

VERA MESSING – BENCE SÁGVÁRI

# CEMENTING EUROPEAN DIVISIONS

MAPPING OF  
EUROPEAN ATTITUDES  
TOWARDS MIGRATION



## 1 INTRODUCTION

This report is a follow-up to our previous report mapping attitudes towards migration and immigrants and aims to contribute to the discussion of immigrants' integration and the role of mainstream society's attitudes, with fresh empirical evidence from 2018/19.

It is part of a series of three studies inquiring into various aspects of immigrants' integration in European societies conducted since 2018. In the first study, published in March 2018 and entitled '*Looking behind the culture of fear. Cross-national analysis of attitudes towards migration in Europe*' (Messing and Ságvári, 2018) we explored cross-national differences in perceptions of migration, and discovered factors that may lie behind the immense differences in the levels of acceptance or rejection of immigrants across European countries. The following study, '*Still divided but more open. Mapping European attitudes towards migration before and after the migration crisis*', offered a dynamic analysis by looking at changes in attitudes over more than one and a half decades and the potential micro- (individual-) and macro- (country-) level factors that brought about those changes (Messing and Ságvári, 2019). While it drew a broader picture of the dynamics of attitudes between 2002 and 2016/17 it also offered a focused analysis of the pre- and post-migration crisis situations. The present study aims to complement this dynamic analysis by including the most recent data on attitudes from 2018/19 and by widening the geographical scope, also including several new countries, primarily from Eastern and Southern Europe (Serbia, Montenegro, Croatia and Bulgaria, but also Slovakia and Latvia). The present data offer the widest geographical scope for comparative analysis of attitudes in Europe. For the first time data also cover the Western Balkans, which is a very important, as yet neglected region. Bulgaria, Montenegro, Croatia and Serbia lie on a crucial route of East–West migration, therefore the extended dataset offers a great opportunity to explore attitudes towards

migration in this region as well. The study '*From landing to arrival. The subtle integration of immigrants across Western Europe*', which is also part of the report series, offered yet another angle on the same subject and looked at how immigrants adapt to their new environments (Messing and Ságvári, 2020).

Our report published in 2019, which analysed the changes in attitudes between the period before and the period after the migration crisis, came to the unexpected conclusion that '*attitudes towards migration in Europe have generally become more positive in most countries since the 2015 refugee crisis. The level of rejection between 2014/15 (before the flow of mass migration to Europe occurred) and 2016/17 (after the migration shock) has decreased from 15% to 10%. Thus, in general, popular attitudes do not support the flourishing anti-migrant populist political discourse, and by the same token, increasingly loud anti-migrant populist narratives have not boosted the rejection of migrants*' (Messing and Ságvári, 2019:35).

The most important question we would like to answer in this follow-up report is whether the more positive attitudes towards immigrants that were recorded in 2016/17 were ad hoc responses to an unexpected and singular event (or series of events) during the summer and autumn 2015, or part of a longer term trend. Another question that we would like to answer is whether the previously recorded East–West divide in the attitude map of Europe remains valid also if we include a wider selection of countries from Eastern Europe.

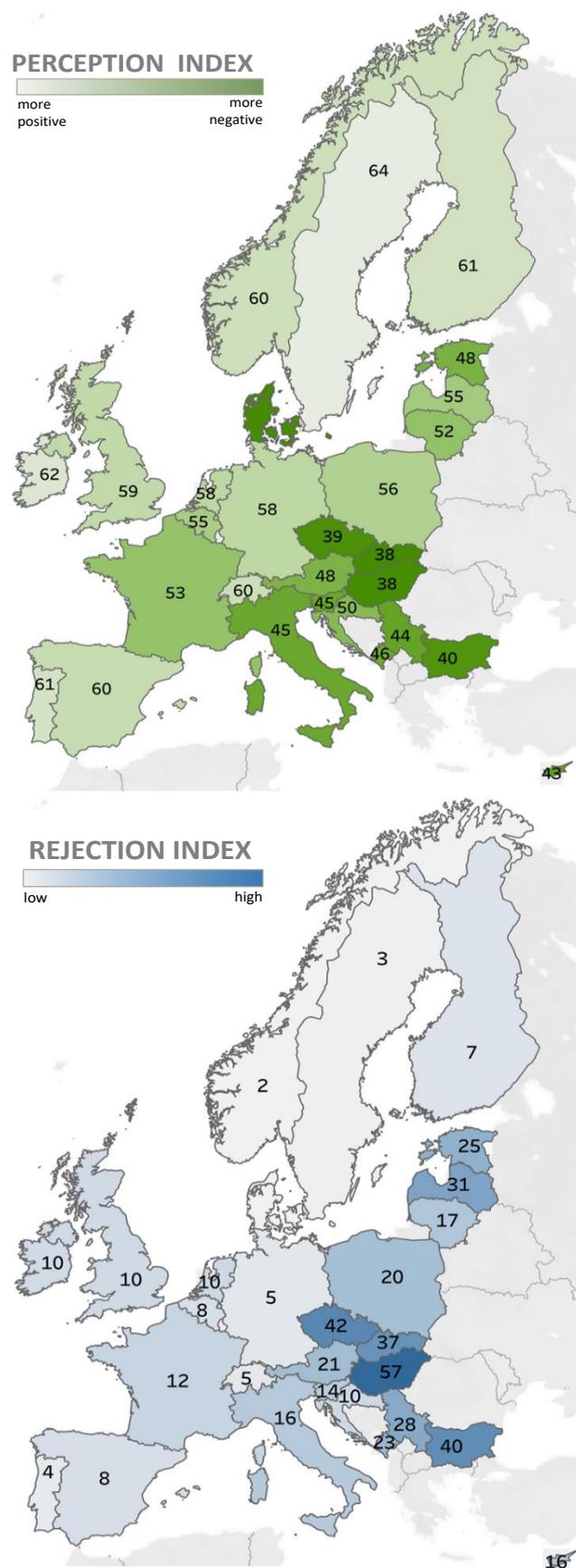
## 2 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND DATA

