



## **Slovakia should stop seeing migration as a problem**

### **Abstract:**

*The respondent of this short interview is immigrant from non-EU country living in Slovakia and practicing medicine for more than 6 years. In the interview he talks about his migrant experience and shares his opinion on residence permits procedure, blue cards, labor and business. He preferred to stay anonymous; therefore his true name and country of origin is not disclosed.*

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### **Hi David, please tell us something about yourself.**

Hello, I am an immigrant from a third country. I live here for more than 6 years already. I am doctor and have my own practice here.

### **What languages do you speak? Who are you patients – Slovaks or foreign nationals?**

I speak English and Slovak, so I have Slovak and also foreign patients.

### **Tell us something about your ambulance and practice here in Slovakia.**

I have my own practice in Slovakia, for 3 years already. I finished my master degree (six years of study) in my home country in 2005 and in 2007 came to Slovakia for a postgraduate studies. My patients are mainly Slovaks (I speak the language), but I have also many foreigners because I can speak English. That is something that many foreigners are looking for.

### **Do you like your work? How would you describe the working conditions here?**

I love my work; I wanted to be a doctor since childhood. One of the main reasons why I want to stay in Slovakia is because here I have enough work. In my home country there is an oversupply of doctors.

### **What was your experience when you were applying for residence permit?**

I was deciding whether to apply for the business temporary residence permit or residence permit for the purposes of labour. Then I decided for labour, because according to the new

legislation, the foreigner business person must pay taxes which are far above normal taxes that a Slovak or a citizen of the EU pays. You have to prove that you have earned certain amount of money every year and I was afraid that I could lose my residence because I would not be able to prove that amount of money. So I decided for employment. But, it's hard to believe that being a qualified professional, and very needed in this country, an immigrant has to go through many difficulties.

### **What do you think about so called “blue cards for qualified immigrants”?**

Blue cards for qualified immigrants are utopia. The foreigner who wants to apply for a blue card in Slovakia must be earning at least the double comparing to the Slovak nationals for that qualified position. This is impossible and the system is working against the interests of Slovakia. This country really needs qualified people in many areas, and medicine is one of them.

### **What do you mean by “difficulties faced by immigrants”?**

I find of extreme necessity to change the conditions of the processing of residence permits in Slovakia. It would be good if people in the parliament, who make the law, would understand the issue. The immigration law shall be more useful in this area and enable qualified people to come and work here. The law shall give benefits to the specific immigrants that Slovakia really needs.

Also, the police office for foreigners is problem. It should be in a place big enough to accommodate a large number of applicants. Police personnel should also give decent treatment to the applicant and not shameful and inhuman treatment that the migrant receives today. Also the waiting system, where people are queuing since early morning (long before opening hours), is a catastrophe.

It seems incredible that in so many years I've been in Slovakia, absolutely nothing has changed in that office.

### **What would you recommend?**

A society like Slovak, who over the years has migrated *en masse* to countries like USA, Canada etc., should accept the immigration, and stop seeing it as a problem.

It is sad to see xenophobic comments of much of the population, comments that reflect ignorance and mediocrity, in online discussion forums.

I have made my life in this country in the recent years, and I've got used to it. I accepted the good and the not so good, the rules of this society. But, I would feel much more comfortable if the changes that I have requested can be made one day.

## **Thank you for the interview!**

Thank you for reading this article.

The interview carried out by Zuzana Številová, The Human Rights League.

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