

In recent years, the integration of third-country workers into the Hungarian labour market has become a key issue. There are many reasons for this, including labour shortages, demographic challenges such as an ageing population, and even the need to optimise labour costs. However, integration faces a number of barriers, for example in terms of difficulties in overcoming cultural and social differences. This can make it more difficult for workers to integrate and can give rise to hostility and fear (xenophobic attitudes) in certain sections of society.

The aim of the research is to provide a comprehensive picture of the challenges faced by third-country workers on the basis of national and international literature, and to assess the labour market situation in order to identify the need for labour import and the effectiveness of the integration process. The objectives include investigating the potential impact of xenophobia on the labour market and organisational culture (1), and exploring how organisations promoting cooperation between third-country workers and Hungarian employers assess the importance of labour importation and the effectiveness and feasibility of integration (2).

To achieve the objectives, I conducted quantitative and qualitative primary research. On the one hand, I used a questionnaire survey to explore respondents' views on how they perceive the current labour market situation, and statements, prejudices and integration experiences were included in the questionnaire to measure the level of xenophobia, in addition to demographic questions. In my data analysis, I used both descriptive statistical methods and hypothesis testing (univariate and multivariate methods). In addition, I conducted expert interviews with HR professionals working in the tertiary sector to get a comprehensive picture of the challenges of integration and their experiences of implementation in practice.

I find that the level of xenophobia has a significant impact on the perception and integration of third-country workers. Analyses conducted to explain xenophobic attitudes have revealed that the source of heterogeneity in attitude levels cannot be linked to demographic characteristics and labour market status alone. Interviewed professionals emphasise that the local labour force cannot fully meet the needs of employers, but that integration is challenging, especially due to cultural and linguistic differences, and that targeted education and integration programmes are needed.