



# **CITY AUDIT INTEGRATION REPORT FOR KOŠICE CITY, SLOVAKIA**

**Integration of Third-Country Nationals**

**in Košice Slovakia, 2018**

**ETP Slovakia, 2018**









**Košice, Slovakia 2018**

City Audit Integration Report for Košice City, Slovakia  
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# City Audit Integration Report for Košice City, Slovakia

Integration of Third-Country Nationals in Košice  
Slovakia, 2018

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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The Košice City Audit Report is one of the outcomes of the international INTEGRA project. The INTEGRA project seeks to improve long-term integration of third country nationals in five EU Member States (Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Italy, and Slovakia) through sharing city-to-city knowledge and experience. The report was prepared by non-profit organization ETP Slovakia – Centre for Sustainable Development with its stakeholder group, including the City of Košice, the Labour Office, Local Police and non-profits providing services to migrants and foreigners living in Košice.

The Audit has identified the main successes, as well as current and future challenges, of TCN integration in Košice.

In a multicultural city of Košice, minorities have always been an integral part of the City society. TCN and migrants account for only two percent of the total population in Košice. They live across the whole city, there are no segregated communities of TCN in Košice, and therefore no problems with a safety of TCN and/or majority populations. In Košice, it is usually fairly easy to integrate into society for those TCN, who moved to Košice for either pre-arranged work or studies. However, each of them has to go through legal issues, challenges with Slovak language, challenges with housing or other social services, cultural orientation or other specific issues. The assistance addressing the mentioned issues is currently exclusively provided by several NGOs operating in Kosice.

The Municipality Office of Košice supports a small number of asylum seekers and people with subsidiary protection by allocating five social housing apartments and by provision of psychological support (indirectly through the Psychosocial Centre).

The main challenges and suggestions made by the professionals, volunteers, foreigners, TCN and migrants living in Košice who participated in the City Audit, include the following:

- 1) A City Vision and Integration Strategy should be prepared, including for the provision of services for the growing number of TCN and migrants in the City. Such an Integration Strategy and Action Plan should be developed by a partnership between the City of Košice and other stakeholders, in order to improve the integration of foreigners;
- 2) Co-operation between the City of Košice and local employers who provide work for foreigners should be established, in order to manage economic migration;
- 3) There should be an increase in the number of social housing (social apartments) available to those TCN and migrants who find themselves in need;

- 4) Regular Slovak language courses for foreigners, TCN and migrants should be provided;
- 5) An information centre (one-stop shop, first contact point) should be established for TCN and migrants, who have moved to, and want to settle down in, the City of Košice;
- 6) Awareness should be raised and the understanding improved of migration, its implications, benefits and trade-offs for the City of Košice, as well as for the local people;
- 7) The participation of TCN and migrants in a variety of cultural, social, sport and other activities organized in the City of Košice should be increased.

Decades of life in a communist society have caused many Košice inhabitants to live with, and for, only their closest families and relatives and they not actively engage in city life or in work for local civic organizations, clubs and community groups, etc. This is slowly changing and there is room for more intense interaction between TCN communities and local people.

The majority population, led by the professionals from the Municipal Office, public authorities and non-profits, should look more proactively into new ideas, novel approaches and measures as how to welcome, support, engage and integrate newcomers, as well as other socially excluded groups and communities (i.e. homeless, disabled, and inhabitants of Roma ghettos) into the diverse social, cultural and economic activities in the City of Košice.

# INTRODUCTION

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Like other cities in Slovakia, Košice has to reflect the need to integrate – third country nationals (TCN) (foreigners who are not from another EU country). Statistics show that their number increases nationally every year and this is especially true for Košice. The growing economy creates favourable employment opportunities and universities in Košice are expanding their study programs and receiving more and more students from abroad. On the contrary, the inhabitants of Košice - especially young people, leave to work or study in other Slovak cities and abroad. More and more employers in Košice are open to employ people coming from abroad as they face challenges to fill vacancies. The better the policies of integration of TCN are at the local level, the more the city will strengthen its economy. At the same time, it can avoid social tensions or segregation, which – by contrast - might happen if the integration of TCN is insufficient.

The Košice City Audit Report is one of the outputs of the activities, which are being implemented in Košice within the INTEGRA international project. The project aims to promote deeper mutual understanding between migrant communities and the host societies, against the rising political discourse of securitization, which paints migrants and refugees as a major security threat in Europe.

The Non-governmental organization ETP Slovakia, with its stakeholder group including the City of Košice, identifies the current and future challenges of integration at the local level. The aim is to develop the City Integration Agenda, which will propose specific interventions (at policy and/or practical levels) to public and civic actors responsible for TCN integration.

The Košice City Audit Report includes both document and policy assessment and mapping exercises, aimed at identifying bottlenecks and opportunities for TCN integration at the local level. City audits put a particular emphasis on urban security and cultural/social participation of TCN.

The City Audit has been designed as participatory, multi-stakeholder activity, engaging local communities of citizens and migrants, public bodies and civic experts in consultations, mapping and assessment exercises. The main objectives of the City Audit are to:

- 1) provide an updated picture of the local context at document and implementation level on the integration of TCN in Košice,
- 2) introduce the results of self-assessment activities regarding the following principal cross-cutting themes: A. City Vision and Services, B. Civic Participation and Social Inclusion of TCN and Migrant Communities, C. Urban Environment, D. Attitudes towards TCN and Migrants,
- 3) to describe good practices in Košice.

# PART I. MIGRATION IN NATIONAL AND LOCAL CONTEXTS

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## MIGRATION IN THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC

Slovakia is not one of the traditional migrant destination countries. It is a culturally homogenous country that has not suffered from a dramatic increase in migration during the 20th century. Until recently, the Slovak Republic was almost exclusively the country of origin of migrants, a country from which citizens migrated to foreign countries for various reasons.<sup>1</sup>

More significant changes happened after Slovakia entered the European Union in 2004 and the Schengen area in 2007. In the Slovak Republic (SR), illegal migration and asylum migration has decreased in the period since 2004 and legal migration has increased fourfold. Despite the fact that the growth of the population of foreigners in Slovakia in 2004-2008 was the second highest among all EU Member States, the representation of migrants in the population - compared to other EU countries - remains low. Foreigners today account for 1.9% of the population in the Slovak Republic but their number is slowly but steadily increasing: in 2017, there were 11 204 more than the previous year, representing an increase of 12%.<sup>2</sup>

In addition to migrating for social reasons, such as a family reunion or a marriage of a migrant with a Slovak citizen, migration for work, business and study are now the most significant reasons for legal migration in Slovakia.

## STATISTICAL DATA AS OF DECEMBER 31, 2017

- 104,451 is the number of foreigners with a residence permit in Slovakia in 2017.<sup>3</sup>
- Their share in the total population of Slovakia is 1.92%.<sup>4</sup> Slovakia has the sixth lowest share of foreigners among the countries of the European Union.<sup>5</sup>
- Citizens of the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Austria and Ukraine (surrounding countries) make up 41% of the total number of foreigners.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> www.iom.sk

<sup>2</sup> Úrad hraničnej a cudzineckej polície Prezídia Policajného zboru (ÚHCP P PZ) – Štatistický prehľad legálnej a nelegálnej migrácie v Slovenskej republike za rok 2016 a 2017 (<http://www.minv.sk/?rocenky>)

<sup>3</sup> ÚHCP P PZ – Štatistický prehľad legálnej a nelegálnej migrácie v Slovenskej republike za rok 2017 ([https://www.minv.sk/swift\\_data/source/policia/hranicna\\_a\\_cudzinecka\\_policia/rocnky/rok\\_2017/2017-rocenka-UHCP-SK.pdf](https://www.minv.sk/swift_data/source/policia/hranicna_a_cudzinecka_policia/rocnky/rok_2017/2017-rocenka-UHCP-SK.pdf))

<sup>4</sup> Štatistický úrad SR – Stav obyvateľstva v SR k 30. 9. 2017 (5 441 899) (<https://www.susr.sk/wps/portal?urlile=wcm:path:/obsah-sk/informativne-spravy/vsetky/b10cca15-62d7-4145-bd44-659fcf3ad2a9>)

<sup>5</sup> Eurostat – Populácia podľa občianstva – cudzinci (štatistika k 31. 12. 2015) (<http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/tgm/table.do?tab=table&init=1&language=en&pcode=tps00001&plugin=1>, <http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/tgm/table.do?tab=table&init=1&plugin=1&language=en&pcode=tps00157> a <http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/tgm/table.do?tab=table&init=1&plugin=1&language=en&pcode=tps00178>)

<sup>6</sup> See [2]

<sup>7</sup> See [2]

