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FORECASTING MIGRATION BETWEEN THE EU, V4 AND EASTERN EUROPE

IMPACT OF VISA ABOLITION

Edited by: Marta Jaroszewicz, Magdalena Lesińska

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JULY 2014

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CENTRE FOR EASTERN STUDIES

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MAIN ABBREVIATIONS

AM - arithmetic mean

BEL - Belarus

CZ - Czechia

EaP - Eastern Partnership

EC - European Commission

Eurostat - Statistical Office of the EU

FDI - Foreign Direct Investment

FSU - Former Soviet Union

FYROM - Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

GDP - Gross Domestic Product

HU - Hungary

EU MS - European Union Member States

OECD - Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development

IOM - International Organization for Migration

ILO - International Labour Office

IVF - International Visegrad Fund

LFS - Labour Force Survey

MD - Moldova

N - number of respondents

PL - Poland

RF - Russian Federation

SK - Slovakia

SD - standard deviation

UK - United Kingdom

UN - United Nations

UNHCR - Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

UA - Ukraine

VLAP - Visa Liberalisation Action Plan

V4 - Visegrad Group

WB - World Bank

MAIN RESULTS

- Current Eastern European migrant stock in the EU may be assessed at around 1 million individuals in the case of Ukrainian nationals, 100,000-150,000 individuals in the case of Belarusian nationals and around 200,000-300,000 in the case of Moldovan nationals. The estimated numbers in Visegrad states are smaller: around 250,000-300,000 individuals in total including Ukrainian, Belarusian and Moldovan nationals.
- Although the migration situation in Russia was not our main research aim, it can be concluded that Russia still remains the primary destination for Ukrainian, Belarusian (over 90%) and Moldovan migrants. The total number of migrants from those three states in Russia (around 2.0-2.5 million individuals) is higher than in the EU as a whole. What is surprising, however, is the fact that Russia probably has higher proportion of irregular migrants from Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova in the overall stock of migrants from those states than does the EU.
- In the case of Ukrainian, Belarusian and Moldovan nationals in the Visegrad states, it can be estimated, however very roughly, that irregular migrants account for between 20% and 40% of the overall number of migrants from those states.
- Two out of four V4 states are key destination countries for Eastern European migrants, namely Poland and Czechia. Poland appears to be the most important destination state in the EU for both Ukrainian and Belarusian migrants. The role of Czechia in the case of Ukrainian nationals is also of the highest significance, though it has lost its previous major position due to the global economic crisis. Hungary attracts only Ukrainian nationals of Hungarian origin, while Slovakia receives insignificant numbers of Eastern European migrants.
- While the role of V4 states in the case of Ukrainian and Belarusian migrants is significant, Moldovans are marginally present in the region (the main EU destination for them remains Italy). Although the size of the EaP population varied significantly among V4 countries, its features are similar in all cases. Migrants from Eastern European countries are particularly visible in secondary sectors of the labour market (i.e. agriculture, construction, household services), they serve as a complementary (not competing) labour force to nationals, and they are concentrated mostly in big cities, regions around capital cities and border areas.

- No massive inflow of labour migrants from Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova to the EU should be expected after the visa regime for short-term travel for up to 90 days is abolished. Firstly, the Delphi survey results indicate the following consequences: moderate growth in inflow of labour migrants to V4 and the EU, more long-term settlement migration, regularisation of already present migrants, family reunification, and possible growth in undeclared employment. Secondly, projections based on the econometric model point to a circa 50,000 increase in the number of Belarusians and Moldovans (counted separately) and around a 200,000-300,000 increase in the number of Ukrainian residents in the EU in a year perspective following the introduction of free movement of people¹. Thirdly, a conclusion from the analysis of the Western Balkan countries is that visa liberalisation has had little or no effect on the number of first-time residence permits, or on immigration flows to EU MS. As visa liberalisation did not have any measurable effect on longer-term migration trends regarding such diverse examples as Poland, the Baltic countries, Romania and Bulgaria, and later Serbia, Montenegro, the FYROM, Albania and Bosnia-Herzegovina, it would be extremely surprising if a completely different pattern emerged in the cases of Moldova, Ukraine and Belarus.
- Our results showed that in the medium-term perspective, even if EU MS decide to lift the restrictions on access to their labour market, a rather moderate rise in the number of Eastern European migrants in the V4 and EU may occur. Only in the case of Ukraine, particularly if it is accompanied by severe economic crisis in the country, may a higher increase be expected (as many as 2.5 million Ukrainians residents in the EU in 2050 in the worst-case scenario). These rather moderate anticipated increases may be explained by: the already significant number of Eastern European migrants at the EU labour markets, growing numbers of Eastern European migrants who obtain EU citizenship, depletion of demographic potential (particularly in the case of Moldova), and increasing interdependence with Russia in the case of Belarus.
- It appears that the expected higher wages and general economic performance in destination countries are the strongest incentives for Eastern European nationals to migrate. The migration policy of respective destination

¹ Due to the lack of comprehensive statistical data related to earlier cases of visa liberalisation in Europe, introduction of free movement of people was taken as a dummy for visa abolition.

states, particularly the possibilities of obtaining residence and labour permits alongside language and cultural similarities are also essential *pull* factors. *Push* factors, such as low wages, poverty, and political unrest in the countries of origin, appear to have lesser significance in the case of Eastern European migration. It may explain why no major outflow from Ukraine can be observed in spite of serious political and security destabilisation.

- If the political unrest in Ukraine continues and is accompanied by economic crisis, growth in migration flows from Ukraine may be expected. In particular, circular migration may increase, but also more Ukrainians may decide on settlement migration (family reunification, more migration for educational purposes).
- With regard to the qualitative characteristics of future migration from Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova, most probably it will become more diversified. Current circular migration, often related to seasonal low-skilled work, will remain. Concurrently, permanent settlement migration may become more significant, including family reunification and migration for educational purposes. Therefore, the irregular migration often related to circularity and low-paid jobs in the migrants niches, may decrease.
- The migration policies of individual Visegrad states, as well as their migration status, significantly vary among each other. Czechia, which experienced a mass inflow of Ukrainian migrants, has undergone a kind of hiatus in its migration policy. In contrast, Poland is in the process of liberalising its migration policy, although it is still one of the most homogeneous countries in the EU. Hungary directs its interest solely towards migrants of Hungarian origin. Slovakia, where the perception of migration as a threat still persists, is occupied with the question of whether (or not) to open the country towards Eastern European migrants.
- Where it comes to the migration policies of the countries of migrants' origin, they are diversified as well. Moldova conducts the most mature emigration policy, though it is still looking for effective measures to attract migrants' investments and possibly return migration. Ukraine's policy on emigration is of more of a declarative character, while Belarus attempts to counteract the emigration of its population, often by administrative means.
- It appears that, with small exceptions, neither public opinion nor the politicians in both the Visegrad states and Eastern Europe, are in favour of

continuous migration from Eastern Europe to V4/EU. While V4 states do not want to face any non-EU migration or any changes within their rather homogenous societies, Eastern European states are preoccupied with the perception of their fellow labour migrants as victims of exploitation and trafficking. Nevertheless, the majority of interviewed Delphi experts from all seven researched states called for greater liberalisation of V4/EU migration and visa policies, and improvements in migrants rights and job opportunities in the V4 labour markets.

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

This book is the result of one year of solid work among a multinational research team assembled from seven states (Poland, Czechia, Hungary, Slovakia, Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova). It aims at a detailed analysis of migration patterns and migration forecasts from Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova to the EU/V4. In particular, the nexus between EU visa policy and migration dynamics as well as the impact of economic, political and institutional factors on migration from Eastern Europe have been investigated. The importance of migration policy must be stressed here. Together with demand for the foreign labour force (labour market needs, level of wages, existing work opportunities) and migration networks (including ethnic links), migration policy has a powerful influence on the scale, directions and characteristics of human flows.

Migration patterns in V4 and EaP states

The Visegrad states together with the neighbouring countries (Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova), constitute an interesting and important case for analysing the dynamics of human flows, and the impact of different factors on migration patterns. On the one hand, the attractiveness of V4 as a destination location is slowly but steadily increasing, which is reflected in the growing stock of foreigners pursuing employment in V4 countries. On the other, despite dynamic modernisation, the V4 countries are still defeated by the 'old' EU countries in the competition for attracting labour from third countries, offering better wages, social benefits, and working and living conditions. The obvious advantages of V4 countries for Eastern European migrants are their geographical and cultural proximity, as well as the migration networks developed over recent decades. In addition, the intra-state political, social and cultural relations between V4 countries and their Eastern neighbours remain strong. In all V4 countries, nationals from Eastern Europe (Ukrainians in particular) constitute a major migrant group; most of the EU visas in Ukraine and Belarus are issued by Polish and Czech consulates. It is a different situation in Moldova, where the main destination remains the countries of Southern Europe. The ethnic component cannot be omitted neither. Its importance is especially noticeable in the case of Poland (in relation to compatriots settled in Belarus and Ukraine), and Hungary (in regard to compatriots staying in Ukraine).

The given Eastern European countries (Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova) share a common feature – its former Soviet past and, as a consequence, specific relations to Russia. Russian Federation still remains a primary destination for

nationals from these countries (it is a destination for more than 90% of Belarusian, and more than a half of Ukrainian and Moldovan migrants). Moreover, there are large populations of ethnic Russians or Russian speaking individuals in these countries which serves as human capital and – especially at present – as a political resource used a tool of Russia’s foreign policy. Another important advantage of Russia in comparison to the EU is the lack of formal barriers such as visas for potential labour migrants. Moreover, Russia has commenced creation of a common migration space based on freedom of movement with some of the former Soviet states (Belarus, Kazakhstan, and in the future also with Armenia and Kyrgyzstan). What distinguish Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova between each other are their relations with the EU and possible EU integration plans. Moldova is the most advanced in this regard, while Ukraine, after a pause of several years, went on the pro-European path recently by signing the Association Agreement with the EU. Belarus declared it has no EU integration aspirations.

Research methods and assumptions

To receive the most reliable results, several research methods have been applied. Firstly, expert panel research (so-called Delphi survey²) was conducted. Under the Delphi survey, we conducted two-round in-depth anonymous questionnaires in all V4 and Eastern European states among around 120 migration experts with different professional backgrounds (governmental representatives, researchers, NGO workers, and representatives of international organisations). Secondly, an econometric model based on demographic and economic data was constructed to obtain projections for the future development of migrant stocks from Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova in the EU. Thirdly, a study that carefully examined the previous waves of visa liberalisation between the EU MS and their neighbours and then attempted to extrapolate these results for Eastern Europe was conducted. Fourthly, a detailed investigation of the role of Eastern Europe in the immigration profile of each V4 country, and of the role of EU/V4 in the emigration profile of Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova, was performed. Finally, all previous deliberations were assessed through the prism of current public debate on migration in the EU and EU policy towards its eastern neighbourhood.

Several important definition caveats should be made. In the research we focus on a Visegrad versus Eastern European perspective. However, since all V4

² For details see Part I, Chapter 1.

states are EU MS and Schengen members at the same time, and no barriers to mobility exist inside the Schengen area, it was therefore impossible to distinguish migration inflows inside the V4 from those inside the EU. Moreover, Eastern European statistical data and migration investigations do not regard the V4 region as a separate migration destination (usually Russia and the EU as a whole are distinguished). Hence, in particular, the Eastern European chapters adopt a rather EU-wide, not V4, perspective. The second caveat regards the definition of Eastern Europe. Without going into details, for the purposes of our research we understand Eastern Europe as Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova (without Russia). In some cases, those three states may be referred to in the text as EaP (Eastern Partnership) states, in the understanding that this term does not encompass the Southern Caucasus.

Forecasts specify what may happen but they do not necessarily have to come true. In the research, we present the most reliable qualitative and quantitative forecasts of future migration developments between V4/EU and Eastern European countries based on present knowledge and some demographic, economic and institutional projections for the future. However, forecasts as a research method are not capable of predicting catastrophes, wars or economic shocks. The impact of protracted political crises on migration patterns is in particular difficult to forecast.

The Ukrainian internal unrest (December 2013) and subsequent Russian annexation of Crimea (March 2014), and the ongoing military clashes in Eastern Ukraine, broke out in the course of the project's implementation. Hence, in the second round of the Delphi survey we asked the interviewed experts to take into account Ukraine's crisis, but only insofar as it impacts on longer-term trends. As a result, we obtained the response that current migration patterns and dynamics may abruptly change only in the case of much more severe unrest. If instability is limited to Eastern Ukraine, which in migratory terms is closely interlinked with Russia, no major changes in current migration dynamics to the EU may be expected however the growth in the number of asylum applications from Ukrainian nationals will surely happen. As for the empirical evidence, so far Ukraine's crisis has resulted mainly in increased internal migration. Also, during the project's implementation, EU visa restrictions on short-term travel for Moldovans were lifted. Again, it appears that our results for Moldova may support the current empirical evidence. The dynamics of cross-border movements in Moldova increased after visa abolition, in particular for family visits, which, in the longer term, may lead to an increase in family reunifications.

The report comprises three main parts. Three chapters presenting the general results of applied research methods (Delphi survey, econometric model, trends extrapolation) comprise the first part. Country chapters that discuss the Delphi results for each individual V4 and Eastern European state and contrast them with other empirical data constitute the second part of the publication. And finally, critical observations and policy analysis of the results obtained are presented in the third concluding part.

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Marta Jaroszewicz, Magdalena Lesińska

Warsaw, July 2014

PART I

EU/V₄ AND EASTERN EUROPEAN
MIGRATION: ESTIMATES, PATTERNS
AND FORECASTS

1. THE PROBABLE FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OF INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION FROM UKRAINE, MOLDOVA AND BELARUS TO VISEGRAD COUNTRIES AND THE EUROPEAN UNION – THE DELPHI METHOD (THE SEARCH FOR “SUBJECTIVE OBJECTIVITY”)

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Introduction

Research goals, questions and design

The aim of this chapter is to present the general results of the Delphi survey on migration trends between EU/V4 and Eastern Europe (Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova) conducted for the needs of the IVF, OSW-financed project “Forecasting migration between the EU, V4 and Eastern Europe: the impact of visa abolition”. As a result of applying two-round in-depth questionnaires, the expert consensus of opinions on current and future migration trends between the EU/V4 and Eastern Europe, their determinants, and the links between short-term visa abolition and migration have been obtained. The main research subjects included:

- qualitative and quantitative assessment of Ukrainian, Moldovan and Belarusian migrant stock³ in V4/EU,
- evolution of migration trends of Eastern Europeans within the next 10 years, main demographic and economic characteristics of Ukrainian, Belarusian and Moldovan migrants in the EU,
- impact of visa-regime abolition (for short-term stays) for future emigration to the EU, and hypothetical impact of lifting labour market restrictions by the EU MS towards Ukrainian, Moldovan and Belarusian nationals,

³ The number of people residing in a particular destination country at a given moment.

- strategic policy measures which should be applied by the EU, V4 states and Eastern European partners to make migration more beneficial for all the actors involved.

Between October 2013 and March 2014 under the Delphi expert panel we surveyed 118 migration experts from seven states (Czechia, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia, Belarus, Ukraine, and Moldova). The first round was performed in November-January 2013 and the second one in January-March 2014. Altogether 192 migration experts with different professional backgrounds but with high migration expertise were approached, out of which 118 took part in the first round (66 in V4 states and 52 in EaP states) and 106 in the second round (59 in V4 states and 47 in EaP states). They represented four categories: the governmental sector, scientific/research institutes, NGOs and international organizations in more or less similar proportions. However, the representatives of international organisations together with NGO workers dealing with migrants were the least numerous.

Within the first round at least 15 respondents in each country participated as a minimum. The overall number declined in the second round. Although this decline was not dramatic, in some cases and concerning particular questions the number of respondents fell below 10. In any case, it is still sufficient in our opinion since the Delphi panel should optimally comprise between 5 and 20 experts⁴.

In both rounds two questionnaires were prepared: one for Visegrad states and one for Eastern Partnership states. The questionnaires were constructed so as to be complementary to each other and to show immigration trends in the case of V4 states and emigration ones in the case of EaP states. However, due to methodological concerns, the results obtained cannot be compared with each other. It can be done only in the case of several questions which were identical. The questionnaires contained features characterising both the so-called *conventional* Delphi (results on migration trends showed in statistical form) and the *policy* Delphi (results on the desirability and feasibility of certain policy measures).

Due to space limitations within this chapter, we provide only the basic results that indicate the broader regional context. However, more detailed

⁴ J. Bijak, A. Wiśniowski, *Forecasting of immigration flows until 2025 for selected European countries using expert information*, Idea Working Paper, No. 7, May 2009; G. Rowe, G. Wright, *Experts Opinions in Forecasting: The Role of the Delphi Technique*, (in:) J.S. Armstrong (ed.), *Principles of Forecasting: A Handbook of Researchers and Practitioners*, Boston 2001: Kluwer Academic Publications, pp. 125-144.

interpretation can be found in the subsequent country chapters. Our research is of a qualitative character. We asked the respondents for some quantitative assessment but with the full consciousness that the results obtained may only indicate certain trends, not detailed estimates.

The research was carried out at a time when a serious conflict between Russia and Ukraine over Crimea and the eastern part of Ukraine took place. This fact, despite having so far a rather limited effect upon the migratory movements studied in our survey, did disrupt the research as such, especially in Ukraine. Secondly, in April 2014, in the course of project's implementation EU lifted short-term visas for Moldovan citizens. Therefore the visa related results obtained for Moldova should be treated as possible outcomes of real, not hypothetical, occurrences. Moreover, in May 2014, the EU Commission decided that Ukraine fulfilled the benchmarks of the first phase of the Visa Liberalisation Action Plan (VLAP) and suggested that Ukraine moves to the second phase of VLAP implementation.

In this chapter we use basic statistical terms, namely, AM – arithmetic mean (average results) and SD – standard deviation (how much variation from the average exists); N – reflects the number of respondents.

Methodology

The Delphi method can be described as a technique for collecting expert opinions through a series of distributed questionnaires interspersed with controlled opinion feedback for individual rounds of the study⁵. The method was developed from brain-storming and belongs to interactive research techniques, also called “research as a public dialogue”. In contrast to brain-storming, however, Delphi attempts to reduce some of the disadvantages and shortcomings from which the brain-storming process might suffer⁶. It seems that the method is appropriate to use if the complexity of a research problem comes into play, when there is a lack of adequate data and where design of common future scenarios is required.

⁵ H. Linstone, M. Turoff (eds.), *The Delphi Method - Techniques and Applications*, Reading 1975: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company; J.P. Martino, *Technological Forecasting for Decision-making*, New York 1972: American Elsevier Publishing Company.

⁶ D. Drbohlav, *Migration Policy Objectives for European East-West International Migration*, International Migration 1997, 35, pp. 85-108.

The main characteristic feature of the Delphi method is establishing a panel of experts with a broad range of experience who are able and willing to participate in the survey. Second, it includes multiple rounds of the questionnaire with feedback from the preceding rounds, which allows the panellists to confront any dissenting opinions and also to change their opinion. Third, the anonymity of the experts, and absence of direct contacts among the Delphi group is expected.

What also has to be mentioned, however, is that the Delphi method must not be considered as a completely defined and described instrument with a certain technical mode of execution. The various Delphi studies can differ considerably and may have little in common. The Delphi method originated in the USA at the beginning of the 1950s and at the beginning chiefly found application in the military sphere. Now, one can find Delphi applied to research into such complex societal problems as, for example, health, transportation, education, housing, or the environment.

Though international migration issues seem to be a suitable topic to be analysed via the Delphi method (an innovative cognitive tool for international migration research), it has so far rarely been used within the field of migration. Nevertheless, there are some studies that apply Delphi to international migration issues⁷. However, to our best knowledge, such an approach has never been applied in the investigation of migration issues in former post-Soviet countries.

Main results for Visegrad states

What are your current estimates for the number of migrants from Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova in your country, separately for each nationality mentioned (including irregularly staying ones)? Given that you now know the opinions of other experts, please place your estimates once more in each respective row. If you feel it is important – particularly if your opinion significantly deviates from the average – please provide arguments to justify your view.

⁷ S. Lovelless et al, *Immigration and Its Impact on American Cities*, Westport 1996: Praeger Publisher; D. Drbohlav, *Migration policy...*, 1997, *op. cit.*; L. Lachmanová, D. Drbohlav, *The Probable Future Development of European East-West Migration (Delphi Method Revived)*, *European Spatial Research and Policy* 2004, vol. 11, No. 1, pp. 135-155; M. Jandl, Ch. Hollomey, A. Stepien, *Migration and Irregular Work in Austria: Results of a Delphi-Study*, International Migration Paper 90, International Centre for Migration Policy Development, 2007 Geneva; J. Bijak, A. Wiśniowski, *Forecasting...*, *op. cit.*

Table 1. Number of migrants from Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova in V4 states

	CZECHIA			HUNGARY			SLOVAKIA			POLAND		
	AM	SD	N	AM	SD	N	AM	SD	N	AM	SD	N
Nationals												
	FIRST ROUND			FIRST ROUND			FIRST ROUND			FIRST ROUND		
Ukrainians	135,000	51,000	13	19,000	13,000	11	19,000	23,000	15	252,500	165,000	10
Belarusians	6,000	4,000	14	1,000	1,000	12	1,000	1,000	12	75,667	160,000	9
Moldovans	7,000	4,000	13	1 000	1 000	12	3,000	5,000	12	4,844	4,000	8
	SECOND ROUND			SECOND ROUND			SECOND ROUND			SECOND ROUND		
Ukrainians	118,000	28,000	14	18,000	6,000	11	16,000	10,000	14	242,000	67,000	15
Belarusians	5,000	2,000	15	1,000	0 (300)	11	1,000	2,000	13	58,182	31,000	11
Moldovans	6,000	2,000	14	1 000	0 (200)	11	2,000	1,000	13	4,388	1,000	13

Respondents in all the respective Visegrad countries stated that Ukrainian migrants predominate over Belarusians and Moldovans. Whereas in Poland the experts indicated around 240,000 Ukrainian migrants, Czech respondents estimated about 112,000 Ukrainians. In Hungary and Slovakia the number of Ukrainians is much lower. The number of Belarusians and Moldovans was, with the exception of Poland, estimated equal to or less than 6,000 in all the countries. It should be borne in mind that if Poland is the main EU destination for Belarusians, none of the V4 states constitute the main destination for Moldovan migrants. The question did not differentiate between temporary, short-term and, on the other hand, long-term or permanent migrants. When estimating the given numbers, respondents revealed that they mainly relied on existing statistics and estimates of irregular migrants. This information was often accompanied with respondents' own expert views and experience.

What, in your opinion, is the current proportion of irregular immigrants (either illegally staying or performing undeclared work) in the stock of migrants from Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova in your country? Put your estimate in percentages (one figure) separately for each nationality. Given that you now know the opinions of other experts, please place your estimates once more in each respective row. If you feel it is important – particularly if your opinion significantly deviates from the average – please provide arguments to justify your view.

Table 2. Proportion of irregular immigrants in the stock of migrants from Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova in V4 states

	CZECHIA (%)			HUNGARY (%)			SLOVAKIA (%)			POLAND (%)		
	AM	SD	N	AM	SD	N	AM	SD	N	AM	SD	N
Nationals												
	FIRST ROUND			FIRST ROUND			FIRST ROUND			FIRST ROUND		
Ukrainians	35	35	13	24	22	9	33	19	14	43	24	9
Belarusians	14	12	14	11	6	8	19	27	11	27	23	9
Moldovans	26	37	13	20	16	8	30	29	12	31	26	7
	SECOND ROUND			SECOND ROUND			SECOND ROUND			SECOND ROUND		
Ukrainians	24	12	12	17	7	10	33	12	14	45	17	15
Belarusians	12	6	13	12	5	10	15	13	13	26	10	12
Moldovans	19	1	12	14	7	10	28	23	13	29	11	13

Once again in this case, Ukrainians are the migrant group which typically constituted the highest shares of estimated irregular migrants in all the respective V4 countries. Their highest share was observed in Poland (45%), in Slovakia (33%), in Czechia (24%), while the lowest was in Hungary (17%). The overall magnitude of the estimates given by the respondents in all countries is rather low. This may be due to several factors. Firstly, it may be due to the relatively liberal EU visa policy which in the majority of cases allows Eastern European migrants to easily enter V4 states. Moreover, certain legal means by which Ukrainian, Moldovan and Belarusian nationals legalise their stay in all V4 states do exist, even though the migration policy of V4 states significantly varies among each other. At the same time, those countries with a stricter migration policy, like Czechia, conducted broad-based return campaigns aimed at irregular migrants. Therefore, a trend towards reducing the share of irregular migrants in the overall stock of migrants from Ukraine, Belarus and Moldovan in V4 can be observed.

Respondents mentioned that their assessment was often based on existing estimates combined with their expert opinions. One thing worth mentioning is the opinion (several times stated) that “irregularity” is mainly connected to irregular employment. This may indicate that labour market regulations for employment of foreigners is the main area in all V4 states that requires further improvements.

How do you think the phenomenon of migration from Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova to your country may evolve in the next ten years? Please specify what kind of patterns and in what direction it may change? Given that you now know the opinions of other experts, please give your opinions once more in each respective box. Here, please accompany your opinion with the most important arguments.

We demonstrate here respondents' opinions on three different migratory patterns that have been measured in the Delphi survey – migration flows, migrants' economic performance and the migration policy of the respective respondent's state. There was more or less consensus among almost all respondents that the migration policy of their states will probably change over the next ten years. While the Polish and Hungarian⁸ experts indicated that it will become more liberal, Czechs forecast that it will be more selective, while the experts in Slovakia were divided over whether it will be more liberal or stricter. Migration flows to particular countries and their probable future development was perceived differently. Whereas in Czechia the respondents' share of those who expect changes versus those who foresee stable development (of immigration from Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova) were more or less balanced, in Slovakia respondents tended to prefer changes (increase) over other possible scenarios. Similar opinions are typical of Polish respondents regarding Ukraine and Belarus, whereas in relation to Moldovans opinions are balanced ("increase" as well as "stable" development). In Hungary, respondents predict a future increase in Ukrainian nationals. Migrants' economic performance will probably transform over the given horizon of ten years in Slovakia and Poland (occupation sectors changes towards more qualified positions, more students, higher wages, and more permanent migration). On the other hand, the situation is expected to be more stable in Czechia and much more stable in Hungary.

What do you expect to happen (in a short-term horizon of three years) in your country if visas for short-term travels for up to 90 days for Ukrainian, Belarusian and Moldovan nationals to the Schengen area are abolished. Given that you now know the opinions of other experts, please mark (with X) once more the three most likely occurrences for each nationality in the table. If you feel it is important – particularly if your opinion significantly deviates from the average – please provide arguments to justify your view.

⁸ Particularly for ethnic Hungarians.

Table 3. Possible future development of migration trends in V4 states in the case of visa abolition for Eastern European nationals

CZECHIA	Ukrainians		Belarusians		Moldovans	
	First round	Second round	First round	Second round	First round	Second round
Mass inflow of labour migrants	3	1	1	0	3	2
Moderate inflow of labour migrants	6	8	6	9	5	5
No changes in number of labour migrants	4	3	4	2	3	2
Decrease in number of labour migrants	0	1	0	1	0	1
Regularisation of already present labour migrants	6	3	6	2	6	4
Growth in irregular employment	8	9	9	8	9	9
More long-term settlement migration	11	10	10	11	10	10
More asylum claims	2	1	8	4	1	1
Other, please specify	0	0	0	0	0	0
Number of respondents (N)	15	14	16	15	16	14

POLAND	Ukrainians		Belarusians		Moldovans	
	First round	Second round	First round	Second round	First round	Second round
Mass inflow of labour migrants	2	1	0	1	2	0
Moderate inflow of labour migrants	9	13	10	9	5	7
No changes in number of labour migrants	4	0	3	1	6	4
Decrease in number of labour migrants	0	0	0	1	0	0
Regularisation of already present labour migrants	7	7	5	4	7	5
Growth in irregular employment	8	8	5	3	5	7
More long-term settlement migration	4	6	5	8	5	5
More asylum claims	0	2	2	1	0	0
Other, please specify	2	0	2	1	1	1
Number of respondents (N)	15	16	14	13	13	14

SLOVAKIA	Ukrainians		Belarusians		Moldovans	
	First round	Second round	First round	Second round	First round	Second round
Mass inflow of labour migrants	4	2	2		1	
Moderate inflow of labour migrants	11	12	8	9	9	9
No changes in number of labour migrants	3	0	7	6	7	7
Decrease in number of labour migrants	0	0	1	0	1	0
Regularisation of already present labour migrants	11	11	11	10	12	11
Growth in irregular employment	9	5	3		7	4
More long-term settlement migration	10	12	7	8	7	6
More asylum claims	2	2	8	4	4	4
Other, please specify	0	0	0	0	0	1
Number of respondents (N)	16	14	16	14	16	14

HUNGARY	Ukrainians		Belarusians		Moldovans	
	First round	Second round	First round	Second round	First round	Second round
Mass inflow of labour migrants	5	3	0	1	0	3
Moderate inflow of labour migrants	7	4	5	4	8	4
No changes in number of labour migrants	2	3	8	6	6	3
Decrease in number of labour migrants	1	1	1	2		2
Regularisation of already present labour migrants	8	4	4	4	7	4
Growth in irregular employment	6	5	4	4	3	5
More long-term settlement migration	8	6	6	5	5	5
More asylum claims	0	0	2	1	2	1
Other, please specify	3	0	2	0	1	0
Number of respondents (N)	14	11	14	11	14	11

This is one of the most important questions asked in the survey in order to investigate the link between abolition of the EU visa-regime for short-term stays and migration flows. The EU abolished the visa regime for Moldovans travelling to the EU for short-term stays soon after the Delphi survey was completed. Therefore, results for Moldova can in fact serve as an indicator of what may happen in the current situation when no major barriers to mobility of Moldovan citizens in the EU exist.

