



Learning from the Past to Face Future Challenges on Integration

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Basic principle: not going with the flow



- Latvia does not have a migration policy (to be established in 2012)
- Integration policy established in October 2011
- We should learn from other European countries, but we also have our own experience with the integration of people who migrated to Latvia during the Soviet times
- Trade offs between a more liberal approach to migration or half-empty country with a national park surrounding a few cities, with either very high taxes or weak provision of public services (like roads) as there are not enough people to support the system
- Competition for human resources with other EU countries, and beyond

Migrant integration policy index (MIPEX)

Rank	Country	Change since	
		MIPEX III*	MIPEX II**
1	Sweden	83	▼ (-1)
2	Portugal	79	▲ (+5)
3	Canada	72	▲ (+1)
4	Finland	69	■ (0)
5	Netherlands	68	■ (0)
6	Belgium	67	▲ (+4)
7	Norway	66	▼ (-1)
8	Spain	63	▲ (+3)
9	USA	62	■ (0)
10	Italy	60	▼ (-1)
11	Luxembourg	59	▲ (+8)
12	Germany	57	▲ (+1)
	United Kingdom	57	▼ (-10)
14	Denmark	53	▲ (+2)
	EU Average	52	■ (0)
15	France	51	■ (0)
16	Greece	49	▲ (+10)
	Ireland	49	▲ (+1)
18	Slovenia	48	■ (0)
19	Czech Republic	46	▲ (+4)
	Estonia	46	▲ (+2)
21	Hungary	45	▲ (+3)
	Romania	45	■ (0)
23	Switzerland	43	■ (0)
24	Austria	42	▲ (+3)
	Poland	42	▲ (+1)
26	Bulgaria	41	■ (0)
27	Lithuania	40	▲ (+1)
28	Malta	37	■ (0)
29	Slovakia	36	■ (0)
30	Cyprus	35	■ (0)
31	Latvia	31	▲ (+3)



- Comparing the legislation of 31 European and North American countries, Latvia's situation was evaluated as the least favourable for migrants and their children (2011 study, data for May 2010)