This report uses the same conceptual and methodological framework that was developed for our 2019 study '*Still divided but more open. Mapping European attitudes towards migration before and after the migration crisis*'. Therefore, in this section we will summarize only the most important milestones of this framework and suggest that readers consult the abovementioned report for more details.

Academic literature discussing the construction of attitudes differentiates between affective (A), behavioural (B) and cognitive (C) components of attitudes (the ABC model) (Van den Berg et al., 2006; Eagly and Chaiken, 1998). Although attitudes incorporate these three components, any particular attitude can be based more on one component than on another.

- The **affective** component refers to the emotional reaction one exhibits toward migrants. Attitudes about hot-button issues – such as politics, sex, and religion – tend to be affectively-based, as they usually come from a person's values.
- The **behavioural** component refers to the way one behaves when exposed to migrants. For example, how would someone decide whether to allow or forbid migrants to come and settle in his/her country?
- The **cognitive** component refers to the beliefs, knowledge, and thoughts we have about immigrants. Whether we are aware of the number and diversity of immigrants in our societies, and also of how their presence affects the country's economy, culture or society.

In this study, in accordance with our previous ones, we will analyse the cognitive and behavioural components of attitudes with two indicators: the Perception Index (PI) measuring the cognitive element of attitudes, and the



**Figure 1.** Rejection and Perception Indexes by country, ESS R9 (2018/19)

Rejection Index (RI) representing the behavioural element of attitudes. The **Rejection Index** denotes in percentage terms the share of those who would *reject any migrants coming from poorer countries outside Europe* without consideration.<sup>1</sup> The Perception Index reflects perceptions of the consequences of migration with the following questions: '*Would you say it is generally bad or good for [country]'s economy that people come to live here from other countries?*' and '*Would you say that [country]'s cultural life is generally undermined or enriched by people coming to live here from other countries?*' The **Perception Index** takes a value that comprises answers for each of these questions and takes values ranging from 0 to 100. The higher the number, the more positive is the perception of migration.

Similarly to our former studies, we use data from the **European Social Survey** (ESS)<sup>2</sup>. This time we focus on the most recent survey round data (Round 9), which was conducted **in 2018/19 in 27 countries** in Europe. This offers the widest geographical coverage in the history of the European Social Survey. The analysis of attitudes in 2019 is based on responses of 47,000 people in 27 countries across Europe. Data that offer comparison between various years (chapter 3.2 and 3.3) represent the populations of countries that participated in both or all three survey rounds.

## 3 RESULTS

### 3.1 ATTITUDINAL MAP OF EUROPE IN 2018/19

First, we give an overview of the most recent data (2018/19) concerning attitudes towards migrants in Europe, and its two components by country (Figure 1.) The Perception Index (PI) – on the upper map – represents the cognitive component of attitudes, namely how people feel about the consequences of migration and migrants for their countries, while the Rejection Index (RI) – on the lower map – embodies the behavioural element of attitudes.

Both indicators suggest **a very explicit East–West divide in the continent** in term of attitudes towards immigrants and immigration. People in Post-communist countries in Eastern Europe are more hostile to immigrants than the population of countries in Western Europe. A fifth to half of the populations in this region reject the arrival and settling of immigrants from poorer countries outside Europe, while these shares are below 10 per cent in most Western European countries. This is despite (or because of) the fact that Eastern European countries experience very low rates of third country national immigrants (TCN) and have very little direct experiences with immigrants. The index indicating the perception of the consequences of immigration shows a similar, though less salient pattern: in most post-communist East European countries people perceive more negative than positive consequences of migration on the society, economy and culture of the country (the overall Perception Index is below 50), but there are four countries where the population is explicitly negative towards immigrants (in the Czech

<sup>1</sup> This index is constructed from a single question: 'To what extent do you think [country] should allow people from poorer countries outside Europe?' (1: Allow many to come and live here; 2: Allow some; 3: Allow a few; 4: Allow none; 8: Don't know) We recoded responses into a binary variable at individual level, summarizing those answering '*allow none*' versus all other responses.