- Other important groups of migrants are the citizens of South and East European countries (Romania, Bulgaria, Russia, Serbia), which make up 22.8% of all foreigners in Slovakia. Citizens of these countries have formed their communities in the past, and their numbers are growing because of coming in for study, work, or for family reasons.
- Migrants from the Asian countries (Vietnam, China, the Republic of Korea and Thailand), who in the past were a dynamically developing group of foreigners in Slovakia, make up 7.7% of all foreigners in Slovakia, reaching 8,079.
- Citizens of the European Union countries account for more than half (51.8%) of all foreigners in Slovakia.<sup>7</sup> The most (10.2% of total number of foreigners in SR) are from the Czech Republic. A more significant increase in the number of migrants from the EU has occurred in the case of migrants from Romania (6.8%), mainly migrant workers after Romania joined the EU in 2007. In 2017, 8,692 Romanians were employed in the SR, compared with 4,786 citizens of Hungary and 4,635 citizens of the Czech Republic.<sup>8</sup>
- The share of citizens of Ukraine in the total number of foreigners in the SR is 15.4%. Ukrainians have the most numerous representation of citizens from both EU and non-EU countries in Slovakia.
- Among foreigners from the non-EU countries, migrants from Serbia, the Russian Federation, Vietnam, China and the Republic of Korea have the largest representation in Slovakia, after Ukrainians.
- Table no. 1: The Top 10 third country nationalities with a valid residence permit

	on 30. 6. 2018	on 30. 6. 2017
<b>Ukraine</b>	18,178	1,827
<b>Serbia</b>	11,974	8,931
<b>Russia</b>	4,401	4,157
<b>Vietnam</b>	3,678	2,980
<b>China (PRC)</b>	2,478	2,409
<b>Korean Republic</b>	1,613	1,618
<b>Iran</b>	1,350	1,169
<b>Macedonia (FYROM)</b>	1,104	968
<b>United States, USA</b>	945	906
<b>Turkey</b>	604	568

Source: Statistical overview of legal and illegal migration in the Slovak Republic, Presidium of the Police Force Bureau of Border and Foreign Police

<sup>8</sup> Ústredie práce, sociálnych vecí a rodiny – Zamestnávanie cudzincov na území Slovenskej republiky za rok 2017, december 2017 ([http://www.upsvar.sk/buxus/docs/statistic/cudzinci/2017/cudzinci\\_1712.xlsx](http://www.upsvar.sk/buxus/docs/statistic/cudzinci/2017/cudzinci_1712.xlsx))

- Third-country nationals account for 48.2% of the total number of foreigners in Slovakia, representing about 0.93% of the population.<sup>9</sup>
- The number of employed foreigners in the SR in 2017 is 49,478, out of which 21,752 are TCN. Most of them are from Serbia (12,259), Romania (8,692), Hungary (4,786), Czech Republic (4,635) and Ukraine (4,626).<sup>10</sup>
- In 2017, the Slovak Republic granted asylum to 29 persons (out of 166 who applied). Asylum seekers were mostly citizens from Afghanistan, Vietnam, Iraq, Syria and Pakistan.
- Of the total of 58,663 asylum applications since 1993, 849 were granted asylum and 709 were granted supplementary protection as another form of international protection.<sup>11</sup>

## MIGRATION IN KOŠICE

### BASIC INFORMATION ABOUT KOŠICE<sup>12</sup>

In terms of its size and importance in the Slovak Republic, the city of Košice ranks right after the capital Bratislava. It lies in the eastern part of Slovakia, not far from the borders with Hungary, Ukraine and Poland. The number of inhabitants in 2017 was 239,141.

Table no. 2: Number of Košice inhabitants

	2015	2016	2017
<b>Number of inhabitants</b>	239,200	239,141	239,095

Source: Statistical Office of the SR

The advantages of this location, near the borders of three states and lying on important domestic and international transport routes, translate into preconditions for good commercial connectivity.

The City of Košice is the administrative centre of the Košice Region. The City of Košice is governed by the Mayor and the City Council.

Košice has a strong economic background, and it creates employment opportunities not only for the Košice residents, but also for the residents of the surrounding region. The biggest local employer is the U. S. Steel Košice steelworks, employing more than 10,000 people. A great majority of the City employees work in the industrial sphere. The education and transport sectors provide also many employment opportunities.

<sup>9</sup> See [2]

<sup>10</sup> See [8]

<sup>11</sup> Migračný úrad MVSR – Štatistický prehľad žiadateľia o udelenie azylu a rozhodnutia v I. stupni za obdobie rokov 1993 – december 2017 (<http://www.minv.sk/?statistiky-20&subor=287666>)

<sup>12</sup> [www.Košice.sk](http://www.Košice.sk)

The average age of citizens of the City of Košice is 35.13 years, which has led to Košice becoming known as the City of Youth. The education system is significantly represented in the City, with over 45 basic schools, 10 grammar schools, 4 commercial academies, and 15 specialized secondary schools covering industrial technologies, agriculture, health care and the arts. There is also the Technical University with 8 faculties, P. J. Šafárik's University with 4 faculties, the University of Economics and the University of Veterinary Medicine.

## STATISTICS FOR KOŠICE REGION

Table no. 3: Number of valid residence permits for TCN on 30. 6. 2017 and on 30. 6. 2018 by region and type of residence in Košice region

	on 30. 6. 2017	on 30. 6. 2018
<b>Number of valid residence permits</b>	<b>5,790</b>	<b>6,528</b>
Temporary residence	3,541	4,156
Permanent residence	2,237	2,368
Tolerated residence	12	4

Source: Statistical overview of legal and illegal migration in the Slovak Republic, Presidium of the Police Force Bureau of Border and Foreign Police (Foreign Police)

## STATISTICS FOR THE CITY OF KOŠICE

- Number of TCN on 31. 5. 2018 in Košice: 4,900 (which counts 2% of Košice population).
- Most TCN living in Košice come from Ukraine, Vietnam & China.
- Age structure: 30% of TCN are young people/students, other TCN reflect the age structure of the majority population.
- Most students come from: Ukraine (growing number during recent years), Russia, Afghanistan, India (study mostly engineering, physics). Students from Vietnam, China, Israel, Saudi Arabia, and Libya study mostly medicine or veterinary medicine.
- Legal migration is higher than illegal (recently the Foreign Police registered only few illegal migrants. The "green border" is patrolled better than in the past).
- The most frequent reasons for coming to Košice: own business, employment, studies, family reunification.
- Table no. 4: Employment of TCN in Košice

<b>Number of work permits issued by Košice Labour Office in 2017</b>	806
<b>Number of work permits issued by Košice Labour Office in 2016</b>	216

Source: Office of Labour, Social Affairs and Family Košice



→ The working permits were issued for the following professions: professional truck driver, Thai massage, operator of electronic equipment, construction worker, insulation worker.

# PART II. MAIN AUDIT FINDINGS

## 1. DESK RESEARCH

### REVIEW AND ASSESSMENT OF DOCUMENTS AT CITY/MUNICIPAL LEVEL FOR TCN INTEGRATION

The topic of integration and migration generally has not been a priority for the regional, nor the local, institutions.

1) The most important strategic document at the local level is the *Program of Economic and Social Development of the City of Košice for 2015-2020 (Program hospodárskeho a sociálneho rozvoja mesta Košice na roky 2015 – 2020, PHSR)*. The City of Košice defined its vision to 2020, including nine key areas. None of these key areas target migrants nor migration in general. However, there are several areas where there is great potential to include migrants/foreigners living in Košice, e.g.:

→ Košice is a city creating new job opportunities for all

→ Košice is a city that helps those in need: seniors, disabled people, people with serious health issues, socially dependent individuals and families in crisis. The comprehensiveness of the social services provided helps strengthen the function of the family as a core cell of society.

→ Košice is a city where quality and innovative primary and pre-primary education is provided.

Current demographic trends in Košice (e.g. population aging and the outflow of young people from Košice to the West) are described in the Program of Economic and Social Development, but are not linked to an increasing number of people coming to Košice from third countries to find employment opportunities or to settle down because of safety and good opportunities for well-being. Also, the number of students from abroad who attend universities in Košice is growing every year. Migrants bring know-how, innovations, and skills of all kinds (from simple low-paid jobs to high-level professionals). All of these could be actively supported bearing in mind the constant outflow of local young people from Košice. Initiatives such as „IT Valley” forecasts that the number of employees in the IT sector in Košice will grow from the current 6,000 to 10,000 by 2020). The creative industry is also growing in Košice and it needs more digital professionals, artists, designers and architects. In all these aspects, pro-migration and pro-integration policies can be very effective and there is considerable room for active and managed migration and integration measures.

2) Other strategic local policies in the areas of education, social services or housing do not reflect migration and the integration of migrants in general. Bearing in mind the relatively low numbers of TCN in Košice, and that current challenges are not noticeable, but TCN integration policies should play a key role in preventive measures.