In general, respondents in all V4 states see the link between introduction by the EU of a visa-free regime for short-term stays for Ukrainian, Moldovan and Belarusian nationals and the changes in migration inflows to their respective countries. They expect a small increase in migration flows but also regularisation of already present migrants. Czech respondents see the short-term future migratory picture as rather “homogeneous”, regardless of the migrants’ country of origin (more long-term settlement migration, growth in irregular employment and moderate inflow of labour migrants). Polish respondents expect a moderate increase in migration inflows (particularly in the case of Ukrainians) but also possible growth in irregular employment. In the case of Belarusians, more settlement emigration has been also predicted. Slovak and Hungarian experts shared similar views on all three EaP nationalities, though they also think that more Ukrainian nationals may regularise their stay and decide to settle down in their respective states due to the introduction of a visa-free regime.

How big an inflow of migrants from Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova may be if your country lifts restrictions in access to labour market for those foreigners (in a short-term horizon of three years after restrictions are abolished) in comparison with present inflow? Please, while now knowing opinions of other experts, put again your opinion in each respective row – one answer for each nationality. If you feel, it is important – especially, if your opinion significantly deviates from the average, put arguments to justify your view.

Table 4. Possible future developments of migration trends in V4 states in the case of elimination of labour market restrictions for Eastern European nationals

CZECHIA	Ukrainians		Belarusians		Moldovans	
	First round	Second round	First round	Second round	First round	Second round
Much higher	1	1	2	0	0	0
Higher	4	4	6	4	6	4
No changes	7	6	6	8	5	7
Lower	3	1	3	1	4	1
Much lower	0	0	0	0	0	0
Number of respondents (N)	15	12	17	13	15	12

POLAND	Ukrainians		Belarusians		Moldovans	
	First round	Second round	First round	Second round	First round	Second round
Much higher	5	5	1	1	3	2
Higher	10	11	12	11	7	9
No changes	1	0	2	1	5	3
Lower	0	0	0	0	0	0
Much lower	0	0	0	0	0	0
Number of respondents (N)	16	16	15	13	16	14

SLOVAKIA	Ukrainians		Belarusians		Moldovans	
	First round	Second round	First round	Second round	First round	Second round
Much higher	5	4	1	1	3	
Higher	10	10	12	7	7	8
No changes	1		2	6	5	5
Lower	0		0		0	1
Much lower	0		0		0	
Number of respondents (N)	16	14	15	14	15	14

HUNGARY	Ukrainians		Belarusians		Moldovans	
	First round	Second round	First round	Second round	First round	Second round
Much higher	7	8	0	0	1	1
Higher	3	2	8	8	8	10
No changes	5	2	6	3	5	0
Lower	0	0	0	0	0	0
Much lower	0	0	0	0	0	0
Number of respondents (N)	15	12	14	11	14	11

This question should be regarded as a “test” one. It was asked in order to check whether the respondents see a difference between the impact of visa abolition and the elimination of labour market restrictions. A genuine lifting of the barriers to foreigners’ access to labour markets will probably not happen soon, taking into consideration current economic problems and high unemployment rates in the EU.

Polish and Slovak respondents evaluated that in this case, potentially a higher influx of Ukrainian, Belarusian and Moldovan migrants can be expected. With regard to Ukrainians, they did not also exclude much higher inflows. Hungarian experts clearly differentiated between the probable future of inflows from Ukraine - here they voted for much higher numbers. The picture drawn by Czech experts is different. They mostly spread out their opinions between the categories ‘no changes’ and higher. This perspective probably reflects a situation on the Czech labour market where the numbers of Ukrainians have already been, to large extent, saturated (at least currently, during the global economic crisis).

The results obtained clearly indicate that labour market restrictions (not entry/stay rules) are the main obstacles for higher migration from Eastern Europe to the EU.

Can you see positive impacts related to future migration from Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova to your country? Please rank below the indicated impacts with 5 - most important, 4 - important, 3 - neither important, nor unimportant, 2 - unimportant, 1 - least important.

Filling in shortages on the labour market was declared by respondents as a positive impact of Ukrainian migrants in all the respective countries. Moreover, for the same reason, Belarusians in Poland and Belarusians and Moldovans in Czechia were also highly valued.

More precisely, providing new students for the educational system and a labour force with the requisite vocational skills is positively evaluated in relation to Ukrainians and Belarusians in Poland. Bringing ethnic Poles from Belarus has been also highlighted. Stimulating an inflow of the required labour force with vocational skills and high-skilled migrants were mentioned often by Slovak respondents *vis-à-vis* Ukrainian migrants (regarding the latter factor, Belarusians also). Also, Czech respondents stressed the importance of student inflows to the educational system in the case of Ukrainians and Belarusians.

It seems that Hungarian respondents especially appreciate the possible inflow of Ukrainians for many reasons, namely, mitigating the consequences of demographic crisis, bringing new students into the educational system, together with a labour force with the necessary vocational skills, and finally bringing their ethnic compatriots home. The last reason alone shows us what is behind the sort of “preferential treatment” shown to those Ukrainians who are often of Hungarian origin.

Can you see negative impacts related to future migration from Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova to your country? Please rank below the indicated impacts with 5 – most important, 4 – important, 3 – neither important, nor unimportant, 2 – unimportant, 1 – least important.

Respondents in all respective countries do not see negative impacts related to future migration from the given EaP countries as something that is worth pinpointing too much. Within all the V4 countries the statement: “I do not see any negative impacts” dominates over all the other possible negative impacts offered. Hungarian respondents are the sole exception when their perception of the impact of future Belarusian and Moldovan migration to their country is perceived rather negatively as compared to Ukrainian migrants, though mostly of Hungarian origin. If we are to specify the most important negative factor related to migration from Eastern Europe, it would be “driving down wages and unfair competition for local workers”.

Do you agree with the statement that abolition of visas for Ukrainians, Belarusians and Moldovans is desirable from the point of view of your country’s interests? Given that you now know the opinions of other experts, please state your opinion once more (with X) in the respective box – one answer for each nationality. Please provide arguments to justify your view, where important.

Table 5. Agreement/disagreement in V4 states with visa abolition for nationals of Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova

POLAND	First round Ukrainians	Second round Ukrainians	First round Belarusians	Second round Belarusians	First round Moldovans	Second round Moldovans
YES	13	15	13	12	11	12
NO	1	1	1	1	1	1
N	15	16	14	13	14	14

CZECHIA	First round Ukrainians	Second round Ukrainians	First round Belarusians	Second round Belarusians	First round Moldovans	Second round Moldovans
YES	9	10	8	10	10	11
NO	4	4	6	4	4	3
N	13	14	14	14	14	14

HUNGARY	First round Ukrainians	Second round Ukrainians	First round Belarusians	Second round Belarusians	First round Moldovans	Second round Moldovans
YES	15	12	8	8	8	9
NO	0	0	5	4	5	3
N	15	12	13	12	13	12

SLOVAKIA	First round Ukrainians	Second round Ukrainians	First round Belarusians	Second round Belarusians	First round Moldovans	Second round Moldovans
YES	13	12	12	12	11	13
NO	2	2	3	2	4	1
N	15	14	15	14	15	14

When interpreting the results of the second round, two different groups of respondents appeared. Polish and Slovakian respondents clearly support the statement that visa abolition is desirable (only 2 as a maximum – out of between 14 and 16 respondents respectively – do not agree with the given statement). On the other hand, Czech and Hungarian respondents are more “cautious”. Despite the majority of these respondents voting for “yes”, a not insignificant number also regards the given abolition of visas as undesirable for their countries. There is, however, one important exception. All the Hungarian experts agree with the desirability of Ukrainian immigration to Hungary. (One can only deduce that the mainly Hungarian origin of these migrants lies behind this sympathy).

If we analyse how the opinions changed between the first and second rounds, we may notice that they were more or less stable. A small increase in the desirability of short-term visa abolition for Moldovans could be observed – possibly due to the fact that at the time of the second round it was certain that the EU would soon lift the visa regime.

In which time perspective do you expect that visas for short-term travel to EU for Ukrainians, Belarusians and Moldovans may be abolished? Underline one of the

possibilities for each nationality. Given that you now know the opinions of other experts, please state your opinion once more in each respective row – one possibility for each nationality. Please feel free to comment on your choice.

Table 6. Anticipated time perspective for visa abolition for Ukrainian, Belarusian and Moldovan nationals

CZ, PL, SK, HU	Ukrainians		Belarusians		Moldovans		N	
	First Round	Second Round	First Round	Second Round	First Round	Second Round	First Round	Second Round
In 2–3 years	19	21	4	0	23	20	46	41
In 4–6 years	26	22	14	16	11	16	51	54
In 7–10 years	12	11	36	33	15	13	63	57
N	57	54	54	49	49	49		

Respondents from the all respective V4 countries (66 in the first round and 59 in the second one) were asked this question, which tackles a more general policy relevant issue. It assesses experts’ insights into EU visa liberalisation policy, the migration and security situation in Eastern Europe, as well as experts’ individual beliefs towards visa abolition. The results obtained indicate that, for obvious reasons, visas for short-term travel to the EU might be abolished a little bit sooner for Moldovans than for the other two countries. (In fact this has already happened). In the case of Ukraine, the majority of respondents were divided over whether visas would be lifted in the short-term perspective (2-3 years) or the medium-term one (4-6 years). However, some experts believed that it may happen only in the long-term perspective (7-10 years). In the case of Belarus, no respondents considered the shortest period (in the second round), one third stick to the 4-6 year interval and two thirds to the 7-10 year interval. It is important to point out that when comparing the given assessment by individual V4 countries the picture seems to be quite similar.

How do you assess current political debate in your country around the issue of visa abolition for Eastern Partnership states? Please answer yes or no.

For any row put numbers for “yes” and “no” in absolute terms and N/number of respondents for each item/topic.

Table 7. Public debate in V4 states over visa liberalisation for Eastern European nationals

POLAND			
	Yes	No	N
This is an important topic for the general public	2	15	17
This is an important topic in political debate	8	9	17
The general public is favourable towards visa abolition	9	7	16
Politicians are favourable towards visa abolition	11	5	16
State officials/administration are favourable towards visa abolition	10	5	15
Business circles are favourable towards visa abolition	16	0	16

HUNGARY			
	Yes	No	N
This is an important topic for the general public	2	11	12
This is an important topic in political debate	2	9	11
The general public is favourable towards visa abolition	2	11	13
Politicians are favourable towards visa abolition	6	6	12
State officials/administration are favourable towards visa abolition	5	6	11
Business circles are favourable towards visa abolition	10	2	12

CZECHIA			
	Yes	No	N
This is an important topic for the general public	5	12	17
This is an important topic in political debate	9	8	17
The general public is favourable towards visa abolition	0	16	16
Politicians are favourable towards visa abolition	3	12	15
State officials/administration are favourable towards visa abolition	4	13	17
Business circles are favourable towards visa abolition	15	1	16

SLOVAKIA			
	Yes	No	N
This is an important topic for the general public	5	11	16
This is an important topic in political debate	9	7	16
The general public is favourable towards visa abolition	4	12	16
Politicians are favourable towards visa abolition	5	11	16
State officials/administration are favourable towards visa abolition	4	11	15
Business circles are favourable towards visa abolition	15	0	15

Answers to this question (measuring the importance of the visa liberalisation topic in public debate in the V4 states and the main proponents and opponents of that process) gave a rather heterogeneous picture. On the other hand, what was very clearly indicated by experts in all four countries is that “business circles are favourable towards visa abolition” in the respective countries. Fairly strong opinion also prevailed in Poland and Hungary, where respondents very much supported the statement that visa abolition for EaP countries is not an important topic for the general public. Moreover, respondents in Hungary, Czechia and Slovakia were in agreement in supporting the statement that the general public is not favourable towards visa abolition. Czech and Slovak respondents agreed in feeling that their politicians, as well as state officials, are not in favour of visa abolition for Ukraine, Moldova and Belarus, while Polish experts were of the opposite opinion (Hungarian experts’ opinion was located somewhere in between).

Main results for Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova

In your opinion, how many migrants from your country currently reside in the Visegrad states, EU states, and in Russia? Both legally (with long-term national visa, temporary and permanent residence permits etc.) and in irregular manner (mainly working irregularly while being on tourist visas)? Given that you now know the opinions of other experts, please place your estimates once more in each respective row. If you feel it is important – particularly if your opinion significantly deviates from the average – please provide arguments to justify your view.

Table 8. Estimated number of migrants from Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova abroad (V4, EU, Russia)

Ukrainians abroad First round	AM	SD	N	Ukrainians abroad Second round	AM	SD	N
Visegrad states	443,000	356,000	13	Visegrad states	387,000	148,000	16
EU	1, 032 000	789,000	11	EU	1, 123 000	325, 000	15
Russia	1, 596 000	1, 049 000	13	Russia	1, 467 000	671, 000	15

Belarusians abroad First round	AM	SD	N	Belarusians abroad Second round	AM	SD	N
Visegrad states	60,000	66,000	9	Visegrad states	70,000	37,000	14
EU in general	127,000	136,000	9	EU in general	150,000	71,000	13
Russia	582,000	326,000	14	Russia	542,000	167,000	16

Moldovans abroad First round	AM	SD	N	Moldovans abroad Second round	AM	SD	N
Visegrad states	14,000	10,000	10	Visegrad states	11,000	5,000	12
EU in general	244,000	104,000	16	EU in general	239,000	97,000	14
Russia	309,000	94,000	16	Russia	315,000	70,000	14

The assessments provided clearly show how important Russia is in terms of migratory contacts between the given EaP countries and Russia. According to the respondents, the most numerous migratory stock from all the countries stays not in the V4 or the EU, but in Russia – and the size is very robust: with 1.5 million Ukrainians in Russia, more than 0.5 million Belarusians and over 300,000 Moldovans there. Whereas in the case of Ukrainians and Moldovans the results obtained are comparable to the existing EU residence permits data and labour force surveys results, the number of Belarusians in the EU turned out to be much higher than that officially confirmed. Logically, the numbers of Ukrainian, Moldovan and Belarusian migrants in V4 countries are the lowest. One challenging comparison springs from juxtaposing the estimates related to EaP migrants based in V4 countries by EaP respondents on the one hand (some 390,000), to those indicated by V4 experts (around 470,000). All in all, when taking into account the overall complexity of the assessments as such, the difference is not so large.

What, in your opinion, is the current proportion of irregular migrants (illegally staying and performing undeclared work) in the overall stock of “labour migrants” from your country in Visegrad states, the EU in general and in Russia? Put your estimate in percentages (one number) for each destination.

Table 9. Proportion of irregular immigrants in the overall stock of labour migrants from Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova abroad (V4, EU, Russia)

First round Ukrainians	AM %	SD %	N	Second round Ukrainians	AM %	SD %	N
Visegrad states	25	11	13	Visegrad states	23	10	15
EU in general	38	15	12	EU in general	38	15	15
Russia	42	20	12	Russia	44	22	15

First round Belarusians	AM %	SD %	N	Second round Belarusians	AM %	SD %	N
Visegrad states	12	7	9	Visegrad states	14	11	15
EU in general	11	6	9	EU in general	13	11	15
Russia	44	21	10	Russia	34	22	15

First round Moldovans	AM %	SD %	N	Second round Moldovans	AM %	SD %	N
Visegrad states	12	11	8	Visegrad states	11	4	11
EU in general	25	19	14	EU in general	22	11	14
Russia	49	26	14	Russia	47	21	14

Some experts who answered this question drew attention to the insufficiently precise definition of irregular migration applied in the questionnaire (altogether irregular stay and undeclared employment). However, this inaccuracy was “intentional” since our aim was to grasp some basic trends, not so much detailed parameters. The given proportion of irregular migrants from the respective EaP countries in the overall stock of labour migrants is estimated to be highest in Russia – ranging between 47% (Moldovans) and 34% (Belarusians). This result is surprising, taking into consideration the liberal admission rules of the Russian Federation (visa-free regime, possibility of entering its territory on so-called ‘internal’ passport, declarative character of work permits) directed towards CIS states’ citizens. The main explanation may be the prevalence of irregular employment in Russia as such, together with distribution of the migration phenomenon in the “grey zone” of the Russian economy. In the EU in

general, the given shares are lower, probably due to the previously mentioned attempts of Ukrainian, Moldovan and Belarusian labour migrants to legalise themselves. The lowest shares observed in V4 states may be explained by the liberal Polish migration policy directed towards short-term migrants, the increasing share of students in the general number of migrants in V4 states, and the tendency to strengthen legal permanent/settlement migration observed in Czechia. However, it should be emphasised that assessment by V4 experts of the share of irregular migrants was much higher, with the highest estimated proportion at 45% in Poland in the second round questionnaire.

What are the main destination states for migrants from your country? Try to rank the five most important destinations (including irregular migrants) – from the most important (No. 1) to the least important (No. 5). Given that you now know the opinions of other experts, please try to assess regular (A) versus irregular (B) in percentages where $A + B = 100$.

The results confirm earlier statements as well as empirical evidence. Russia appears at the top as the main destination country of all the EaP countries. Then, Poland, Italy and Spain were mentioned at least twice among the top five most popular destinations within the respective three EaP countries. Other countries were presented only once – Czechia as an important destination for Ukrainians; the USA, Germany and Ukraine – as an important destination for Belarusians; and Turkey and France – as a very attractive destination country for Moldovan migrants.

What are the main push and pull factors of emigration pushing from Belarus and attracting to the EU? Please rank each of the following factors with 5 – most important, 4 – important, 3 – neither important, nor unimportant, 2 – unimportant, 1 – least important.

Almost unanimously high wages, high living standards in destination countries accompanied with “already staying and working relatives or close friends (migration networks)” belong, according to respondents in all the respective countries, to factors that pull their migrants outside their mother countries of origin (especially as for the two former factors, SD figures are very low indicating that respondents’ estimates were very similar to each other). In addition, poverty and social tensions in the sending country were also perceived as very important push factors in Ukraine and Moldova.

Are there any specific factors in Visegrad states that attract/repel migrants from your country? Please rank each of the following factors with 5 – most important, 4 – important, 3 – neither important, nor unimportant, 2 – unimportant, 1 – least important.

What has been confirmed at a more general level above (the dominance of an economically-based motivation), it is also evident in the specific example of the migratory relationship between EaP countries and Visegrad countries. Obviously, what mainly drives migrants from EaP to Visegrad countries are “high wages” (indicated in all three examined countries). Ukrainian respondents pointed out the fact that in Visegrad countries “it is easy to find work” too. On the other hand, “low wages” and “difficulty in finding work are among important push factors” (in Ukraine and Moldova). What, however, distinguishes Visegrad states from other EU countries is their geographic proximity, language and cultural similarities and low travel costs. It also has to do with psychological factors – there is always the possibility of return at any moment. Rather ambiguous results were obtained with regard to the assessment of Visegrad states visa and migration policies – generally, they were assessed as friendly and harsh at the same time.

Can you see any specific behavioural patterns of citizens of your country residing in the EU at this moment? Please, besides legal stays, also take into account those who are in an irregular position. Please rank the given possibilities from 5 to 1: 5 – definitely yes, 4 – perhaps yes, 3 – maybe yes, maybe no, 2 – perhaps no, 1 – definitely no. Given that you now know the opinions of other experts, please place your estimates once more in each respective box – choose from 5 to 1.

There are some rather similar features that characterise the main current patterns of migration and integration of EaP citizens in the EU. As for the sectors which EaP migrants are mostly involved in, in particular the construction sector (according to respondents, typical of migrants from all the respective countries), the household sector (in relation to Ukrainians and Moldovans) and services (in relation to Belarusians) were mentioned. In any case, the issue of manually demanding jobs in which Ukrainians in particular are involved in was raised too. Ukrainian respondents also emphasized that their compatriots are employed as highly skilled specialists, particularly as teachers or doctors. Whereas for Ukrainians and Moldovans, respondents tended to characterise migrants as those who are in their middle age, for Belarusians a young age was identified and stated as the most important. As far as migratory type is concerned, whereas respondents attributed a preference for settlement migration to Belarusians, they indicated that Moldovans tend towards circular

migration. In this respect, Ukrainians were closer to Moldovans, though respondents' preferences were not so sharply crystallized here. The ability for "communication in destination countries languages" was mentioned as a rather typical feature of Belarusian and Moldovan migrants. Nevertheless, was also considered important in the case of Ukrainian migration. Last but not least, female migration was found important for Moldovan migrants in the EU, too.

What do you expect to happen (in a short-term horizon of three years) if visas for short-term travel for up to 90 days to the Schengen zone for your country nationals are abolished? Given that you now know the opinions of other experts, please mark (with X) once more the three most likely occurrences for each nationality in the table below. If you feel it is important – particularly if your opinion significantly deviates from the average – please provide arguments to justify your view.

Table 10. Possible future development of migration trends in Eastern Europe in the case of EU visa abolition

	Ukraine first round	Ukraine second round	Belarus first round	Belarus second round	Moldova first round	Moldova second round
Mass outflow of labour migrants	1	1	1	1	0	0
Moderate outflow of labour migrants	13	11	12	14	11	13
No changes in number of labour migrants	7	6	2	0	6	4
Decrease in number of labour migrants	3	0	0	0	0	0
Regularisation of already present labour migrants	9	8	11	13	12	15
Growth in irregular employment	6	4	3	2	0	1
More long-term settlement migration	6	5	12	12	5	8
More asylum claims	2	1	3	1	2	0
Other	5 (more young people, more circular migration)	14 (more young people, more circular and seasonal migration)	3 (increase in tourism and business contacts)	5 (increase in tourism and business contacts)	0	4
Number of respondents (N)	19	16	16	16	16	16

Comparable to the results for the similar question asked in V4 states, the outcomes for EaP countries confirmed that, in general, respondents see the link between introduction by the EU of a visa-free regime for short-term stay for Ukrainian, Moldovan and Belarusian nationals and the changes in migration outflows towards the EU. A rather homogeneous picture was drawn by the respondents for all the respective EaP countries. First of all, no massive outflow of labour migrants from these countries should be expected. Most of the respondents foresee a moderate outflow of labour migrants from their countries to the EU. Experts in all three countries think that after the abolition of the short-term visa requirement one can expect more long-term and settlement migration. Moreover, some Ukrainian respondents pointed out a possible increase of circular and seasonal migration movements. In addition, some Ukrainians experts expect growth in irregular employment of their migrants in the EU also. What seems to be common to respondents from the all countries is that they rely on regularisation of their already present labour migrants in EU countries. And finally, what should be emphasised is that the results obtained in V4 states were very similar.

How big an outflow of migrants from you country will there be if the European Union lifts restrictions on access to the labour market for your country nationals (in a short-term horizon of three years after restrictions are abolished) in comparison with the present inflow? Given that you now know the opinions of other experts, please mark (with X) one of the following possibilities. If you feel it is important – particularly if your opinion significantly deviates from the average – please provide arguments to justify your view.

Table 11. Possible future development of migration trends in Eastern Europe in the case of elimination of restrictions in access to EU labour markets

	Ukraine first round	Ukraine second round	Belarus first round	Belarus second round	Moldova first round	Moldova second round
Much higher	3	1	4	5	0	0
Higher	10	10	11	11	14	12
No changes	6	5	1	0	3	2
Lower	0	0	0	0	0	0
Much lower	0	0	0	0	0	0
N	19	16	16	16	15	15

As in a similar question directed towards V4 experts, the aim of this inquiry was to assess the role of lifting labour market restrictions in comparison with easing the restrictions on mobility (visa-free regime). What was indicated in the V4 results is confirmed here. One probably cannot expect a massive invasion of EaP migrants flooding EU countries, but on the other hand, no decrease is very likely to be seen in this regard as well. Thus, higher migration flows with some additional “structural changes” might probably occur – as Ukrainian experts in particular stated.

Can you see any positive impacts springing from future migration from your country to the EU? Please rank below the indicated impacts with 5 – most important, 4 – important, 3 – neither important, nor unimportant, 2 – unimportant, 1 – least important.

Among the possible positive impacts springing from future migration from the respective EaP countries to EU, “delivery of remittances” clearly dominates (in addition, its importance is strengthened by the very low SD figure that signifies very uniform opinion among respondents). “Reducing poverty and unemployment” is the second important positive impact mentioned by respondents from Ukraine and Moldova. On the other hand, respondents from Belarus rely very much on future “returns of experienced migrants and growth in entrepreneurship”. All in all, all the above mentioned factors plus “mitigating social and economic tensions” play a very positive role according to the experts in all the EaP countries when assessing the future development of their international migration vis-à-vis the EU.

Can you see any negative impacts springing from future migration from your country to the EU? Please rank below the indicated impacts with 5 – most important, 4 – important, 3 – neither important, nor unimportant, 2 – unimportant, 1 – least important.

When assessing negative factors resulting from future migration from Ukraine, Moldova and Belarus to the EU, two factors clearly emerged as the most important. Respondents in all the EaP countries agree that they are very concerned by “depletion of their labour force” and “brain drain”. Moreover, in harmony with what Moldova in particular has already been suffering from, “breakup of families” is similarly perceived as a serious threat for the future.

In which time perspective do you expect that visas for short-term travel to the EU for Ukrainians, Belarusians and Moldovans may be abolished? Given that you now know

the opinions of other experts, please state your new opinion on your country nationals and also on the two other nations investigated in each respective row – one possibility for each nationality. Please, feel free to comment on your choice; second round results only (in the second round respondents were asked to present the estimates for two other nationalities as well).

The resulting picture clearly shows that respondents from all the EaP countries foresee possible abolition of the given visa regime for Moldova very soon – in a horizon of 2-3 years. (Moreover, the other 4 Ukrainian respondents voted for an even shorter period – “in 2014” – though this possibility was not offered at all). In fact, the same opinion is shared by Ukrainian and Moldovan respondents about Ukraine, whilst Belarusian experts split in this assessment into two clear groups – 43% voted for 2-3 years, 43% for 4-6 years. Belarus in itself might face abolition of the short-term visa regime according to Ukrainian and Moldovan respondents in a horizon of 7-10 years, while according to the Belarusian experts it would occur earlier, after 4-6 years. It is also important to point out that when comparing the given assessment with the results for V4 states both of them presented a very similar picture. The only difference may be that the EaP experts seem to possess a more thorough knowledge of visa liberalisation processes in relation to the EU than the V4 experts; in any case, this conclusion does indeed appear to be quite logical.

How do you assess current political debate in your country around the issue of visa abolishment for Eastern Partnership states? Please answer yes or no.

Table 12. Public debate in Eastern Europe over visa liberalisation

UKRAINE	YES	NO	N
This is an important topic for the general public	17	0	17
This is an important topic in political debate	14	3	17
The general public is favourable towards visa abolition	17	0	17
Politicians are favourable towards visa abolition	14	1	15
State officials/administration are favourable towards visa abolition	14	2	16
Business circles are favourable towards visa abolition	17	0	17

BELARUS	YES	NO	N
This is an important topic for the general public	12	4	16
This is an important topic in political debate	10	6	16
The general public is favourable towards visa abolition	15	0	16

Politicians are favourable towards visa abolition	6	8	16
State officials/administration are favourable towards visa abolition	5	10	16
Business circles are favourable towards visa abolition	15	0	16

MOLDOVA	YES	NO	N
This is an important topic for the general public	17	0	17
This is an important topic in political debate	17	0	17
The general public is favourable towards visa abolition	16	1	17
Politicians are favourable towards visa abolition	17	0	17
State officials/administration are favourable towards visa abolition	17	0	17
Business circles are favourable towards visa abolition	16	1	17

Two different national environments clearly appeared. On one side, Ukrainian and Moldovan respondents similarly and strongly expressed that international migration, in general, and visa abolition for EaP countries in particular, are perceived by all the relevant actors in their countries (namely, the public, politicians, state officials and business circles) as important issues. Opinions were almost unambiguous, supported by all the respondents or by a substantial majority of them. On the other hand, Belarusian respondents shared similar opinions to the Ukrainian and Moldovan respondents only when supporting a view that: “business circles are favourable towards visa abolition” and “the general public is favourable towards visa abolition”. Interestingly, more Belarusian experts expressed their disagreement (than agreement) with the statement that “politicians are favourable towards visa abolition” and that “state officials/administration are favourable towards visa abolition”.

When comparing EaP results with those for V4, one can clearly notice that visa liberalisation issues are of the highest importance for EaP societies, while certainly this is rather a marginal topic for Visegrad countries citizens.

Main results: policy measures

Respondents from all seven states were asked in the final question of the first Delphi round: “to formulate important strategic policy measures which should be newly applied in the near future (in a three year horizon) by destination Visegrad countries, by the EU and by countries of origin - to better manage the migration between Visegrad states and Eastern Europe and make migration more beneficial for all the actors”. The Delphi coordinators did not propose any policy solutions to choose in the first Delphi round; it was an open-ended question.

When putting all the results together, the following picture appears (policy measures which were mentioned more than five times are listed⁹). It is no surprise that there is an evident correlation between policy measures designed for Visegrad countries, on one hand, and the EU as a whole, on the other hand.