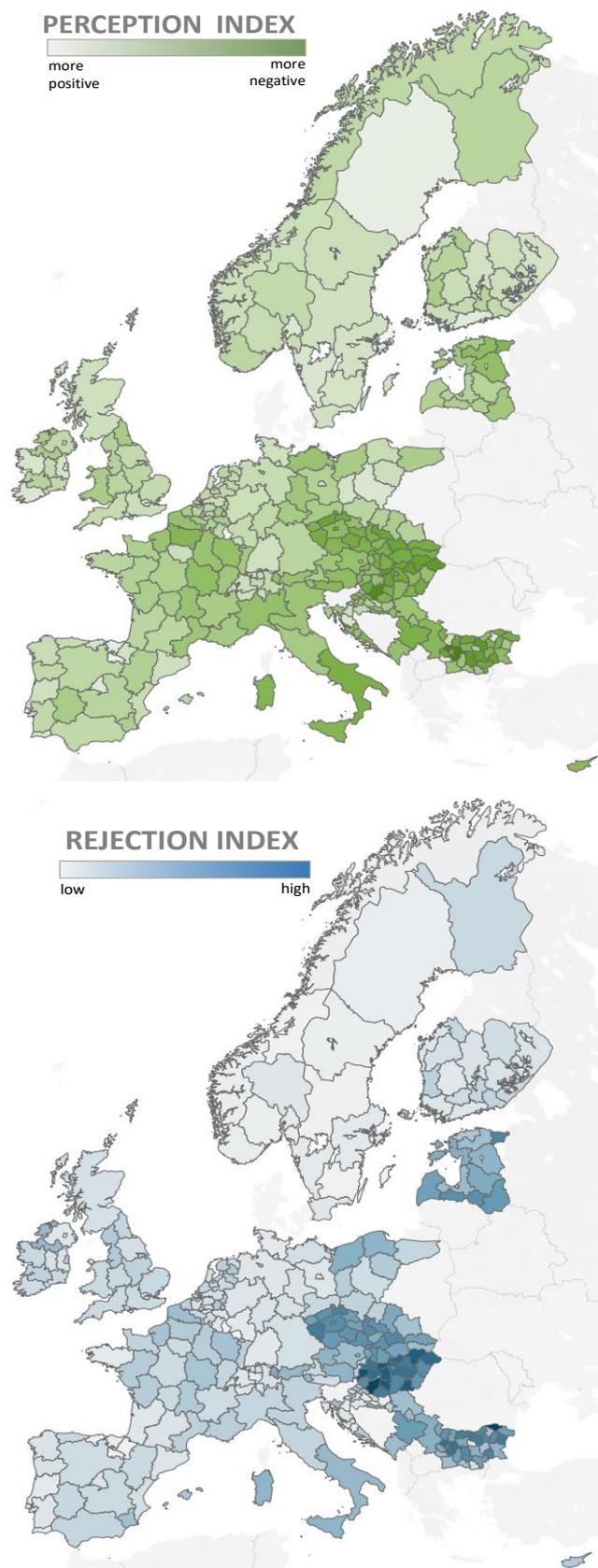
<sup>2</sup> [www.europeansocialsurvey.org](http://www.europeansocialsurvey.org)

Republic, Slovakia, Hungary and Bulgaria the PI is 40 or below).

Although the East–West divide is explicit, it also needs to be noted that **neither the West nor the East is homogeneous** in their evaluations of immigration and its consequences. Among Western European countries there is a handful in which only a negligible share of the population considers that no TCN immigrants should settle (Nordic countries, Portugal, Germany and Switzerland), and there are some in which a substantial minority (10–21 per cent of the population) thinks this way (Austria, Italy, France). Similarly, not all countries are equally hostile in Eastern Europe; there are significant differences within countries in the region: people in Hungary, Czech Republic and Slovakia are the most hostile, while the population of the northern countries (Poland, Lithuania), as well as the ex-Yugoslav countries (Croatia, Slovenia, Serbia and Montenegro), is significantly more open to immigrants, in general. This is a new and somewhat unexpected finding: based on the modern history of the Western Balkans, the long-term ethnic hostility and the generally lower level of trust and well-being that would tend to predict higher levels of anti-migrant hostility (see Messing and Ságvári, 2018), we expected more negative attitudes towards migration in this region. There are six countries that can be identified as in-betweeners in the continent: attitudes in Poland, Lithuania, Slovenia and Croatia, are significantly more positive towards immigrants than the average of post-communist countries, while people in Austria and Italy think more negatively of immigration and immigrants than people in Western Europe do in general.

Looking at the sub-national level, when focusing on **intra-country regional differences** the image becomes more blurred (Figure 2).