- 3) The City of Košice has not elaborated any strategic document (nor conception, plan or policy) at the local level, which would specifically target the integration of TCNs. However, the City of Košice took into consideration the document *Strategy of TCN integration for Košice* developed in 2012 by the Centre for the Research of Ethnicity and Culture - CVEK, an independent non-profit organization, based in Bratislava. The document was never approved officially, nor did it become part of the official policies of the City of Košice.
- 4) There is an official document at the regional level (Košice Self-Governing Region), approved and published in 2015: *Road Map of Managed Migration in the Košice Region*. The regional strategy is in line with the national integration policy and EU strategic documents. This document contains an overview of the current situation regarding the integration of TCN in the region, i.e. basic statistical data as well as describing the needs and problems that foreigners often experience. It also provides an overview of institutions that have certain competencies in the area of integration of TCN at the regional level. The *Road Map* also includes suggestions of specific measures that regional offices, together with local governments and institutions, can implement. The conception also assumes direct cooperation with NGOs and TCN communities. The document has not been updated since 2015, but Košice Self-Governing Region Office has been involved into several initiatives/projects regarding TCN integration and there is a will to deal with this issue more intensively.

## OVERVIEW OF THE INSTITUTIONS AT LOCAL LEVEL RESPONSIBLE FOR TCN INTEGRATION

There are several institutions in Košice that have certain competencies in the field of integration of TCN, or, where appropriate, they provide services to TCN, or they address TCN needs.

### THE UNITS OF FOREIGN POLICE OF THE POLICE FORCE KOŠICE

The Foreign Police is the first contact point or place where all TCN go. The Foreign Police receive applications for temporary or permanent residence, grants approval and renewal of a certain type of residence and changes the purpose of a stay, etc. This is an institution that has a direct impact on the legalization of the status of foreigners in the Slovak Republic territory. Since it is a public authority institution, its activities are based on the competences laid down in the Foreigners Residence Act. Residence of foreigners in Slovakia is governed by the Act No. 404/2011 Coll. On Residence of Foreigners and Amendment and Supplementation of Certain Acts. The public authorities carry out activities determined by law, so it's more active involvement of public authorities in the integration process, beyond the adopted laws, is not envisaged.

Experiences of TCN regarding communication with the Foreign Police Office differ but generally, the language barriers and problems to understand rather complicated instructions in official documents prevail.

### THE CITY MUNICIPALITY OFFICE OF KOŠICE

The main law relating to the City of Košice is Act 401/1990 Coll. The competencies of the local government apply to all inhabitants of Košice, regardless of their nationality or country of origin. It also applies

to foreigners with permanent or temporary residence in Košice. Various departments of the City Municipality Office provide a number of social services to the Košice inhabitants, which have a high potential to contribute to improve to the integration of migrants, foreigners and TCN and facilitate their situation, even though they have no direct impact on granting them residence or work permits. However, in reality, the target group of these services are not migrants. The City of Košice does not collect nor evaluate data about migrants/TCN.

As mentioned above, the City of Košice does not have any specific official vision about TCN integration. In spite of that, the city has officially delegated several competences to different organizations in order to deal with specific integration tasks. E.g., The Psycho-social Centre (city co-funded organization) has been put in charge of providing of psychological, psychiatric and counselling services which includes to TCN. Another city co-funded organization is called K13 and it is responsible for managing several cultural centres and programs promoting such things as diversity and culture of minorities and/or migrants.

## **THE OFFICE OF LABOUR, SOCIAL AFFAIRS AND FAMILY, LOCAL BRANCH IN KOŠICE (“LABOUR OFFICE”)**

The responsibility of the Labour Office is to issue work permits for TCN and/or to register them into a jobseeker registry when a TCN is looking for a job. Pursuant to Act No. 82/2005 on Illegal Work and Employment, it is prohibited for an employer to employ a person without an established legal employment relationship. This is applicable also for TCN. TCN are entitled to work in Slovakia if they have a work permit/temporary residence permit for the purpose of employment. Employment relations need to be established by a written employment contract (or work performance contract, work activities contract or temporary student job contract) between an employer and an employee. The Labour Office in Košice is generally very helpful in issuing a working permit to the TCN as local employers are seeking workers or professionals to fill in the vacancies.

TCN with a residence permit in Slovakia are entitled, under certain circumstances, to also receive so-called “social security benefits”. These benefits serve to ensure basic living conditions for a person in a specific situation. There are equal conditions for both Slovak citizens and foreigners in receiving social security benefits. However, various legal constraints, as well as a lack of awareness and a language barrier, contribute to the very low number of TCN who receive, when in need, social security benefits<sup>13</sup>.

## **DISTRICT OFFICE OF KOŠICE (INCL. ALSO THE TRADE LICENCING OFFICE)**

Slovakia is generally recognised as an open market economy and has recently become known as a central European leader in economic development, and rated by World Bank as one of the 20 most investor friendly countries in the world. It offers almost the whole EU within a 2000 km radius as well as the Gateway to Balkans and another 440 million inhabitants<sup>14</sup>.

If a TCN intends to do business in Slovakia, it is essential to be granted residency status. This means not all types of residency allow TCN to do business in Slovakia. If a TCN intends to conduct a trade, TCN need to notify the Trade Licencing Office and obtain a Trade Licence from the District Office of Košice.

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<sup>13</sup> CVEK: Rámcová stratégia integrácie cudzincov žijúcich v meste Košice

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.startupoverseas.co.uk/starting-a-business-in-slovakia>

## THE OFFICE OF KOŠICE SELF-GOVERNMENT REGION (KSGR)

The KSGR, the only self-governing region in Slovakia, has drawn up an Action Plan for the integration of TCN. The *“Roadmap for Regulated Migration in the Košice Region”* (Regional Integration Strategy) was adopted in May 2015 and its crosscutting activities were developed during 2016. This strategic document (*“Strategy”*) was developed in cooperation with all relevant institutions in the KSGR territory that in some form deal with migration issues. The main objective of the Strategy is to manage integration of foreigners through the creation of a collaborative network of all relevant bodies and institutions. It also assumes the involvement of TCN and non-governmental and other organizations active in the field of integration<sup>15</sup>.

In October 2017, at the invitation of the non-profit organization Human Rights League, KSGR’s representative participated in the Integration Forum held in Košice and they presented KSGR’s integration activities related to foreigners. In 2017, the KSGR supported the Human Rights League in preparation of the KapaCITY project - Supporting the Integration of Newcomer Foreigners at a local level.

There are other public institutions such as **the Tax Office, the Social Insurance Office, the Health Insurance Offices**, which a TCN usually contacts when applying for social and health insurance, as well as when paying taxes (e.g. while doing business in Slovakia).

## NON-PROFIT ORGANISATIONS

**There are several non-profit organizations operating in Košice providing integration services to TCN on a daily basis. They usually provide free legal assistance for refugees and TCN, free Slovak language courses, free social services and they organize various cultural and social activities:**

- IOM Migration information centre
- Marginal
- Human Rights League
- Mareena

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<sup>15</sup> Súhrnná správa o stave plnenia cieľov a opatrení Integračnej politiky Slovenskej republiky za rok 2017

## 2. FOCUS GROUPS

In April and June 2018 two planned, moderated discussions - focus groups – were held with more than 30 participants. The participants were representatives of the Košice Municipality Office, Labour Office, Police, local schools and universities, members of TCN community and non-profit organizations providing their services to TCN in the City of Košice. Meeting experts with various backgrounds and TCN with personal experience helped to collect opinions, perceptions and viewpoints about the following topics:

- The presence of third country nationals communities in Košice
- The implemented measures for their integration at the local level
- The implemented social and cultural services for third country nationals
- The good local level practices conducted in the city to increase integration and main challenges faced by TCN in Košice

These topics were discussed in details in four thematic areas as described below.

### THEMATIC AREA: CITY VISION AND SERVICES

It is important to see migration in two contexts: “voluntary” and “forced” migration.

Voluntary migration is based on economic or other benefits (e.g. study, family reasons, volunteering, lecturing and so on). A majority of TCN who have come to Košice for economic reasons handle their situation on their own and are financially more or less stable (the most frequent reasons for settling in Košice are employment, studies, running their own business and reunion with a family). However, they complain about a lack of cultural orientation and practical advices, i.e. “first contact points” for foreigners.

Forced migration relates to people, who have come to Košice as asylum seekers. There are not large numbers of asylum seekers, or people with subsidiary protection, in Košice (up to 60), but, based on their own perception, they suffer the most (they are economically unstable, often suffer from trauma or health issues, and/or have no family relatives or peers in Košice). They also complain about the lack of integration measures and programs at the local level.