Table 13. Important strategic policy measures to better manage the migration between V4/EU and Eastern Europe

Policy recommendations for Visegrad countries	Frequency
- to promote mutual (both bilateral and multilateral) cooperation with EaP while making efforts to liberalise the migration regime and to abolish visa requirements for entering V4 and EU	33
- to sign agreements to guarantee rights and entitlements of migrant workers; to counteract discrimination	15
- to enhance the integration process of migrants in V4	11
- to facilitate circular migration	10
- to recognize EaP migrants' qualifications and diplomas	8
- to apply stricter migration policy and controls towards EaP migrants	6

Policy recommendations for EU	
- to promote mutual (both bilateral and multilateral) cooperation with EaP while making efforts to liberalise the migration regime and to abolish visa requirements for entering V4 and EU	40
- to sign agreements to guarantee rights and entitlements of migrant workers; to counteract discrimination	14
- to recognize EaP migrants' qualifications and diplomas	9
- to further work on possible accession of EaP to EU	6
- to open the national educational system to foreign students	6
- to facilitate circular migration	6

Policy recommendations for countries of origin	
- to sign agreements to guarantee rights and entitlements of migrant workers; to counteract discrimination	26
- to go through democratisation and socioeconomic reforms; to foster economic growth and implementation of policies for sustainable economic development, thereby decreasing emigration from countries of origin in a mid-term horizon	22
- to press for liberalisation or to even lifting visa restrictions in EU for migrants from EaP	12
- to carry out effective return migration policy including reintegration programs	9
- to facilitate circular migration	7
- to sign readmission agreements with the EU countries	7

⁹ They were “put together and unified”, in other words, designed (precisely formulated) by coordinators of the whole survey in harmony with respondents' formulations.

The most important policy measure that was recommended for both V4 states and the EU by all the experts was the promotion of mutual cooperation, which could be assessed as too vague a suggestion for it to be implemented in practice. However, this recommendation is followed by the recommendations to liberalise migration regimes and visa requirements. Another important point is that experts in both of the questioned groups are in favour of “signing agreements on the rights and entitlements of migrant workers”, which may indicate the general feeling that it is high time that migration from Eastern Europe was tackled in a more comprehensive and considered manner, rather than in an ad hoc way as it is today. Other suggestions included introduction of measures to facilitate circular migration or allowing for recognition of migrants’ qualifications. Only one policy measure among those which were more frequently raised calls for a more restrictive regime via “applying stricter migration policy and controls towards EaP migrants” – it was recommended for the Visegrad states.

When it comes to the recommendations for Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova, the issue of migrants’ rights protection and their legalisation in destination states comes to the fore. On the other hand, experts call for necessary political and socio-economic reforms that would allow for the sustainable development of those states and result in the reduction of emigration. Logically, the issue of visa abolition is also very high on the agenda.

In the second Delphi round, all the respondents were asked to: “*assess the situation by individual policy measures (obtained from the first Delphi round) with regard to their desirability and feasibility*”.

Table 14. Assessment of policy recommendations with regard to their feasibility and desirability

	Desirability			Feasibility		
	AM	SD	N	AM	SD	N
Policy recommendations for V4 – OVERALL RESULTS						
- to sign agreements to guarantee rights and entitlements of migrant workers; to counteract discrimination	4,3	0,9	97	3,4	1,0	95
- to promote mutual (both bilateral and multilateral) cooperation with EaP while making efforts to liberalise the migration regime and to abolish visa requirements for entering V4 and EU	4,3	0,7	101	3,4	0,8	95
- to design and implement a proper migration strategy	4,3	0,7	98	3,8	0,8	94
- to recognize EaP migrants' qualifications and diplomas	4,4	0,7	100	3,4	1,0	94
- to apply stricter migration policy and controls towards EaP migrants	2,3	1,0	99	3,4	1,0	94
- to analyse labour market needs in V4 and, accordingly, to decide what one wants to gain via migration/immigration	4,3	0,7	101	3,6	0,8	98
- to generally promote transparency within migration policy and practice	4,4	1,6	102	3,5	0,9	98
- to launch programs for attracting immigrants to V4	3,6	1,0	97	3,3	0,9	93
- to spread information about migration/integration measures	4,2	0,8	102	3,9	0,8	96
- to facilitate circular migration	4,3	0,8	99	3,7	0,8	94
- to enhance the integration process of migrants in V4	4,2	0,7	100	3,3	0,7	96
- to open the educational system to foreign students	4,4	0,7	98	4,1	0,8	84
- to weaken the emphasis which is placed on security aspects of the migration process	3,0	1,0	100	2,9	1,0	97
- to apply a more friendly attitude towards visa applicants in consulates of V4 abroad	4,3	0,8	99	3,7	1,0	96
- to increase the number of border checkpoints at the border with third-countries	3,6	1,1	97	3,2	0,8	95
- to launch additional programs of cultural and scientific exchanges among V4 and third-countries	4,3	0,7	96	4,0	0,7	94
- to facilitate repatriation	3,9	0,9	98	3,5	0,8	94
- to lessen the bureaucratic burden and administrative requirements which migrants are often exposed to	4,3	0,8	100	3,4	0,8	97

	Desirability			Feasibility		
	AM	SD	N	AM	SD	N
Policy recommendations for EU – OVERALL RESULTS						
- to sign agreements to guarantee rights and entitlements of migrant workers; to counteract discrimination	4,2	0,9	101	3,4	1,1	97
- to combat irregular migration	4,2	0,9	101	3,5	1,0	99
- to design and implement a proper migration strategy	4,2	0,8	97	3,5	0,8	92
- to promote mutual (both bilateral and multilateral) cooperation with EaP while making efforts to liberalise the migration regime and to abolish visa requirements for entering V4 and EU	4,3	0,7	100	3,4	0,8	97

- to support trans-border cooperation	4,5	0,6	98	4,0	0,7	96
- to enhance the integration process of migrants	4,2	0,7	98	3,5	0,7	94
- to improve migration statistics	4,3	0,8	103	3,6	0,9	99
- to further work on possible accession of EaP to EU	3,9	1,0	101	2,9	1,1	98
- to open the national educational system to foreign students	4,3	0,7	102	3,8	0,9	99
- to recognize EaP migrants' qualifications and diplomas	4,3	0,8	102	3,4	1,0	99
- to assist in improving development in countries of origin (also via business activities)	4,4	0,7	99	3,4	0,8	96
- to tighten migration policy towards third countries	2,6	0,8	101	3,6	1,0	96
- to facilitate circular migration	4,1	0,8	101	3,5	0,7	97
- to harmonize migration and integration policies	4,2	0,7	100	3,3	0,7	97
- to support NGOs' role in solving migratory issues	4,1	0,9	99	3,7	0,8	96

Policy recommendations for countries of origin – OVERALL RESULTS	AM	SD	N	AM	SD	N
- to sign agreements to guarantee rights and entitlements of migrant workers; to counteract discrimination	4,3	0,8	99	3,5	0,9	95
- to facilitate circular migration	4,1	0,8	101	3,4	0,8	96
- to sign readmission agreements with the EU countries	4,1	0,9	96	3,8	1,0	92
- to create more favourable conditions for money transfers (remittances) via official channels	4,3	0,8	101	3,6	0,9	99
- to combat irregular migration (including trafficking)	4,4	0,7	100	3,5	0,8	98
- to go through democratization and socioeconomic reforms; to foster economic growth and sustainable economic development, thereby decreasing emigration in a mid-term horizon	4,6	0,6	101	3,1	0,8	99
- to spread information about migration in the society	4,4	0,8	100	3,8	0,8	97
- to combat corruption	4,7	0,6	99	3,0	1,0	97
- to press for liberalisation and for lifting visa restrictions by the EU	4,2	0,9	99	3,3	0,9	96
- to support the development of the “Prague process” – targeted migration dialogue policy	4,2	0,9	100	3,6	0,8	97
- to support EU enlargement via signing association agreements with EU countries	4,2	0,7	99	3,4	0,7	97
- to develop effective communication channels with diasporas and to consolidate mutual relationships	4,2	0,8	101	3,5	0,8	98
- to improve migration statistics	4,4	0,8	97	3,5	0,9	95
- to develop border cooperation, inter alia, by launching local border traffic regimes between particular V4 and EaP countries	4,4	0,7	101	3,8	0,8	99
- to carry out effective return migration policy including reintegration programs	4,3	0,7	102	3,2	0,8	100
- to establish better coordination between state institutions dealing with migrants	4,5	0,6	98	3,5	0,8	96
- to streamline migration policy as such	4,5	0,7	97	3,4	0,8	95

Via this evaluation perspective, the following policy measures are regarded by experts as the most desirable for Visegrad countries: to open the educational system for foreign students, to recognize EaP migrants' qualifications, and to generally promote transparency within migration policy. As for two former policy measures, the strength of opinion is supported by a very uniform assessment among the given respondents (low SD figure). As far as the EU is concerned, supporting trans-border cooperation clearly appeared as the most desirable policy recommendation (also with a low SD figure), closely followed by "assisting in improving development in countries of origin (also via business activities)". Moreover, four other policy recommendations can be considered very desirable too - again those tied to the necessity to open up the educational system and to simplify recognition of qualifications and diplomas and the newly stressed "improvement of migration statistics" and "promoting mutual cooperation with EaP while making efforts to liberalise the migration regime and to abolish visa requirements for entering V4 and EU". Different policy recommendations appeared among the most desirable for the Eastern European countries of origin. "Combating corruption" closely followed by "building more developed and democratic societies" were preferred the most. "To establish better coordination between state institutions dealing with migrants" and "to streamline migration policy as such" were considered very important (again having low SD figures).

There is an interesting, and indeed important, aspect of those policy measures which were presented as highly undesirable. This applies to measures recommended for Visegrad countries and the EU (there were no such policy measures assessed for Eastern Europe). Apparently, there is some kind of disharmony since both pro-restrictive (to apply stricter migration policy towards EaP migrants - for V4; to tighten migration policy towards third countries - for EU) and anti-restrictive (to launch programs for attracting immigrants to V4 and to weaken the emphasis placed on security aspects of migration - for V4; to further work on possible accession of EaP to EU - for EU) were, in a comparative perspective, more rejected than accepted by respondents¹⁰.

With regards to feasibility, "To open the educational system to foreign students", "to launch programs of cultural and scientific exchanges among V4 and third-countries" and "to spread information about migration/integration measures" are among those policy measures which are considered by experts to be perfectly feasible for Visegrad countries. "Supporting of trans-border

¹⁰ Highly undesirable policy measures are typical of higher SD figures as compared to highly desirable ones.

cooperation” and “opening up of educational systems” were similarly stated as readily feasible for the EU. As for the EaP states, “to sign readmission agreements with the EU countries”, “to spread information about migration” and “to develop border cooperation, *inter alia*, by launching local border traffic regimes between V4 and EaP countries” are again assessed as very feasible.

On the other hand, the measures evaluated by respondents as extremely difficult to achieve were “to weaken the emphasis placed on security aspects of the migration process” for V4 and “to further work on possible accession of EaP to EU” for EU. Recommended policy measures for EaP as “combating corruption” and “going through democratization and socioeconomic reforms (...), thereby decreasing emigration from countries of origin” are seen by experts – in comparison with other policy measures – as very difficult to achieve.

A highly relevant issue is, of course, to identify policy measures which are considered by experts as highly desirable, and, at the same time, very feasible. These are mainly: “to open the educational system to foreign students” for V4, “to support trans-border cooperation” and “to open the national educational system to foreign students” for the EU. On the other hand, attention must be paid to the picture drawn by the EaP experts who, in relation to desirability *vis-à-vis* feasibility, found significant differences. It concerns the following policy measures: “to go through democratisation and socioeconomic reforms (...) thereby decreasing emigration” and “to combat corruption”. Here respondents’ assessment demonstrates a high discrepancy between, on the one hand, very high desirability and, on the other hand, very difficult feasibility.

Nevertheless, it is perhaps worth pointing out that there are also measures which are considered in agreement and (in a comparative perspective) rather undesirable and, at the same time, unfeasible – it concerns “to further work on possible accession of EaP to EU” for the EU and “to weaken the emphasis placed on security aspects of the migration process” for V4.

Conclusions

In summarising what we obtained via this Delphi survey, several issues arising from respondents’ opinions will be outlined in a comparative perspective.

First of all, we turn to one of the main research questions as to what might be the effect of visa abolition for the given EaP countries. It is likely that no massive outflow of labour migrants should be expected after the visa regime for

short-term travel for up to 90 days to the EU is abolished. Most of the respondents in the given EaP countries foresee a moderate outflow of labour migrants from their countries to the EU. Accordingly, similar views are typical of V4 respondents (a rather moderate inflow of labour migrants, more long-term settlement migration, and, to a lesser extent, growth in irregular employment).

Second, there is a slightly different perception of the probable future development of the migration of EaP nationals to V4 countries by experts from individual countries. Czech and Hungarian respondents expect fewer changes compared to Polish and Slovak experts, who foresee a more dynamic development in this respect. Moreover, Czech and Hungarian respondents are – compared to Polish and Slovakian ones – more cautious in terms of the statement that abolition of visas for Ukrainians, Belarusians and Moldovans is desirable from the point of view of their country's interests. Furthermore, only the respondents in Czechia and Hungary were in agreement on supporting the statement that (their national) general public is not favourable towards visa abolition.

Third, Hungarian respondents apparently treat Ukrainian immigration to Hungary as something which differs from other immigrant inflows and perhaps deserves special attention. The positive assessment of this group is very likely connected with the fact that most of these real and potentially would-be migrants are Ukrainians of Hungarian origin. This phenomenon (a specific relationship to compatriots) was not so distinctly observed in relation to any other national respondent sample.

Fourth, Belarus and Belarusian respondents partly differ from the other two EaP countries when assessing the current and future migratory development. Importantly, only Belarus is considered by most respondents as a country who will obtain visa free regime to EU later than Moldova and Ukraine. On the other hand, unlike in Moldova and Ukraine, low wages, difficulty in finding work, poverty and social tensions were not perceived as very important push migratory factors in Belarus. In the same vein, whereas Ukrainian and Moldovan experts have no uniform opinion on future migratory developments, Belarusian experts do not anticipate any future changes in the migratory situation. Last but not least, unlike experts in Ukraine and Moldova, more Belarusian respondents tend to support the opinion that their politicians and state officials/administration are not favourable towards visa abolition.

Fifth, when all the respondents (within the first Delphi round) were to “freely” formulate important strategic policy measures which should be newly applied

in the near future, the recommendation: “to liberalise the migration regime and to abolish visa requirements for entering V4 and the EU” is by far the most frequently mentioned policy measure recommended for V4 and the EU. It was followed by “signing agreements to guarantee rights and entitlements of migrant workers; to counteract discrimination”. The need to sign an accords on migrants’ rights was the most frequent policy measure recommended for Eastern European countries. The second most important recommendation refers to the need to build more developed economies and to decrease emigration from those countries of origin in a mid-term horizon.

The second Delphi round, where the respondents were asked to assess the individual policy measures with regard to their desirability and feasibility brought important results. The policy measures which are considered by experts as highly desirable, and, at the same time, easily feasible, are mainly: “to open the educational system to foreign students” for Visegrad countries, “to support trans-border cooperation” and “to open the national educational system to foreign students” for the EU. No such measure was stated on behalf of the Eastern European countries.

2. ECONOMETRIC FORECASTING OF MIGRANT STOCK FROM EASTERN EUROPE IN THE EU MEMBERS STATES

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Introduction

The main objective of this chapter is to elaborate the econometric model forecasting the migrant stock from the Eastern European states (namely Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova) in the European Union Member States in 2014-2050. Based on economic and demographic data derived mainly from Eurostat, existing literature and previous own research, a detailed econometric model fulfilling the criteria of scientific integrity and practical utility was designed and executed. To ensure the validity of results, the mathematical correctness of the elaborated model was verified and the co-integration of explanatory variables using panel data was tested. Based on this model, the estimates on migrant stock's dynamics from Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine in the EU states were performed and three scenarios of possible developments till 2050 were presented.

To our best knowledge, no similar analysis or projections of possible migration from the Eastern European countries to the EU has ever been conducted. This research builds on similar studies predicting Central European migrations to the EU before and after 2004. Our model works with the newest data, takes into account the impact of recent economic and financial crises, and employs advanced econometric techniques. Hence, this paper might contribute to the vast body of research literature and becomes a reference point for relevant stakeholders and policymakers.

All three Eastern European countries discussed have experienced labour emigration, although the character and dynamics of the outflows vary substantially between them. Belarus sustained an economic crisis in 2011. As a result, mainly industrial workers began migrating to Russia, which accounts for the majority of Belarusian emigration. However, the overall migration outflows from Belarus probably do not exceed several hundred thousand. The second state analysed - Moldova - is one of the countries in the world most heavily

affected by its citizens' labour emigration abroad. The Moldovan Labour Force Survey data showed that around 300,000 people, or approximately 25% of the economically active population, were working abroad as of 2010¹¹. The outflows from Moldova tend to take the form of long-term migration which is particularly painful for the country from demographic, economic and social point of views. Ukraine is a special case among the three. In 2013 the International Labour Organization conducted a Modular Population Survey on Labour Migration Issues that revealed that as many as 1.2 million individuals (3.4% of the population in the 15-70 age group) worked abroad in the period of January 2010-June 2012¹². However, the general emigration dynamics of Ukrainians is falling, the recent events (Euromaidan) in Ukraine and subsequent annexation of Crimea by Russia, and finally the violence in Eastern Ukraine raised concerns about future politically motivated emigration.

Reality can be stranger than fiction and many events cannot be captured by the econometric models. Forecasts do not have to come true, they may only indicate what might happen. Nevertheless, this elaboration attempts to predict the migration stocks in the EU from all three Eastern European countries in question, based on the current situation and the three scenarios that are likely to capture the possible changes in economic situation in the medium term and long term.

Finally, three important caveats should be made. Firstly, our model is based on the Eurostat data for residence permits granted to Ukrainian, Moldovan and Belarusian citizens in a given year by particular EU states. Therefore, neither circular migration (residence permits granted for stay shorter than 3 months) nor irregular migration (unregistered for obvious reasons) have not been taken into account. Since no complete historical data related to changes in migrants stocks in the EU due to the visa liberalisation were accessible, we use a dummy instead - the free movement of people. And lastly, since the following chapter aims at presenting the results of the estimates, to both practitioners dealing with migration issues and the researchers as well as to the general public, the section explaining the model was shortened down to the most important specifications and assumptions.

¹¹ M. Vremiş, V. Craievschi-Toartă, E. Burdelnii, A. Herm, M. Poulain, *Extended migration profile of the Republic of Moldova*, Chisinau: International Organization for Migration 2012.

¹² *Report on methodology, organization and results of module survey on labour migration in Ukraine*, International Labour Organisation 2013.

The methodology and the model specifications

The research literature implies that it might be possible to explain the migration trends by the specific framework of *push* and *pull* factors. *Push* factors are represented by unfavourable domestic conditions that influence individuals to seek work abroad, whilst *pull* factors can be described as favourable conditions in the target countries of migration that make them more attractive in the eyes of potential migrants. One should not think of the *push* factors in purely economic ways, e.g. is in terms of low wages or high unemployment, but also in terms of unfavourable political situations, police oppression, and corrupt institutions. The same rationale holds for the *pull* factors, e.g. higher wages, higher living standards, better healthcare and other related issues. The incentives to migrate decrease with age because the older a person is the lower are the expected gains obtained from moving abroad.

The first part of the elaborated model is consistent with those models based on a human capital approach that deal with investment in human capital and expected future income¹³. The model applies the econometric methods used by Boeri and Brücker (2000) and Alvarez-Plata, Brücker and Siliverstovs (2003) in estimating migration from Central and Eastern Europe into the EU 15 before EU expansion¹⁴, and most recently by Glazar and Strielkowski (2010) and Glazar and Strielkowski (2012) in assessing future migration from Turkey to the EU¹⁵.

In the elaborated model we assume that people make expectations regarding the future income in the target (host) country and source (home) country. The differences in incomes in the target and source countries in the past influence expectations about the future possible difference in incomes and the income a migrant can obtain in the host country. A country's GDP *per capita* serves as

¹³ L.A. Sjaastad, *The Costs and Returns of Human Migration*, *The Journal of Political Economy*, 1962, Vol. 70, No. 5, pp. 80-93; J. Harris, M. Todaro, *Migration, Unemployment and Development: A Two-sector Analysis*, *The American Economic Review*, 1970, Vol. 60, pp. 126-142; T.J. Hatton, *A Model of UK Emigration, 1870-1913*, *Review of Economics and Statistics*, 1995, Vol. 77, pp. 407-15.

¹⁴ T. Boeri, H. Brücker et al., *The Impact of Eastern Enlargement on Employment and Labour Markets in the EU Member States*, Final Report, Brussels 2000; P. Alvarez-Plata, H. Brücker, B. Siliverstovs, *Potential Migration from Central and Eastern Europe into the EU-15 - an Update*; Berlin 2003: DIW.

¹⁵ O. Glazar, W. Strielkowski, *Turkey and the European Union: possible incidence of the EU accession on migration flows*, *Prague Economic Papers*, 2010, Vol. 3, pp. 218-235; O. Glazar, W. Strielkowski, *Turkish migration in Europe: An economic analysis of possible EU accession on migration*, Charles University, Prague, 2012.

a proxy for individuals' incomes both in source and target countries (the selection of GDP *per capita* can be justified by the limited data sources available). The average employment rate in both target and source countries is taken as a proxy for labour market conditions. More precisely, the probability of finding a job rises with higher employment and vice versa. The lagged migration stock serve as a proxy for network effects. If migration stocks are based on expectations about past variables, this means that present values are influenced by past values¹⁶, thus it should be a first-order autoregressive process (AR (1)). Therefore, a simple error-correction model (a dynamic model in which the movement of the variables in any period is related to the previous period's gap from long-run equilibrium) can be constructed in the following way¹⁷:

$$\begin{aligned} \Delta m_{fh,t} = & \beta_1 * \Delta \ln (w_{f,t} / w_{h,t}) + \beta_2 * \Delta \ln (w_{h,t}) + \beta_3 * \Delta \ln (e_{h,t}) + \\ & + \beta_4 * \Delta \ln (e_{f,t}) + \beta_5 * \ln (w_{f,t-1} / w_{h,t-1}) + \beta_6 * \ln (w_{h,t-1}) + \\ & + \beta_7 * \ln (e_{h,t-1}) + \beta_8 * \ln (e_{f,t-1}) + \beta_9 * (m_{fh,t-1}) + \beta_{10} * DummyF + \varepsilon_t \end{aligned} \quad (1)$$

where:

$m_{fh,t}$	dependent variable – the stock of migrants from Eastern European countries f (Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine) in the EU Member States as a % of home population h
$w_{f,t}/w_{h,t}$	foreign to home country income difference
$w_{h,t}$	home country income
$e_{f,t}$	employment rate in country f
$e_{h,t}$	country of origin employment rate
$m_{fh,t-1}$	lagged migrants stock of home country h and target country f
DummyF	dummy variable for the free movement of persons
$t, t-1$	denotes time periods

Variables enter the equation specified in (1) both as fixed quantities and as the deltas (differences between the variables in the current and previous time periods). Variables' differences show the short term reaction of migration to these fluctuations. On the other hand, the levels of the variables determine the

¹⁶ T.J. Hatton, *op. cit.*

¹⁷ G. Alogoskoufis, R. Smith, *On error correction models: specification, interpretation, estimation*, *Journal of Economic Surveys*, 1991, No. 5(1), pp. 97-128.

long-run relations between migration stocks and respective independent variables. The equilibrium stock of migrants can therefore be derived from equation (1) by setting all changes equal to nil and obtaining the steady state for the stock of migrants¹⁸:

$$\begin{aligned} \bar{m}_{fn} = & (\beta_5 / -\beta_9) * \ln (w_f / w_h) + (\beta_6 / -\beta_9) * \ln (w_h) + \\ & + (\beta_7 / -\beta_9) * \ln (e_h) + (\beta_8 / -\beta_9) * \ln (e_f) + \\ & + (\beta_{10} / -\beta_9) * DummyF + \varepsilon \end{aligned} \tag{2}$$

where \bar{m}_{fn} is the steady state equilibrium share of the foreign migrants in the source population. The β coefficients in brackets are therefore semi-elasticities in the long-run equilibrium and denote the relation between stocks of migrants and explanatory variables. The coefficient β_9 is expected to be negative; hence the signs of the original coefficients will not change. A negative sign of the coefficient is expected due to the assumption that migration follows an AR(1) process (i.e. the output variable depends linearly on its own previous values). Hence $m_t = \eta m_{t-1}$ where η must be smaller than 1 (If this does not hold, the entire population of the source country will migrate). A part of (1) can be re-written in the following way:

$$\begin{aligned} \Delta m_t = m_t - m_{t-1} = & \beta_9 * (m_{t-1}) \\ m_t = & (1 + \beta_9) * (m_{t-1}) \end{aligned} \tag{3}$$

Thus, it appears that β_9 should be negative to ensure the sustainability of migration. If the β_9 coefficient were even slightly positive, the coefficient before lagged migration would have been greater than one and this would have led to an unsustainable migration explosion.

First we test if the long-term equilibrium between migration stocks and explanatory variables does exist. Therefore, we tested for the cointegration that shows that our variables make up the cointegration set, because they passed the two stage process. So we can start with estimation of the long term equilibrium parameters from equation. We set the changes of variables for the steady state to zero, and this allows us to estimate the described equation (3).

¹⁸ Variable t (time) was left out from the equation in order to indicate the long-term equilibrium.

A part of cointegration that involves the cross-section pooling of data might evoke further restrictions that may cause problems to the regression results. In the literature, a variety of estimators for estimating such panel data is used. From the data assumptions presented in similar studies¹⁹ it appears that in this framework the most efficient estimator should be the Seemingly Unrelated Regression (SUR). However, we will also evaluate the model by employing classical panel data Least Squares (PLS) and General method of moments (GMM). We will try to confirm the hypothesis that the SUR is the best estimator in this respective case.

Furthermore, the variable denoting the employment rate in the country of origin (domestic income) had to be eliminated from equation (2) due to the fact that it proved to be insignificant in all estimates (it appeared to be redundant since the null hypothesis of insignificance of beta was not rejected). The final model can thus be presented in the following way:

$$\Delta m_{fht} = \alpha_h + \beta_1 \ln(w_{ft}/w_{ht}) + \beta_2 \ln(w_{ht}) + \beta_3 \ln(e_{ft}) + \beta_4(m_{fh,t-1}) + \beta_5(m_{fh,t-2}) + \beta_6 * DummyF + Z_{fh}\gamma + \varepsilon_t \quad (4)$$

where:

m_{fht}	the dependent variable representing the stock of migrants from source country h living in target country f as a % of source country population h .
w_{ht}	country of origin income level
w_{ft}/w_{ht}	foreign to home country income difference
e_{ft}	employment rate in country f
$m_{fh,t-1}$	lagged migrants stock of home country h in country f
$m_{fh,t-2}$	lagged migrants stock of home country h in country f
Z_{fh}	vector of time-invariant variables which affect the migration between two countries, such as geographical proximity and language.
DummyF	Free movement of persons

¹⁹ Alvarez-Plata, Brücker, and Siliverstovs, *op. cit.*

Our model employs the econometric techniques known as Seemingly Unrelated Regression (SUR), Panel data Least Squares (PLS) and General method of moments (GMM).

Three types of possible scenarios – low, medium, high – are presented for each of the three countries: until the year of 2050 with a simulated shock of introduction free movement of labour in 2015. From a political point of view, it may be unreasonable to forecast such an early abolition (2015) by EU MS of restrictions on access to their territories for migrants from Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova. It should be emphasised that Poland and other Central European states as well as Bulgaria and Romania were offered genuine free movement of people only when they joined the EU, while free access for their citizens to the labour markets of all MS was guaranteed a few years later. However, by application of this dummy (free movement of people) we intended to test whether and to what extent such a deep liberalisation of mobility may influence the migrant stock dynamics. Two reasons lay behind our decision. Firstly, such a subtle liberalisation of mobility rules as visa liberalisation cannot be introduced successfully into an econometric forecast model. Secondly, we did not possess comprehensive uniform statistical data (including historical data) back from the 90s when EU MS lifted the visa regime for the Central European states nor for the Western Balkan states who obtained a visa free regime in 2009-2010.

The most notorious problem in migration estimation is the absence of data. Due to the non-existence of historical data and application of different methodologies in different states (in particular, discrepancies exist between Eurostat migration data and definitions and those applied in Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova), comparison of stocks and flows data may be very complicated. Therefore, we decided to stick to one source of migration data, namely on residence permits²⁰ data for the EU-27, which turned out to be more detailed and comprehensive than migrant stock data. However, one should remember that the simulation presented here concerns future trends in the residence permits issuance, which was taken as a proxy for migrants stock.

²⁰ By residence permits data Eurostat understands: any authorisation valid for at least 3 months issued by the authorities of a Member State allowing a third country national to stay legally on its territory. According to Article 6.2 of the Council Regulation (CE) No 862/2007 of 11 July 2007, when national laws and administrative practices of a Member State allow for specific categories of long-term visa or immigration status to be granted instead of residence permits, such visas and grants of statuses are also included.

Main results and discussion

In this sub-section three different scenarios for the future dynamics of migrant stock of Ukrainian, Moldovan and Belarusian nationals in the EU have been presented. In our model we worked with the panel data on residence permits issued to the nationals of Eastern European states in 27 EU countries and Norway. For the vast majority of countries we found observations from 2008 to 2012. In the model, we explain migrant stock using the number of issued residence permits and by analysing the *push* and *pull* factors of migration – the explanatory variables are unemployment and GDP *per capita* in both the EU in general and in each of the three examined Eastern European states. Population data, data for GDP *per capita* and the unemployment rate in the EU MS were derived from Eurostat, while equivalent data for Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova come from the World Bank and national statistical offices of the respective states.