The East–West divide remains evident, but it is also true that attitudes towards immigrants in some countries are far from homogenous. **The greatest internal heterogeneity is measured in some of the countries with high levels of rejection:** in Bulgaria, for example, the RI



**Figure 2.** Rejection and Perception Indexes by regions, ESS R9 (2018/19)

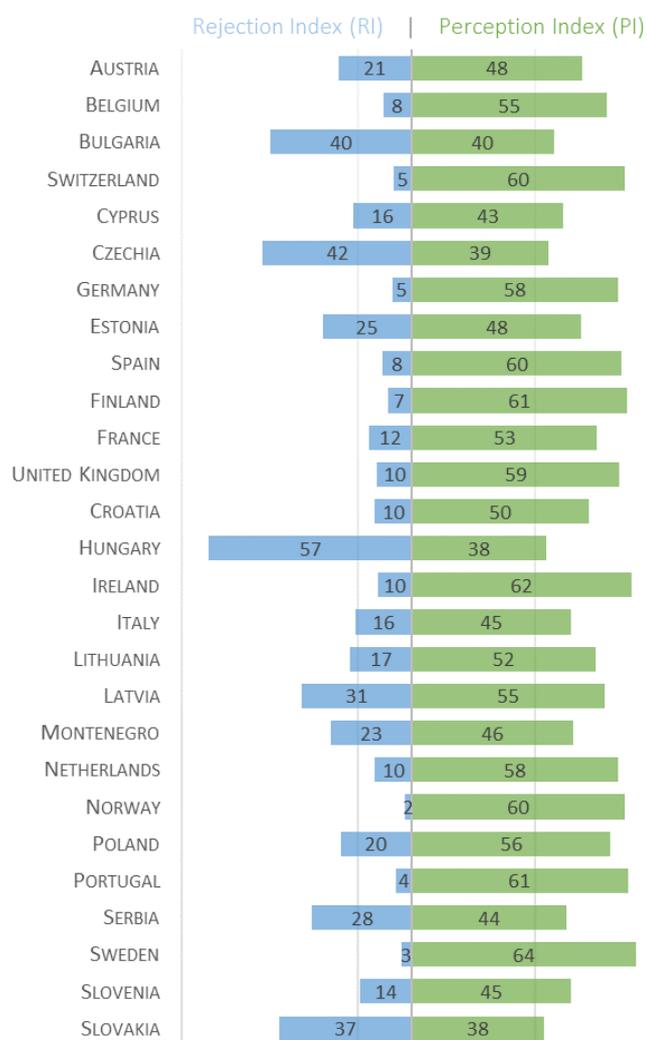
fluctuates between below 10 per cent (Gabovo) to over 90 per cent (Silista region). In Austria it varies between 8 per cent in Kärnten and Salzburg regions and 31 per cent in Vorarlberg. At the other end of the scale we find Switzerland, where rejection of immigrants is homogeneously minor in all cantons (between 2 and 7 per cent). Also in Germany, despite its large geographical area and the distinct social, economic and political histories of its *Länder*, attitudes about migration are fairly homogenous: with two exceptions (Bremen 13 per cent and Saxony 10 per cent) the Rejection Index remains below 10 per cent in all of its states. Finally the UK is worth highlighting in the wake of 'Brexit': there are some differences in how British people living in

various parts of the country think about immigrants, but they are not particularly large. The fact that the British living in northern regions are less tolerant towards immigrants (the Rejection Index in the North West is 16 per cent and in the North East 11 per cent) does not come as a surprise, while those in the South are less rejecting of migrants (RI of 7–9 per cent in the Southern regions).

Figure 3 show variations in the transformation of perceptions of the societal, economic and cultural consequences of immigration into rejection.

**While the cognitive element of attitudes (PI) fluctuates moderately between countries (between a minimum of 38 and a maximum of 64), its behavioural element (that is, rejection of immigrants) shows significant outliers, such as Hungary, the Czech Republic, Bulgaria and Slovakia. It is noteworthy that countries with similar levels on the Perception Index may have quite different levels of rejection.**

For example, Serbia, Italy and Slovenia have the same – slightly negative – perceptions of the consequences of immigration on their societies, economies and culture (PI=45). Still in Serbia the share of those rejecting immigrants is double that in Italy or in Slovenia. Another example of the same phenomenon are the cases of Belgium and Poland: people, on average, evaluate the consequences of migration slightly positively in both countries (PI=55) – in Poland, every fifth respondent would reject immigrants coming and settling, while in Belgium this share is only 8 per cent. A third example could be that of Hungary and Slovakia, where the perception of migrants is the most negative on the continent (PI=38) – their rejection is almost double in Hungary (RI=57) what it is in Slovakia, however (RI=37). The analysis confirms the finding of our previous study: *'We suspect that the strength of norms as set by political and public discourse is decisive in determining the degree to which negative attitudes are transformed into explicit rejection and exclusion.'* Also, while countries in the East have more negative perceptions about the economic, societal and cultural consequences of