The Košice Municipality Office provides services to all Košice inhabitants (including those with temporary or permanent residence). The public authorities officers, when meeting a client (a Košice resident), do not investigate the origin of the resident. Practically speaking, the Košice Municipality Office employees meet mostly the TCN who have been integrated (or partly integrated), because it takes some time to receive residency. As the numbers of TCN in Košice City have been rather small (only 2% of the total population of Košice) the TCN situation has not been perceived as problematic. No security issues have been reported, and there are no segregated communities of TCN. Therefore, the integration of TCN is not an issue, nor a priority for the Municipality Office and other institutions in the City of Košice. Representatives of the city and municipality do not feel an urgent need to manage integration of TCN in the City of Košice, especially due to the following facts:

→ Foreigners are not mentioned specifically in the Law on the City of Košice (“Zákon o meste Košice č. 401/1990 Zb. z.”), the law mentions “residents of the City of Košice”.

→ There is an active presence of several non-profit organizations that provide a variety of services to TCN on daily basis in the field.

On the other hand, employers are interested in TCN because the TCN help to fill in a gap on a labour market (Košice labour market lacks craftsmen, i.e. construction workers, as well as professionals, i.e. language teachers or IT experts, who arrive to Košice mostly from India or the USA). In 2017 the Košice Labour Office issued 800 working permits for foreigners, compared to 200 permits in 2016.

Beside the economic benefits (employed TCN pay taxes & contribute to the functioning economy), the contribution of TCN includes bringing novel experience, new points of view, and cultural variety. The presence of the TCN in the City of Košice enriches the City, and it contributes to higher tolerance and greater respect for other nations and a peaceful life.

Non-profit organizations, providing services to the TCN see their role as mediators (as the non-profits are much closer to TCN and more flexible than the public institutions). They network with TCN and their communities, provide free Slovak language and other training courses, legal consultancy, assistance in housing, finding a job, schooling for children and communication with health care staff, etc. In many cases, non-profit organizations substitute the role of the public authorities.

TCN representatives present at the focus group meetings pointed out that there are three key factors related to integration of TCN: language, work, and housing. When TCN want to become financially independent, two other things are substantial: their own “start-up funds” and support from the Slovak Government (i.e. Labour Act, other laws and rules, non-discrimination). Currently, the TCN often decide not seek support from public authorities, they prefer to approach their peers from their own ethnic communities (e.g. Ukrainians, Vietnamese, etc....) who have already been living in Košice, or they prefer to approach the non-profit organizations.

One of the big problems of the TCN in the City of Košice is a housing for TCN, especially for asylum seekers, who have arrived to Košice unprepared, and financially unstable. The City has a limited number of flats (only 5), which can be offered to those in need. Commercial housing is expensive and not affordable for asylum seekers.

**Outcome 1:** There is no integration policy/strategic document and no specific vision on integration of foreigners at local level in the City of Košice.

**Outcome 2:** There is marked difference between economic migrants and asylum seekers. Each group needs different and very specific support, i.e. specific integrations measures and/or interventions.

**Outcome 3:** Some specific issues (for example education of TCN's children, health care, housing, etc.) require solutions and interventions approved at national level, but there is also room for local actions, and the provision of services at a local level.

**Suggestions, recommendations:**

- It would be useful to establish a "first contact point" centre or one-stop shops, which can provide basic information, orientation sessions, and direction to specific services (including issuing a publication or a brochure with practical information at the local level).
- The Municipality Office should have at least some vision regarding the integration of foreigners and the priorities of the City in this area.

## THEMATIC AREA: CIVIC PARTICIPATION AND SOCIAL INCLUSION OF TCN AND MIGRANT COMMUNITIES

There is a long tradition of multiculturalism in the City of Košice, which has historical roots. Several ethnic minorities have become an integral part of all citizens in the City of Košice. Their ancestors came to Košice hundreds years ago. Traditional communities/ethnic minorities of Hungarians, Ruthenians, Roma, Jews, Ukrainians, Poles, Czechs, Russians, Carpathian Germans, Bulgarians... have preserved their culture. They created official associations and they organize community activities, cultural events, manage their own theatres (Hungarians, Roma), and present their culture, language etc. to other inhabitants of the City.

New TCN communities are not officially organized at a local level, for example, there is only the national Afghan association in Slovakia.

Ukrainians communicate very well online, through their own social networks. On Facebook they have a community fan page and it serves as a virtual place to get an advice or help. Similar Facebook fan pages are common for foreigners generally (e.g. "Foreigners in Košice").

Ukrainians usually learn Slovak language quickly, but nevertheless they complain about a kind of discrimination when looking for a job (especially jobs for university graduates, i.e. teachers). They help each other



when learning Slovak language. After they pass the basic level (usually language course organized by a non-profit), they organize their own peer groups to practise Slovak language.

Annually there is a public event „Days of Ukraine“, organized by the Ukrainian community in Košice. Also, there is a Vietnamese ball organized in Košice. A couple years ago, there was an event called Mexical evening. Refugees and asylum seekers from Košice participate each year at public event held on International Day of Refugees, organized mutually by local non-profit organizations and UNHCR.

Some Ukrainian students or other foreign students complain that they feel separated from their other classmates (for example in their dormitory, at school projects, etc....). There is also a big group of Israeli students, who are rather independent and they organize activities for themselves. Separation happens more on a personal level – between classmates, peers, and it differs from university to university, or from school to school.

A Turkish community became visible recently, when a candidate with a Turkish origin started to run for a position in local government in local elections in 2018.

In the GO KOŠICE mobile application, local residents and migrants can find information about cultural events planned in the city with organizers being able to use this platform free promotion of their events. The mobile app is available in both English and Slovak languages.

**Outcome 1:** The life of TCN communities is managed by themselves, but they would welcome support from the Municipality Office of Košice.

**Outcome 2:** Representatives of the City of Košice welcome all initiatives (cultural or other events) carried out by the TCN. The City of Košice frequently provides information relating to such events and also assistance, if needed (e.g. issuing an official permit). When the event is under the auspices of the Municipality, it usually gains better responses from the public.

**Suggestions, recommendations:**

- The Municipality should be more active in organizing events for TCN or managing e.g. “club for TCN”. It could provide a place for meetings, interaction, sharing, getting to know each other. It should have an attractive form and format in order to ensure regular presence of TCNs.

## THEMATIC AREA: URBAN ENVIRONMENT

In the City of Košice there are no zones nor streets that would be dangerous for TCN or for local people. Very rarely TCN become victims of a theft or an assault (8-10 incidents per year, reported by the Police). The Police in Košice have not recorded an increased number of incidents with extremist or racist motives. Occasionally (18-40 cases per year) a TCN is investigated for theft allegations, fraud etc.

Some TCN reported an atmosphere of a latent racism in Košice. However, there are very few cases of assaults, which might be caused e.g. by wearing a hijab or other traditional ethnic clothes.

There is a perception that if TCN or migrants, refugees live in significant numbers in the same place (e.g. a street, neighbourhood, apartment house), there might be a feeling they could become a threat to the majority.

Public transportation is safe, modern and frequent; the announcements in trams and buses are also in English (although the schedules and timetables are mostly in Slovak language). The bus stops are clearly marked. Orientation in the city is not difficult, although the streets and other signs are mostly in Slovak. The most important public authorities are located in the City of Košice, so there is no need to travel to another city to arrange for official documents.

**Outcome 1:** TCN declared they feel safe in Košice, and this is supported by police statistics.

### **Suggestions, recommendation:**

- When providing housing, do not concentrate migrants and TCN at one location (cheap housing for workers or social housing).
- Cooperation with employers seems to be crucial in order to manage economic migration (e.g., proper plans regarding housing prevent of spatial segregation in the future).
- Communication is vital and is the key to a safe and functioning society. Mutual respect, understanding and dealing with cultural differences (e.g. women ashamed to visit male doctors, the position of a man in the family...) should be part of a cross-cultural-communication training of those who work with TCN.

## THEMATIC AREA: ATTITUDES TOWARDS TCN AND MIGRANTS

In recent years, the topic of migration has received more coverage by the media (both national and local). It is usually a mix of positive and negative news, but locally positive news dominate. The local media cover mostly stories of individual foreigners or migrants, which prevents from generalization, stigmatization and negative emotions towards the group of TCN and migrants. There is definitely room, however, to improve media coverage and education of the local public regarding this topic.

Non-profit organizations (e.g. IOM in 2013, and in recent years Marginal and HRL) used to organize communication campaigns and educational projects aimed at the public and/or representatives of public authorities. They try to present a balanced and substantial data that contribute to an informed view on migration and migrants, to integrate the information on migration and foreigners into education, to strengthen a debate about migration and migrants, and thereby contribute to the deconstruction of stereotypes and myths in society and to the prevention of intolerance, discrimination and xenophobia.

The annual Festival of Diversity is organized by the City of Košice (indirectly through the non-profit K13, which was created by the City of Košice and is supervised and co-financed by the Municipal Office). The Festival presents different cultures and local communities – not only in terms of ethnicity, nations, but also age, interests, languages, life styles, etc. . The Festival also includes the very popular Soup Festival. Various communities (not necessarily only foreigners or TCN, but they have always been very welcome and included) present their traditional soups, which are tasted by visitors. All focus group participants agreed that the Festival is an example of best practice. It is very popular among the public, well attended, and covered by the local media. See a chapter BEST PRACTICE at the end of this document.