Table 15. Statistical sources for the migration projections

Data type	Source	Link
Migrants stock	EUROSTAT	http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/population/data/database
Population growth: Belarus, Moldova, Ukraine	WORLD BANK	http://databank.worldbank.org/data/views/variableselection/selectvariables.aspx?source=world-development-indicators
Population: Belarus, Moldova, Ukraine	WORLD BANK	http://databank.worldbank.org/data/views/variableselection/selectvariables.aspx?source=world-development-indicators
Population: EU countries	EUROSTAT	http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/population/data/database
GDP <i>per capita</i> in current US dollars	WORLD BANK	http://databank.worldbank.org/data/views/variableselection/selectvariables.aspx?source=world-development-indicators
Unemployment: EU countries	EUROSTAT	http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/employment_unemployment_ifs/data/database
Unemployment: Belarus	National Statistical Office	http://belstat.gov.by/homep/en/indicators/labor.php
Unemployment: Moldova	WORLD BANK, National Statistical Office	http://databank.worldbank.org/data/views/variableselection/selectvariables.aspx?source=world-development-indicators
		http://statbank.statistica.md/pxweb/database/EN/03%20MUN/MUN06/MUN06.asp
Unemployment: Ukraine	WORLD BANK, mecometer.com	http://databank.worldbank.org/data/views/variableselection/selectvariables.aspx?source=world-development-indicators
		http://mecometer.com/compare/russia+ukraine/unemployment/

The shock which simulates the free movement of people in the EU for the nationals of the three respective states has been set to occur in the year 2015. The size and duration of the shock is derived from the situation in Poland, Bulgaria and Romania after their accession to the EU, which eliminated barriers to mobility to the ‘old’ EU MS. The results of the shock are recorded in the model one year after the free movements restrictions were abolished (there is a lag before the data on the stock of migrants are collected and analysed).

The low (best-case) scenario assumes the unemployment rate to be the average of the 2008-2012 observations, as well as the proxy of economic growth and well-being represented by 1% GDP growth in the Eastern European states and 4% GDP growth in the EU Member States. The medium (or the realistic) scenario works with 0% GDP growth in the Eastern European states and 2% GDP growth in the EU Member States. Finally, the high (or the worst-case) scenario takes in a 2% decline in GDP in the Eastern European states and 0% GDP growth in the EU Member States.

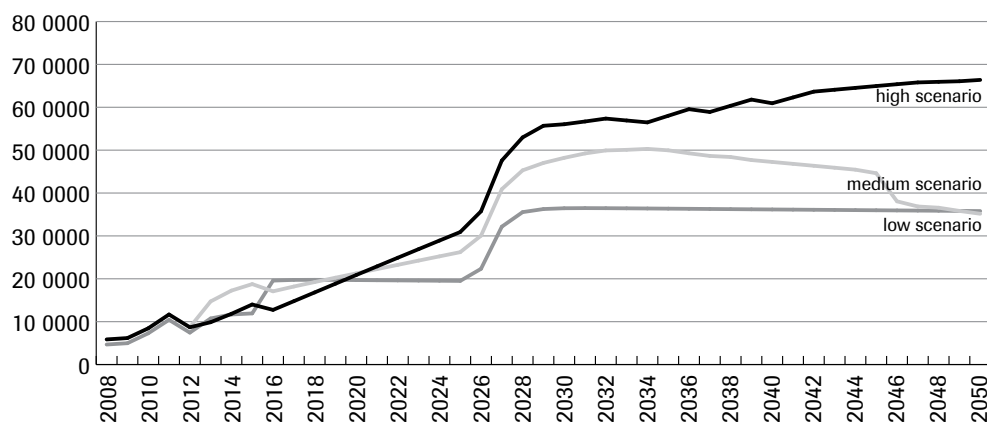
Table 16. Specifications of econometric model scenarios

Low	Medium	High
Unemployment = average of 2008–2012 observations	Unemployment = average of 2008–2012 observations + 0.5%	Unemployment = average of 2008–2012 observations + 2%
1% GDP growth Eastern Europe, 4% GDP growth EU MS	0% GDP growth Eastern Europe, 2% GDP growth EU MS	-2% GDP decline Eastern Europe, 0% GDP growth EU MS

Source: Own results

The results obtained for all the scenarios are presented below. It should, however, be borne in mind that, due to the fact that many migrants from Eastern Europe in the EU remain there irregularly and migration statistics poorly reflect circular migration, this forecast is more likely to point to trends than show precise figures.

Figure 1. Total Belarusian resident stock 2008-2050 – 3 scenarios, 27 EU countries and Norway, impact of visa abolition in 2015



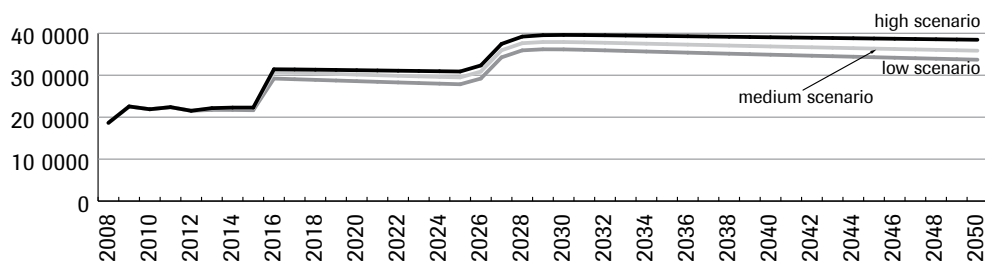
Source: Own results based on Eurostat data

Looking at the results for Belarus one can notice that no major increase in the number of Belarusian nationals holding residence permits in the EU MS is to be expected in short and medium-term perspectives. According to official Belarusian statistics, Belarus belongs to those rare countries in the post-Soviet space that has been characterized by positive net migration during the whole independence period. However, the country chapter on Belarus in our publication clearly shows that these statistics vary significantly from the reality. Nevertheless, Belarusian nationals exhibit a rather low propensity to migration. Moreover, the overwhelming majority of Belarusian migrants reside and work in Russia.

In the low scenario no real change in the number of Belarusian residents can be expected even up to 2026 and yet the introduction of free movement of people does not seem to significantly alter that trend (possible increases can be observed for a year or two). In both the medium and high scenarios the shock related to visa abolition may have some impact on the rise in migrant stock. However, the migration patterns of Belarusian nationals may only change significantly in the medium- and long-term perspectives. In the medium scenario, a considerable increase can be expected only in 2026-2032 and may amount to around 500,000 residence permits in 2032. In subsequent years migrants stocks should stabilize. It is only the high scenario, with very pessimistic economic forecasts for Belarus and a growing Belarusian diaspora in the EU, that predicts long-term increasing migration dynamics up to 2050.

When the main destination states for Belorussian migrants are to be selected, Poland seems to occupy first position. However, the growth rate of Belorussian migrant stock in that country turned out to be smaller than the overall growth rate of Belarusians in the EU, which may be due to relatively lower wages in Poland in comparison with other EU locations.

Figure 2. Total Moldovan resident stock 2008-2050 – 3 scenarios, 27 EU countries and Norway, impact of visa abolition in 2015



Source: Own results based on Eurostat data

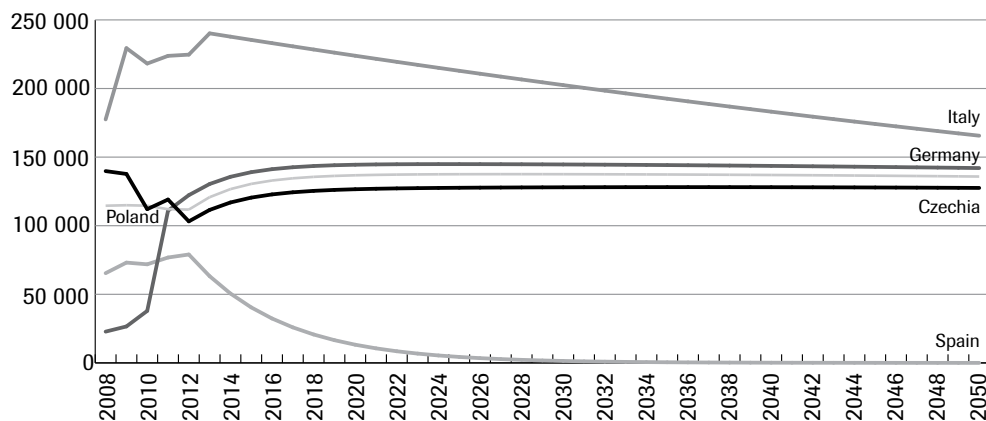
Projections for Moldova do not show high growth potential mainly due to the very small overall number of the Moldovan population. The second most important factor is the significant number of Moldovans (as many as 500,000) who hold Romanian passports, which is certainly a more comfortable way of staying and working in the EU MS than requiring a residence permit²¹. Currently, approximately half of labour migrants from Moldova choose Russia as a destination state, and half choose EU locations. However, the trend in favour of EU locations may accelerate due to visa relaxation for short-term stays, which took effect in April 2014, and the clear pro-European path chosen by the Moldova.

In the case of Moldova, the results for all three scenarios represent an oscillation around 400,000 people (below, at the 400,000 migrant stock level, or above that level for the optimistic, realistic and pessimistic scenarios respectively) until 2050. Simultaneously, it should be borne in mind that long-term forecasts are subject to higher risks than short-term ones. The introduction of free movement of labour (the dummy for visa liberalisation) for Moldovan nationals appears to result in an increase of migration stocks in the EU to a level ranging from 250,000 to 300,000 Moldovans. The main destination states for Moldovan migrants are Italy and other Southern European states. If we take

²¹ For more details see the country chapter on Moldova.

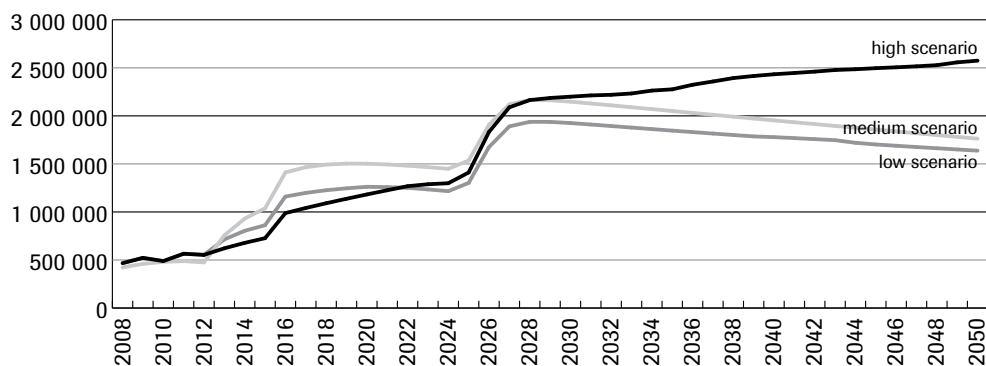
into consideration current patterns of Moldovan migration, it is certainly becoming more permanent with a visible tendency to ask not only for the status of EU long-term resident but also to obtain EU MS citizenships. This may add a further explanation to our projections in terms of why the curves of future migration stocks are rather flat.

Figure 3. Ukrainian resident stock in 27 EU Member States and Norway in 2008-2050: medium scenario



Source: Own results based on Eurostat data

Figure 4. Total Ukrainian resident stock 2008-2050 – 3 scenarios, 27 EU countries and Norway, impact of visa abolition in 2015



Source: Own results based on Eurostat data

As previously mentioned, the highest possible increase in migrants stock may happen in the case of Ukraine due to its relatively large population, significant wage gaps in comparison to EU states and strong network effects. What is also important is that in recent years Ukrainians were among the top nationalities

who received residence permits in the EU, which imposes certain, more dynamic, assumptions on the forecasts. On the other hand, the rise in registered residence permit data does not necessarily mean the arrival of new migrants – the most likely explanation is the tendency of Ukrainian migrants to legalise their stay. It would also confirm the previously mentioned hypothesis for Moldova concerning the changing pattern of Eastern European migration as becoming the permanent one. Regardless of what has been said earlier, the fact that EU residence permit data more accurately show the real migration picture provides added value to our projections.

The low and medium scenarios envisages that by the year 2050 there is going to be just around 1,500,000 Ukrainian residents in the EU²². Where the high (worst-case) scenario is concerned, the stock of Ukrainian nationals in the EU might reach some 2,000,000 to 2,500,000 people. However, we should look at these long-term prognoses very carefully since many economic and population changes, including unpredictable shocks, may occur over such a long perspective.

If we look at the short-term projections we can see that until 2014 Ukrainian migrant stock should be on the rise, after which they would stabilise for a certain period of time, and then will likely start to grow again from around 2025. Then, after another stabilization period, future growth may occur around 2028 but only in the pessimistic scenario. The result of visa abolition in 2015 would result in the low case scenario of a rise of between 200,000-300,000 in new residence permits issued. It should be noted that, paradoxically, the increase in migrants stocks may actually be higher in the medium scenario than in the high one, most probably due to reduced labour possibilities within the EU labour markets in that scenario. As for destination states for Ukrainian migrants in the EU, there is no one dominant location. The most important ones are: Poland, Italy and Czechia.

In all three scenarios for all the states we assumed GDP growth (or decrease) in both the Eastern European state and in the EU, although the assumptions for the EU were always more optimistic due to the strength of its economy. Nevertheless, if the EU was severely hit by any new recession, this would certainly curtail the inflow of new migrants.

²² For details see the country chapter on Ukraine.

Overall, we can state within the framework of this model and using this detailed econometric approach that our results are robust and significant, which, in turn, might lead us to the conclusions that migration from Eastern Europe to the EU MS would be considerable but manageable representing from 1.5 million to 3.5 million migrants in the perspective up to 2050, depending on the scenario we use.

Conclusions

In this chapter, we have presented the results of the migrant stock (residence permits data) projections, based on the econometric model derived from the human capital approach. We assumed that people make expectations regarding the future income in the target (host) country and source (home) country. The differences in former incomes influence expectations about future possible incomes. We explained migrant stocks using the number of issued residence permits and by analysing the so-called *push factors* of migration – the explanatory variables are unemployment and GDP *per capita* in the Eastern European countries in question. We simulated the shock that causes access to the free movement of people for 2015 (a proxy for visa abolition) and the size and duration of the shock is derived from the situation in Poland, Bulgaria and Romania after their EU accession in 2004 and 2007 respectively.

To sum up, it appears that the hypothetical visa abolition for the Eastern European countries represented by Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine is not going to significantly increase the stocks of migrants from these countries in the EU Member States. The results of the forecasts for all the states may amount to around 50,000 individuals over a two-year perspective for both Belarus and Moldova (taken separately) and around 200,000-300,000 for Ukraine. In the longer term (up to 2050) the overall stocks in the EU from those three states may oscillate between 1.5-3.5 million migrants, depending on the economic performance of both the destination locations and the countries of origin. However, it should be emphasized that the forecasts do not need to come true, they only model the potential migration dynamics under different scenarios of economic development.

3. THE IMPACT OF VISA LIBERALISATION ON MIGRATION FROM EASTERN EUROPE TO THE EU AND V4 – CAN WE LEARN FROM THE PAST?

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Introduction

As a manifestation of their sovereignty, states regulate the access of foreign nationals to their territories, both concerning short-term movements (travel), and with regard to entries for the purpose of longer-term stay (immigration). The most common instruments used for this purpose are laws regulating medium- and long-term stays of foreign nationals, identity checks at the external borders (and sometimes also within countries), and the definition and enforcement of entry requirements for short-term travellers, such as passport and visa obligations.

In the European Union, these three basic dimensions of states' mobility control policies (immigration legislation, border control, and visa policy) have been subject to processes of harmonisation and communitisation for more than 15 years. In the area of visa policy, communitisation has seen more progress than in other areas of cooperation. With some exceptions, the Member States now further develop the Union's visa policy together. This is done on the basis of three main legal instruments, the Schengen Borders Code²³, regulating the crossing of the EU's external borders and entry requirements for third-country nationals, the Visa Code²⁴, which lays down the conditions and modalities of granting visas for short stays, airport transits and transit travel, and the EU Visa Regulation²⁵, that specifies uniformly which third-country nationals need visas to enter the Schengen area, and which do not.

²³ Regulation (EC) No 562/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 March 2006 establishing a Community Code on the rules governing the movement of persons across borders (Schengen Borders Code).

²⁴ Regulation 810/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 July 2009 establishing a Community Code on Visas (Visa Code).

²⁵ Council Regulation (EC) No 539/2001 of 15 March 2001 listing the third countries whose nationals must be in possession of visas when crossing the external borders and those whose nationals are exempt from that requirement.

It is largely under-researched, however, how the three above-mentioned dimensions of mobility control policies, including migration control, affect each other, or, to be more precise, whether a change in immigration law can trigger not only (intended) changes in immigration patterns but also (unintended) higher (or lower) numbers of applications for short-term visas or, conversely, whether measures affecting the granting of short-term visas can have an impact not only on short term travel but also on longer-term immigration and residence of foreign nationals.

When the EU engages in dialogue with third countries on visa facilitation agreements or visa-free travel, there is often substantial scepticism towards any liberalisation, and even if political leaders are unlikely to openly state this, much of their resistance can be attributed to fears of visa abolishment triggering uncontrollable influxes, together with repercussions for the volume of longer-term immigration and settlement. To find actual evidence concerning any such effects of visa liberalization, however, seems to be more difficult.

When we want to know whether, or how, changes in the EU visa regime towards third countries, and in particular the lifting of any visa requirements with regard to short-term travel, can affect longer-term migration patterns, one possible hypothesis is that visa-free travel facilitates mobility and thus migration, at least indirectly, while conversely, a visa requirement hampers cross-border movements²⁶. When a visa requirement is in place, pre-entry procedures may have a deterring effect, not least because of costs, waiting times at consulates, application procedures and the need to provide documentation, among other factors²⁷. It has, however, not been established with certainty whether such a link between visa policies and immigration exists in reality.

The objective of this chapter shall be to explore some historic and more recent examples of cases in which visa requirements were lifted by the EU Member States and to ask whether this may have prompted any measurable changes in immigration flows between the countries or regions involved. It is hoped that any speculation concerning the impact of possible visa liberalisation in

²⁶ S. Bertoli, J. Moraga, *Visa Policies, Networks and the Cliff at the Border*, IZA Discussion Paper No. 7094, 2012.

²⁷ E. Neumayer, *Unequal access to foreign spaces: how states use visa restrictions to regulate mobility in a globalized world*, *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 2006, 31 (1), pp. 72-84.

the future, between the EU on the one side and Moldova, Ukraine and Belarus on the other side, will profit from this analysis.

Methodology, data sources and caveats

The analysis relies on statistical data related to specific case-studies. The basic approach is to look at immigration from a particular country to an EU Member States or the EU as a whole over time, and to check whether any significant changes, such as a sudden increase in immigration or a rising number of asylum applicants, can be seen immediately after the point in time when the requirement to hold a short-term visa was lifted.

The analysis will be carried out by examining two case studies. Firstly, a short section will look into the case of citizens moving to Germany from Poland, the Baltic countries, Bulgaria and Romania before and after the German government introduced visa-free travel for the nationals of these countries in 1991, 1999, 2001 and 2002, respectively. It is assumed that Germany represents a good case example, as it has been one of the most important hubs and destinations for Central and Eastern European migrants.

The second case deals with the consequences of more recent visa liberalisations towards the citizens of the Western Balkan countries: Serbia, Montenegro, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM), Albania and Bosnia-Herzegovina. Here, the abandonment of previous visa requirements came as a joint decision by the Schengen countries and took effect in December 2009 (for Serbia, Montenegro and the FYROM) and in December 2010 (for Albania and Bosnia-Herzegovina). These cases will be examined in more detail, also due to the better availability of reliable data for EU Member States. Since 2008, the statistical office of the EU (Eurostat) has been collecting certain migration statistics in a harmonised fashion on the basis of a binding EU regulation²⁸.

Five statistical sources are used as indicators: data on first-time residence permits issued by EU Member States to nationals of the countries that were relieved from visa obligations, data on immigration flows (nationals immigrating from these countries in a specific year), population stock data (indicating the number of nationals of these countries residing in EU Member States at

²⁸ Regulation (EC) No 862/2007 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 July 2007 on Community statistics on migration and international protection and repealing Council Regulation (EEC) No 311/76 on the compilation of statistics on foreign workers.

specific points in time), data on asylum applications and data on foreign nationals found to be “illegally present” in EU Member States. All these data, with the exception of some additional data from national statistical sources, were retrieved from the Eurostat database.

A few problems were experienced, however. The annual Eurostat statistics on immigration flows turned out to be both incomplete and inconsistent over time. For some Member States, no reliable data could be found, whereas for others, there were breaks in the timeline and the reported figures changed due to modifications of underlying definitions or data retrieval methods. Therefore, some potentially relevant Member States, such as France or the United Kingdom, needed to be excluded from the analysis, and data for Germany were taken from a national database instead. Statistics on first-time residence permits and population stocks, which both appeared more uniform and consistent, were used as an additional (proxy) source for immigration²⁹. Changes in population stocks, disaggregated by nationality, can show whether the number of nationals of a specific foreign country in an EU Member State has increased or decreased over the years and can thus indicate whether the lifting of a visa requirement may have prompted a growing presence of people from that country. Statistics on residence permits were considered to be relevant since third-country nationals usually need a residence permit in order to legally reside in the EU, irrespective of whether short-term entry is permitted solely with a visa or not.

Data on first-time asylum applications (excluding repeat- or follow-up applications by the same persons) and persons found to be “illegally present” in the EU (persons with irregular stay apprehended in a Member State) were also used, particularly in order to find out whether visa-free travel could have prompted more dynamic cross-border movements outside legal migration channels.

Within such a statistical analysis of migratory movements, however, any statistical trend observed must be interpreted cautiously. Migration behaviours and trends are determined by many different factors and can never be related to one particular trigger or reason alone. In cases in which immigration levels from a certain country are roughly the same in quantitative terms before and after visa liberalisation, it can be assumed that visa liberalisation has not had any major effect on immigration patterns. When immigration increases

²⁹ The concept of “first-time residence permit” means that only new residence permits are counted and that renewed or extended permits are excluded.

following visa liberalisation, there can be a causal relationship, but it cannot be established whether it is purely down to visa liberalisation or whether other factors may also have contributed to this. It is generally assumed that the lifting of visa restrictions encourages migration. Conversely, however, it could also be true in some cases that citizens of a country that are required to hold a visa when they want to travel to another country are inclined to achieve a legal immigration status there in order to avoid the inconvenience of repeatedly applying for an entry-visa. In such a case, the lifting of visa requirements could have the effect of easing immigration pressures.

Last but not least, statistics on irregular migration should also be treated carefully. Even when the number of people apprehended for illegal stay the EU increases following visa liberalisation, this may be due to other reasons, too, such as more controls on foreigners or stricter enforcement of immigration rules. When a person is apprehended as an irregular migrant, the statistics do not tell us when this person has entered the country.

Case study 1. Germany and immigration from Poland, Bulgaria and Romania (1991-2002)

The first case study deals with immigration to Germany before and after visa-free travel was introduced for citizens of Poland (in April 1991), Bulgaria (April 2001) and Romania (January 2002). The example of Poland shows that while the realisation of visa-free travel immediately prompted more border-crossings by Polish nationals towards Germany, intensified mobility was not accompanied by a higher rate of settlement. In fact, recorded longer-term migration from Poland to Germany increased only marginally.

Immigration flows

Immigration from Poland to Germany increased slightly in 1992 as compared to 1991, when visa-free travel became possible, but then decreased significantly. The immigration flows recorded in 1991 can unfortunately not be compared to previous years, mainly due to the reunification of the two German States in 1990. What is interesting to note, is that immigration from Poland to Germany increased substantially at a much later point in time, namely when Poland joined the EU.

Table 17. Immigration of Polish, Romanian and Bulgarian nationals to Germany, 1991-2007

	Poland	Bulgaria	Romania
1991	128,482	17,172	61,670
1992	131,780	31,395	110,096
1993	75,195	27,241	81,760
1994	78,745	10,387	31,449
1995	87,305	8,064	24,845
1996	77,545	6,335	16,986
1997	71,322	6,433	14,144
1998	66,263	5,275	16,987
1999	72,402	8,143	18,814
2000	74,256	10,411	24,202
2001	79,033	13,156	20,142
2002	81,551	13,191	23,953
2003	88,241	13,369	23,780
2004	125,042	11,586	23,545
2005	147,716	9,057	23,274
2006	152,733	7,749	23,743
2007	140,870	20,919	43,894

Source: Federal Statistical Office (*Statistisches Bundesamt*). Shaded cells mark the years in which Germany introduced visa-free travel for nationals of the respective countries

In the case of Bulgaria and Romania, a small increase of immigration to Germany can be seen for the respective years in which Germany introduced visa-free travel. However, there was no further increase. Rather, immigration levels tended to decrease until 2007, when, most probably prompted by EU accession, there was a sharp rise again.

The available data for other Central and Eastern European countries, such as the former Czechoslovakia, Hungary and the Baltic States, reveals similar patterns. Recorded migration of Czechoslovakian nationals to Germany increased significantly in 1992 (36,271) compared to 1991 (22,381). During the following years, however, it dropped again. Immigration from Hungary stood at 24,763 in 1991, increased to 27,844 in 1992, and then decreased again. Both countries had become visa-free in 1990. As far as nationals of the Baltic States are concerned, recorded flows increased slightly from Lithuania and Estonia in the year in which the visa obligation was abandoned (1999), but decreased in the case of Latvia.

In sum, it appears unlikely that the visa policy towards the countries of Eastern Central Europe and the Baltic states had any significant effect on immigration from these countries to Germany. Other developments, such as EU enlargement, had a far greater impact.

Asylum data

Statistics on first-time asylum applications submitted by nationals from Poland and Bulgaria do suggest that the introduction of visa-free travel had an effect on asylum dynamics. The number of new asylum applications submitted by Poles increased by almost 23% in 1992 compared to the previous year. Applications by Bulgarians rose by 91.9% in 2002, compared to 2001. In contrast, no link can be established in the case of Romanian asylum seekers. Their number actually fell in the year after visa requirements disappeared.

Table 18. Asylum applications by nationals of Poland, Romania and Bulgaria to Germany, 1991-2005

	Poland	Bulgaria	Romania
1991	3,448	12,056	40,504
1992	4,212	31,540	103,787
1993	1,670	22,547	73,717
1994	326	3,367	9,581
1995	119	1,152	3,522
1996	137	940	1,395
1997	151	761	794
1998	49	172	341
1999	42	90	222
2000	141	72	174
2001	134	66	181
2002	50	814	118
2003	32	502	104
2004	21	480	61
2005	16	278	55

Source: Federal Statistical Office (*Statistisches Bundesamt*). Shaded cells mark the years in which Germany introduced visa-free travel for nationals of the respective countries

Case study 2. The European Union and immigration from the Western Balkans (2007-2012)

In the following case study, the picture is widened. Since the visa requirements for holders of biometric passports from Western Balkan countries were lifted by the EU on 19 December 2009 for nationals of Serbia, Montenegro and the FYROM, and on 15 December 2010 for citizens of Bosnia-Herzegovina and Albania, relevant statistical data from Eurostat is available for all EU Member States both for the year preceding visa liberalisation and for subsequent years.

First residence permits

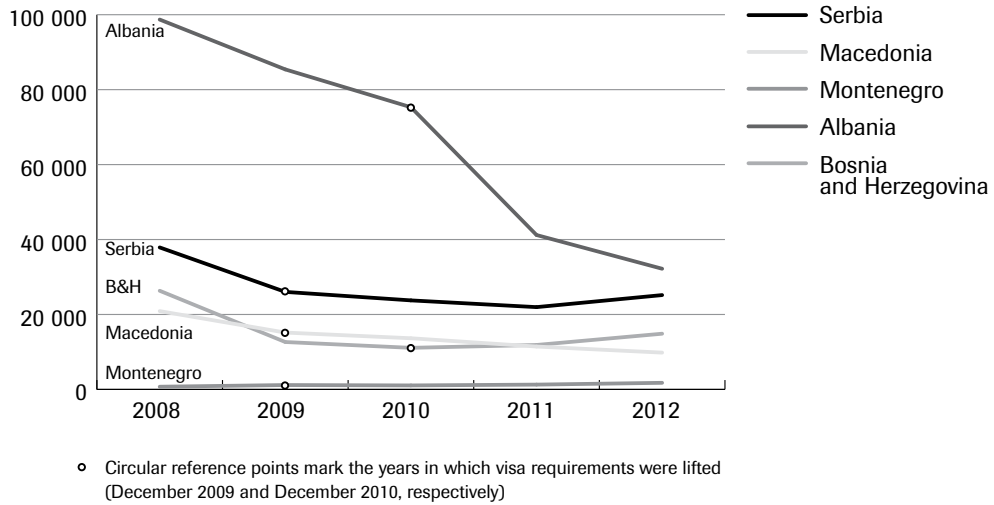
No increase in the overall number of first-time residence permits granted to citizens of the Western Balkan countries can be seen for the years in which visa-free travel took full effect (2010 and 2011, respectively), with the exception of Bosnia-Herzegovina, where a small increase can be detected. In the other four cases, the number of residence permits granted decreased.

Table 19. First-time residence permits granted by 27 EU Member States

Citizenship / year	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Serbia	37,893	26,024	23,759	21,962	25,175
FYROM	20,895	15,172	13,654	11,443	9,819
Montenegro	721	1,168	1,067	1,283	1,759
Albania	98,704	85,399	75,310	41,204	32,203
Bosnia and Herzegovina	26,330	12,648	11,096	11,862	14,867
Total	184,543	140,411	124,886	87,754	83,823

Source: Eurostat database. Shaded cells mark the years in which Germany introduced visa-free travel for nationals of the respective countries

Figure 5. First residence permits granted by EU Member States to Western Balkans citizens in 2008–2012



Source: Eurostat database

If we examine the extent to which individual EU Member States have issued first-time residence permits to nationals of Serbia, Germany ranks first. Almost 8,000 such permits were issued to Serbian applicants in 2012, as compared to 2,700 in 2011 and 3,300 in 2010. In 2009, before visa-free entries became possible, Germany issued almost 4,900 permits. The fact that the number of residence permits decreased immediately after visa liberalisation and only increased in 2012 suggests that visa policy is not a main underlying reason for the trend observed. Austria and Italy rank second and third. While Austria noticed an increasing number of residence permits, comparable to Germany, the number of permits issued by Italy decreased. Thus, visa liberalisation cannot explain by itself the increases and decreases noted by the different Member States.

