

## Welcome culture between skepticism and pragmatism – Germany after the refugee crisis”

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### Executive Summary: Ten key results at a glance

In April 2019, Bertelsmann Stiftung conducted a survey of the German public on issues pertaining to immigration and refugees. The results were published in September. The following outlines 10 key findings emerging from this research.

1. Skepticism about migration is declining slightly compared to 2017, but the numbers remain higher than in surveys before the migration crisis in 2012 and 2015. The negative effects of immigration continue to be perceived as strong, but with a downward trend compared to 2017: 71 percent say it is a burden on the welfare state, 69 percent say it leads to conflict between immigrants and locals, 64 percent mention problems in schools and 60 percent point out housing shortages in agglomerations. Positive effects of immigration are perceived less strongly, but with an increasingly positive trend compared to 2017: currently 67 percent think that life will become more interesting, 64 percent see less over-aging, 63 percent consider the settlement of foreign companies as advantageous, 47 percent say immigration is necessary to compensate for the lack of skilled workers and 41 percent see additional income for pension insurance system as beneficial.
2. A narrow majority (52 percent) say that there is too much immigration in Germany, despite all skepticism almost two thirds (65 percent) take the pragmatic approach that immigration has a positive effect on the economy.
3. The perceived welcome culture is "robust" and in most cases stable at a high level. The majority of immigrants who work or study in Germany continues to be welcomed by the authorities (79 percent compared to 77 percent in 2017) and the local population (71 percent compared to 70 percent in 2017). Refugees are also perceived in such a way that the majority of them are still welcome by the authorities (71 percent compared to 73 percent in 2017) and the local population (56 percent compared to 59 percent in 2017).
4. The willingness to receive refugees, which had declined significantly during the refugee crisis, is increasing slightly again, but is not reaching the same positive numbers as before. 49 percent are of the opinion that Germany cannot accept any more refugees, because it has reached its limits (compared to 54 percent in 2017 and 40 percent in 2015). 37 percent believe that Germany can accept more refugees (compared to 37 percent in 2017 and 51 percent in 2015).
5. According to 41 percent of those surveyed, although this is not the majority, believe that immigration is necessary to deal with the shortage of skilled workers. In contrast to previous year, more and more people consider immigration the most preferred solution for the shortage of skilled workers (in comparison to longer working hours or an increase in the employment rate of women).

6. The dominant understanding of integration among the population focuses on both immigrants and the host society. On the one hand, immigrants are expected to perform and integrate well; on the other hand, the introduction of supporting measures by the host society to improve the participation of immigrants are also seen as important. As in previous years, the majority of respondents are in favour of making Germany more attractive for foreign skilled workers. However, there is a growing understanding that in some areas, especially in the search for housing, legal regulations are necessary to counteract the disadvantages faced by certain population groups.
7. Similarly to 2011 and 2017, major challenges to integration are seen by most respondents to be in the field of language (91 percent compared to 91 percent in 2017 and 93 percent in 2011), but also in education (60 percent compared to 66 and 64 percent), equal opportunities (63 percent compared to 65 and 62 percent) and discrimination (58 percent compared to 59 and 56 percent). A majority of respondents also believe that the connection to the country of origin is not conducive to integration, although the trend is going down (53 per cent compared to 59 per cent in 2017 and 57 per cent).
8. Differences in responses are mainly related to the region of respondents (East-West contrast), age and education. Migration skepticism is higher in the East than in the West. The younger the interviewees and the higher their educational accomplishments, the more open they are to immigration and immigrants. The gender and migration background of the interviewees had little or no effect on their responds.
9. The welcome culture in Germany is young. The young generation under the age of 30 differs significantly from the older age groups in their assessments and perceptions of migration and integration. This is also due to the fact that the proportion of people with a migration background is around 30 percent among 15- to 30-year-olds, while it is around 20 percent among older people. As a result, contact with and dealing with diversity is much more common among younger people.
10. A comparison of selected attitudes between the populations in Canada and Germany reveal substantial differences of 10 to 20 percentage points. Canadians have a much more positive view of immigration and immigrants. However, the attitudes of the younger generation under 30 in Germany are approaching the Canadian level.