There are several other bottom-up initiatives of organized cultural or social activities for TCN. The already mentioned non-profit Human Rights League used to organize a women peer group to strengthen leadership within the TCN communities. Tabacka-Kultufabrik (pub/café/gallery) organizes a “Language Café” every Wednesday to connect locals with different foreigners.

The private Elementary School Starozagorska is attended by many foreign children. Many of their parents work in Košice (including expats). The Elementary School takes an advantage of an international atmosphere, and in close cooperation with the families, it organizes workshops in English for children from other schools and about different cultures, countries... Most other schools in Košice struggle to educate foreign pupils with Slovak children, as they do not get much help from either local or national educational institutions.

**Outcome 1:** The Municipality Office should lead a communication campaign aimed at the public. The Office has the respect among the local population, and the power to influence the perception of the majority to „set the tone of the debate about TCN and migrants“.

**Outcome 2:** There is great potential to work with TCN and empower them to be more active in self-presentation.

**Suggestions, recommendation:**

- Continue with the “Soup Festival” and eventually increase the number of activities, where the TCN will be presented as natural part of the City. During the popular “Days of the City of Košice”, the TCN could have a separate creative section/corner/stage for a presentation and became an official part of the program.
  
- Organize creative events in „Vymenniky“ (small cultural centres at densely populated residential areas) or small thematic events/picnics with neighbours, street festivals, photo/art exhibitions, etc...

### 3. PHOTOVOICE

Two separate PhotoVoice workshops have been organized on June 26<sup>th</sup>, and July 25<sup>th</sup>, 2018 in order to ensure effective and flexible work. 35 people participated in the two events and five more people joined the PhotoVoice workshop by sending in their pictures. Before going out into the City of Košice to take pictures, ETP Slovakia held an introductory session. The PhotoVoice goals were:

- to gather personal experiences and points of view of each participant,
- to start a dialogue among public authorities, citizens and TCN communities regarding the integration of TCN,
- to describe the current situation of integration and to identify future measures to improve integration.

### MAIN FINDINGS REGARDING KOŠICE AS A FRIENDLY CITY TO TCN AND MIGRANTS

Over 80 photos (total number within both workshops and individual work) were taken and sent by the PhotoVoice participants. By means of pictures, participants tried to illustrate how the public spaces, public services, social & cultural facilities and the city atmosphere help TCN to integrate. The pictures were diverse and covered several topics of TCN integration. The photographs represented both positive and also negative points of views.



#howiseintegration

## PhotoVoice

Show how you see integration through photos!

- Are you from Košice?
- Do you like taking photos?
- Do you want to share your point of view and maybe even change something?

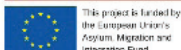
Then you are the perfect candidate for PhotoVoice!

We are looking for Slovaks and foreigners living in Košice, who would like to share their ideas, opinions, and experience with integration through photos.

You don't need to be professional photographers nor integration experts – all we want is your personal ideas and experience.

Would you like to take part?  
Register at:  
[etp@ke.etp.sk](mailto:etp@ke.etp.sk)

We look forward to having you  
as a part of the  
PhotoVoice team!



INTEGRA



## CITY VISION AND SERVICES



The City of Košice provides five rental apartments (social housing) to TCN, specifically for people under international protection (asylum seekers or holders of subsidiary protection). These apartments are located in the middle of heavily populated urban residential area (“where there are mostly high-rise blocks of flats”), in close proximity to local inhabitants. The City of Košice has outsourced the housing services and operation to a non-profit Marginal, which provides services to clients on a daily basis. The price of rent is 1/3 or 1/2 of the commercial rent, but clients complain about the low quality of the apartments. However, the number of such apartments for people in need is very low due the limited number of social housing units in the City of Košice.

**Picture 1:** Premises of apartment house where some of the TCN live. Most announcements are in Slovak, but the staff are helpful.

*Author: Barbora Visnovska*



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**Picture 2:** Municipality Office: Big board on the walls of Košice Town Hall introducing Košice as a city of culture.

**Picture 3:** Inside the reception hall there are beautiful pictures introducing famous people of Košice – art work made by children. There is a feeling that the city wants to interact with its citizens and takes care of the public premises.

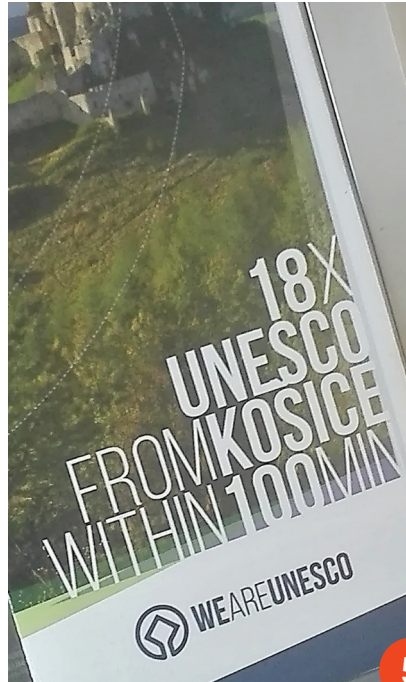
*Author of both pictures: Lenka Czikkova*



City of Košice has not developed a specific agenda of TCN integration (except of Strategy of TCN integration developed in 2012 by CVEK, non-profit organization, based in Bratislava, but which was never officially approved by the Local Council) and it does not have any specific vision about TCN's integration. Most of the services (social and legal counselling, language classes, employment services) have been provided by several non-profits operating in the City. The City often perceives foreigners as tourists, who have only come to Košice for sightseeing. There are several tourist centres, but not a single one-stop-shop or an information centre for TCN who need support while settling in the City.



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**Picture 4:** In front of the one of several City information tourist centres on Hlavna street. *Author: Ivan Shepa*

**Picture 5:** City information tourist centres offer many information materials about Košice and the region (maps, culture offer, and sightseeing brochures) in different European languages. *Author: Barbora Messova*

**Picture 6:** Somebody (refugees, migrants) coming from abroad might ask "Why"= Prečo? "Why there is no place where I can ask about school for me?". *Author: Barbora Messova*

## CIVIC PARTICIPATION AND SOCIAL INCLUSION OF TCN AND MIGRANT COMMUNITIES



In Košice, some of the "new" TCN communities (e.g. Turkey, Syria, Iran, Ukraine & India) are more active and visible to the public and local inhabitants. People from these communities are better integrated into local life and the interaction has become natural (falafel or kebab restaurants, shisha bars and other businesses owned by Syrians, Turks, Israelis). Students from Israel or IT specialists from India, who work in IT companies, are well known in Košice. They participate in public life, usually they learn Slovak language quickly (Ukrainian young people organize "discussion clubs" in cafes, where they help each other to learn Slovak) or speak English and make friends among

locals. On the other hand, any public initiatives of some minorities/communities (e.g. Vietnamese) have been hidden and these communities remain more isolated.

Historically, there are several minorities/communities, whose ancestors came to Košice centuries ago (e.g. Jews, Roma, Czechs) or have lived in Košice for a long time (e.g. Hungarians, Ruthenians, Ukrainians). These communities are very active and alive; they also get legal and financial support from the State Government. They traditionally enrich the City, they have formed the culture and history of the City (e.g. Hungarian theatre Thalia, Roma theatre Romathan, annual public events such as Days of Jewish culture, Day of Ukrainians etc.).



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**Picture 7:** Džemal Kodrazi (Turkey) is a candidate for local government for the upcoming elections in November 2018. Slogan says "Future of Košice is in your hands". *Author: Sybil Marmostein*

**Picture 8:** Turkish interpreter during public culture event "Authors' Reading Month". *Author: Sybil Marmostein*

**Picture 9:** Place where Ukrainians feel more like at home. *Author: Ryta Goncharova.*



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Examples of presence of old/traditional minorities/communities in Košice:

**Picture 10:** Synagogue as symbol of Jewish community. It symbolises freedom of religion and world outlook in Slovakia. *Author: Ryta Goncharova.*

**Picture 11:** Old house on Hlavna street with Hungarian inscription. *Author: Barbora Messova.*

**Picture 12:** Association of Ruthenians&Ukrainians. *Author: Slavka Macakova*



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**Picture 13:** Vietnamese community is closed to strangers. For locals and other migrants it is difficult to penetrate into. Vietnamese bistro (together with small clothes shops) is one of the few visible signs of interaction with locals. *Author: Irena Fedorova*

## URBAN ENVIRONMENT AND SAFETY



Urban safety was generally evaluated as very good, none of the participants experienced conflict regarding their ethnicity or country of origin.