As far as residence permits for Macedonians are concerned, Italy was the leading country in numerical terms. There, numbers decreased sharply despite visa-free travel since 2010. Also, with regard to Albanians, Italy was the main receiving country, but while 47,600 residence permits were issued in 2010, this number had almost halved in 2011 and further decreased in 2012.

Immigration flows

Among all EU countries (14 in total), for which complete immigration flow data for citizens of Serbia, Montenegro, the FYROM, Albania and

Bosnia-Herzegovina over the years 2007-2011 were available, Italy, Slovenia, Sweden and Germany are the most relevant ones when it comes to recorded immigration. Unfortunately, data for some other potentially interesting EU Member States, such as France and the United Kingdom, are missing. It is perhaps surprising that in all 14 cases immigration flows have tended to decrease following the introduction of visa-free travel. Most notably, in the case of Italy, the immigration of citizens of Serbia, Montenegro and the FYROM more than halved between 2008 and 2011. A similar, but even stronger, negative trend can be observed for Slovenia, which is interesting also due to its geographic proximity. In Sweden, a geographically more remote but economically attractive country, the annual immigration levels regarding citizens of the Western Balkan countries citizens respectively, decreased by around 27% between 2008 and 2011. In the case of Germany, the trend points towards a very different direction. Here, the number of immigrants from the Western Balkan countries increased by nearly 75% between 2008 and 2011.

To conclude, the trend concerning the immigration of Western Balkans states' citizens to the EU in 2008-2011 is inconsistent. While geographically close countries such as Italy and Slovenia witnessed strongly declining numbers, Sweden observed a less significant reduction, and Germany saw a strong increase. Figures for those EU Member States for which data was available, but which were not analysed in detail here, such as the Czechia, Denmark, Finland, Hungary, Ireland, the Netherlands or Spain, reveal either decreasing immigration flows or more or less stable levels. The fact that immigration to Germany apparently increased strongly can therefore certainly not be seen as a result of the citizens of Western Balkans being released from Schengen visa requirements. It appears much more likely that other reasons, socio-economic ones or family or networking contexts, affected these immigration flows.

Table 20. Immigration from five Western Balkan countries to Italy, Slovenia, Sweden and Germany, 2007-2011

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Italy					
Serbia + Montenegro	4,904	5,637	4,822	5,121	1,576
FYROM	4,088	5,794	4,942	3,359	2,932
Albania	23,292	35,715	27,493	22,591	16,613
Bosnia-Herzegovina	1,146	1,959	1,435	997	789

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Slovenia					
Serbia + Montenegro	6,451	4,496	3,020	1,176	1,254
FYROM	3,163	3,196	2,987	1,145	1,016
Albania	16	17	34	10	7
Bosnia-Herzegovina	12,479	13,038	12,910	4,403	3,387
Sweden					
Serbia + Montenegro	2,009	1,877	1,102	946	1,133
FYROM	184	304	255	252	305
Albania	96	98	122	164	137
Bosnia-Herzegovina	584	607	538	516	520
Germany					
Serbia + Montenegro	12,382	10,171	8,667	16,666	17,794
FYROM	2,334	2,308	2,399	7,585	5,679
Albania	1,106	1,046	961	913	1,417
Bosnia-Herzegovina	6,403	6,154	6,145	6,920	9,533

Source: Italy, Slovenia and Sweden: Eurostat database. Germany: Federal Statistical Office. Shaded cells mark the years in which Germany introduced visa-free travel for nationals of the respective countries.

Population stock

Eurostat only has complete data for citizens of Serbia, Montenegro and the FYROM, for 2008-2012 for 14 EU Member States only³⁰. Another 13 Member States had to be left out of the timeline³¹. In the cases of citizens of Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina, 15 Member States (including Italy) had complete data at Eurostat for all years³².

Germany was the country in which most Serbian nationals resided in 2012, almost 214 thousand. In the period from 2008 to 2012, the number of Serbians residing there more than doubled. This development, however, was more than counter-balanced by the fact that the number of residents in Germany with a nationality of the Former Serbia and Montenegro, i.e. who had a passport issued before 2006, when Serbia and Montenegro as well as Kosovo were one country, decreased dramatically during the same period.

³⁰ Belgium, Bulgaria, Czechia, Denmark, Germany, Ireland, Spain, Hungary, Netherlands, Poland, Slovenia, Slovakia, Finland and Sweden.

³¹ Austria, Cyprus, Estonia, Greece, France, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxemburg, Malta, Portugal, Romania and the United Kingdom.

³² Italy has the biggest resident population of Albanian citizens among all EU Member States by far (almost 500,000 in 2012).

When we look at the numbers of citizens of Serbia, Montenegro and the FYROM living in the 14 EU MS in 2008-2012, we can see an overall upward trend. Visa liberalisation, however, does not seem to have accelerated this growth. It rather seems that population growth became less intense after 2009, at least in the cases of Serbia and Montenegro. This finding would be well in line with the analysis of data on first residence permits above. Whenever immigration exceeds emigration (and/or fertility is greater than mortality), the number of foreigners residing in an EU Member State will increase, but when the number of first-time residence permits granted decreases, population growth will be slower than before. As far as Albania and Bosnia-Herzegovina are concerned, the number of Albanians residing in EU Member States has continued to increase after visa liberalisation, but the number of citizens of Bosnia-Herzegovina has decreased.

Table 21. Foreign population in 14 EU Member States (citizens of Serbia, Montenegro and the FYROM)

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Serbia	136,809	175,777	213,167	233,506	251,492
Montenegro	3,379	7,896	12,483	15,812	18,665
FYROM	85,116	85,831	88,505	94,513	97,088
Total	225,304	269,504	314,155	343,831	367,245

Table 22. Foreign population in 15 EU Member States (citizens of Albania and Bosnia-Herzegovina)

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Albania	419,591	459,426	485,949	503,175	518,324
Bosnia-Herzegovina	261,404	260,908	265,503	263,336	240,132
Total	680,995	720,334	751,452	766,511	758,456

Source: Eurostat database. Shaded cells mark the years in which Germany introduced visa-free travel for nationals of the respective countries

Asylum data

The abolition of visa requirements contributed to a significant increase in nationals from the Western Balkan countries applying for asylum in some EU Member States. The number of first-time asylum applications lodged by Serbians increased by more than 360% in 2010, as compared to 2009 (Table 7). The trend is even clearer for nationals from Macedonia, where almost ten times as

many applications were received in 2010, compared to the previous year. Montenegro does not matter much as a country of origin, in quantitative terms, but also in the cases of Bosnia-Herzegovina and Albania, strong increases can be seen. The number of Albanian applicants increased by approximately 160% in 2011, and by another 140% between 2011 and 2012.

Table 23. New asylum applications by citizens of Western Balkan countries in 27 EU Member States

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Serbia	5,360	3,205	14,765	10,650	13,635
Montenegro	105	190	340	540	1,105
FYROM	315	615	6,135	4,535	6,705
Albania	620	1,305	1,095	2,860	6,875
Bosnia and Herzegovina	435	1,040	1,910	2,400	5,235
Total	6,835	6,355	24,245	20,985	33,555

Source: Eurostat database. Shaded cells mark the years in which Germany introduced visa-free travel for nationals of the respective countries

To complement this overall picture, it should be noted that increases in the number of asylum applicants from the Western Balkans did not materialise in all EU Member States. Concerning applicants from Serbia, mainly Germany and Sweden were affected, and to a lesser degree, Denmark. In the case of Macedonians, increases were significant in Germany, Belgium, France, the Netherlands and Sweden. For applicants from Albania, this was noted by Belgium, France, Germany, Luxemburg, Sweden and the UK. Finally, as far as Bosnian applicants are concerned, Germany, France and Sweden recorded increases. Analyses of these trends have shown that visa liberalization has made it easier and cheaper for citizens of the Western Balkan countries to travel to some EU Member States, and to apply for asylum there. If visa requirements had still been in place, they would have functioned as a filter, because the EU Member States do not grant visas for the purpose of seeking asylum.

Irregular immigration and overstaying

As a final analysis, the question may be posed as to whether the possibility of travelling to Schengen states without visas has been used by nationals of Serbia, Montenegro, the FYROM, Albania or Bosnia-Herzegovina in order to stay there on an irregular basis, either without a residence permit, with expired documents or in excess of the time periods a person may stay as a traveller

(three months). Eurostat provides statistics on third-country nationals that are found to be “illegally present” in the EU. These are people who are detected by Member States’ authorities and have been determined to be illegally present under national immigration laws. To be regarded as “illegally present”, a person must have been found to have entered illegally or entered legitimately and subsequently remained on an illegal basis (for example by overstaying their permission to remain or by taking unauthorised employment).

An analysis for the EU as a whole shows that the number of Serbian nationals who were found to be “illegally present” was higher in 2010 as compared to 2009, when the visa requirement was abolished. It then decreased in 2011 and increased again in 2012. Additionally, in the case of Macedonian citizens, an increasing trend can be observed from the year in which visa-free travel became possible onwards. For nationals of Bosnia-Herzegovina, a rising trend can be seen, albeit not a very significant one. Albania should be regarded as a case apart, since extremely high numbers of irregular migrants were reported by one country alone – Greece. While 72,660 Albanian nationals were found to be illegally present in the EU in 2008, Greece alone reported 65,000 cases. In 2011 and 2012, the numbers dropped dramatically – which is also only due to a dramatic decrease reported by Greece. For all other countries, an increasing trend can be observed.

In sum, it seems legitimate to assume that the number of people staying on an irregular basis has increased after the introduction of visa-free travel. Whether there is a direct causal relationship is not clear, but if we see this trend in connection to the asylum trends described above, a causal link would make sense.

Table 24. Citizens of Western Balkan countries found to be “illegally present” in EU Member States, 2008-2012

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Serbia	13,315	8,335	12,050	9,315	10,475
Montenegro	350	310	365	390	450
FYROM	2,780	1,915	3,160	3,235	3,400
Albania	2,660	68,985	52,375	17,220	18,610
Bosnia-Herzegovina	2,525	2,095	2,255	2,690	2,715

Source: Eurostat database. Shaded cells mark the years in which Germany introduced visa-free travel for nationals of the respective countries

Conclusions and possible lessons for future cases: Ukraine, Moldova and Belarus

From the statistical case studies above, what can now be learned about the possible outcomes of visa liberalisation measures to be introduced for citizens of Ukraine, Moldova and Belarus for short-term travel to the EU? The clearest result to emerge from the analysis of the Western Balkan countries examples is that visa liberalisation has had little or no effect on the number of first-time residence permits, or on immigration flows to EU Member States. Contrary to what might have been expected, the overall number of residence permits issued to nationals of these countries decreased rather than increased. Furthermore, the analysis of the available immigration flow data showed declining trends – with the notable exception of Germany. Only with regard to the number of nationals of Western Balkan countries living in the EU (population stocks) has there been an increasing trend – except for nationals of Bosnia-Herzegovina. This could, however, be unrelated to the introduction of visa-free travel. In all cases, the number of residents of the Western Balkan countries in the EU had already been growing before visa liberalisation. When visa liberalisation finally occurred, the growth of the number of residents from these countries in EU Member States did not accelerate – in fact it slowed down.

The only clearly positive relationship between visa liberalisation and migration was shown in the areas of asylum and, to a smaller degree, irregular stay. There, visa liberalisation almost certainly triggered increasing numbers, even if far from all EU Member States experienced this, and even if visa liberalisation itself may not have been the only contributory factor. The abolition of visa requirements could only have produced this effect because it coincided with other factors, such as enhanced transportation infrastructure and reduced transport costs, geographic proximity, socio-economic conditions and asylum seekers' access to accommodation and benefits. There are also exceptions to this development, such as the case of Greece, where the number of nationals of Western Balkan countries who were found to be “illegally present” decreased markedly.

In a similar vein, the example of citizens moving to Germany from Poland, the Baltic countries, Bulgaria and Romania after visa liberalisation in 1991, 1999, 2002 and 2003, respectively, further revealed that the impact of the introduction of visa-free travel on longer-term immigration and settlement was rather marginal, and that only with regard to asylum can some impact be assumed. The number of asylum seekers coming to Germany from these countries

quickly became insignificant, however, most probably due to improved political and socio-economic conditions in the countries of origin.

Whether any of these observations can have a bearing on possible future examples of countries being relieved from visa requirements, such as Moldova (which saw EU visa requirement lifted from April 2014), Ukraine and Belarus, is highly uncertain. If the effects of abolishing visa requirements were the same as in earlier cases, then we could expect the number of residence permits issued to nationals of these countries and overall immigration flows towards the EU to decrease, the number of nationals of these countries living in the EU to increase more slowly than before, and the number of asylum seekers to rise, at least in some Member States.

When we look at the number of residence permits granted by EU Member States to nationals of Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova, there is no clear pattern for the EU as a whole. The number of permits granted to nationals of Ukraine and Belarus has increased and was at a significantly higher level in 2012 as compared to 2008, while in the case of Moldova, immigration to the EU has moderated. One reason for this is that many Moldovan citizens have Romanian passports, which makes it easier for them to live and work in other EU Member State. With regard to Ukrainians, the biggest country among these three, Poland was by far the leading country of destination within the EU, mainly due to its liberal immigration policy and geographical proximity. There, more than ten times as many Ukrainians were granted a residence permit (in most cases for temporary stay) in 2012 than in 2008. In Italy, which has also been an important destination country, the number of permits granted to Ukrainian nationals decreased strongly as a result of the economic crisis. The same is true for Czechia, Hungary and Spain. In Germany, a gradual increase could be seen, and in the United Kingdom, the number of permits granted to Ukrainians has remained roughly stable throughout the period 2008-2012.

In the case of Belarus, Poland has been the most important country of destination within the EU for several years, and the number of first residence permits granted to nationals of Belarus has risen strongly. In the other main destination countries, such as Germany, Italy, Lithuania, the United Kingdom or Czechia, the number of residence permits granted has tended to decrease during the five-year-period 2008-2012. All countries except Poland granted less than 1,000 residence permits in 2012. Similarly, the number of permits granted to Moldovans has declined or remained stable in almost all cases. Czechia, for example, issued more than 3,600 first-time residence permits to Moldovan

nationals in 2008, but only about 900 in 2012. The only notable exception from this trend is Poland, where around 4,700 permits were granted in 2012, compared to less than 1,000 in 2008 and 2009.

Table 25. Residence permits granted by 27 EU Member States to nationals of Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova, 2008-2012

	2008	2009	2010	2012
Ukraine	115,770	87,740	166,945	163,083
Belarus	12,644	9,848	10,406	29,649
Moldova	58,442	45,619	55,626	20,321
Total	186,856	143,207	232,977	213,053

Source: Eurostat database

Note: Data for 2011 were incomplete at Eurostat and therefore not included

As the experience of the Western Balkan countries has shown, it seems unlikely that any future step in visa liberalisation will have a strong impact on immigration patterns. It appears more reasonable to assume that the number of residence permits granted responds to a certain degree on developments within the EU, such as changes in the economic situation and the possibilities for foreign nationals to legally immigrate for work reasons. Domestic factors in Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova, such whether or not there will be political stability and a positive economic outcome, will also most likely play a certain role. In the event of a protracted economic crisis in Ukraine, young people may decide to leave and to study or work in the EU. Others may try to find work in the EU on either a longer-term or – most probably – short-term basis, as seasonal workers or circular migrants, for example. Since circular migration is the most prevalent immigration pattern of Eastern European migrants in the EU, visa liberalization may facilitate short-term immigration, depending however on whether or not EU Member States grant temporary residence permits for work purposes.

As far as asylum is concerned, the political situation in Ukraine, and to a lesser degree in Belarus, will certainly have a strong impact. In the case of the Western Balkan countries, the introduction of visa-free travel triggered a sharp increase in the number of people from these countries applying for asylum in some EU Member States. It would, however, be wrong to automatically assume that the same will happen in the case of the abandonment of visa obligations for nationals of Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova. According to Eurostat, 2,325 nationals from Belarus, 1,590 from Ukraine and 840 from Moldova applied

for asylum in the EU in the years 2011 and 2012 – 4,755 people in total. When we compare this figure to the number of people from the Western Balkans that applied for asylum in the EU in the two years (2008 – 2009) preceding the introduction of visa-free travel, which amounted to more 13,000, this figure appears rather small – especially when we take into account the fact that Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova together have a population of almost 58 million, while the Western Balkan countries only account for some 17 million. Thus, any dramatic development regarding the number of asylum applicants from Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova coming to the EU as a result of an eventual introduction of visa-free travel can practically be ruled out. The only “risk factor” in this context is the political situation in these countries. Protracted or aggravated instability in the Ukraine, for example, interference by Russia, separatist tendencies and uncertainty regarding the rights of minorities can rapidly change asylum patterns.

Despite the assumptions and expectations presented here, one should bear in mind that any country has its specific socio-economic characteristics, history and relations with other countries in the wider region. Hence, in all cases, the factors encouraging citizens to emigrate, or discouraging them, will be different, irrespective of the EU’s visa policy. However, as visa liberalisation did not have any measurable effect on longer-term migration trends regarding such diverse examples as Poland, the Baltic countries, Romania and Bulgaria, and later Serbia, Montenegro, the FYROM, Albania and Bosnia-Herzegovina, it would be extremely surprising if a completely different pattern would emerge in the cases of Moldova, Ukraine and Belarus. It should be assumed that the extent to which citizens of these countries will immigrate to the EU, or seek asylum there, will depend on EU immigration provisions, economic developments both in the countries of origin and in the EU, and the political situation in the source countries. The question as to whether or not visa requirements are in place will affect the possibilities of people to travel, but not so much their migration. What can be said, however, is that visa-free travel will widen the options of potential migrants since it saves them money and administrative difficulties. Other factors, such as whether EU Member States open up for circular migration, labour migration and temporary stay, or differences between salaries in countries of origin and destination, will most likely have a far greater impact.

PART II

COUNTRY CHAPTERS

1. MIGRATION BETWEEN THE EU, V4 AND EASTERN EUROPE: THE PRESENT SITUATION AND POSSIBLE FUTURE THE PERSPECTIVE OF POLAND

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Introduction

Although Poland still is a net emigration country, its migration status has been changing, and the transformation process from an emigration country into an emigration-immigration country is (slowly but steadily) discernible. The size of the foreign population in Poland is growing, but is still marginal in comparison with other European Union states. Persons of foreign origin constitute less than 1% of the resident population (National Population Census 2011). Moreover, Poland has the lowest proportion of foreign workers among the working population within OECD countries – 0.3%, while the average for OECD countries is 12%³³. The inflows to Poland are predominantly of a temporary and circular character (as opposed to settlement migration), and the major groups of newcomers originate from the Eastern European neighbouring countries, Ukraine in particular.

Poland's migration profile is shaped by several factors. Since the early 1990s, Poland, due to its geographical location, has been a transit area for people moving from the former USSR countries and Asia towards Western Europe. Among the factors of key importance which shape the migratory flows are: cultural proximity to the neighbouring Eastern European countries, migration policy which has recently become more and more open for foreigners, and migration networks which exist between Poland and its neighbours. The steady economic growth seen recently is also an important factor in increasing Poland's attractiveness as a destination country.

Poland's EU accession in 2004 was a key turning point in terms of the dynamics and trends of human inflows and outflows as well as legal and political developments within its migration policy. One of these effects related directly to migration flows was the obligatory implementation of the EU *acquis communautaire*,

³³ OECD, International Migration Outlook 2010.

including introduction of a visa regime towards third country residents, i.e. eastern neighbours, which was introduced in 2003 and fully implemented in 2007, when Poland became a part of the Schengen zone. It had a powerful impact on traditional migration channels existing between Poland and Eastern European countries. An even more significant effect arising from EU membership was the massive emigration of Poles, mainly to the UK and Ireland, especially shortly after accession. 2007 was a year when the outflow reached its peak and more than 2.3 million Poles (6.6% of the total population) were registered in other EU countries as temporary residents³⁴. The unexpected mass outflow on the one hand, and steady economic growth and large investments in infrastructure and regional development on the other (also owing to EU structural funds), generated significant shortages in the labour market and growing demand for foreign workers, especially as regards seasonal jobs in agriculture. Processes such as serious depopulation (already noticeable in some regions), very low fertility rates and the process of population aging are expected to have a negative impact on Poland's economy and Polish society in the long run. Therefore, migration policy has grown in importance.

The endeavours of the Polish government to make Poland more attractive as a destination country are evident. They include, among others, a gradual simplification of admission rules to the labour market for foreigners, addressed to citizens of EaP countries and Russia, as well as visa system liberalization and better integration of migrants already residing in Poland.

The main aim of this report is to present the current and future role of Eastern European countries in shaping Poland's migration profile. It consists of five main parts. The report starts with a brief description of Poland's migration profile. The second section analyses the key determinants influencing the current migration flows from Eastern Europe. The media and public discourse on migration in Poland is briefly summarized in the third part. The last two sections include a prognosis of migration inflows from Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova as well as elaboration of the challenges, opportunities and risks potential flows may have, based on the Delphi survey on migration trends between EU/V4 (Poland) and Eastern Europe carried out by the chapter's authors. The Delphi survey was conducted from November 2013 to March 2014 among Polish migration experts representing academic institutions, NGOs, governmental bodies

³⁴ A. Fihel (ed.), *Recent Trends in International Migration in Poland. The 2011 SOPEMI report*, CMR Working Papers 52 (110), Ośrodek Badań nad Migracjami UW, Warsaw 2011, Online: <http://www.migracje.uw.edu.pl/publ/1778/>, p. 25.

and international organisations. The survey was performed in two rounds, the first run involving 18 experts and the second among 17 experts.

Immigration profile of Poland – a brief description

To reliably estimate the stock of the foreign population residing in Poland, several data sources have to be taken into account. The last population census was completed in 2011 and shows the great ethnic homogeneity of Poland's population and the marginal number of foreigners among its residents. Almost 99.7% of people living in Poland are persons having Polish citizenship. Among the foreigners officially residing in Poland the most numerous groups are Ukrainians (24,100), followed by Germans (9,200), Belarusians (7,500) and Russians (7,200). The overall number of foreigners registered in the census is very small (63,000). However, the category of 'foreign citizens' used in the census does not include all categories of migrants, e.g. temporary or irregular migrants, and thus the real number of foreigners residing in Poland may be much higher in reality.

The number of officially registered foreign residents in Poland has been increasing year by year. According to the records of the Office for Foreigners, at the end of 2013 almost 121,000 foreign nationals with valid residence permits (of all kinds) were registered in Poland. About a half of all permits was issued for a fixed period of time, while 42% are permits for a long-term residence. The top ten nationalities include: Ukrainians (31% of all foreigners with valid residence permits), Vietnamese (11%), Russians (10%), Belarusians (9%), Chinese and Armenians (4% each), Turks, Indians and Americans (2% each), and South Koreans (1.5%). Jointly, citizens of the three neighbouring countries (Ukraine, Russia and Belarus) constitute a half of the foreign population possessing residence permits in Poland. Additionally, at the end of 2013 around 60,000 EU citizens registered their stay in Poland. Most of the EU citizens residing in Poland come from Germany, Italy, France, the UK, Bulgaria and Spain.

Table 26. Number of foreigners with valid residence permits in Poland (as of 31.12.2013) according to different status of residence (top five countries)

Country of origin	Complementary Protection	Long term residence permit	Long term stay permit of UE resident	Tolerated stay*	Refugee status	Residence on fixed term	Total
UKRAINE	7	17,959	2,198	142	1	17,372	37,679
VIETNAM	1	4,340	1,947	368	4	6,744	13,404
RUSSIA	2,243	4,813	425	610	530	4,024	12,645
BELARUS	15	7,077	367	38	92	3,570	11,159
CHINA	4	514	259	16	-	4,223	5,016
All nationalities	2,446	51,027	7,490	1,838	888	57,529	121,218

* Tolerated stay is one of the protection statuses; it is granted e.g. to persons whose removal is impossible for practical or humanitarian reasons

Source: The Office of Foreigners (www.udsc.gov.pl)

There are additional important data sources related to the labour market which illustrate the scale and characteristics of foreigners' inflows to Poland. There are two main legal schemes enabling foreigners to be employed in Poland: the work permits system and a simplified employment scheme (addressed to short term workers from five EaP countries and Russia). Both schemes have become progressively more popular over recent years. There has been a noticeable increase in the number of issued work permits, from 12,300 in 2004 up to 39,000 in 2013. Among the recipients the prevailing number are EaP states citizens. More than a half of all granted work permits have been issued annually to EaP states residents with Ukrainians receiving almost one-third of all work permits. A steady growth in the number of workers coming from the Balkan states and from Asia to Poland has been also evident recently - mainly from China (which is a direct effect of Chinese companies' investments in Poland). A steady increase is also noticeable in the number of foreign students coming to Poland. In the academic year 2012/2013 the number of foreign students registered in higher education institutions in Poland reached 24,253 persons, more than a half of which were students from EaP countries (13,500 persons), and the most numerous groups were Ukrainians (9,474) and Belarusians (3,388) who constituted 33.4% and 11.6% of all foreign students in Poland respectively³⁵.

³⁵ Data according to *Raport Studenci zagraniczni w Polsce 2013* [Foreign students in Poland 2013].

Other categories of migrants include asylum seekers and undocumented migrants. At the end of 2013, the number of persons having valid stay permits under different forms of protection in Poland reached 5,100 (including 888 refugees, 2,446 persons with status of tolerated stay, and 1,838 with status of complementary protection). However, a significant increase in the number of applications for refugee status was noticeable in the last two years. The highest number of applications ever was registered in 2013 (15,000). The vast majority of asylum claims were submitted by citizens of Russia (almost 85%, mostly persons declaring Chechen nationality), followed by Georgians (8%), Syrians (2%), Armenians (1%) and Kazakhs (1%). Most of these applications were rejected as manifestly unfounded. In 2013, only 1% of all the applicants who asked for protection were granted refugee status according to the Geneva Convention, additionally 1.5% was granted status of tolerated stay and 0.5% were granted complementary protection.

Although estimating the number of undocumented migrants is very problematic, the most popular nationalities among this group may be identified based on information obtained from migrant regularisation programs. Throughout the whole regularisation campaign which took place in the first half of 2012, the number of registered applications reached 9,500. Among the top nationalities whose representatives applied for legal status in Poland were citizens of Vietnam (23% of all applications) and Ukraine (21%)³⁶.

It may be assumed that there are at least 120,000 foreigners currently legally residing in Poland, and that half of them are settled migrants. Additionally, the number of seasonal foreign workers amounts to around 250,000 a year. What has to be underlined is that the temporary (seasonal, circular) type of inflows clearly dominates. The interest in permanent settlement in Poland among foreigners is rather limited. Moreover, existing legal and political frameworks (related to admission, stay and employment) provide an opportunity to circulate, encouraging and sustaining short-term mobility, and at the same time they discourage long-term or settlement migration.

The Delphi survey on migration trends between EU/V4 and Eastern Europe conducted in Poland revealed that according to expert knowledge, the number of migrants from Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova in Poland oscillates around

³⁶ Ministry of Interior of Poland, *Polityka migracyjna Polski w odniesieniu do obywateli Republiki Białorusi, Ukrainy i Federacji Rosyjskiej* [Migration policy of Poland in relation to citizens of Belarus, Ukraine and Russian Federation], Warsaw 2012, p. 35.

the figures of 240,000, 58,000 and 4,400 respectively (arithmetic means from experts' estimations were calculated; estimates were given by 15 experts for Ukrainians, 11 for Belarusians and 13 in the case of Moldovans). Moreover, the experts estimated that irregular migrants in Poland account for about 45% of all migrants in the case of Ukrainians, 26% for Belarusians and 29% for Moldovans. Importantly, a broad definition of irregular migration was used in the survey, thus including both irregular stay and unregistered work. As regards Ukrainians, Belarusians and Moldovans, their irregular status lies mainly in undertaking work without registration while being in possession of a valid residence or stay permit. Moreover, experts assessed that Ukrainian migrants prefer circular migration, are involved in manual labour (e.g. in agriculture, construction and household services), and do not experience problems communicating with Poles. As regards Belarusians, experts agreed that migrants are involved in manually demanding jobs and can communicate in Polish, while in the case of Moldovans they acknowledged only the former. Although this may imply that Belarusian and Moldovan migrants do not follow such clear behavioural patterns as Ukrainians, it may also indicate that knowledge about Belarusian and Moldovan migration is significantly less than that of Ukrainian nationals (and thus the experts have more frequently chosen the answer 'maybe yes, maybe no').

Main determinants of immigration processes to Poland

The key advantages of Poland as a destination country influencing the scale, trends and sources of current inflows are as follows: 1) the growing attractiveness of Poland as a result of its recent economic development, 2) increasing demand for foreign workers in some sectors of the economy, 3) recent liberalisation of the rules related to admission and employment of foreigners, 4) political developments addressed to particular groups perceived as desirable, such as students and foreigners of Polish origin.