**Figure 3.** Rejection and Perception Indexes by country, ESS R9 (2018/19)

migration, these tend to turn into upfront rejection more easily than in the long-standing democracies of Western Europe. This is probably due to a combination of factors: migration in Eastern Europe is minor and people have very little personal experience of immigrants and the consequences of migration for their country (Messing and SÁGVÁRI, 2018). The media coverage, which not only represents but also sets political and public discourse, can have considerable effects on public attitudes toward immigration and the perceived impact of immigration (Chauzy and Appave, 2014), too. Countries where somewhat negative perceptions of migration turn into a high level of rejection are usually those in which migration is high on the agenda of dominant political parties that are explicitly hostile to immigrants (that is, Hungary, Poland).

### 3.2 CHANGES IN ATTITUDES TOWARDS MIGRATION SINCE 2014

Our recent report analysing changes of attitudes between the periods before and after the 2015 migration 'crisis' highlighted an unexpected and significant change in attitudes. People in Europe (or more precisely, in the 19 countries under scrutiny) thought more positively about immigrants and the consequences of migration after 2015 than before the mass inflow of refugees. We are interested now in whether the significant changes observed were a one-time reaction to an extraordinary set of events (refugee crisis) or the start of a long-term trend.

The two charts in Figure 4 show the Rejection and Perception Indexes for 2014/(early)15 (before the migration crisis), 2016/17 and 2018/19.