- Latvia has projects, but no coherent strategy on migrant integration

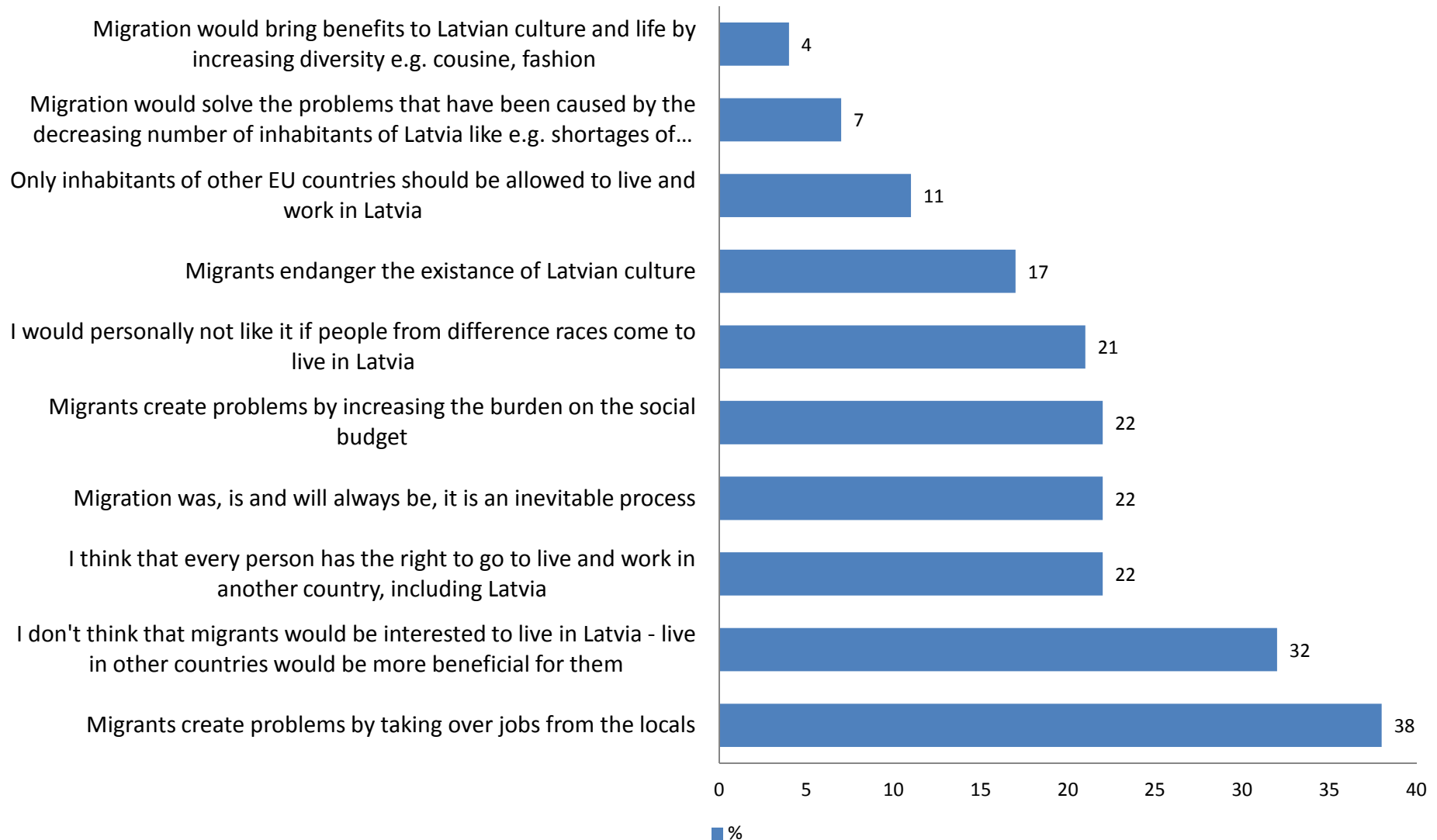
- Catching up, but not enough: still last of all 31 countries (keeping the worst record as in the 2007 study)