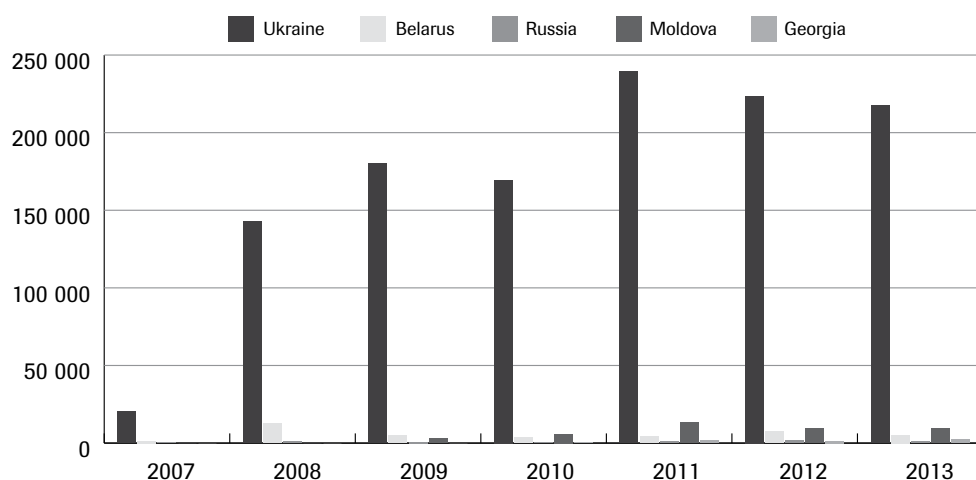
Poland has seen stable economic growth in time of severe worldwide recession over recent years. Moreover, thanks to EU funds and structural and foreign investments, Poland's attractiveness increased (especially in comparison with Southern European countries which have faced economic crisis and rapidly growing unemployment in recent years). Not only return migration of Poles but also the inflow of foreigners from different (sometimes very 'exotic' countries like China, Philippines or India) is becoming more apparent. The mass post-accession emigration of Poles on the one hand, and economic development on the other, in short time brought about serious labour market shortages and

growing demand for foreign workers. It was particularly noticeable in agriculture and construction. Therefore, there was intensive pressure exerted by employers on the government to simplify the rules regarding employment of foreign nationals, particularly for short-term contracts and seasonal jobs.

As a result of these overlapping processes, a complementary scheme to the work permit system was introduced in 2006 (and came into operation in the mid-2007) to support short-term circular labour migration. It is based on an employer's declaration of intent to employ a foreigner and allows citizens of six countries (initially Ukraine, Russia and Belarus, and since 2009 Moldova and Georgia, and from 2014 Armenia) to perform work in Poland for up to six months within a period of twelve consecutive months without a work permit. The employer's declaration scheme implemented as a pilot project has evolved into the most significant formula for the employment of foreigners in Poland.

The number of work visas issued based on employer's declarations has grown from 142,000 in 2008 to 217,000 in 2013. More than 90% of them have been issued to citizens of Ukraine, followed by citizens of Moldova and Belarus, while in the case of Russians and Georgians it remains at a very moderate level. Migrants mostly undertake employment in low-skilled and low paid jobs (sometimes despite possessing a high level of education).

Figure 6. The employer declarations to hire a foreigner by country of origin in Poland in 2007-2013

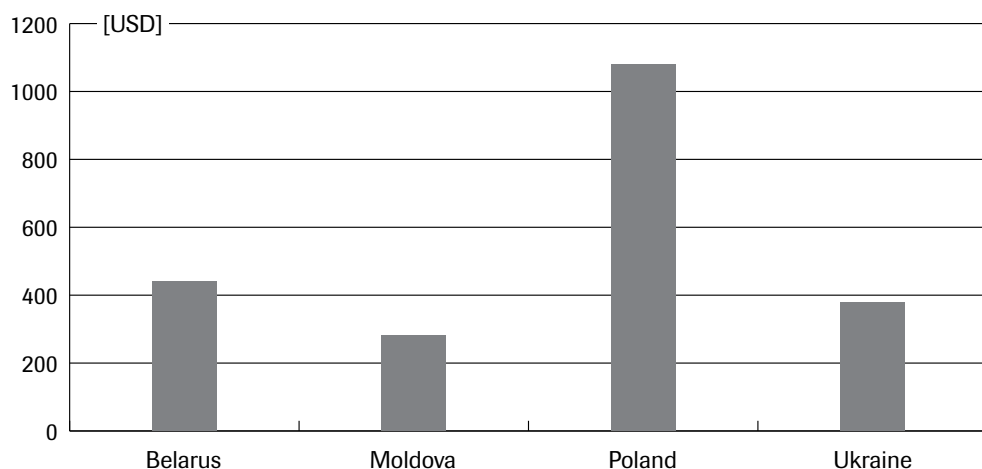


Source: Ministry of Labour and Social Policy of Poland

Although the level of wages in Poland may be perceived as a *pull* factor at first sight as average wages are much higher than in Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova,

it is not necessarily the most important factor when choosing Poland as a destination country.

Figure 7. Annual average monthly wages in EaP countries and Poland in 2012



Source: Belstat; statbank.statistica.md; zus.pl; Ukrstat³⁷

First of all, wages in Poland are not so attractive when compared to Western European states. Secondly, it has to be taken into account that migrants usually earn less than the average wage in the host country (both because migrants' earnings are in general lower than those of the natives and because they mainly work in sectors which include worse paid jobs).

In July 2012, the Council of Ministers adopted the policy document entitled *Migration Policy of Poland – the Current State and Postulated Actions*³⁸ as a result of multi-year work by an inter-ministry group coordinated by the Ministry of Internal Affairs. This document recommends determining priority groups of migrants which should be treated according to preferential rules of admission. Among others, three groups are singled out: foreigners of Polish origin, students and scientists, and the self-employed. In particular, the first group deserves close attention due to special legal provisions addressed to them.

³⁷ Calculated using official exchange rates available at <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/PA.NUS.FCRF>.

³⁸ Ministry of Interior, *Polityka migracyjna Polski – stan obecny i postulowane działania* [Migration policy of Poland – the current state and the postulated actions], Warsaw 2012.

There is a long-lasting tradition of political measures addressed to individuals of Polish origin residing abroad (diaspora policy) who may be willing to resettle to Poland. The current repatriation wave, actively stimulated by Polish authorities, started in the early 1990s. In time, the interest in repatriation has become marginal (only 120 repatriation visas were issued in 2012). In general, the largest group of incoming repatriates originated from four countries: Kazakhstan, Russia, Ukraine and Belarus. Due to problems with financing the repatriation scheme and its limited effectiveness, the Card of the Pole (*Karta Polaka*) was implemented in 2007 as a substitutive measure. It is addressed to foreigners of Polish origin who are citizens of the former Soviet Union states. The Card of the Pole entitles the holder, among other things, to apply for a free-of-charge multiple-entry visa to Poland, to procure employment without a work permit, and to study on the same basis as Polish citizens. The Card circumvents the most difficult legal obstacles, such as the obligation to have a work permit and the need for frequent visa application procedures, and therefore serves as a pull factor for migration. Its growing popularity is reflected in the numbers. In 2008-2012, more than 100,000 Cards were issued, approximately 90% to citizens of Ukraine and Belarus, far fewer were issued to Lithuanians, Russians and other nationalities.

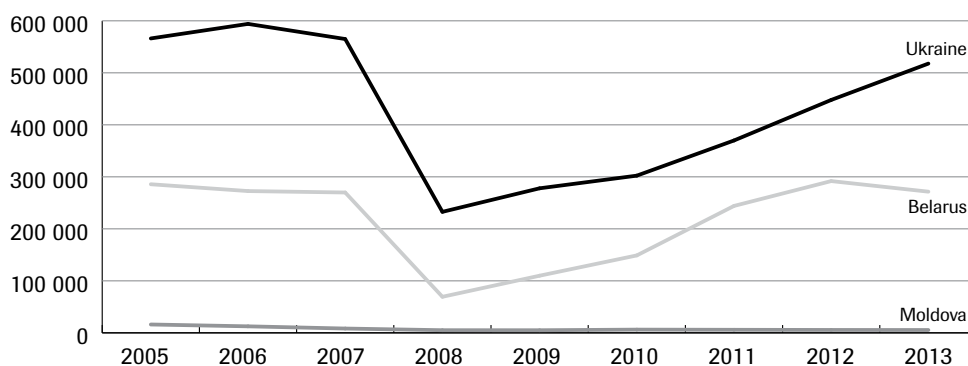
The data on border crossing movements shows that entry to the Schengen zone and restrictions on visas and the border control system had an impact on the number of people coming to Poland from the eastern neighbouring countries (although the visa regime was introduced for neighbouring countries in 2003 and until 2007 visas for Ukrainians were issued free of charge). The data from Polish Border Guards show that there was a serious drop just after the visa regime's introduction, but shortly afterwards the number of border crossings at the Eastern border again increased. This means that people have gained awareness of the new rules and got used to application procedures over time.

An important determinant influencing migration flows are admission rules, including visas and border control. Problems stem from both the visa application system (including online registration and long queues in front of the Polish consulates), and daily reality at the border crossing points. These difficulties have been frequently investigated by mass media and NGOs, and were a subject of serious criticism³⁹. The fact that Polish consulates have issued the

³⁹ See e.g. M. Kindler, E. Matejko, *Gateways to Europe. Checkpoints on the EU External Land Border. Monitoring Report*, Stefan Batory Foundation, Warsaw 2008, Online: <http://www.migracje.uw.edu.pl/download/publikacja/408/>;

largest number of visas (all kinds – national and Schengen ones) for citizens of Ukraine and Belarus among the EU countries over recent years makes the problem even more relevant. The majority of visas issued by Polish consulates are short-term uniform Schengen visas (79% of all visas issued in 2013). Moreover, more than 90% of all visas were issued for just three nationalities: Ukrainians, Belarusians and Russians⁴⁰. There has been a stable increase in the number of short-term Schengen visas issued by Polish consulates since 2008, in particular regarding Ukrainians. The visa statistics confirms marginal interest from Moldovans in making visits to Poland, which is unsurprising given the fact that there are other attractive destinations in its immediate neighbourhood. Among the declared purposes on visa applications, the most popular is business (21% in 2013), tourism (20%), and employment (14%).

Figure 8. Visas (Schengen visas, type C) issued by Poland for citizens of Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova (2005-2013)



Source: http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/borders-and-visas/visa-policy/index_en.htm

In the first round of the Delphi survey, experts were asked to assess the importance of the current main push and pull factors determining migration of Ukrainians, Belarusians and Moldovans to Poland. As regards Ukraine, experts evaluated the most important factor to be geographic proximity between Poland and Ukraine and low travel costs. The second most important factor

J. Konieczna-Sałamatin, E. Świdrowska, P. Wołowski, Granica do naprawy. Problemy pogranicza Polski i Ukrainy [The border to be repaired. The problems of Poland's and Ukraine's borderland]. Stefan Batory Foundation, Warsaw 2012, Online: http://www.batory.org.pl/upload/files/Programy%20operacyjne/Otwarta%20Europa/Granica_do_naprawy.pdf

⁴⁰ Raport polskiej służby konsularnej za 2013 rok [Consular Service of Poland Report 2013], Department of Consular Service, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Warsaw 2014.

proved to be migration networks (the presence of relatives or close friends already staying and working in Poland). The third most important factor concerned, in the opinion of experts, the relatively liberal visa and migration policy in Poland. As far as Belarus is concerned, experts ranked the first three most important factors as follows: 1) geographic proximity and low travel costs, 2) cultural and language proximity and 3) political oppression and/or destabilization of the political situation in the sending country. In the case of Moldova, poverty and social tensions in the country of origin and higher wages in Poland were perceived by experts as most important.

An interesting finding was obtained from the question concerning the impact of the economic crisis of 2008-2012 on immigration patterns. The majority of experts claim that the number of migrants from Ukraine grew, while the minority stated the same for Belarus and Moldova. Although in the case of Moldovans it is not surprising, in the case of Belarusians it may seem somewhat unexpected taking into account the fact that in 2011 the Belarusian economy underwent a severe economic crisis, which resulted in intensified labour migration outflows. It may result from the fact that Russia is an indisputable leader among destination countries for Belarusian migrants⁴¹ and it has attracted most of those departing due to the crisis or from the fact that knowledge of Belarusian migration is much lower among Polish migration experts than that of Ukrainian.

Media and public discourse on migration

On the one hand, the problem of immigration and foreigners residing in Poland has not been a subject of any profound public, political or media debate over the last few decades. It is an exceptional phenomenon in the EU, where generally immigration is one of the hottest topics of public discourse and political campaigns, and at the same time is widely discussed in mass media. On the other hand, the mass emigration of Poles (in the post-accession wave) became a subject of public and political debate (it is also frequently present in the media) as well as being included in political parties' programmes during election campaigns.

The non-existence of a debate on migration in Poland could easily be explained by the fact of 'invisibility' of foreigners in Polish society which is currently

⁴¹ See Z. Brunarska, M. Lesińska, *Poland as a(n) (un)attractive destination for Belarusian labour migrants*, CMR Working Paper 70/128, 2014 (online: <http://www.migracje.uw.edu.pl/publikacja/rodzaj/CMR/>).

one of the most homogenous in Europe (in terms of cultural, ethnic, religious and linguistic diversity). There is a marginal number of settled migrants residing in Poland, moreover most of them come from neighbouring countries and have no serious integration problems due to their cultural and linguistic proximity. Other immigrant groups, such as the Vietnamese, are generally in-group oriented, concentrated in particular locations in the largest cities, with very limited contacts with their Polish neighbours in daily life (yet the social self-isolation of Vietnamese communities does not create any problems or tensions between them and Polish inhabitants). Another important factor is that foreigners living in Poland are generally not perceived as a threat of any kind, which is often the case in traditional immigration countries, where migrants are accused of increasing unemployment, criminality and being a burden to the welfare system. Moreover, the conflicts or incidents of racial or ethnic background against foreigners recorded in the police statistics are rather marginal in scale.

The studies analysing perceptions towards foreigners in the Polish media conclude that a positive message prevails, focusing on the advantages stemming from immigration for a destination country and its society⁴². Among the public institutions involved in discourse on immigration, the most active are NGOs and a few administrative bodies, such as the Department of Migration Policy of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, which is directly responsible for migration policy. The increase of migrants' presence in the public sphere and media is visible whenever a new legal act or political measure related to foreigners is introduced, e.g. the last regularisation program in 2012 or the presentation of a draft of the new alien act a year later. These are the rare occasions when the mass media also showed an interest (at least for a while) in issues related to foreigners. Usually they are absent from public or political discourse at any level. Even the important modifications in migration law (such as liberalisation of labour market admission rules for foreigners or the new alien act) have not been a subject of wider interest or debate in the Polish parliament, not to speak of any dispute among political parties.

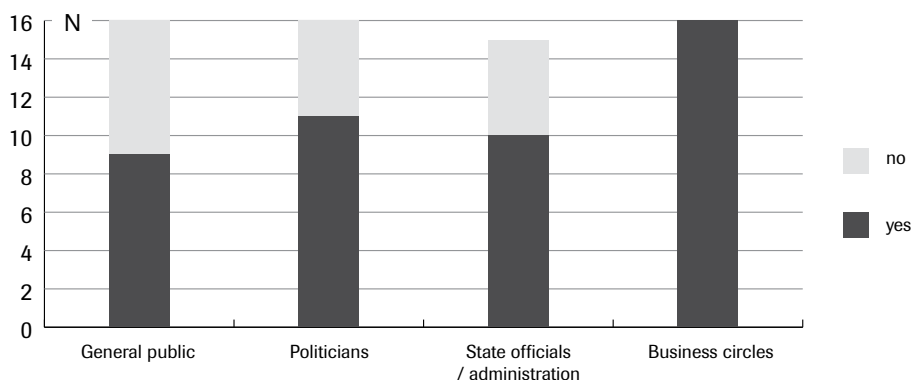
Foreign residents have no voting rights at any level (with the exception of EU citizens). They are not represented in any labour union or political party in Poland. This could be an explanation for why immigration-related issues are

⁴² I. Józwiak, J. Konieczna-Sałamatin, M. Tudorowski, „Bez cudzoziemców bylibyśmy ubożsi”. *Wizerunek obcokrajowców na łamach polskiej prasy* [Without immigrants we would be poorer. The image of foreigners in Polish Press], The Institute of Public Affairs 2010, Warsaw.

absent from the agendas of political parties. Moreover, although foreigners have the right to establish associations, their number and impact is rather limited. There is no institution – such as a consultative or advisory body – that functions as a forum for communication between immigrants and authorities at the central level. In practice, it also means that immigrants and their organizations are very rarely visible in the media – at the same time in the public or political sphere.

In the Delphi survey, experts were asked whether visa abolishment for EaP country nationals is an important topic for the general public and in political debate in Poland. The overwhelming majority claimed that this topic is not important for the general public. The results regarding political debate were more surprising – only about half of the experts stated that visa abolishment for EaP countries does not constitute an important topic. This may, however, be explained by the fact that although the subject of immigration in general is not a relevant element of political debate, practical measures that could be implemented in this domain, such as visa abolishment, arouse more interest. In the Delphi survey, the question related to attitudes to visa abolishment manifested by certain actors was also asked. The figure below summarizes the results obtained.

Figure 9. Are those actors favourable to visa abolition for Eastern Partnership countries? (answers for Poland)



Source: Delphi survey Poland 2013-2014

As we can see, the group perceived as the most favourably disposed to Schengen visas abolition is that of business circles. This is hardly surprising, given the fact that this is the group that would potentially benefit most from immigration (as it includes employers).

The general conclusion is that the mass media (and public opinion in general) are not interested in issues related to immigration and foreigners in Poland. Although mass media as a basic, and often the only source of information, have a powerful impact on shaping public opinion and mainstream discourse on migration and foreigners, they do not fulfil their mission as a reliable source of information and for raising the awareness of Polish society on this subject at any level.

Prognosis of immigration - a brief summary

It is not easy to forecast future migration trends, especially in a situation of scarcity of data due to the informal character of part of the ongoing migration processes as is the case in Ukrainian, Belarusian and Moldovan migration to Poland. Moreover, the current political situation in Ukraine makes the potential prognoses as regards this country of origin especially weak.

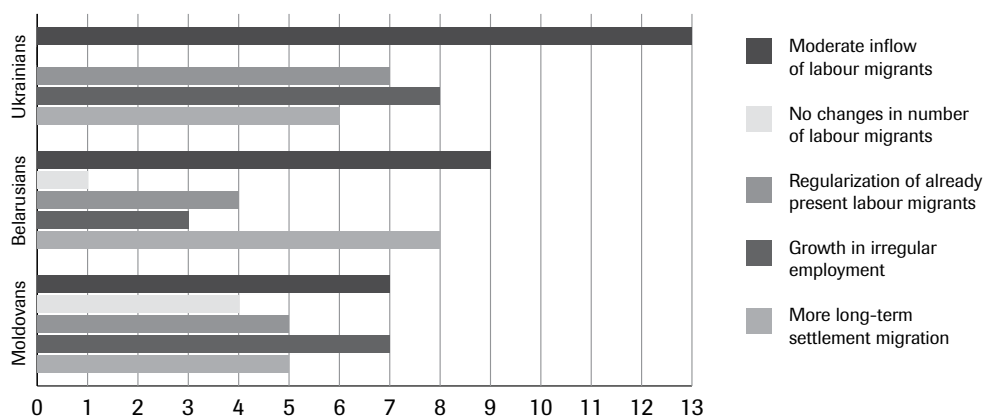
In the Delphi survey, migration experts were asked to give their prognosis of future immigration trends to Poland from Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova. Asked if the dynamics of migration flows should change in the next decade, most of the experts who answered this question gave an affirmative response, predicting an increase in the case of Ukrainian migrants, while only a few experts foresaw that the situation will remain stable. The main arguments for an increase listed by experts included: economic and political crisis in Ukraine coupled with growing demand for foreign labour in Poland. In the case of Belarusian and Moldovan migration, fewer experts predicted an increase, while more opted for the *status quo*. Some experts claimed, however, that changes might occur provided that an active recruitment policy is implemented in Poland. In the case of Moldova, an argument was also raised that compared to other EU destinations, Poland is not and will not in the nearest future become an attractive destination country for Moldovans and, moreover, Moldova's migration potential has already been largely depleted.

Furthermore, most of the experts predicted that there will also be transformations in migrants' economic performance. Experts pointed to the fact that migrants will be employed in more diversified sectors, including occupying highly skilled positions, according to their qualifications. Therefore, and due to the predicted growing demand for labour in Poland, their wages are expected to grow. These prognoses may come to pass, especially if there follows an increase in enrolment to Polish universities by students of Ukrainian, Belarusian and Moldovan origin. Such a scenario is likely given the decreasing

number of secondary school graduates in Poland, and the survival strategies undertaken by institutions of higher education aimed at attracting foreign students. As regards the future of Poland's migration policy, the experts were unanimous that it will undergo change and become more liberal, as will be necessitated by a growing demand for labour and the worsening demographic situation in Poland.

Experts were also questioned on what they would expect to happen in a short-term horizon of three years if visas for short-term travel (up to 90 days) for Ukrainian, Belarusian and Moldovan nationals to the Schengen area were abolished (they were asked to choose the three most probable options), in order to find out whether in their opinion there is a link between visa liberalisation and migration patterns. The figure below shows the most frequent responses.

Figure 10. What do you expect to happen (in a short-term horizon of three years) in Poland if visas for short-term travel for up to 90 days for Ukrainian, Belarusian and Moldovan nationals to the Schengen area are abolished? (most frequent answers)⁴³



Source: Delphi survey Poland 2013-2014

As far as Ukrainians are concerned, most of the experts who answered this question marked moderate inflow of labour migrants as one of the three most possible scenarios. In second place, experts placed possible growth in irregular employment and regularisation of existing labour migrants. In the case of Belarusians, the most likely outcomes were indicated as follows: moderate inflow of labour migrants, more long-term settlement migration and regularisation of

⁴³ 16 experts answered this question for Ukrainians, 13 – for Belarusians and 14 – for Moldovans.

the already present labour migrants. As regards Moldovans, the most significant were: moderate inflow of migrants, increase of irregular employment and more long-term settlement migration and regularisation of those migrants already present. There were only single responses predicting significant changes in migration processes – mass inflows of labour migrants, or the contrary – a decrease in the number of labour migrants.

As for prospects for visa abolition for short-term travel to the EU, for Ukrainians the majority of experts were convinced that visas will be abolished in no later than six years (6 out of 15 indicated a 2-3 year horizon; 8 indicated a 4-6 year horizon). The main obstacles included: the current political crisis in Ukraine, slow progress in implementation of the EU-Ukraine Visa Liberalisation Action Plan and the lack of political will to liberalize on the EU level. As regards Belarus, the experts were more sceptical: most of them (8 out of 12) opted for long-term future (seven years and more), while the rest argued it will happen within four to six years. Here the experts supported their opinion with arguments on the political situation in Belarus, its dependence on Russia and its lukewarm relations with the EU. As far as Moldova is concerned, visas for short-term travel for Moldovan citizens were already abolished by the EU in late April this year.

The experts were also asked what they predict to happen provided that Poland lifts restrictions on access to the labour market for Ukrainian, Belarusian and Moldovan nationals, which seems to currently be the most important legal obstacle for Eastern European migrants wishing to work in the EU. As regards Ukrainians, most of the experts (11 out of 16) predicted a rise in migration inflow from Ukraine over a three year horizon after the restrictions are abolished, while the minority of them foresaw that it will become much higher and additionally, one person indicated no changes at all. In the case of Belarus, experts were even more unanimous – the majority of them predicted higher (but not much higher – this option was selected by only one expert) inflow, while only two respondents expected no changes. Regarding Moldova, opinions were more divided: some expected higher inflow of migrants, others foresaw no changes whereas some predicted much higher inflows.

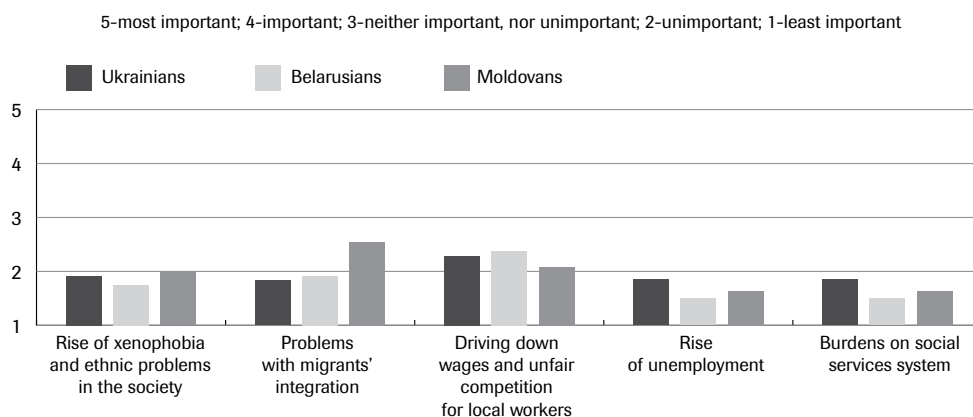
The Delphi survey started at the end of the year 2013 when the political crisis in Ukraine had just begun. Since then the situation in the country has changed dramatically and Russian occupation of Crimea has additionally influenced the propensity to migrate for the inhabitants of Ukraine, and of Crimea in particular. Moreover, seeking to prevent the results from being biased due

to placing undue emphasis on short-term effects, experts were asked to concentrate on general trends and were not asked to comment on the Ukrainian crisis explicitly. Theoretically, it is possible that Ukrainian migrants abroad will re-orientate towards the EU, provided that Russia tightens its regulations towards them. As Russia occupies first place among receiving states for Ukrainian labour migrants, potential inflow to the EU may possibly grow. However, Poland is definitely not the most desirable destination for migrants who previously occupied higher status positions in Russia and who would not be satisfied with unskilled, low-paid jobs in agriculture, construction or household services in Poland, and thus for them it may function more in the role of a transit country.

Challenges, opportunities and risks of further immigration

The potential increase in migration to Poland may involve both possible risks and bring new opportunities. However, taking into account the characteristics of migrants coming to Poland from Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova – especially their cultural closeness, minor integration problems and high economic activity – the most frequently mentioned risks are actually minimised. This observation is in line with the results of the Delphi survey. The surveyed respondents rated the possible rise in xenophobia or ethnic problems connected with immigration from Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova as unimportant. Similarly, they do not expect any problems with integration of these migrants, nor do they predict that future immigration may lead to the growth of unemployment or place an additional burden on the social services system. As far as the integration of migrants is concerned, experts were more uncertain in the case of Moldova – the results obtained show that according to the respondents Moldovans may encounter some integration problems. An argument often raised in immigration countries – that the presence of migrants drives down wages and that they constitute competition for local workers – was not regarded as an important risk connected to future migration of Ukrainian, Belarusian and Moldovan nationals to Poland. The figure below summarizes the assessment of potential negative impacts of Ukrainian, Belarusian and Moldovan immigration to Poland by those experts taking part in the Delphi survey.

Figure 11. Negative impacts of future migration from Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova to Poland (average answers)⁴⁴



Source: Delphi survey Poland 2013-2014

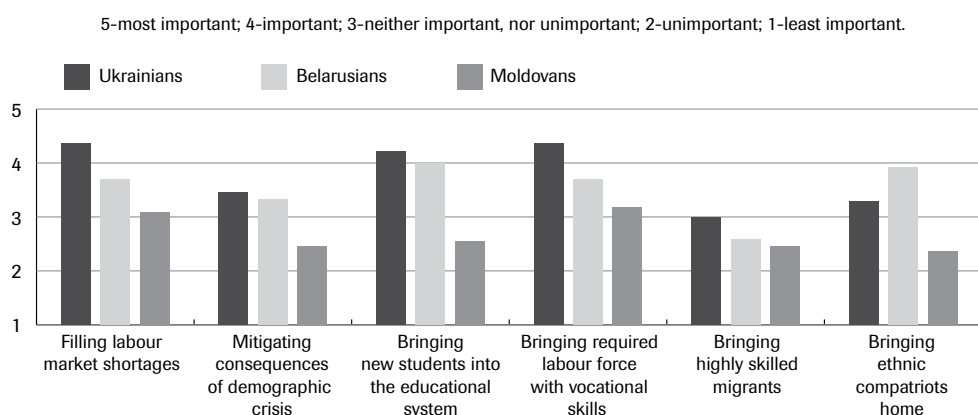
As far as opportunities connected with Eastern European migration to Poland are concerned, none of the experts surveyed stated that she/he ‘does not see any positive impacts’ which migration from these countries may have. As the most important positive impact of immigration from Ukraine, respondents identified the fact that it compensates for labour shortages, including the supply of a labour force possessing sought-after vocational skills, and that it attracts new students to the Polish educational system. As regards Belarusians, opportunities connected with the possibility of attracting new students and bringing ethnic compatriots home obtained the highest average rank. What is interesting here is that this point was assessed as a slightly more important in the case of Belarus as in the case of Ukraine. The other two positive impacts rated as important for Ukraine (‘filling labour market shortages’ and ‘bringing required labour force with vocational skills’), were evaluated as slightly less important in the case of Belarusian migrants, which may be explained by differences in population size and thus migration potential between these countries.

The experts participating in the Delphi survey were not overly enthusiastic regarding the chances for mitigating the consequences of the demographic crisis which lies in store for Poland. Naturally, potential future Ukrainian migration got the highest placing in this domain among the three countries of origin, while Moldova the lowest. In general, Moldovan migration proved to be identified as having the least important impact in all domains, which is not

⁴⁴ Each point has been ranked by at least 11 experts from whose answers the arithmetic mean has been calculated.

surprising given the fact that Poland does not constitute a particularly popular destination. The figure below presents the average of ranks given to potential positive impacts from Ukrainian, Belarusian and Moldovan immigration to Poland as assessed by the experts taking part in the Delphi survey.

Figure 12. Positive impacts of future migration from Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova to Poland (average answers)



Source: Delphi survey Poland 2013-2014

Experts were also asked to assess whether it lies in Poland's interest to attract ethnic Poles living in Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova. Most of the experts who answered this question gave an affirmative response. The most frequently cited arguments supporting this opinion include: the importance of this measure in light of the current demographic situation in Poland and future labour market demand and the fact that those people will easily integrate with Polish society. Two experts argued that migrants of Polish origin will be more easily accepted by society than foreigners not possessing Polish roots. Those experts who represented the opposite view point of view referred to the fact that Polish descent should not be treated as a key determinant in defining the most desirable immigrants.