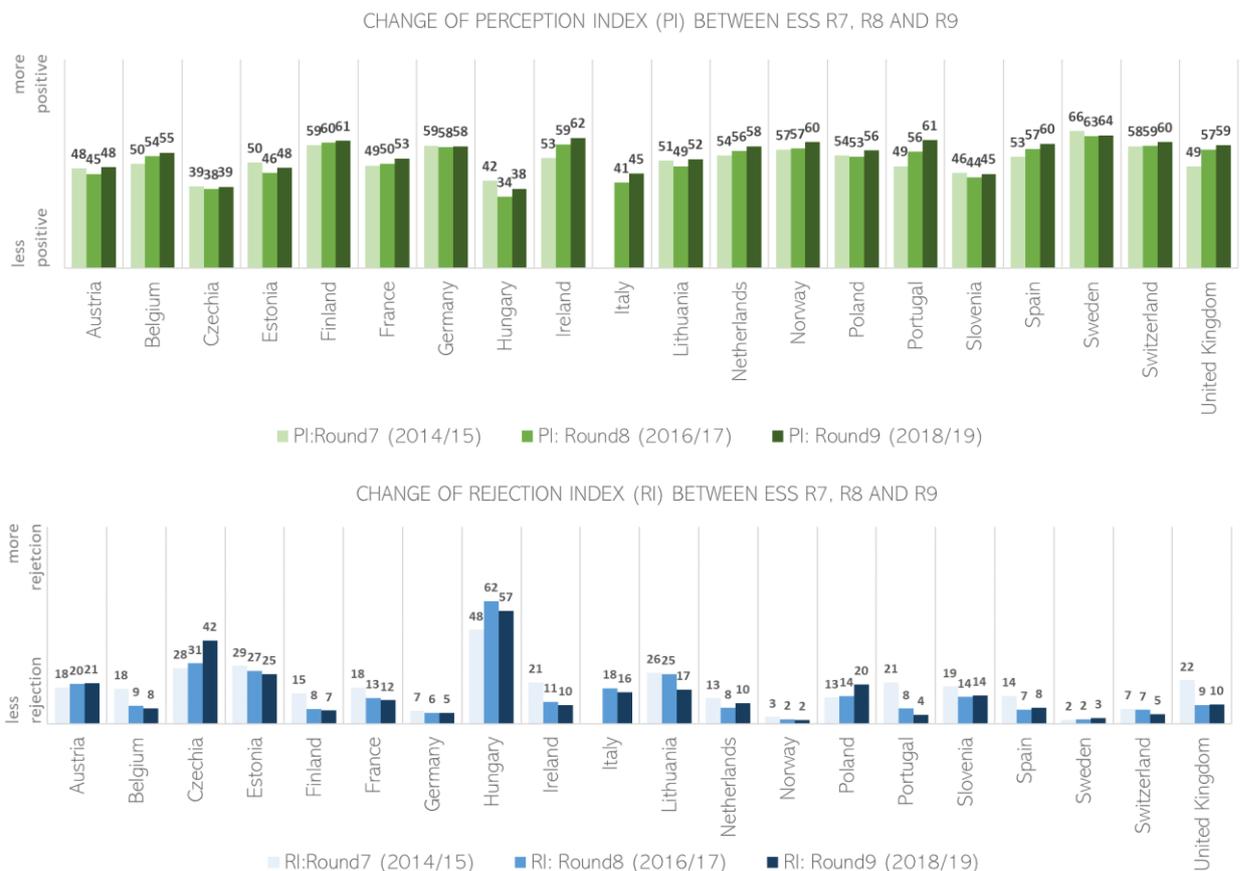


Figure 4. Change in Rejection and Perception Indexes by Country, ESS R7, R8, R9

The results show that **there are only two countries – the Czech Republic and Poland – in which people have become significantly more hostile to immigrants in the past two years**, since round 8 of the survey. Interestingly, rejection of immigrants increased without any shifts in the perception of the consequences of migration in these two countries. **There are two countries in which people became more open to immigrants: in Lithuania the rejection index dropped from 25 to 17. In Hungary, where by far the highest levels of rejection were registered in the past six years, a slight shift towards less hostility** (RI from 62 to 57) did not change the fact that Hungarians are still by far the most hostile towards immigrants in Europe; this can be interpreted as a consolidation of the extreme shift towards hostility.

*The trend we see in the Central-East European countries can be interpreted as some kind of convergence to higher levels of anti-immigrant hostility than in other parts of Europe.*

*Another noteworthy finding of the analysis of the changes since 2014 is a stabilization of more positive attitudes towards immigrants in most of Western Europe: in all countries where a significant change was registered between before and after 2015 (Portugal, Ireland, the UK, Finland, France, Spain and Belgium) attitudes have stabilized at the level of 2016/17. Thus, we may say that the change in public attitudes between before and after the migration crisis in 2015 was not haphazard but brought about by a stable change towards a more open, receptive environment for immigrants in these countries.*



Figure 5. Change in Rejection Indexes between ESS R8 and R9 by demography in selected countries

### 3.3 WHOSE ATTITUDES HAVE CHANGED

An obvious question that requires an answer is how we interpret the changes in attitudes. To answer, we need to look deeper into **which groups have changed their attitudes**. In the previous parts we showed that there are four countries in which significant changes in the rejection of immigrants were measured: in the Czech Republic and Poland there was a significant increase and in Hungary and Lithuania a significant, though not large decrease in hostile attitudes. Figure 5 describes the changes between R8 and R9 data by the socio-demographic groups and identifies who drivers of these changes are.

In the **Czech Republic**, where the **Rejection Index has risen by 11 per cent** on average since R8 in 2016/17, **all social groups (with the exception of the unemployed) have become more hostile to immigrants**. However, the increase in the rejection of immigrants was **driven primarily by the elderly, economically inactive and retired rural population**. It is easier to say which groups added less to the increase in anti-migrant attitudes: young people and those living in metropolitan areas. Income, however, does not seem to make a big difference: both the upper two income quintiles, as well as those who reported having great difficulties coping on a daily basis and those living comfortably are among those whose attitudes changed a lot (an increase in the Rejection Index of over 14 per cent).

**Poland** is an interesting case: in the mapping of attitudes towards immigrants on the continent since 2002, it was an outlier in the general East–West regional divide. As we found in the analysis based on 8 rounds of the ESS it is positioned in the country group *'in which attitudes towards migrants have been moderate, and have slightly fluctuated over the past 15 years. This group includes such traditional destination countries as*

*Germany, Spain, the Netherlands, Belgium or France,<sup>3</sup> as well as Slovenia, Poland and Finland'* (Messing and Ságvári, 2019). The share of those who rejected third country national immigrants coming to Poland was below 10 per cent until 2012 and reached 13 and 14 per cent in 2014 and in 2016, respectively. Anti-immigrant feelings further **increased by 6 percentage points from 2016 to 2018**, reaching 20 per cent. Data show that this **increase was** not driven by any specific social group, but **distributed fairly equally across the population**, including high and low income earners, young people and retirees. At the same time, middle aged people who are economically active, and those with tertiary education, underwent sharp changes in attitudes to a lesser extent.

In **Hungary**, anti-immigrant attitudes are the most explicit and widespread in Europe and remain so after **a slight decrease** (a 5 percentage point decrease in the RI) **since 2016**. As stated in our 2019 analysis *'Hungary is [in] a category of its own: its already high rejection rates have rocketed since 2014. [...] it is even more hostile to migrants than non-EU countries such as Russia, Ukraine, Turkey or Israel...'* This was still the case in 2019 despite the slight moderation of anti-immigrant attitudes. Although the decrease in anti-immigrant hostility was measured in most social groups, **it can clearly be linked to** specific socio-economic groups: **middle aged and young people with relatively high incomes**, living in the capital, who are economically active and relatively well educated.

In **Lithuania**, attitudes towards immigrants have become more favourable, with an **8 per cent increase** in the share of people who would accept the arrival and settlement of TCN migrants. The increase in acceptance is found in **all social groups, but** the main drivers of the change seem to be the middle and older cohort (50–69 years of age), urban people with

<sup>3</sup> In these countries the share of migrants is also moderate, with the highest in Germany (12.5 per cent) and lowest in France (5.7 per cent), Spain (9 per cent), Belgium (11 per cent), Slovenia (8 per cent), Germany (12.5 per cent), Finland (6.5 per cent), France (5.7 per cent) and the Netherlands (11 per cent).

medium and high incomes, and those who are in employment. The change is less prominent among rural people, the young and people with lower than average incomes.

