

## **Bratislava as a cosmopolitan city?**

### ***What has the city carried over from traditional cosmopolitanism to present times***

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One hundred years ago, Bratislava (then Pressburg or Poszony) was known to be one of the most cosmopolitan cities of Europe. It is located on the borders of three states. People of various nationalities and cultures, in particular Slovak, Hungarian, German (Austrian), Jewish and others coexisted here and created city's cosmopolitan atmosphere. This changed during the Second World War and the Communist era, when ninety percent of the city's inhabitants were ethnic Slovaks. With the fall of the Iron curtain in 1989 the borders opened again and Slovakia is becoming destination point for more and more diverse migrants year-over-year, especially after joining the European Union in 2004. According to statistical data of the Ministry of internal affairs, more than one third of immigrants live in the Bratislava region. International organization for migration mentions, that the region has the second largest concentration of foreigners in Europe, whereas the first one is London. The capital city attracts migrants primarily due to economic reasons. However can we consider contemporary Bratislava to be a cosmopolitan city?

My final paper will offer an analysis of the situation and a proposal for further research, since I presume that the scope of the essay cannot provide satisfactory answers to all of the questions.

The key question is: *Does Bratislava have a potential to develop its cosmopolitan character?*

The sub-questions are: *What does the cultural armature (history, demography, cultural policies) of Bratislava indicate? Do the inhabitants of Bratislava perceive the city as cosmopolitan?*

I would like to outline the current trends as well as possible projections for the future regarding the city and the region. To do so, I will firstly need to elaborate on the city's history and migration flows. Concepts which need to be analyzed are cosmopolitanism and cosmopolitan city, multiculturalism, identity. I assume that there are several factors influencing migrants to come to Bratislava. Among the positive ones is high probability of employment (for high-skilled and low-skilled migrants; from European Union, third countries as well as internal migrants from other parts of Slovakia), existing transnational nets among immigrants (mainly from third countries, who have settled in the capital). Some of the negative factors include the high cost of living, xenophobic attitudes toward foreigners from third countries or barriers imposed by government in an effort to acquire citizenship. Bratislava is on one hand a cosmopolitan place in a sense that there are many international corporations and many different ethnic and religious minorities. On the other hand, the city doesn't present itself as a global cosmopolitan city, diverse minorities are not that much perceivable in the public space and public discourse.

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