Asked whether abolition of short-term Schengen visas for Ukrainian, Belarusian and Moldovan nationals is desirable from Poland's perspective, experts almost unanimously gave a positive answer. First of all, experts think that simplification of entry rules is important in light of a shrinking working age population in Poland. Moreover, experts also drew attention to the fact that it would enable the strengthening of neighbourhood cooperation with Eastern European states and positively influence mutual relations. Some experts also argued that this step may be perceived as a soft-power measure since it may improve Poland's image in these countries and help to promote democracy, in

particular among Belarusian citizens. Furthermore, visa abolition will facilitate circular migration and contribute to an increase in the number of tourists and shopping visits to Poland.

Taking into account the challenges associated with population decline and population aging facing Poland, it is clear that Poland has to turn to foreign labour forces to compensate for population losses and to maintain the social and pension system. Moreover, another argument in favour of attracting workers from abroad is the fact that immigrants only compete with local workers to a limited extent as they usually hold jobs in sectors which are relatively unpopular among Poles. Immigrants tend to occupy positions in such sectors as agriculture, construction and household services. The labour demand in some of these sectors, e.g. elderly care, will certainly grow. In addition, Western European experience shows that these are usually immigrants who are employed e.g. as senior care assistants.

What seems to be one of the challenges of future migration from Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova to Poland is the problem of irregular migration. Irregular status of stay or employment translates into losses both for Poland as a receiving country (as it means losses to the state budget as irregular workers do not pay taxes) and for migrants themselves (as they are not protected by the labour law and are not entitled to certain benefits, e.g. social benefits). Therefore, the state has to support legal employment and create the conditions whereby regularization becomes profitable both for Polish employers and immigrants. Another challenge concerns the problem of transit migration – Poland may prove not to be attractive enough to make the migrants stay long-term.

Conclusions

Poland is still in a transition period from emigration to an immigration country, and it is not obvious when and whether it will be completed, and to what extent Poland follows the cases of Western and Southern European countries in the migration cycle. Emigration still dominates. Although the inflow of foreigners is increasing, it is mainly of a short term and circular character. Moreover, immigration is not yet a subject of widespread debate in Poland, nor do the media devote much attention to this theme.

Taking into account the economic stability and social developments which have taken place in the last decade, it can be expected that the attractiveness of Poland as a destination country will grow, in particular for citizens of Eastern

European countries. This opinion was confirmed by experts participating in the Delphi survey conducted among Polish migration experts in 2013-2014. Migration policy remains one of the key factors influencing the scale and character of immigration trends. The legal framework shapes migrants' opportunities related to admission. The entry and stay requirements (including visas) are barriers which have a real impact on migration decisions. Also, the rules regulating access of foreigners to the labour market are important and may act as a pull factor for potential labour migrants. Migration policy in Poland has changed significantly over recent years towards a more open and friendly approach to newcomers, especially as regards Poland's eastern neighbours. The simplified system for employment of foreign workers proved to be a positive measure which has attracted quite a significant number of short term workers, especially from Ukraine. Poland's authorities are also promoting a visa free regime for nationals from Eastern Partnership countries. Further liberalisation of migration policy is only a matter of time, this is also the considered opinion of the overwhelming majority of experts surveyed. This trend towards a more controlled opening up for enhanced mobility (including migration) is perceived as positive and in line with Polish state interests in sustaining economic and demographic growth, according to the Delphi experts. However, whether these improvements bring desirable effects depends on many factors, including the future economic and political situation in the sending countries (particularly in Ukraine) and economic developments in Poland.

Migration from Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova is expected to grow in the coming years, especially as regards Ukraine, while the number of Moldovan migrants is not expected to grow markedly. Furthermore, a potential increase, in particular regarding Belarusians, depends on the effectiveness of an active recruitment policy conducted by Polish authorities towards foreigners. In the future, labour migrants from these countries in Poland are expected to occupy more diversified sectors and be more frequently employed in positions reflecting their qualifications. Liberalisation of admission procedures towards eastern neighbours, such as EU uniform short-term visas abolishment or – more importantly – lifting restrictions in access to the labour market, is expected to lead to growth in migration inflows, albeit not a very high growth. However, as was pointed out by some of the experts interviewed, visa abolition may lead to a growth in irregular employment. That is why it seems reasonable to alleviate restrictions in access to the labour market simultaneously with the introduction of changes concerning the visa regime (e.g. by prolonging the period for which employer's declarations are valid).

2. MIGRATION BETWEEN THE EU, V4 AND EASTERN EUROPE: THE PRESENT SITUATION AND THE POSSIBLE FUTURE. THE PERSPECTIVE OF CZECHIA

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Introduction

Czechia, as a country with twenty years of continuous growth in migrants, can nowadays be treated as a typical immigration country. The process of integrating migrants may be regarded as a success, mainly due to the fact that most migrants come from culturally close countries (Slovakia, Ukraine, Russia, Poland) and from countries where adaptation to new customs is not principally rejected (i.e. Vietnam). After significant growth in the number of migrants in 2001–2009, it seems that Czechia currently finds itself at a crossroads, where the next migration development is not obvious.

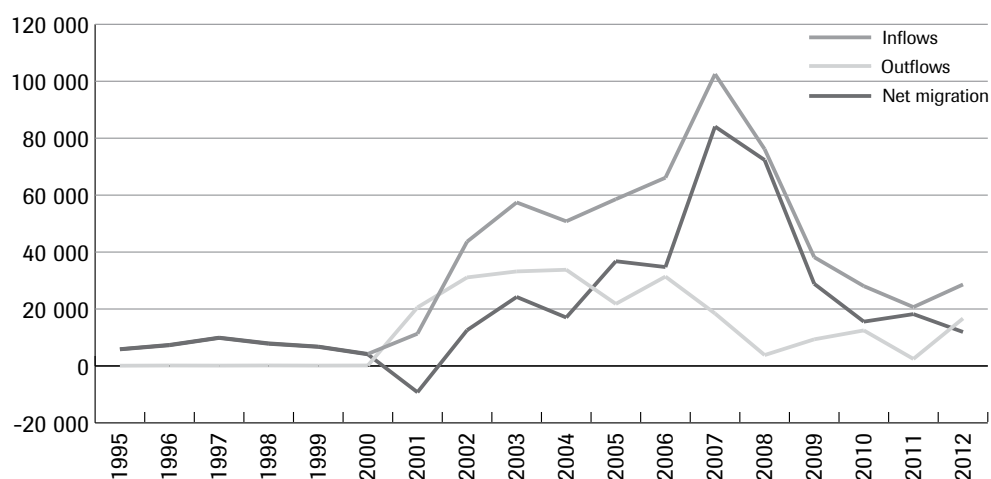
Have the migration dynamics stabilised over the long-term perspective or will larger waves of migration appear after the economic crisis is overcome? What does the present political crisis in Ukraine augur? What new measures should be adopted in the immigration policy? The following chapter will attempt to address these questions. Besides migration patterns, the text also considers the strategies of migrants in terms of their length of stay, economic and demographic behavior. However, the main aim of this report is more specific – to present the current and future role of Eastern European countries in shaping Czechia's migration profile. The chapter will analyse what benefits and drawbacks Eastern European migration has brought to Czechia so far, and what are the future perspectives in times of restrictive migration policy conducted by the Czech government.

The chapter contrasts existing statistical data, previous quantitative and qualitative research, with the results of the Delphi survey on migration trends conducted in November 2013 – February 2014 for the purposes of the current publication. 17 experts took part in the first round of Delphi survey and 16 in the second round. The experts represented Czech governmental institutions, non-governmental organizations, international organizations and the scientific community.

Immigration profile of Czechia – a brief description

Within a short time span, following the democratic transformation of 1989, Czechia shifted from a country of emigration to a transit country, and then to a country of net immigration. The stock of migrants has increased six fold since 1993. The period of dynamic growth in the foreign population began in 2001 when the number of incoming immigrants totaled about 25,000 per year and reached approximately 100,000 in 2007. The global economic crisis, however, dented that trend and resulted in a decline in the number of migrants after 2008⁴⁵.

Figure 13. International migration flows to/from Czechia in 1995-2012



Source: Czech Statistical Office, 2014

Although non-natives constitute only around 4% of the total population, this number ranks Czechia at the top among the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, and at the same level as Portugal or the Netherlands. On January 1, 2013, the number of legally residing migrants reached 438,000. Migrants from Ukraine, Moldova, and Belarus accounted for 123,000 (almost 30% of the entire migrant population). The estimate of the total number of migrants made by the experts who took part in the Delphi survey is higher, standing at 149,000 in the first round of the survey and 129,000 in the second round. This is due to the fact that the experts' estimates also included irregular migrants.

⁴⁵ Foreigners in Czechia, 2013, Czech Statistical Office, Prague; <http://www.czso.cz/csu/2013edicniplan.nsf/engp/1414-13> (10.05.2014).

Nevertheless, the Delphi experts' estimates for the stock of irregular migrants seem to be rather low in comparison with the results of previous investigations concerning irregular migration in Czechia⁴⁶ and closer to the numbers of irregular migrants apprehended in the country. It is interesting that experts estimated that the majority of irregular migrants (in relative numbers) come from Belarus. It seems that estimating the figures for the less common groups of migrants is more difficult than for the ones that are more numerous (i.e. Ukrainians). However, the surprising conclusion is that the experts kept their estimate low and in the second round this estimate was reduced still further, which may also be explained by the general decrease in all types of migrants residing in Czechia.

Table 27. Number of foreigners in Czechia

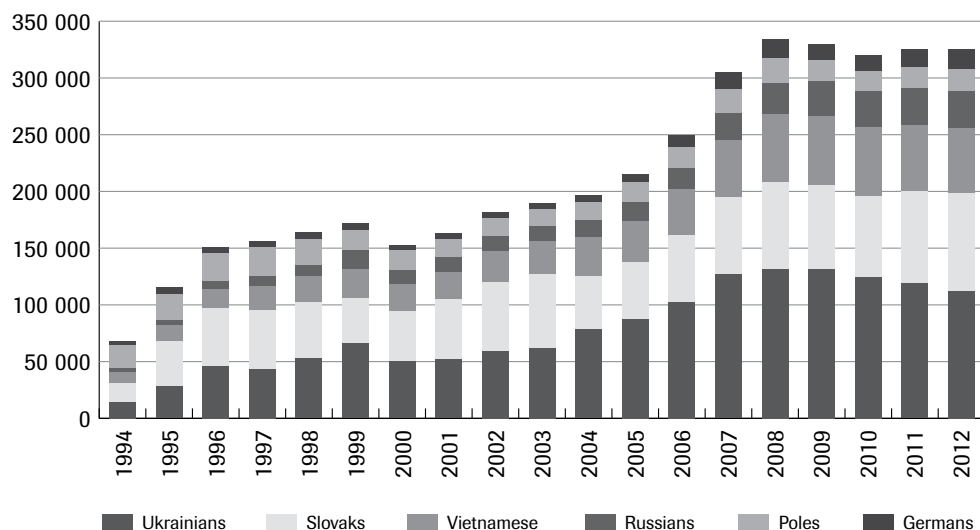
	Registry of population (1 January 2013)	Delphi estimate (first round, 11/2013)	Delphi estimate (second round, 2/2014)
Belarus	4,480	6,400	5,200
Moldova	6,373	7,700	6,000
Ukraine	112,642	135,000	118,000
Total (BL, MD, UKR)	123,495	149,100	129,200
Other foreigners	314,581	-	-
Total foreigners	438,076	-	-

Source: Directorate of Alien Police, Asylum and Migration Policies Department (MI CR), Delphi survey Czechia 2013-2014

The composition of the main countries of origin for migrants arriving in Czechia has been stable since the 1990s. The migrants from non-EU countries prevail: Ukrainians, Vietnamese, and Russians. However, the share of EU citizens has shown an increasing trend, from 32% in 2010 to 37% in 2012. The geographical composition of immigrants has been affected by the economic crisis since 2008. Those who left the country were mainly migrants from Ukraine, Moldova and Poland. This does not apply to migrants from Belarus, who are believed to be political rather than economic migrants. The number of migrants from Bulgaria and Romania has increased since the accession of those countries to the EU, (one expert of the Delphi survey pointed out that there are Ukrainians with Romanian passports among this group).

⁴⁶ D. Drbohlav, L. Lachmanová, *Irregular Activities of Migrants in Czechia: a Delphi Study on Adaptations in a Globalising Economy*; (in:) P. Dostál (ed). *Evolution of Geographical System and Risk Processes in the Global Context*, Prague 2008, Charles University, P3K, pp. 129-156.

Figure 14. Foreigners in Czechia by country of origin in 1994-2012



Source: Czech Statistical Office, 2014

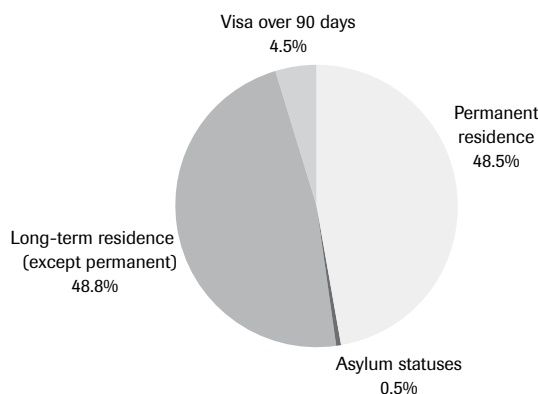
Regarding the types of residence, 2012 was the first year when foreigners with permanent residence status outnumbered those with long-term residence status⁴⁷. This is due to the higher number of migrants fulfilling the requirement of five-year residence, which is one of the conditions for obtaining permanent residence. Migrants' increased interest in permanent residence reflects the change in the prevailing pattern of migration from a short-term into a permanent one. However, the results of the Delphi survey have shown that the trends of both permanent and circular migration still remain.

Other categories of migrants residing in Czechia are marginal, such as refugees and persons having subsidiary protection status. Between 1994-2012, 79,000 foreigners applied for asylum and less than 2,000 individuals were granted international protection, which ranks Czechia among the EU states with one of the smallest number of foreigners granted asylum. Belarusians (along with Russians) represent the national group with the highest share of refugee status granted in the years 1993-2010 (13%)⁴⁸.

⁴⁷ Permanent residence (unlike long-term residence) provides a number of benefits to migrants, such a permit to stay for five years, the opportunity to obtain/change employment without permission. Also, family reunification members do not need a work permit.

⁴⁸ Czech Statistical Office, www.czso.cz (accessed 10.05.2014).

Figure 15. Foreigners in Czechia by category of residence (1st January 2013)



Source: Czech Statistical Office, 2013

The migrant population is dominated by men (57%), but the proportion of women is slowly but steadily increasing (Czech Statistical Office data, 2013). The lowest proportion of women is among migrants from the ‘old’ EU states. On the contrary, a higher proportion of woman can be seen among representatives of the FSU (Russians, Kazakhstanis and Belarusians). There are also noticeable differences in the age profile of foreigners. The young age group (25-39 years) is strongly represented in the migrant population, in contrast to a small share of people beyond working age. Statistical data correspond to the Delphi experts’ opinions.

In general, migrants are concentrated in the capital city and the surrounding region. The share of foreigners registered in the city of Prague reached 37% (of the total number of migrants) in 2012. The spatial distribution of foreigners, however, shows certain differences depending on the nationality. Whereas Ukrainians have tended to cluster in the Central Bohemia Region and the South Moravia Region, Vietnamese settle in Prague and areas close to the Czech-German frontier, and Russians in Prague and the Carlsbad Region. The highest share of irregular migrants is recorded in Prague. Their number was estimated at 47,000 in 2008, which is more than one third of the entire foreign population in this city⁴⁹.

The economic performance of foreigners in Czechia differs by country of origin. Alongside this is the dual labour market theory, whereby foreigners from Western Europe and the US are highly skilled and work mainly in the “primary”

⁴⁹ L. Medová, D. Drbohlav, *Tijdschrift voor Economische en Sociale Geografie*, 2012, Vol. 104, No. 1, pp. 75-89.

sector, while those from Eastern Europe occupy the “secondary” sector of the Czech labour market (e.g. industry and manufacturing). One third of the economically active foreigners are self-employed. The official gross monthly average salary of migrant is lower than the average salary received by Czech national. However, the average earnings may be higher in reality since many migrants have more than one job and work many hours over the legal limit.

The experts surveyed in the Delphi panel claimed that migrants from Ukraine and Moldova are mainly engaged in manually demanding sectors, such as construction and industry, although they are also said to perform highly qualified jobs. An interesting finding is that migrants from Belarus are said to be more often employed in the service sector than in manually demanding jobs. The experts also reflected on recent growth in the domestic sector, where Ukrainian women are primarily located.

Main determinants of immigration processes to Czechia

Migration inflows are closely connected with the economic development of the country. Czechia is the most stable and prosperous country in Central and Eastern Europe. GDP *per capita* at purchasing power parity was USD 27,100 in 2011, which is 85% of the EU average. The whole transformation period has also been characterized by other favourable economic characteristics, such as low unemployment rates (6% in 2014) and a low inflation rate (0.9% in 2014).

The periods of strongest economic growth (1990-1997 and 2003-2008) were accompanied by high demand for labour and consequently by higher immigration flows. During these two periods, the demand existed primarily in low-skilled occupations in the construction and manufacturing industries. Nevertheless, the structure of demand changed over time. Today, growing demand in the domestic services sector has been observed. Moreover, in recent years, the interest in studying at universities, which is free of charge in the Czech language in state colleges, turned out to be one of the popular motives among young migrants for coming to Czechia.

According to results from the Delphi research, the factors that attract migrants from Ukraine, Moldova and Belarus, are primarily economic (and to some extent political in the case of Belarus). The strongest *pull* factor is the economic and political stability of the country. Other reasons for selecting Czechia as a destination country are: migration networks, geographical, cultural and language proximity (language proximity does not apply to migrants

from Moldova, but many of them are also fluent in Russian, which is similar to Czech). In the case of Ukrainian migration, another advantage is a long lasting tradition from the interwar period (1918-1939), when Ukrainian Transcarpathia was part of the former Czechoslovakia.

An additional factor facilitating migration from post-soviet states, mainly from Ukraine and Moldova, is the presence of semi-legal networks, which developed in the early 1990s. These semi-legal networks assist in the obtaining of entry visas, work permits, insurance, and accommodation and then place the migrants in semi-legal employment system controlled by the network. That scheme became commonly known as the “client system”. The key person is called a “client”, who is usually a person who arrived in the 1990s and over some time set up his/her own business in Czechia and then provided services as an intermediary in migrants’ employment. The costs for migrants of being involved in the “client system” are the restrictions to their freedom (difficulties in changing a job, retention of wages, liability to exploitation), and lesser prospects of integration into the Czech society. It is estimated that as many as one third of migrants are involved in the “client system”⁵⁰.

Table 28. Current main push and pull factors influencing migration flows from Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova in Czechia

	Ukrainians			Belarusians			Moldovans		
	AM	SD	N	AM	SD	N	AM	SD	N
Ethnic links (migration of ethnic Hungarian, Poles and Slovaks)	2.8	1.2	16	1.8	1.2	16	1.6	1.2	16
Ease of finding a job in destination country	4.1	0.6	16	3.4	0.6	16	3.9	0.6	16
High wages in destination country	4.0	0.5	16	3.8	0.5	16	4.0	0.5	16
High living standards in destination country	2.7	1.1	16	2.6	1.1	16	2.6	1.1	16
Poverty and social tensions in sending country	3.9	0.7	16	3.8	0.7	16	4.0	0.7	16
Political oppression and/or destabilization of political situation in sending country	3.3	1.2	16	4.2	1.2	16	2.8	1.2	16
Cultural and language proximity	4.2	0.7	16	3.6	0.7	16	3.1	0.7	16

⁵⁰ D. Čermáková, M. Nekorjak, *Ukrainian Middleman System of Labour Organization in the Czech Republic*, Tijdschrift voor Economische en Sociale Geografie, 2009, Vol. 100, No. 1, pp. 33-43.

	Ukrainians			Belarusians			Moldovans		
	AM	SD	N	AM	SD	N	AM	SD	N
Liberal visa and migration policy of destination country	2.9	1.3	16	2.9	1.3	16	2.8	1.3	16
Already existing strong group of compatriots in destination country	4.5	0.6	16	3.5	0.6	16	3.8	0.6	16
Already staying and working relatives or close friends (migration networks)	4.6	0.6	16	3.8	0.6	16	4.2	0.6	16
Geographic proximity and low travel costs	4.2	0.9	15	3.6	0.9	15	3.3	0.9	15
Tradition of migration	4.0	1.4	2	3.0	1.4	2	2.5	1.4	2

Source: Delphi survey Czechia 2013-2014

Note: AM - arithmetic mean (mean of all received answers), SD - standard deviation (how much variation from the average exist,) and N - number of respondents; Rating according to agreement with the statement: 5 surely yes, 4 - perhaps yes, 3 - maybe yes, maybe no, 2 - perhaps no, 1 - surely no

The structure of migration inflows is also influenced by the migration policy of a receiving state. Czech migration policy has transformed several times. It started out as liberal (during the 1990s), switched to being restrictive (at the turn of the millennium), was then harmonized with EU legislation (at the time of accession in 2004), became more restrictive after 2008 global economic crisis, and could today be characterized as being both active and restrictive simultaneously. The Delphi experts described the migration policy of Czechia after 2008 as more restrictive, but also as active and selective. Among others, such measures aimed at attracting high-skilled migrants as the project “Selection of Qualified Foreign Workers” (2003), Green Card (2009)⁵¹, Blue Card (2009), and the opportunity to change employers without the need to leave the country, could be seen as examples of active policy. On the other hand, the introduction in 2009 of restrictions on accepting job applications, aimed at nationals from Vietnam, Ukraine, Mongolia, Moldova, and Uzbekistan, could be considered a restrictive action. These restrictions are implemented through the quota system which requires submitting an application via the system VISAPPOINT at the Czech consulates abroad.

Migrants from Moldova, Ukraine and Belarus come from culturally close countries, i.e. their integration primarily due to linguistic and cultural proximity

⁵¹ The Green card simplifies entry to the job market for foreigners who have qualifications for which Czechia has a job opening. It is for qualified workers with university education and also for workers in jobs with a minimum educational requirement (more at http://portal.mpsv.cz/sz/zahr_zam/zelka/ciz#coje).

is well underway. The Delphi experts do not regard these three countries as 'problematic' in terms of their integration with Czech society. Nevertheless, a consequence of the employment market regulation is that, in practice, migrants from these countries work in less attractive sectors of the labour market, which, in many cases, does not match up with their education and professional experience. Among the main obstacles to the integration of migrants are: problems with recognition of migrants' qualifications, discrimination by employers, and involvement in the "client system"⁵².

Media and public discourse on migration

The media image of foreigners has been perceived by researchers for many years as unchanging and rather unfriendly. Generally speaking, migrants are not at the centre of mainstream media attention. However, there are some exceptions, such as the story on the accidental fire of the Vietnamese market in 2008 or of a demonstration by an extreme right-wing party against migrants. Among the various groups of foreigners, only refugees are positively perceived by the media⁵³.

When it comes to Czech society, it is considered to be tolerant in many respects, but not necessarily towards migrants. The degree of tolerance varies depending on migrants' country of origin – Czechs are most tolerant towards Slovaks and Poles. A lower level of tolerance is shown to migrants from the post-Soviet and Balkan countries. Nevertheless, considerably more toleration is revealed to migrants than to the Roma minority⁵⁴.

With regard to more in-depth public discourse on migration and visa issues, a key moment of Czech migration policy was the introduction in 2000 of short-stay visas for the citizens of post-Soviet states, which marked the end of the liberal migration policy and was discussed publicly. Since then, the topic of a visa-free regime for the Eastern European countries and migration policy aimed at this category of foreigners has not been discussed in public.

⁵² M. Rakoczyová, R. Trbola, *Sociální integrace přistěhovalců v České republice*, Praha, Slon 2011, p. 310, in Czech.

⁵³ A. Szczepanikova, „Zatím s nimi nejsou problémy”. *Mediální obraz azylantů a jejich integrace do české společnosti*, (in:) *Cizinci, naši a média. Mediální analýzy*, Praha 2007, Multikulturální centrum Praha, pp. 37-47, in Czech.

⁵⁴ D. Drbohlav et al, *Migrace a (i)migranti v Česku. Kdo jsme, odkud přicházíme, kam jdeme?* Praha 2010: Slon, p. 207, in Czech.

Prognosis of immigration - a brief summary

For short-term future migration trends (with a horizon of three years), the Delphi experts are expecting no change. Some of them believe that inflows may increase slightly in the future and more migrants will take up employment on the Czech labour market. Although the Czech government is currently implementing measures aimed at reducing the number of irregular migrants, primarily by combating irregular employment, the Delphi experts seem to be skeptical about the prospects of this policy and they expect growth in irregular employment. Although in the first round of the survey the experts considered regularisation of existing labour migrants as feasible, in the second round they were doubtful that it could happen.

With regard to the long-term perspective the experts expect more long-term and settlement migration from Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova in the future. Over a ten-year perspective they anticipate stable migration flows, but their prognosis is conditioned by various future developments in the national economy and the EU, the political situation in sending countries, and migration policy. In particular the experts foresee an inflow of young migrants including students, a rising number of migrant women and continuity of family reunification. Experts believe that the economic performance of migrants will be characterised by an increase in job opportunities, wages, volume of remittances, and diversification of the sectors occupied by migrants (a shift from industry to social services).

The Delphi experts also agreed that the abolition of uniform EU visas for short-term stays for the citizens of Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova is both desirable and feasible (in the second round more experts agreed with that opinion than in the first round). For Moldova (experts were surveyed before the EU has lifted visa obligations for Moldovan citizens) and Ukraine, the experts are expecting the abolition of short-term visas within a short time period (2-3 years), and for Belarusians over a longer period (7-10 years)⁵⁵. In general, experts believe that abolition of EU short-term visas does not bring serious security risks for Czechia. In fact, one expert expressed the opinion that visa abolition could be one of the steps to reducing the existing “client system”. In general experts believe that short-term visas’ regime is certainly linked with mobility, but cannot be regarded as an effective tool to fight against irregular migration.

⁵⁵ Probably due to frozen political relations between the EU and Belarus.

Table 29. Agreement with the abolition of short-term EU visas for Eastern European nationals in Czechia

		Ukrainians	Belarusians	Moldovans
Yes	First round	9	8	10
		New opinion Yes	New opinion Yes	New opinion Yes
	Second round	10	10	11
No	First round	4	6	4
		New opinion No	New opinion No	New opinion No
	Second round	4	4	3
Number of respondents (second round)		14	14	14

Source: Delphi survey Czechia 2013-2014

Note: The text of the question: Do you agree with the statement that abolition of visas for Ukrainians, Belarusians and Moldovans is desirable from the point of view of your country interests?

Challenges, opportunities and risks of further immigration

Czechia has recorded a natural decline in population for 12 years in succession (1994-2005), but thanks to the inflow of foreigners the total population losses were not so high. In the future, however, inflows of foreigners cannot be the solution to the problem of the population ageing. The Delphi experts therefore suggest a selective migration policy as an appropriate tool for partial solution to demographic problems, but mainly as an answer to changing requirements of the labour market. The experts also supported an approach of promoting mutual cooperation with these states while making efforts to liberalise the migration regime, abolishing visa requirements and facilitating circular migration. A focus on cooperation with the origin countries of migrants (Moldova, Ukraine and Belarus) is seen as the most desirable measure. By that they mean increasing business activities in Eastern Europe, trans-border cooperation and making the Czech education system more open to foreign students. The Czech experts think that migrants and also potential migrants do not have sufficient information about the migration process and the situation in the destination country. Therefore, they advise that information about migration and related matters should be circulated as widely as possible. Specific recommendations from Czech experts to the governments of Moldova, Belarus and Ukraine concern the development of effective communication channels with diasporas.

The Czech experts' recommendation for Visegrad countries could be divided into two groups: systematic and practical. As systematic measures, the experts suggested the design and subsequent implementation of proper migration strategies, the promotion of transparency within migration policy and practice, and the enhancement of integration processes. For migration strategies they suggest facilitating circular migration, launching additional programmes of cultural and scientific exchanges, and opening up the education system to foreign students. As practical measures, experts suggested providing widespread information about migration/integration measures, recognising migrants' qualifications and diplomas, and lessening the bureaucratic burden which migrants are often subjected to.

Conclusions

Czechia, with a history of over 20 years of immigration and almost half a million migrants, has ranked among the countries of significant immigration. Today's Czechia could be considered as a stabilising immigration country with both permanent and circular migrants. Among the most important developments in migration sphere the following patterns and phenomena may be enumerated: the creation of immigration and integration policies, the issue of natural demographic decline in relation to immigration, irregular migration, and security issues. These and other topics were included in the Delphi survey, where experts expressed their opinions with regard to the current and future development of immigration to Czechia.

Taking in account the economic and political developments, it is expected that immigration inflows from Eastern European countries to Czechia will continue. The Delphi experts see the main *push* and *pull* factors for migration from Ukraine, Moldova and Belarus primarily as economic and for Belarus also as political. Other *pull* factors for migrants are: the existence of migration networks, a tradition of migration (Ukraine), geographical proximity, cultural and language proximity.

Over short-term (three years) and long-term (ten years) horizons, stable migration inflows, or slight growth, are expected. Due to the development of permanent migration, an increase in migrants' wages and employment opportunities is awaited. With regards to the demographic patterns of migrants, one can expect immigration of younger people, students, women and children, as well as family reunification.