And finally, the case of **Portugal** needs to be mentioned separately. In Portugal, on average, there was a **modest increase in acceptance of immigrants (by 4 per cent)** between 2016/17 and 2018/19. This is noteworthy because Portugal is among the countries with the lowest levels of anti-migrant hostility, and this further increase in tolerance has put Portugal among the most tolerant countries in Europe. A 4 per cent decrease in RI represents a continuation of a very explicit trend of rising tolerance. Portugal was formerly among the countries whose populations were not particularly open to immigrants; until 2012 over a quarter of the population rejected third country national immigrants; the RI in 2012 was 37 at its highest. Since then, however, there has been a sharp trend of increasing openness to immigrants, with the RI falling to 21 in 2014/15, 8 in 2016/17 and 4 in 2018/19. Looking at the social groups that acted as **drivers** of more open attitudes we see that they **are older than average, are more likely to have financial difficulties, are not in employment (are unemployed and retired) and live in rural areas.**

In the five countries where perceptible changes in attitudes have occurred in the past two years quite different patterns were identified concerning the social groups that act as drivers of change. In the Czech Republic and Poland, where attitudes have become more hostile, the change in the former was driven by the elderly, rural and economically inactive population, while in the latter, no social groups could be identified as one whose attitudes changed significantly more than others'. Among the three countries in which a decrease in rejection occurred, patterns are very different again: in Lithuania no specific groups could be pinpointed as drivers of change. In Hungary it is the educated, financially well

situated, urban youth and middle aged, while in Portugal it is just the opposite, the most vulnerable population.

### 3.4 HOW ARE ATTITUDES TOWARDS MIGRATION LINKED TO PARTY PREFERENCES?

In our original 2019 report we dealt with how the rising right-wing populism in Europe is connected to attitudes towards migration. We established that *'in each country, supporters of centre-left parties evaluate migration more positively, while supporters of populist right-wing parties hold very negative views'*. Figure 6 shows how support for political parties and anti-immigrant attitudes were connected in nine countries (Austria, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Italy, Hungary, Germany and Poland, Sweden and the United Kingdom) in 2018/19 (Messing and Ságvári, 2019: 32). Political parties are located in a space created by the Perception Index (vertical axis) and the Rejection Index (horizontal axis) in Figure 6.<sup>4</sup> The higher a party is placed, the more its supporters reject immigrants, and the more they are situated to the right of the chart, the more negatively they perceive the consequences of migration on their country's economy, culture and society. We selected the nine countries plotted on the chart because they best represent the different patterns of correlation of political preferences and anti-immigrant attitudes.

The first important observation we can make is that **in the old member states of the EU rejection of immigrants, even by supporters of right-wing populist parties, is far smaller** (15 per cent for Sverigedemokraterna, 25 per cent for AFD in Germany, 27 per cent for Lega Nord in Italy, 40 per cent for UKIP, and 45 per cent for FPÖ in Austria) **than in Eastern European countries** (70 per cent of Jobbik in

<sup>4</sup> Only political parties with at least 30 supporters in the ESS data are shown in the chart.



Figure 6. Average Perception and Rejection Index values of party supporters in selected countries

Hungary and for the governing FIDESZ party, and over 60 per cent for the Svoboda party in the Czech Republic). Another important finding based on the chart is that although in all countries supporters of right-wing populist parties express more negative attitudes towards immigrants than others, still there **are significant differences in the relationship between support for political parties and attitudes**. In Germany, it is the right-wing populist party (AFD) that gathers people that express anti-immigrant hostility, while respondents supporting other political parties are, on average, positive about immigrants. In Austria and Italy a similar pattern can be seen, with the difference that supporters of non-populist parties

are somewhat more critical about migration than in Germany. By contrast, in Hungary and the Czech Republic party preference makes much less difference with regard to levels of anti-immigrant attitudes. Although in these countries supporters of right-wing populist parties have the most negative attitudes towards immigrant, supporters of other parties are not that different in this respect. Rejection of immigrants is as high as 40–50 per cent even among supporters of left-wing parties, such as the Hungarian Socialist Party, the Democratic Coalition in Hungary or ANO and CCSO in the Czech Republic. Thus, we may establish that anti-immigrant attitudes are not only widespread in Hungary and the Czech

Republic but seem to form a political consensus stretching from the extreme right to the left. Poland is a different case in its generally more positive attitudes towards immigrants, but the weak relationship between party preference and attitudes towards migrants holds here, too.

## 4 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The data show a **very explicit East–West divide in the continent in term of attitudes towards immigrants and immigration**. New EU member states with a communist heritage and a low share of immigrants are more hostile to immigrants than old EU member states with a longer tradition of immigrant integration.