Representatives of the Municipality Office, Košice understand the need for Košice to become more open to people from abroad, regardless whether they have come as tourists or to study, to work, or if they want to settle down. One of the easy ways to improve the image of the City and to build a friendly atmosphere is to take care of the public spaces, keep the streets clean, reconstruct shabby buildings and improve the public transportation system. Košice won the title European Capital of Culture in 2013, hosted Ice-hockey World Championships in 2011 (and will host it again in 2019) and in each year since 1924 hosted the most famous sport event – Košice Peace Marathon, which is the oldest marathon in Europe. In 2021 will Košice host European Olympic Youth Festival, to be held for the first time in Slovakia.

These internationally recognized events have significantly helped the City of Košice in terms of major investments into the City infrastructure, culture in general and public spaces. Signs, announcements and instructions in English have slowly started to appear in public spaces (it was very rare in the past) such as the train station, bus stations, trams and buses, parking lots, information centres and parks, etc. There is, however, plenty of room for improvement, especially in communications and signs at public offices and public services in general.



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**Picture 14:** Well-maintained, safe and clean public spaces. *Author: Ivan Shepa*

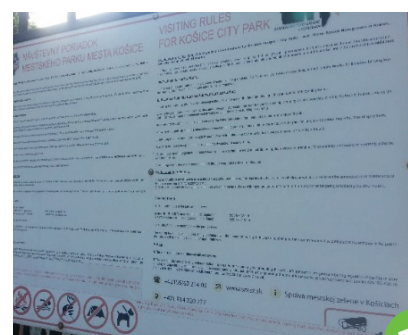
**Picture 15:** Relaxed and welcoming atmosphere in Košice. *Author: Zuzana Orsagova*



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**Picture 16:** Using English becomes more common at some public areas - mostly those, which have been reconstructed or renovated recently. *Author: Lenka Czikkova*

**Picture 17:** English announcements in trams. *Author: Michaela Wenzlova*

**Picture 18:** Visiting rules for Košice City Park in English. *Author: Viera Dubecka*



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**Picture 19:** The irony in an announcement saying "Public space is monitored by security cameras", but it itself is damaged. *Author: Barbora Messova*

**Picture 20:** Graffiti writing, which represent different subcultures and points of view. There are many hidden messages behind it, which are only understood by locals. *Author: Barbora Messova*

**Picture 21:** Is this a public toilet? *Author: Jana Papcunova*

## ATTITUDES TOWARDS TCN AND MIGRANTS

As already mentioned, the representatives of the City of Košice do not feel an urgent need to do much more in terms of TCN's integration. The TCN with permanent or temporary residence are considered equal to any inhabitant of Košice, meaning they have access to any public services. TCN without a permanent or temporary residence are serviced by several non-profits operating in Košice (Marginal, Human Rights League, IOM, Mareena) and national institutions, which provide their services on national level (e.g. Labour Office, Foreign Police, Health Care).

However, there are several integration cultural events supported by the City (e.g. Soup Festival, Festival of Diversity, Festival of Authors' Reading Month). Cultural events, in general, are opportunities to present positive attitudes towards foreigners, TCN or minorities, i.e. via posters/programs of cultural centres in both Slovak and English languages, or via providing support of minority theatres/events (Roma theatre Romathan, Hungarian Theatre Thalia, Festival of Jewish Culture Mazal Tov!). The City of Košice also manages a grant program, which supports various cultural events/activities in the City. The target groups of this grant program are informal citizens' groups, non-profit organisations, or individuals, and TCN formally registered organizations are eligible to apply as well. Mobile application GO KOŠICE (initiated by the City of Košice) helps to find information about cultural events held in Košice both in Slovak and in English. Mobile application is accompanied by digital touch screens/digital info kiosks located in the centre of the City of Košice.

Many integration initiatives originate from local people, volunteers or owners of small businesses. Tabačka Kulturfabrik (@tabackaKošice), a social and cultural facility, focused on presenting culture&creativity, residential activities&exhibitions, theatrical, dance, musical or multimedia productions and is one of the favourite places where foreigners (incl. TCN) gather. It is a favourite place, a café, a bistro, a gallery, an event venue for locals, too. Each Wednesday the "Language Café" is held. Each table hosts a different language, so people can interact, discuss different topics, learn and practice language with native speakers on a voluntary basis. Some locals through online social networks offer teaching Slovak in one-to-one conversations.

There are also many events held by/for international students. The Faculty of Medicine at P.J. Šafárik University and The University of Veterinary Medicine and Pharmacy in Košice have enabled international students to complete their studies in English since early nineties. Young people from about 50 countries study medicine at the Faculty of Medicine<sup>16</sup>. The Technical University and other universities have also opened their English study programs (currently students from over 40 countries study at the Technical University)<sup>17</sup>. There is also a growing number of students from Ukraine studying in Košice in recent years.

Generally, the City benefits from the presence of TCN, but such benefits have not yet been defined, nor measured, and have not been communicated to the public. Integration of TCN faces several challenges (housing, schooling of small children), and, unfortunately, they have only been discussed within the Municipality of Košice and the Local Council to a limited extent.

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<sup>16</sup> [www.upjs.sk](http://www.upjs.sk)

<sup>17</sup> [www.tuke.sk](http://www.tuke.sk)



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**Picture 22:** Tabačka and its popular event Language café. *Author: Veronika Poklembova*

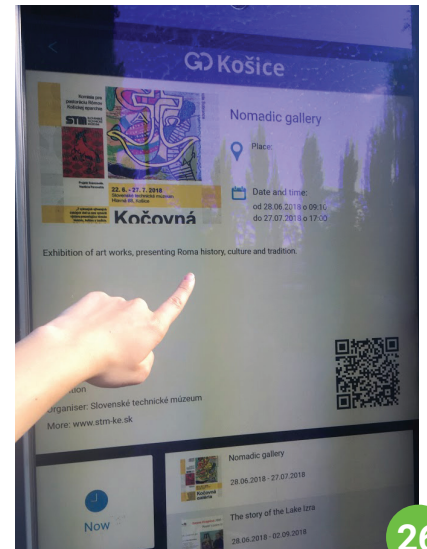
**Picture 23:** The memorial to a famous Norwegian writer Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson, the Nobel prize winner in literature and a supporter of the Slovak people. Writing is in Slovak and English. *Author: Ryta Goncharova*



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**Picture 24:** Memorial to November `89 and all exodus from Slovakia during 20th century. Civic initiative of artists and activists to commemorate those who were forced to leave Slovakia. Massive emigration from Eastern parts of Slovakia to USA at the beginning of 20th century, Hungarians, Czechs and Germans were forced to leave Slovakia before or after WW2, holocaust of Jews and Roma, victims of communism deported to gulags or killed when crossing the state borders. *Author: Lenka Czikkova.*

**Picture 25:** A bookstore presenting books in different languages: English, Russian. *Author: Lenka Czikkova*

**Picture 26:** The mobile application GO KOŠICE and big digital screens on public spaces informing about cultural events held in the city, information available in English, too. *Author: Oleg Shylenko*



**Picture 27:** There are many offers to learn English but it is difficult to find lessons of Slovak language. *Author: Barbora Messova*



**Picture 28:** Many books (e.g. personal or skills development) are in Czech language, which is absolutely fine for Slovaks, but other TCN who hardly command Slovak language are unable to read them. *Author: Julia Rokicka*

**Picture 29:** Infographic with announcement only in Slovak. TCN can ask what that actually means: food and drinks are not sold here or is it forbidden to bring own food and drinks or anything else? *Author: Barbora Messova*

**The following findings resulted from the discussions taken after the PhotoVoice sessions.**

- + Košice is a safe and friendly city with good universities, opportunities to find a job or start a business. Public spaces are nice; TCN and migrants feel happy in Košice.
- + Locals and non-profits do a great job in terms of integration – Slovak language courses, assistance with housing, job searching, skills development, legal counselling, social services, and cultural integration.
- + Minorities such Hungarians, Ruthenians, Jews, Roma, Ukrainians ... are supported by the State and/or the City.

- There are poor, or non-existing, integration policies within the City of Košice, no strategy as to how to deal with increasing numbers of TCN , no monitoring of any policies and no public campaigns on this topic. (Idea how to improve: a training course for the Municipality Office employees and public authorities' officers).
- Municipality officers do not have actual information about national policies in terms of health care, employment, schooling, thus it is difficult to develop any strategy or policies. (Idea how to improve it: workshop for the Municipality Office employees and public authorities' officers to share information about actual national policies).
- The Municipality Office supports in a minimum way the integration initiatives run by non-profits, volunteers, cultural institutions, schools, ... (Idea how to improve: improve current integration public events and find ways how to support the others, which are managed individually or on a small scale).
- There are no one-stop-shops for TCN. They can feel lost at the beginning. There is very weak support, and difficult communication at public offices, challenges to find precise information, TNC are confused. (Idea how to improve: establish a one-stop-shop managed by the Municipality or develop a special web page with all information needed).