Public opinion



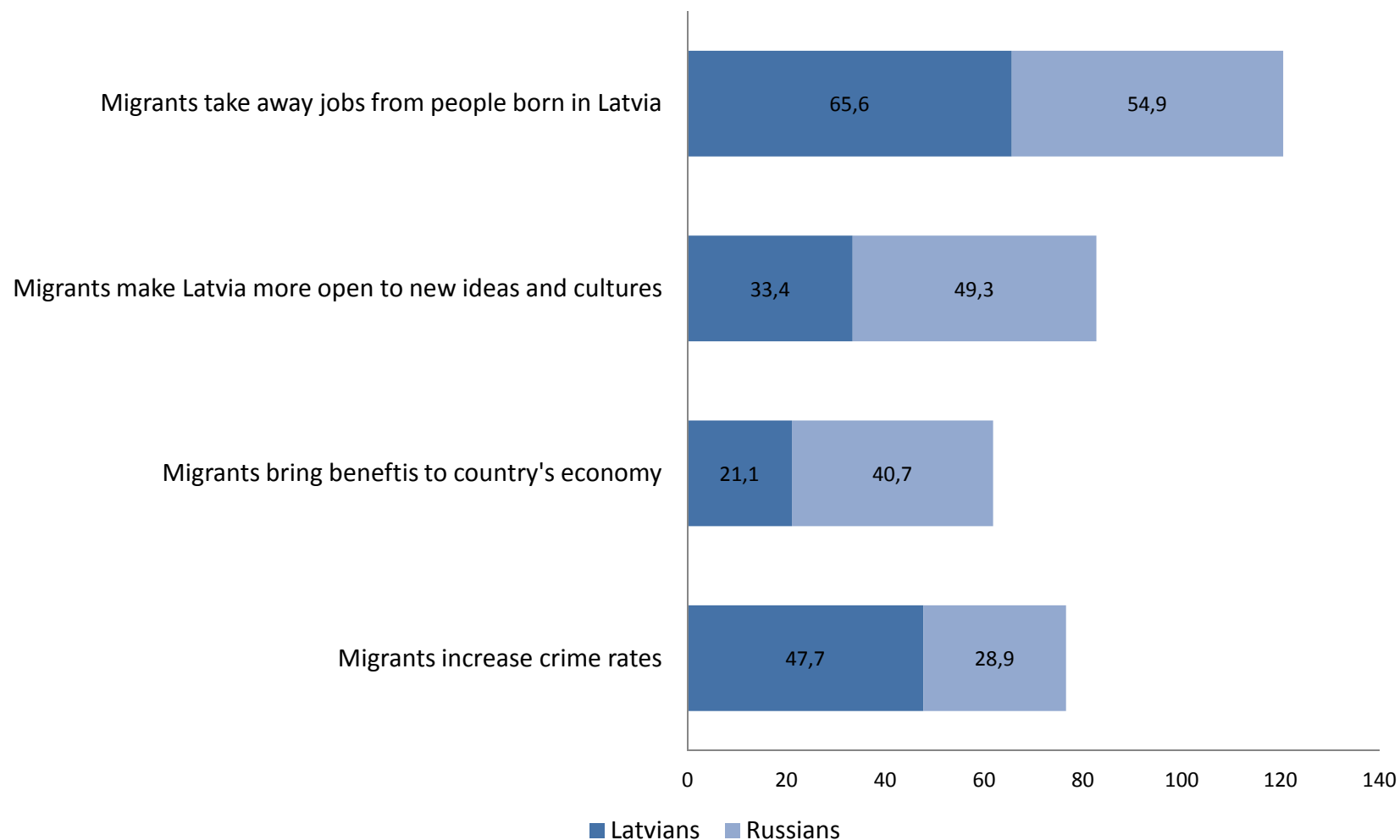
- Latvians behave as the “endangered majority”: everyone should live where they were born
- 18% Latvians think that citizenship should not be granted to people who want to keep their traditions and culture, 7% Russians agree. 36% Latvians think that citizenship should not be granted to migrants, 15% Russians agree. (2010 survey, LU)
- Cultural and linguistic assimilation?!
- 70% do not support state budget expenditure on immigrant integration, thus the main funding source remains the European Fund for the Integration of Third Country Nationals (75% EU funding, 25% national co-funding; activities since 2009 are sporadic due to institutional changes)
- Since 2009 the institutional responsibility for migrant integration policy has changed 4 times!

What is your attitude towards the willingness of people from other countries to come to work and live in Latvia?



