

ARE THE RUSSIANS COMING? STATISTICAL EVIDENCE FROM THE CZECH REPUBLIC: POPULATION AND DEMOGRAPHICS

The Russian and Russian-speaking population in the Czech Republic constitutes a small, relatively recent, and still evolving community. It is composed of migrants from Russia and other former Soviet republics. The influx of Russian settlers to the Czech Republic has never been massive, neither in the post-Soviet decades nor, even less so, now, as the European Union enforces strict anti-Russian sanctions. In recent years, the Russian-speaking population of the Czech Republic has grown primarily through an influx of citizens from other post-Soviet countries. Although the Czech Republic seeks to attract young, highly skilled professionals in the hope of securing a reliable tax base, it remains reluctant to grant them full civil rights. Nevertheless, driven by strong motivation, solid educational and professional credentials, and an aptitude for navigating cultural and linguistic differences, Russians in the country often enjoy a higher economic and social standing than other migrant groups, and in some metrics, even outpace the local population. Despite their relatively small total number — officially estimated at tens of thousands in the Czech Republic (though our own estimates suggest around 100,000) — the Russian and Russian-speaking minority is dispersed across all major and mid-sized urban areas. This makes it impossible to gain an accurate understanding of this group based solely on interviews and selective surveys. The Czech Republic stands out from many European countries with its meticulous state statistics. The analysis of these statistics makes it possible not only to estimate the actual population size, but also to determine educational levels, the extent of involvement in productive labor, and to understand the ethnocultural, linguistic, and civic orientations of this demographic group. Within the Czech Republic itself, the issue of the Russian presence remains understudied. An analysis of the results of the recent national census conducted in the country confirms that the demographic and human capital losses suffered by Russia in the first post-Soviet decades should serve as a warning and a safeguard against repeating past mistakes in refining domestic policies to support human potential.

Keywords: Russians in the Czech Republic, population censuses, ethnocultural identity, linguistic identity, migration, demography, social structure

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