## 4. CITY WALKS WITH QUESTIONNAIRES

ETP Slovakia organized two separate city walks with a total of 23 participants. After explaining the goal of the sessions and giving instructions, the route and timing of the city walk was decided. The participants talked about the places with the potential of higher concentrations of TCN.

Although, Košice is a big city (around 250,000 inhabitants) and there is only roughly 2% of TCN (less than 5,000). As they are scattered among the majority population, **there are no specific zones or streets, which would be typical for TCN or specific migrant community.**

Typically, at university campuses and at some secondary schools, dorms and their premises there is a higher concentration of foreign students and teachers. Since both city walks were held during the summer, the semester had already finished and the majority of students were not present. We met some TCN around train and bus stations and in the City centre.

At Adlerova street (in the “Furča” residential area), there is an apartment building with social housing and five flats are inhabited by the TCN families (asylum seekers or people with subsidiary protection status). Other TCN live all around the City.

We discussed the main topics covered by a checklist. Many participants were not aware of specific issues e.g.:

- if the City provides funds or other support for TCN organizations
- if there are appropriate resources to deal with hate crimes and hate speech, or
- if the City analyses and reviews data about migration and diversity in the City
- and therefore they found it difficult to evaluate these questions. Other questions were more clear and practical, although some of the questions in the questionnaire were very general.

Some questions were ranked by a full range of points, which means an equal number of people ranked the same question as 1 and, on the other hand, as 5, e.g.:

- There is a wide public access to computers and the internet in public spaces...
- There are city-supported initiatives and community-wide events to encourage intercultural dialogue and exchange between different communities living in the City
- If the share of migrant population in certain disadvantaged neighbourhoods is higher, service gaps, needs and challenges are promptly and efficiently addressed to overcome a spatial segregation
- Communications led by the City appropriately promote a positive image of migrants and TCN in the City

The score for each part/topic can be found below. The results identify the more and less advanced areas of urban integration policies. Participants have discussed their experiences and points of view (see the comments).

# CITY VISION AND SERVICES RESULTS

Score 5 means "excellent" and 1 means "poor".

	Average Score	Details	Comments/Evidence
The City has a strategy for promoting diversity and equal opportunities in which TCN and migrants are identified as a target group.	1,7	12x1 7x2 3x3 1x4	No strategy, just some ad-hoc activities/events (e.g. "Soup festival", "Festival of Diversity")
Adequate financial and organizational city resources support TCN/migrant integration.	1,9	9x1 9x2 2x3 2x4	Migrants are not mentioned in the law about the City of Košice – see the "Zákon o meste Košice č. 401/1990 Zb. z.")
The City has structures in place to encourage and ensure engagement from TCN communities in policy-making.	1,6	12x1 4x2 4x3	Only formal procedures: TCN with permanent residence (min 8 years) can get Slovak citizenship. Afterwards s/he can become a candidate to city council (elections on local level are every 4 years). City does not organize any formal round tables or similar activities with TCN.
City related information and advice is available and accessible to TCN and migrants, taking account of particular language needs, community locations, etc.	2,9	3x1 6x2 7x3 5x4 2x5	There is big room for improvement (e.g. 1. communication at Foreign Police office and its system of providing of information, 2. no available information online – the city doesn't have specific section on its web site focused on TCN...). There are many tourist information in English in Tourist centres (how the transportation work, info about city, history, culture).
The City simplifies the provision of services to migrants through one-stop shops, online portals, cultural mediation, etc.	1,5	16x1 3x2 3x3 1x4	City doesn't provide such services.
The City works with employer and educational organizations and NGOs to support projects helping migrants gain skills to improve their employability.	2,7	4x1 7x2 7x3 2x4 3x5	Only formal support, no activity, which would be initiated by the City of Košice.
There is wide public access to computers and the internet, at no or minimal charge, in public places such as local government offices, community centres and libraries.	2,9	6x1 4x2 3x3 5x4 5x5	Mainly at offices in NGOs, at universities, in libraries. There are also free WIFI spots around Košice
The City regularly collects information and monitors and evaluates its integration policies (e.g. strategic documents for urban development, social, educational and cultural services, respective action plans).	1,9	8x1 4x2 3x3 2x4	Probably not at all. City checks only statistical data gained from Foreign Police if there is a special need to do that.  Several respondents didn't tick anything, they were not aware of this issue.



# CIVIC PARTICIPATION AND SOCIAL INCLUSION OF TCN AND MIGRANT COMMUNITIES RESULTS

	Average Score	Details	Comments/Evidence
The city promotes opportunities for TCN participation via appropriate channels and in multiple languages.	2,3	6x1 6x2 7x3 1x4 1x5	Participation for what? Some respondents needed more specific question.  Generally, the average score showed it is very limited (via city cultural organization K13, which organizes above mentioned festivals).
The city provides funds or other support for TCN/migrant self-organization, capacity building and activities.	2,4	4x1 4x2 5x3 1x4 1x5	This is relevant only for "traditional" minorities' organizations (Hungarians, Ruthenians, Czechs...).  Only 15 respondents answered this question.
A range of flexible options for TCN/migrant volunteers is available, with training, recognition, guidance and compensation of personal costs.	2,0	9x1 3x2 5x3 2x4	Not managed by city, but NGOs.
Voluntary/NGO sector bodies encourage and facilitate membership of TCN.	2,8	4x1 3x2 10x3 3x4 2x5	Some organization try to involve TCN into activities, but it is very individual.
There are city-supported initiatives and community-wide events to encourage intercultural dialogue and exchange between different city communities in the host society.	2,5	2x1 5x2 9x3 4x4 2x5	A couple of cultural events are formally and financially supported by the city. The city has capacities to do much more in this area.
TCN are depicted positively and without stereotyping in the media.	2,7	4x1 4x2 10x3 4x4 1x5	The news and publicity about TCN at local level can be evaluated as neutral, because there is some negative news, but also positive news. Generally, speaking in Slovak context, the official national policy is rather anti-immigrant, but on local level and having in mind the multiculturalism of Košice, Košice is slightly better.
The cultural offering of the City through its museums, galleries, cultural activities and programmes, grant-making, etc., reflects the diversity of the City population and allows for TCN/migrant cultural self-expression.	3,2	1x1 6x2 10x3 5x4 1x5	Currently available mostly for "traditional" minorities, which run their own associations, theatres, media. From time-to-time there are organized events such Ukrainian days, Vietnamese ball, ...

# URBAN ENVIRONMENT AND SAFETY RESULTS

	Average Score	Details	Comments/Evidence
Outdoor safety is promoted by good street lighting, police patrols and community education – what type of education?	4,0	1x1 2x2 3x3 6x4 11x5	People feel safe in Košice. The safety was evaluated as very good.
Streets and public transport routes are well signed, in local language and in English/other language.	3,0	1x1 6x2 8x3 5x4 2x5	Slovak language most of the time, but English is becoming more visible (new trams, reconstructed public spaces).
Public buildings are well signed outside and inside.	3,7	0x1 4x2 4x3 9x4 6x5	Slovak language most of the time.
Public toilets outdoors and indoors sufficient in number, clean and accessible.	2,6	4x1 3x2 9x3 4x4 3x5	People more likely use the toilets in restaurants or pubs than the public ones.
Public transport costs are consistent, clearly displayed and affordable.	4,2	1x1 1x2 1x3 9x4 10x5	Tickets machines are located around Košice, it is also possible to buy electronic ticket via mobile phone. Prices are affordable.
Public transport is safe, reliable and frequent, including at nights and on weekends.	4,4	0x1 2x2 1x3 6x4 13x5	Public transport was evaluated as excellent. It has been renovated recently, there are announcements in English in vehicles, too.
Complete and accessible information is provided to users in local language and in English/another language about routes, schedules, etc.	3,3	1x1 7x2 6x3 6x4 3x5	Inside the buses/trams also English is used, the timetables on bus stops are in Slovak only, which might be difficult for newcomers, later on it becomes easy to understand the schedules.
Sufficient public and commercial rental housing is available and affordable.	2,8	10x3 7x2 3x3 2x4	Social housing for TCN is a big problem. There is only limited number of flats for asylum seekers. Commercial housing is rather expensive (local people use to advertise apartments for TCN on social networks). TCN students have decent accommodation in student dorms.
If the share of migrant population in certain disadvantaged neighbourhoods is higher, service gaps, needs and challenges are promptly and efficiently addressed to overcome spatial segregation.	2,4	3x1 7x2 7x3 2x4 2x5	There are no specific zones in Košice inhabited by TCN community.
Appropriate resources within the city to deal effectively with hate crimes and hate speech.	2,4	4x1 3x2 4x3 3x4	There was no personal experience with hate speech towards TCN in public among our respondents. Only 14 people answered this question.