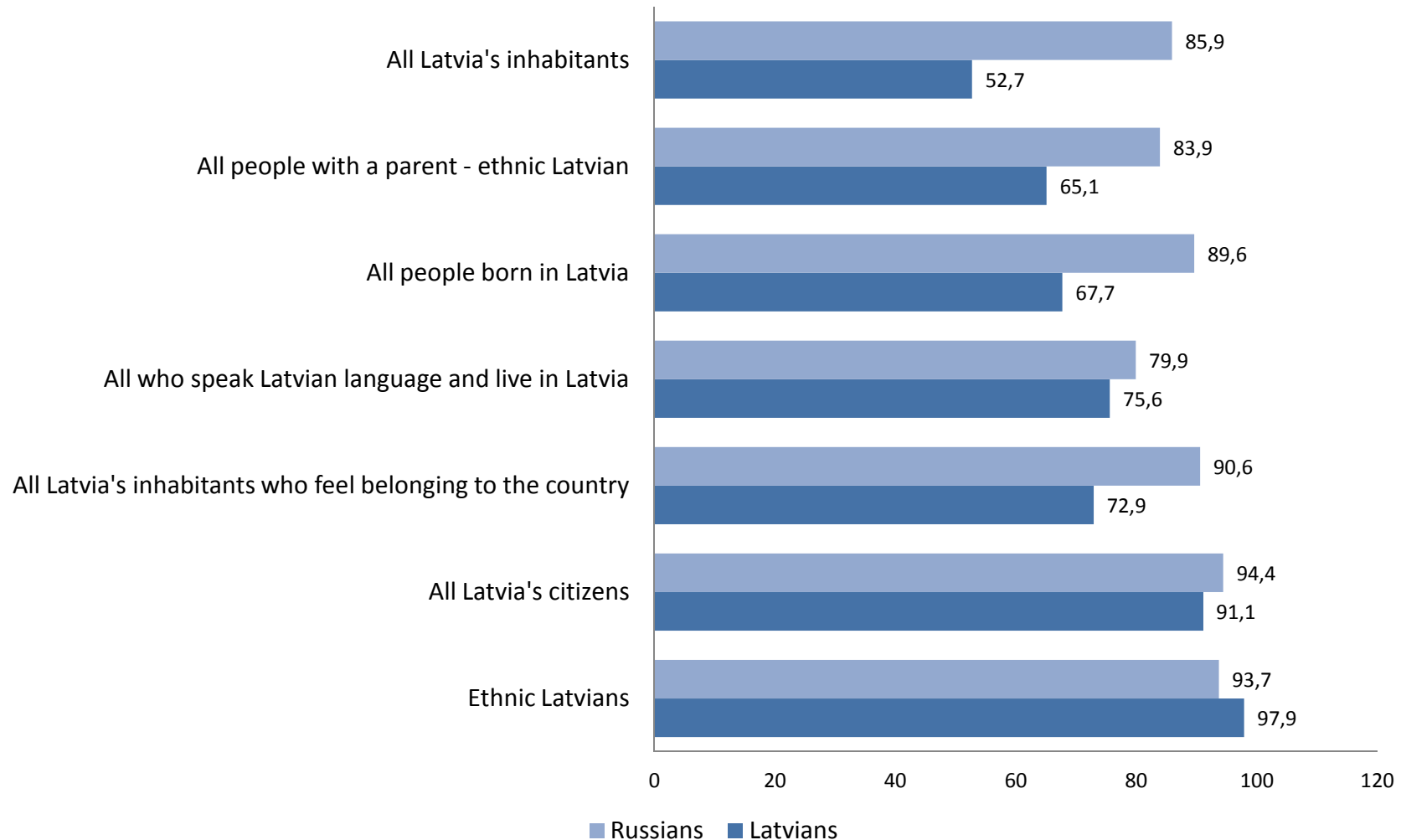
Source: DnB Nord Latvijas barometrs, survey conducted on February 2011, N= 1005 Latvia's inhabitants, respondents could agree to multiple statements

Attitudes towards migrants' impact on social and economic processes



Source: NI: *Dimensijas. Vēsturiskā atmiņa*. LU SZF. Survey conducted in 2010, N= 1004 Latvia's inhabitants, % of respondents according to ethnic origin (identification), "absolutely agree" and "rather agree" answers were summed up. Quoted in: *Human Development report of Latvia 2010/2011*

What constitutes Latvian people (*Latvijas tauta*)?