**Neither ‘East’ nor ‘West’ are homogeneous in the evaluation of immigration and its consequences.** Among Western European countries there are some in which only a negligible share of the population nurtures anti-immigrant attitudes (Nordic countries, Germany, Switzerland) and some in which a substantial minority of the population that rejects immigrants (Austria, Italy and France). Similarly, not all countries in the East are similarly negative: the most hostile attitudes are displayed by Hungarians, Slovaks, Bulgarians and Czechs, while people in Poland, Baltic states and the Balkans are less hostile.

**In Eastern Europe we see a trend towards a convergence of attitudes.** In Poland, where people were rather tolerant towards immigrants, as well as in the Czech Republic, attitudes have become **more hostile**, while **in the most hostile countries (such as Hungary and Lithuania) attitudes have consolidated** at a high level of intolerance.

Another noteworthy finding of the analysis of the changes since 2014 **is a stabilization of more positive attitudes towards immigrants in most of Western Europe**: in all countries in which a significant change was registered

between before and after the migration crisis of 2015 (Portugal, Ireland, the UK, Finland, France, Spain and Belgium) attitudes have stabilized at the level of 2016/17. Thus, we may say that the turn in public attitudes between the periods before and after the migration crisis in 2015 were not haphazard but brought about a stable change towards a rather open and receptive environment for immigrants in Western Europe.

**In the two years between 2016/17 and 2018/19 we see a further distancing of the East of the continent from the old member states**: more positive attitudes in the western part of the continent have remained unchanged or become even more positive, while in Eastern Europe they have deteriorated significantly in some countries (Czech Republic, Poland) and remained unchanged or changed slightly towards less hostility (Hungary, Lithuania, Estonia, Slovenia).

The inclusion of new countries in the ESS from the **Western Balkans region shows unexpected results**: this region, which struggles with a history of ethnic hostility and division, as well as being a major route of East–West migration and thus is threatened by the arrival of large numbers of immigrants, is actually **much less hostile towards immigrants than most Central East European countries**.

The analysis of attitudes at a sub-national level tells us that some countries are far from homogenous in terms of their populations’ attitudes towards immigrants. **In some countries, such as Bulgaria, Austria or Italy, there are very large regional differences in how people evaluate migration.** At the other end of the scale we find countries where attitudes are homogeneously tolerant despite their large size and/or cultural diversity (Germany and Switzerland).

People in Germany and Sweden are among those who are most tolerant towards immigrants in Europe, despite the disproportionate burden their countries bore during the 2015–16 migration

crisis and widespread disputes about the management of the crisis. Still, we see that **in Germany and Sweden acceptance of immigrants has remained widespread across most regions and social groups; the salience of anti-immigrant attitudes is brought about by right-wing populist parties** such as the AFD and Sweden Democrats rather **than widespread hostility.**

**The UK** is also worth highlighting in the wake of Brexit: **perceptions of the consequences of immigration have become more positive in the past six years** (rising from 49 to 59 per cent), while the rejection of immigrants fell from 22 per cent to 10 per cent between 2014/15 and 2018/19. There are some differences in how British people living in various parts of the UK think about immigrants, but those are not particularly large.

The present analysis confirmed the finding of our previous study: while the cognitive element of attitudes (perception of migrants) fluctuates moderately between countries, **its behavioural element (rejection of migrants) shows significant outliers, such as Hungary, the Czech Republic, Bulgaria and Slovakia.** It is noteworthy that countries with similar levels on the Perception Index may have quite different levels of rejection. We think that **the strength of norms as established by the political elite and public discourse have a determining role in the degree to which negative attitudes are transformed into outright rejection of immigrants.**

Analysing the socio-demographic composition of those countries in which significant changes in attitudes were measured, we found that there is **no uniform pattern with respect to the drivers of change. Country-specific social, historical and political environment is crucial in terms of which groups drive attitudinal changes.**

Analysing the relationship between party preferences, political populism and anti-

immigrant attitudes two important observations were made.

**In the old member states of the EU rejection of immigrants even by supporters of right-wing populist parties is generally smaller than among supporters of left-wing parties in Eastern European countries.**

Although in all countries supporters of right-wing populist parties express more negative attitudes towards immigrants than others in Germany, Austria and Italy, it is these parties that attract people with strong anti-immigrant sentiments, while **in Hungary and in the Czech Republic anti-immigrant attitudes are not exclusive to supporters of right-wing populist parties, but are widespread among supporters of left-wing parties, too.**

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Acknowledgements: the authors of this report would like to express their gratitude to colleagues at the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, Budapest, especially to Csilla Malomvölgyi and Zsolt Bogár for their invaluable support throughout this project.

## 7 IMPRINT

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Publisher: Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung Regional project 'Flight, Migration, Integration in Europe'

H-1056 Budapest, Fővám tér 2–3, Hungary

Tel.: +36-1-461-60-11

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ISBN: 978-615-81517-7-1