## ATTITUDES TOWARDS TCN AND MIGRANTS RESULTS

	Average Score	Details	Comments/Evidence
There are mechanisms in place to measure and track public perception of TCN and migrants for the purposes of city policy development.	1,6	11x1 5x2 2x3 1x4	No such mechanism.
The city collates, commissions, analyses and reviews data and information about migration and diversity in the city.	2,2	8x1 2x2 8x3 2x4	Data of Foreign Police office, data of Labour office, City Register office and other offices are reviewed, but not for the purpose of TCN integration policies/evaluation.
The city branding activities aim to build a shared sense of belonging and identity for all citizens, including TCN and migrants.	2,8	2x1 6x2 8x3 5x4	Passively only.
All city communication (publications, website, press releases, interviews, public statements, public functions) appropriately promote a positive image of migrants in the city.	2,6	4x1 6x2 5x3 6x4 2x5	Our respondents have not spotted any such communication.
The existing migrant communities in the city play a visible positive role by eliciting role models and mentors, engaging in meaningful public campaigns, etc.	2,3	6x1 5x2 10x3 2x4	Individuals only.

## SUMMARY OF CHECKLISTS' RESULTS

The City Vision and Services area was evaluated with the lowest score (ranged from 1,5 to 2,9) out of all the areas discussed. The results of the questionnaire pointed out the same challenges as the focus groups discussions and desk research. The consequences of not having a vision of the City of Košice nor policies relating to the integration of TCN are:

- 1) only minimum provision of services to migrants and TCN through one-stop shops, online portals, cultural mediation, etc.,
- 2) no structures in place to encourage and ensure engagement of TCN communities and migrants in policy-making,
- 3) only formal support helping migrants gain skills to improve their employability,
- 4) obviously no collection of information, monitoring and evaluation of the City of Košice integration policies.

The Civic Participation and Social Inclusion of TCN and Migrant Communities area was ranked between 2,0 to 3,2 points, which shows that this area has still potential to improve. A couple of cultural events are formally and financially supported by the city. The city reflects the diversity of its population and allows different cultures to self-express, but this is valid mostly for the "traditional" minorities, which run their own associations, theatres and media. "New migrant" communities miss financial and formal support. Many activities in this area are managed by NGOs.

Urban Environment and Safety area was the best evaluated. The points ranged from 2,4 to 4,4. TCN and local inhabitants feel safe. There are no specific zones in Košice which would be densely inhabited by TCN communities. Respondents ranked public transportation as excellent. It has been renovated recently, there are announcements in English in vehicles. The prices are affordable, timetable is frequent, and orientation is easy. Lowest points were given to questions regarding housing, which remains as one of the biggest challenges in Košice.

Attitudes towards TCN and Migrants area score was between 1,6 to 2,8, which indicates opportunities to improve especially the city communication and promotion of a positive image/benefits of migrants in the city. Proper public communication is necessary not only towards locals, but towards to TCN communities as well. As the first step it is recommended to evaluate the data about migrants and track public perception of TCN and migrants for the purposes of city policy development.

# PART III. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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## MAIN SUCCESSES AND CHALLENGES REGARDING THE INTEGRATION OF TCN IN KOŠICE IDENTIFIED DURING THE CITY AUDIT

### Main successes

- Košice has a historical tradition of being a multicultural city of which minorities have always been an integral part. .
- There are only small numbers of TCN in Košice (only 2% of population) so there are no serious problems, e.g. with safety.
- Many TCN can easily integrate (especially those who come for a pre-arranged job, e.g. to work in IT companies or as students).
- There are several well-functioning non-profits, which support those TCN who are in need of help or support. The Municipality Office supports (although does not initiate) cultural events and presentations of TCN, minorities and a variety of different cultures in the City.
- The Municipality Office has allocated small number of apartments for asylum seekers and/or people with subsidiary protection.

### Main challenges

- Non-existence of a Local Strategy for integration of TCN.
- Role of the Municipality and of the non-profit organizations in provision of social and cultural services.
- Cooperation between the City and employers in the City (to manage economic migration).
- Three most important areas to focus on: language, work and housing.

## THEMES, WHICH STIRRED MOST INTERESTS

The following themes were identified as the key ones, which need more attention:

### 1. THEMATIC AREA: CITY VISION AND SERVICES

**The municipality should develop a strategy of integration of TCNs, since there is a visible trend of increasing the number.**

*Recommendation:* organizing a workshop for the representatives of the Municipality Office about migration and integration. Introduce them to the topic and benefits of having an integration strategy.

**Improvement of TCN integration during their first days/weeks/months in Košice.** Communication towards TCN should be in a tone “we will take care of you and we want to help you settle down”.

*Recommendation:* establishment of a “first contact point centre”/one-stop shop, which would serve as a place for getting basic information, orientation, direction to services (+ publication/brochure with practical information on local level). It would also provide moral support – so an individual does not feel alone in their new environment. The centre should be located at municipality office premises. If this would appear too ambitious, the suggestion is to provide the above mentioned information online - on the City web site.

**Program for schools attended by children with Slovak as a second language.**

Municipality Office is a founder of all public elementary schools in Košice. The migration trends (increasing the number of “TCN children”) should be mirrored in the support of schools, who struggle with these new challenges.

*Recommendation:* organize a training course for teachers, teachers’ assistants (there have been several methodologies already piloted in other towns and cities across Slovakia).

## 2. THEMATIC AREA: Civic Participation and Social Inclusion of TCN and Migrant Communities

**Improvement of current integration of public cultural events and find ways how to support the others, which are managed individually or on a small scale.**

*Recommendation:* development of a grant scheme specifically targeted at minorities, TCN, international communities of migrants, which would support their bottom-up initiatives and civic participation in culture or social area.

#### 4. THEMATIC AREA: Attitudes towards TCN and Migrants

**Working with public opinion and improving relations within local neighbourhoods through communication campaign explaining benefits of migration for the City** (in contrast to spreading fear, which is undertaken by conspirators, alternative media or populists).

*Recommendation 1:* using existing popular events such as “Diversity Festival” or “Days of the City of Košice”, add a section or a stage, which would be specifically dedicated to TCN. This could be supported by an online and offline campaign.

*Recommendation 2:* the small culture centres located in the urban areas are ideal places for smaller intercultural events, which would connect local inhabitants with new neighbours (workshops, trainings, charity fairs, music events, photo/art exhibitions etc.).

#### 3. THEMATIC AREA: Urban Environment and Safety

**Providing starter housing for TCN/asylum seekers/migrants in cooperation with employers.** Cooperation with employers seems to be crucial in order to manage economic migration and prevent spatial segregation in the future.

*Recommendation:* the development of a housing action plan in cooperation with employers (using State Fund for the Development of Housing or other relevant funds).

## BEST PRACTICE - FESTIVAL OF DIVERSITY

# RŮZMĀNĪTŮŠŤ

The mission of Creative Industry Košice is deeply rooted in its origins, the organization of Košice - European Capital of Culture 2013. The city acquired this prestigious title after the approval of the Interface 2013 project by an international selection committee in September 2008 in Bratislava. The non-profit organization went through a fundamental change at the end of 2013, when the City of Košice founded the subsidized organization, K 13 – Košice Cultural Centres.



K 13 is the main organizer of **the Diversity Festival**<sup>18</sup> (**Festival Rozmanitosti** in Slovak language). The Festival brings different types of art stories of people from various minorities, cultures, sub-cultures and people at the imaginary edge of society (not necessarily in the sense of different nationalities, it targets wider society – all city inhabitants). Festival participants embark on journeys to the unknown, into a new environment outside their conformational zone, and recognize

<sup>18</sup> <https://vymenniky.sk/festival/festival-rozmanitost/>



everyday joy and concern of the members of these communities. Through music, dance, theatre, live libraries, exhibitions, film screenings, art workshops and other artistic forms, they also learn about their habits, differences in traditions, values, and life. The aim of the festival is to contribute to understanding, to respect differences in general and to increase tolerance in society.

Every year, the festival offers an insight into sensitive topics of society through art and brings real stories and peoples' concerns. Its culmination is the Soup Festival<sup>19</sup>.

#polievkac

The Soup Festival represents the national and cultural mixture that can be found in Košice. Minorities, whether in a larger or smaller numbers, represent the best of their cultures, their cuisine, especially the soup. The main idea of the festival is to present and to know Košice's national and cultural diversity, to remove the barriers that arise between people of different groups and ethnic groups, to promote tolerance and to contribute to mutual dialogue between the majority and the minority of our city. This year there will be 43 "soups teams" creating their soups (along with teams representing different Košice communities, there will be Iranian, Ukrainian, Turkish, Mongolian, French, Polish, Portuguese, Bulgarian teams and team from Caribbean).

Entrance to events is free.

The Diversity Festival (incl. Soup Festival) is one of the favourite events in Košice. It is annually being held at the beginning of October.

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<sup>19</sup> <https://vymenniky.sk/festival/polievkovy-festival/>





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