowledge of the Czech language are probably the most widespread accompanying features of disadvantages on the labour market or a “trigger” enabling discrimination on the grounds of different citizenship or nationality. It was repeatedly proven in the quantitative part of the study that the incidence of a feeling of disadvantage is related to the degree of knowledge of the Czech language. **A total of 40% of the respondents assigned themselves the highest mark for their competence in Czech**. According to “self-assessment”, 2% of the EU citizens working the Czech Republic are completely lacking knowledge of the Czech language; another 6% rated their knowledge of the Czech language at level 2 (second lowest level).

Almost three quarters (73%) of the foreigners interviewed responded that their work corresponded to their education and qualifications. **On the other hand, one fifth (20%) of foreign workers in the Czech Republic believe that the current job is not in line with their education and qualifications.**

According to their own statement, 92% of the EU citizens working in the Czech Republic have a valid health insurance card or a substitute card, 3% admit that they lack valid health insurance, and 5% do not know/are not sure.

The project implementation by MindBridge Consulting a.s. was ensured by a three-member implementation team that was involved in the performance of the contract and was responsible for the provision of the relevant services related to the study **Citizens of the European Union in the Czech Republic.**

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