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Citizens' Consultation on Integration



- Citizens' Consultation on Integration in Riga on 25-26 February 2012, gathered 42 people who were invited via random selection – citizens and non-citizens, people from different regions, age groups, professional backgrounds and different ethnicities reflecting the diversity of Latvia.
- The objective was to achieve a compromise among the participants on the needed improvements to enhance the creation of an inclusive society – concrete ideas drafted by the participants with the help of professional facilitators, with the involvement of decision-makers and experts.
- Consequences of Soviet migration policy – if we don't learn from the experience of the past with the integration of the so-called Russian speaking population, we won't be able to establish a pragmatic immigrant integration policy in the future

Ideal inclusive society



- No hatred between people of different nationalities; no division of people according to the ethnic origin,
- All inhabitants are citizens, no division in citizens and non-citizens,
- The state is listening to all members of the community,
- A common identity and common cultural events,
- Equality, fairness, less chauvinism,
- We have learnt from the past and move on, not being stuck in history,
- Belief in joint strength, ability to agree on a common future; goals and ideas have one direction independently of the ethnic origin of the people,
- A tolerant and emphatic society - people help each other,
- Understanding between people, the language of communication is not the primary concern,
- Less differences of opinions and prejudices, more respect and trust,
- A society that understands that all people have the same needs – economic and social security, welfare,
- A more cheerful society,
- A Latvian Latvia, with traditional culture and art flourishing .

Obstacles to achieve ideal inclusive community



- Cultural divisions – we live in parallel communities,
- Divided media space that does not provide opportunities to get to know other groups; manipulative media who divide the society, the lack of bilingual media,
- Historic heritage and its impact, being stuck in the past; society is being purposefully incited and divided using history,
- Using the ‘national issue’ to compete in politics,
- Language barrier and inability to appreciate the benefits of knowing several languages,
- Latvian language is not the main language in kindergartens so children don’t learn it from early childhood,
- Division of people in “our people” („savējais”) and “foreign” („svešais”); the incorrect setting that there is a “titular nation” („pamatnācija”) and the rest; unequal attitude towards people (non-citizens, ethnic backgrounds),
- Lack of self-respect about Latvia, lack of feeling of belonging,
- Lack of respect, unity, pragmatism and sympathy, lack of forgiveness; too much arrogance,
- Economic situation, poverty, low level of education,
- Inability to identify oneself – other ethnic nationalities are not represented in the government; non-citizens can not take part in decision making,
- No motivation to naturalize,
- Lack of individual responsibility – people don’t think that they can make a difference.

Lessons learnt



- No to isolated communities
- Cooperation instead of parallel communities
- No melting pots or 2 salad bowls
- Support for learning local language while also keeping the knowledge of mother tongue
- Opportunities to participate in decision making. No taxation without representation!
- Support to access public services and institutions (migrants don't know the local situation!)
- More open citizenship policies – newly born, high school graduates, dual citizenship
- Respect and support
- Practicing that all people living in a country are shaping this community
- Equal rights and responsibilities – paying taxes, observing legislation, participating in decision making!
- Recognition of the impact of every step that we take on other individuals, groups, the society as a whole
- Individual welfare and the welfare of the community is interlinked
- Brain drain or brain gain – how can you put a stamp on a migrant saying he's 'lost' as a human resource to the motherland?

Putting things into a wider perspective



- Motivation for migration is the human right to live better,
- Most people would want to live in the country where they were born - family ties, language, traditions, willingness to contribute to the development of the country,
- If migration is a personal strategy to live better than currently possible in the motherland of the migrant, then do we want to be a community to forbid that? Building fortress Europe and witnessing the death of irregular migrants in their attempt to reach the EU?
- Do we want to be a community that believes that some people belong to the privileged (EU citizens) who can choose their place of residence and pursue their personal goals, while others – those who were not lucky enough to be born in the Western world – should not be entitled to these opportunities?
- The role of the EU to help the third countries to develop so that migrants don't need to move to the EU
- EU's development cooperation policy should not be a way to “throw money at the problem” – making donations to stop migration flows, especially when funding provided to developing countries is linked to a requirement to purchase European products (machines),
- EU's responsibility about the impact of EU's policies on the third countries, when subsidizing European farmers and not letting agricultural products from the third countries in European market on fair conditions (high agricultural levies to protect the market), thus not allowing the third country to develop!