



AS IT IS

World Becoming Less Accepting of Migrants, Poll Finds

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A new opinion study shows the world is growing less accepting of migrants. The latest version of the Migrant Acceptance Index was released Wednesday by Gallup, an American company known for its public opinion research.

North Macedonia, Hungary, Serbia and Croatia were at the top of Gallup's list of least-accepting countries. Several South American countries also became clearly less welcoming of migrants, the **poll** found.

The poll was made up of more than 140,000 interviews in 145 countries and areas. It included questions about people's positions on migrants living in their country, marrying into their families and becoming their neighbors.

Scores for the latest Migrant Acceptance Index go from zero to nine, with a higher number meaning greater acceptance. Gallup reports a decrease from 5.34 to 5.21 between 2016 and 2019.

Gallup migration expert Julie Ray told the Reuters news agency that the worldwide decrease in acceptance happened mostly because of changes in Latin American countries.

Countries that saw some of the biggest score drops have taken in millions of Venezuelans fleeing their country's humanitarian crisis. The largest changes came from Ecuador, Peru and Colombia.

Peru's score fell from 6.33 in 2016 to 3.61 in 2019. The number of Colombians who said it was a good thing that migrants lived in their country dropped from 61 percent to 29 percent.

At first, ‘many of the migrants and refugees were welcomed in these countries,’ the report says. But public acceptance began to change “as their economies, their health, education and social assistance programs” were affected by increased demand, the report notes.

Most welcoming

Canada, Iceland and New Zealand were among the most welcoming countries, Gallup found.

Ray noted that the United States, which was sixth in the index, also has a welcoming position toward migrants.

“Americans are mostly very accepting of migrants,” she said, even as immigration continues to be a big issue for the administration of President Donald Trump.

Experts also note that, around the world, younger people often show greater acceptance of migrants. So do people with higher levels of education.

Gallup first released its Migration Acceptance Index in 2017, following a strong reaction to the migrant crisis in Europe 2015. It developed the index to measure people’s acceptance of migrants in Europe and the rest of the world.

I’m Susan Shand.

VOA’s Aline Barros reported this story. Susan Shand adapted it for Learning English. Ashley Thompson was the editor.

Words in This Story

poll - *n.* asking people their opinions to measure agreement or disagreement with a policy or regulation

index - *n.* a list