The most sensitive question in our Delphi survey was the experts' estimate of irregular migrants. The estimate of irregular migrants was surprisingly low. It appears that the problem of irregular migration has currently been resolved in Czechia. Nevertheless, for future trends the experts expressed their opinion that next wave of economic growth may again be accompanied by irregular migration.

The Delphi experts are more supportive of the abolition of short-term visas with Ukraine, Moldova and Belarus. As one negative consequence of such a measure, they anticipate more irregular circular migration. As a positive impact they expect growth in tourism, reducing the scale of the "client system" and also the possibility for potential migrants to arrange their employment individually (without using middlemen), which could be advantageous for both migrant and potential employer.

The key factor for the future development of migration trends will be the migration policy chosen by Czechia. The restrictive measures which came into effect after the 2008 financial crisis showed how strong the impact of migration policy on immigration trends may be. Delphi experts were rather unanimous when criticising the current migration policy of Czechia. They pointed out that it is strongly influenced by the fears that political and social developments in Eastern Europe are moving in the wrong direction and has less to do with the true performance of Ukrainian, Belarusian and Moldovan migrants in the Czech labour market and their integration into Czech society.

3. MIGRATION BETWEEN THE EU, V4 AND EASTERN EUROPE: THE PRESENT SITUATION AND POSSIBLE FUTURE THE PERSPECTIVE OF HUNGARY

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Introduction

Located at the crossroads of cultures and population movements since its foundation, Hungary is a country of both inward and outward migration. As the southernmost of the Visegrad countries, it is an important hub of transitory flows arriving from both the Eastern Partnership countries and the Balkan Peninsula. This chapter aims to present the opinion of a carefully selected group of Hungarian migration experts surveyed under the Delphi research on migration trends between EU/V4 states and Eastern Europe from the governmental, academic and non-governmental sectors, and to compare it with other sources. Due to geographic proximity and historical ties, the bulk of these flows occurs between Ukraine's Transcarpathia region and Eastern Hungary, and involves mainly ethnic Hungarians of Ukrainian citizenship. However, there are also many other, very diverse patterns of migration from Eastern Europe to Hungary. The future of these patterns is uncertain, especially with the 2014 political crisis in Ukraine. Nonetheless, long-term processes can be foreseen to some extent, as the aggregate opinion of Hungarian experts seems to orient towards rather specific directions.

In the following country chapter, the Delphi survey results are contrasted with statistical data (when available) in first three sub-chapters, while in the concluding sub-chapters opinions about the future of migration flows and the possible effects of the abolition of the current EU visa requirements are presented. 15 experts took part in the first round and 12 in the second round of the Delphi survey on migration trends (conducted between November 2013 and March 2014), with equal representation from the governmental, academic and non-governmental sectors.

Immigration profile of Hungary: a brief description

During the era of state socialism the country enjoyed a relatively stable economy and acceptable living standards, but personal and economic freedoms were

limited, and from the point of view of international migration, the country was rather closed until the late 1980s. With the transition to democracy in 1989, the borders opened and economic collapse occurred across the whole Eastern bloc, which had an important push effect on migration. However, Hungary underwent a relatively smooth transition and it was seen as an island of stability in the region during the troubled decade of the 1990s, becoming an attractive destination for citizens of neighbouring countries, most of them ethnic Hungarians.

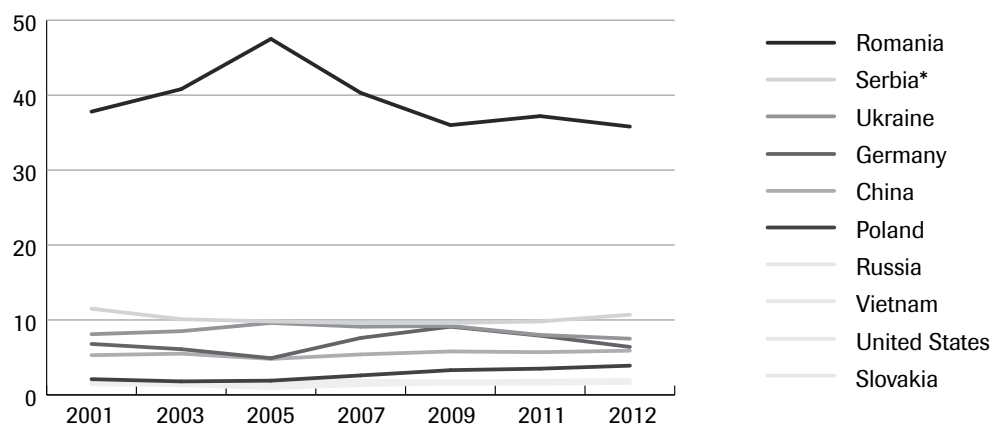
The negative post-transition economic trends reached a low point in the second half of the 1990s and a slow recovery began. As a consequence, a small but economically very active group of non-European immigrants (most importantly of Chinese, Vietnamese and Turkish nationality) arrived in the country. The accession of Hungary to the EU fostered intra-EU mobility and many EU citizens, mainly Germans, entered the country. On the other hand, with the end of limitations for Hungarian citizens on working in EU countries (e.g. in 2004 for UK, Ireland and Sweden, 2007 for Spain and Italy, 2011 for Austria and Germany) and pushed by the unfolding of the global economic crisis, emigration has started to rise in recent years. The issue of emigration has gradually become a key topic in Hungarian public discourse. Outward migration is especially high among doctors and healthcare professionals, engineers, technical workers and students. The migratory landscape of Hungary in the second decade of the 21st century is therefore constituted by immigration and emigration flows of an almost equal volume⁵⁶.

A presentation of a immigration profile of Hungary should begin with the clarification of who is considered as an immigrant by Hungarian law. If we take the definitions of Regulation (EC) No 862/2007 as a starting point, Hungary is the country of usual residence for more than one year for 143,000 foreign citizens, according to the 2011 census (including refugees). The data for 2011 in the Hungarian Central Statistical Office's database was 209,000 but it is believed that return migration to countries of origin followed the crisis and the lack of de-registration of migrants made the administrative data sources inaccurate. This figure, however, does not include the number of dual (Hungarian and other) citizens whose number increased by 500,000 between 2010 and 2014, another possible reason for the decrease in the stock of foreign citizens.

⁵⁶ I. Gödri, B. Soltész, B. Bodacz-Nagy, *Dynamic Historical Analysis of Longer Term Migratory, Labour Market and Human Capital Processes in Hungary*, SEEMIG Country Report 2013, online: www.seemig.eu

The census found that the largest migrant communities in Hungary are formed by the citizens from three neighbouring countries – Romania, Ukraine and Serbia – and two other – Germany and China. The top five countries account for two thirds of the migrant stock. Other, moderately important sending countries include Russia, Poland, Vietnam, Slovakia and Austria, constituting another 10-12% of the foreign population in Hungary.

Figure 16. TOP 10 countries of citizenship of foreign population in Hungary in 2001-2012 (as % of total foreign population)



* Including data for Montenegro

Source: Hungarian Central Statistical Office STADAT database. Compiled by I. Gödri (2013)

Immigrants are distinguished according to two key factors: their ethnicity and the EU membership of their country of citizenship (or lack thereof). Three general categories of foreigners could be pointed out, which are very much differentiated in both legal and public opinion terms: 1) ethnic Hungarians from neighbouring countries, 2) non-Hungarians from EU countries, and 3) non-Hungarians from third countries. Arguably, another category can be added, namely 4) recognized refugees.

Ethnic Hungarians from neighbouring countries are the most populous immigrant group in Hungary although they are the most atypical in international comparison. As a consequence of the Peace Treaties ending the First World War in 1920, large populations of Hungarian ethnicity became citizens of newly created or territorially expanded countries. As of 2014, Romania, Serbia, Ukraine and Slovakia have the largest ethnic Hungarian populations. As the transition to democracy had some rocky moments in these countries, Hungary became a prime destination for them, starting with Romania which, in the final years

of the repressive Ceaușescu regime, was the source of the first massive flow of irregular migration. Also, from Ukraine, Yugoslavia and its successor states there were thousands of ethnic Hungarians who decided to move to Hungary⁵⁷.

In Ukraine, Ethnic Hungarians live mostly in the districts of Berehovo, Mukachevo, Vynohradiv and Uzhorod. These districts are adjacent to the Hungarian border and strong historical and cultural ties link them to Hungary. According to Central Statistical Office data 74% of all Ukrainian migrants living in Hungary come from these four districts, while the other 16% come from other districts of Transcarpathia and 10% from the rest of Ukraine. Transcarpathia (*Zakarpats'ka oblast'* in Ukrainian, *Kárpátalja* in Hungarian), the westernmost region of Ukraine, belonged to the Kingdom of Hungary within the Austro-Hungarian Empire. A sense of historical belonging to Hungary and the knowledge of the Hungarian language make the group of ethnic Hungarians in Transcarpathia more willing to migrate to Hungary than other Ukrainian citizens.

As a consequence of this mutual sense of belonging to each other, ethnic Hungarians have always been privileged in terms of naturalization and obtaining settlement permits in Hungary. Legally speaking, in these cases the acquisition of citizenship derives from their ancestors' (ex)-Hungarian citizenship under the principle of *ius sanguinis* or, former Hungarian citizens can re-acquire their citizenship upon request. However, between 1989 and 2010, ethnic Hungarians could acquire citizenship only by moving to Hungary. From 1 January 2011 onwards, Hungarian law contains the accelerated or "simplified naturalization process" instrument, that is, every ethnic Hungarian is eligible for fast-track naturalization. Under this process, non-Hungarian citizens living abroad can be naturalized without moving to Hungary, if they or their ancestors ever held Hungarian citizenship, are able to speak basic Hungarian and possess a clean criminal record. Between January 2011 and April 2014, around 550,000 new citizenships were granted, of which approximately 70,000 were given to Ukrainian citizens, which is one second of the total number of ethnic Hungarians living in Ukraine (152,000 according to the 2001 census)⁵⁸.

⁵⁷ I. Gödri, E.F. Tóth, Magyarország, Románia és Szlovákia kivándorlási folyamatai a rendszerváltások után – eltérések és hasonlóságok, *Demográfia*, 2010/53, No. 2–3, p 157–204.; Sz. Póczik, L. Fehér and others, *Nemzetközi migráció – nemzetközi kockázatok*, (in:) *Magyar Tudomány*, 2008/09, p. 1095–2008, in Hungarian, online: <http://www.matud.iif.hu/o8sze/o7.html>

⁵⁸ B. Soltész et al., *Hungary: cross-border migration in a fragmented ethnic space*, (in:) A. Erőss, D. Karácsonyi (eds.), *Discovering migration between Visegrad countries and Eastern Partners*, Budapest, HAS RCAES Geographical Institute 2014.

The second group of immigrants, namely, EU and EEA citizens in Hungary enjoy basically the same rights as Hungarian citizens. The third group is constituted by third country nationals (non-EU). Eastern European and other non-EU nationals are required to have a visa for any stay longer than 90 days (also for short-term entry in the case of many third country nationalities, including the FSU states) and their employment is subject to an employment permit. In 2013, a total of 11,000 labour permits were issued by the National Employment Service to third country nationals. Third-country nationals are thus a well-documented group – although they are not a ‘group’ in sociological terms, as their characteristics vary wildly according to their nationality. Most of the Chinese, Vietnamese and Middle Eastern immigrants are small entrepreneurs who took advantage of the collapsing socialist economy and founded successful new businesses. On the other hand, Ukrainian citizens’ employment rate is below the average of the total population. Many of them work in Hungary on the grounds of a work permit, not a permanent settlement permit, which hinders their labour market mobility. Regarding EaP countries’ nationals, Ukrainians constitute the most important group. As of 2012, there were 15,362 Ukrainian citizens having residence and an immigration or a settlement permit in Hungary, while for Moldovan citizens this figure was 196 and for Belarusians – 168.

The fourth group is comprised of refugees. The arrival of approximately 50,000 asylum seekers in the last decade from Afghanistan, Iraq, Bangladesh, Somalia and Syria is worthy of note, although only around 10% received refugee status. Many of them are believed to have moved further West even without a final decision on their case. In 2013, a sharp increase in asylum claims occurred: around 20,000 asylum seekers arrived in Hungary, as opposed to the 2,150 of the previous year.

To sum up, the migrant stock in Hungary is not very large and it is very fragmented in terms of ethnicity and legal category. According to the 2011 Census, 79% of all foreign citizens residing in Hungary were Europeans (59% EU citizens), and 16% Asians. In the public discourse and the media, it is mainly the (non-Hungarian) third country nationals and refugees who are identified as immigrants, although they account for a very moderate share of the total immigrant stock in the country.

The Delphi survey on migration trends between EU/V4 and Eastern Europe in Hungary was somewhat difficult to apply as it did not represent ethnic Hungarians as a separate category. However, when contrasted with the data and

conceptual categories described above, it can be seen that the experts surveyed are aware of the characteristic features of the migrant stock of Ukrainians, Belarusians and Moldovans in Hungary. In the second round of the Delphi survey, the estimate for Ukrainian citizens given by the experts resulted in an average of 17,500, which is slightly higher than the 12,000 measured by the Census in 2011 (meaning Ukrainians without Hungarian citizenship). For Belarusians and Moldovans, the average estimate is under 1000 in both cases, which also corresponds to the statistical data. None of the three groups was perceived as an immigrant group with a significant share of ‘irregulars’, as answers were almost exclusively in the 10% to 20% range.

The survey shows a complex picture of how Hungarian experts assess the social and economic characteristics of Ukrainian, Belarusian and Moldovan migrants in Hungary. There is a relative consensus about the respondents that migrants are at an economically active age. Respondents slightly favoured the “young” over the “medium age” answer option. Also, a gender balance is perceived, as none of the three migrant groups are believed to be of a typically male or female profile. No serious problems are detected regarding their social integration, especially in the case of Ukrainians.

Main determinants of immigration processes

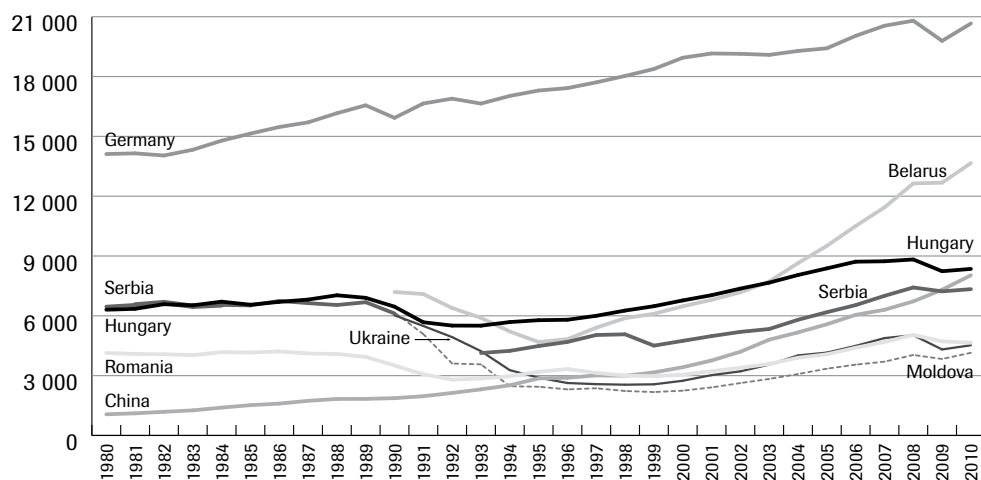
Given the fragmentation of the migrant stock in Hungary, it is difficult to point out the factors that are relevant for the immigrant population as a whole. Leaving aside refugees, it is worthwhile keeping the distinction presented above for obtaining a deeper insight into the determinants of migration processes in the case of Hungary.

Regarding social factors, the transition to democracy and capitalism brought a sudden growth of inequality and there have been several social groups which are commonly named in both scientific discourse and everyday talk as “the losers of the transition”: the Roma, the rural population and the elderly (born between 1930 and 1945). As opposed to the previously mentioned categories, urban, younger, higher educated and better-off Hungarians managed to take advantage of the structural transformation of the economy, thus becoming the “winners of the transition”. Immigrants therefore arrived in a society which had been polarized and in which many local residents had lost their jobs and a stable position in the social fabric. Ethnic Hungarians were usually perceived as ‘close relatives’ although with a rather open discrimination in the labour market, where they usually occupied lower-paid positions. Finally, third-country

nationals remained largely outside the formal labour market and they became temporary manual workers or they founded small businesses.

Economic factors are also a two-faced driver of immigration. As a consequence of the transition and the collapse of several branches of industry, Hungarian labour market structure stabilized at a low employment rate and relatively high unemployment. Hungarian GDP, measured by its *per capita* purchase power parity in 1990 Geary-Khamis dollars, was USD 6,459 which fell to a low point of USD 5,506 in 1993 – a significant, but not catastrophic decrease when compared to other countries in the region. Economic restructuring started in the mid-1990s and it was based on the inflow of foreign – mostly German and Austrian – capital, and Hungarian GDP climbed back to its pre-transition level in 1999 and kept on growing during a period of economic expansion that lasted until 2008 when GDP *per capita* topped at USD 8,826 in Geary-Khamis dollars. The global economic crisis hit the country heavily, causing a recession of 1.5 years and a consequent stagnation period.

Figure 17. GDP *per capita* in Hungary and in selected countries of origin of immigrants (TOP 5 + Belarus, Moldova), 1980–2010, given in 1990 International Geary-Khamis dollars*



* Note: The Geary-Khamis dollar or international dollar is a hypothetical unit of currency that has the same purchasing power parity that the U.S. dollar had in the United States at a given point in time, (in this analysis, in 1990).

Data from Germany is for East and West Germany for 1980–1990. Data for Serbia is for the current territory of the Republic of Serbia (without Kosovo)

Source: Maddison Data Bank

Political determinants are negligible in the Hungarian context, as there is no significant political will to attract immigrants. Also, no significant anti-immigration political discourse exists, due to the low share of immigrants in the population.

There are important differences in the perceptions of migrants' labour market situation and further plans. Under the Delphi research, Ukrainians were given high scores on the possibility of settlement or circular migration, while Belarusians and Moldovans are believed to come to Hungary having further migration in mind, e.g. going to Western Europe whenever possible. Additionally in the questionnaire, Hungarian experts gave above average scores to Ukrainians in all sectors of the labour market with the exception of highly qualified white collar jobs, while in the case of Belarusians and Moldovans they received below average scores in almost all cases. A possible interpretation of this average of replies can be the perception of Ukrainians as labour migrants who can integrate in all sectors except the highest-ranking one, while the number of Belarusians and Moldovans is so low in Hungary that there is no 'typical' immigrant profile in the experts' mind.

To sum up, out of the three main legal categories of migrants, two are relevant in the Hungary – Eastern Partnership migratory system. These two (ethnic Hungarians and non-ethnic third country nationals) hold a very different legal status and they are perceived very differently by Hungarian society, a difference which is also reflected in the experts' responses. Policymaking also reflects this duality: the state has a friendly policy towards ethnic Hungarians, but non-Hungarian immigrants are not addressed by policymakers, not even the highly skilled or seasonal workers⁵⁹.

Media and public discourse on migration

Systematic research on Hungarian population's attitudes towards immigrants began in 1992. The longest time series about attitudes towards migrants has been produced by the TÁRKI Institute of Social Research. It was conceptualized in the early 1990s when the general perception of the migration issue was largely understood as a humanitarian one, as was the case when many Romanian and Yugoslav citizens arrived in the country. The questions in the survey thus considered "refugees" instead of "migrants" what, based on the result of

⁵⁹ Gödri et al., *op. cit.*

other surveys, is not a source of significant difference in the results. The question is stated as follows: “Do you agree that Hungary should provide asylum to: 1) every refugee, 2) not a single refugee, 3) some of the refugees (depending on several characteristics)?”. In the following question, a list of ethnicities is presented, asking whether these groups should be let in. In the mid-2000s, a fake ethnicity (“Piresian“) was included, whose rejection shows the overall, unspecified xenophobia of the respondent (59% when first asked in 2006).

In the last 20 years it has always been the third option (deciding on a “case-by-case” basis) that the majority of respondents have chosen, although their share has fluctuated over time. The share of “xenophobes” (who refuse everybody) peaked in 1995. It is believed that freedom of speech following the transition to democracy, and the rapidly deteriorating economic situation, brought xenophobic sentiments to the surface, which have been oscillating with an upward trend in the most recent years, registering 40% in 2012. Finally, a minor group of “xenophiles” have also been present, representing approximately 10% of the Hungarian population.

The breakdown by ethnicities shows a very polarized range of attitudes. In 2012, 82% of the respondents stated they would refuse to grant asylum to any Arab, 79% to any Chinese, 75% to any Russian and 71% to any Romanian, regardless of the given person’s circumstances. In sharp contrast, only 4% of the respondents thought that ethnic Hungarians from neighbouring countries should not be granted asylum (regardless of the stable political situation).

Conventional variables for explaining xenophobia were established in Hungary in the 1990s and mid-2000s, namely that the elderly, the rural dwellers and those with lower educational attainment tend to be more xenophobic than the younger, urban and more skilled population and that knowing personally a member of a given group reduces the tendency to favour refusing asylum to that specific group. Xenophobia, as fear of the unknown, is very significantly reduced by the shared language and cultural traits of a given migrant group with the host society, hence the very favourable position of ethnic Hungarians from neighbouring countries⁶⁰.

Regarding public opinion on the size and economic effects of immigration, in TÁRKI’s 2011 Omnibus survey 64% of the respondents stated that immigrants

⁶⁰ B. Dencső, E. Sik, *Adalékok az idegenellenesség mértékéhez a mai Magyarországon*, *Educatio* 16 (1), 2007, pp. 50–66, in Hungarian.

take jobs away from Hungarians, a finding that underpins the European Social Survey's ranking in which Hungary has the third highest percentage of respondents in Europe who believe that immigration is bad for the country's economy. Another TÁRKI survey showed that Hungarians perceive the immigrant stock to be around 13 times larger than it actually is⁶¹.

Institutional actors score relatively high in anti-discrimination and family reunion legislation, while they score low in access to citizenship for non-ethnic Hungarians. According to the MIPEX III report, the overall Migrant Policy Integration Index score of Hungary is rather low (45%), mostly because "foreigners living in Hungary for years are slightly discouraged from becoming Hungarian, contrary to policies for co-ethnics abroad"⁶².

Political discourse on immigration is marked by the conceptual differences between 'ethnic Hungarian' and 'non-Hungarian' immigrants. The situation of ethnic Hungarians in neighbouring countries and their linkages to Hungary are a highly sensitive issue. As stated above, Hungarian public opinion is very favourable towards ethnic Hungarian immigrants. However, a controversial referendum was held in 2004, in which only 51.5% of the votes were in favour of providing dual citizenship to all ethnic Hungarians (with a voter turnout of just 37.5%, making the referendum invalid), and the then-ruling Socialist Party campaigned against it, based on the hypothesis that it would produce an influx of immigrants. The centre-right conservative Fidesz party won the elections in 2010 and the new government created the simplified naturalization scheme for ethnic Hungarians as a policy response to the needs of the ethnic Hungarian population in the neighbouring countries. It is, however, understood more in terms of a 'nation policy' than a 'migration policy' tool. The official Hungarian standpoint since the transition to democracy has been one of encouraging ethnic Hungarians to "get along in the lands of their birth". However no repatriation program of co-ethnics, like in the case of Germany's *Aussiedler*, took place in Hungary⁶³.

⁶¹ P. Krekó, A. Juhász, A kínaiak, zsidók és arabok betelepülésére számítunk leginkább. TÁRKI Research report, August 2011, online: <http://www.tarki.hu/hu/news/2011/kitekint/20110801.html>; E. Sik, B. Simonovits (eds.), *Migráns esélyek és tapasztalatok - Honnan jönnek, hányan vannak, mit csinálunk velük?* TÁRKI, 2011, in Hungarian.

⁶² MIPEX (2010) Country Profile: Hungary, online: <http://www.mipex.eu/hungary>

⁶³ R. Brubaker, *Migrations of ethnic unmixing in the New Europe*, in: *International Migration Review*, Vol. 32. No. 4, 1998, p 1047-1065; T. Wetzsel, *A bevándorlás kérdése Magyarországon*, Publikon Pécs 2011, in Hungarian.

On the other hand, politics on immigration of groups other than ethnic Hungarians have never been a major political issue. While a Government Decree in 2004 stated that the Minister of the Interior should prepare the migration strategy of Hungary, it was only in 2013 that the strategy document was written, which is a considerable step forward. In recent decades, immigration management has not really gone beyond administrative issues and adopting the relevant legislation package of the *acquis communautaire*. Migrant integration projects have been set up thanks to the European Integration Fund, with Hungarian NGOs handling most of the cases⁶⁴.

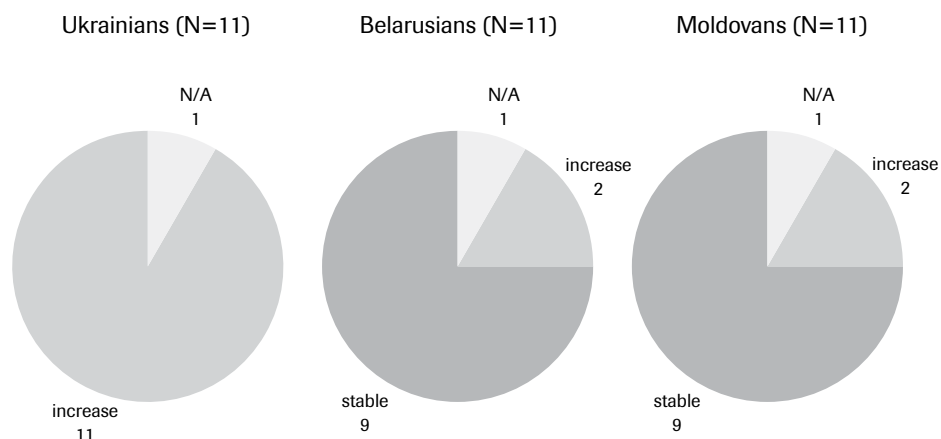
The mass media's approach is basically similar to the political approach. Ethnic Hungarians are usually presented in a positive but paternalistic way. EU citizens are rarely perceived as 'migrants' while third country nationals, and especially refugees, are often presented as a threat.

Prognosis of immigration - a brief summary

In the following section, the opinions of Hungarian experts regarding the possible changes in migration patterns of Ukrainian, Belarusian and Moldovan migrants in the context of Hungary are presented. The evaluation of the potential effects of Schengen visa liberalisation and lifting labour market restrictions on the direction and scale of population movements from Eastern Europe will be also shown. The second round of the Delphi survey coincided with the political crisis in Ukraine of early 2014, which had an effect on – although not substantially changing– the assessment of the dynamics of migratory flows. While in the first round 12 out of 15 respondents believed that the number of Ukrainians to arrive in Hungary will increase in the future, in the second round every respondent (11 out of 11) stated that an increase in inflows is to be expected. It contrasts with the replies given concerning Belarusian and Moldovan citizens: in both rounds the great majority of respondents answered that the immigration dynamics of these two groups will remain stable in the future.

⁶⁴ Gödri et al., *op. cit.*

Figure 18. Expected changes in migration flows in Hungary (2014 and 2024)



Source: Delphi survey Hungary 2013-2014

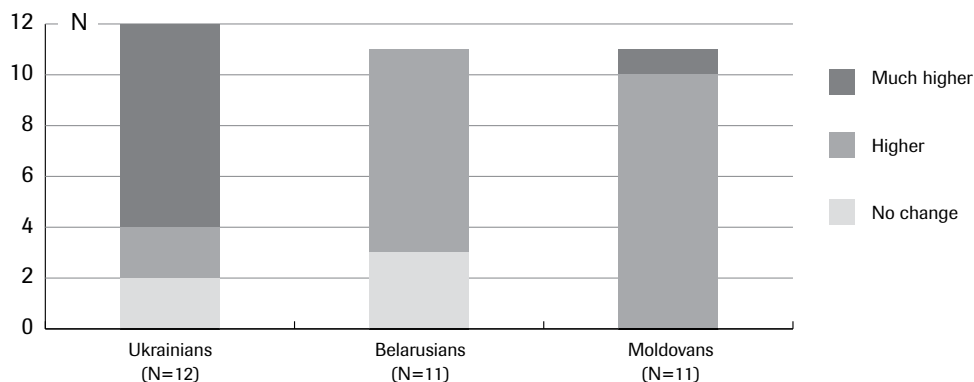
Experts' viewpoints regarding migrants' future economic performance in Hungary appear to be more varied. In the case of Ukrainians, slightly more than half of respondents expect some kind of change regarding migrants' economic performance in the future. A diversification of the labour market is foreseen for Ukrainians: in the second round survey, 6 of the 10 believed that they will occupy different (than secondary) sectors as well, while only 3 of 11 believed so in the case of Belarusians and Moldovans. A possible driver for this could be language skills: either ethnic Hungarian or not (but having lived in Transcarpathia), Ukrainian citizens in Hungary are widely believed to speak Hungarian.

The interviewed experts are rather pessimistic about Ukrainian migrants' job prospects, anticipating a general decrease in wages as well as deterioration in employment opportunities. With regard to the economic performance of Belarusian and Moldovan migrants, the majority of respondents predict no change in the next decade. Nevertheless, those who do foresee a change, also tend to denote negative employment prospects for immigrants.

Experts' expectations about Hungary's immigration policy directives are different with regard to Ukrainian citizens on the one hand, and Belarusian and Moldovan citizens on the other. Although none of the respondents indicated signs of a foreseeable negative shift in the Hungarian government's migration policy, the majority of respondents presume no positive advancements with regard to Belarusian and Moldovan migrants either (in the case of Belarusians, 7 out of the 11, while in the case of Moldovans, 8 out of the 11 respondents

expect consistency in the government’s migration policy). In contrast, 8 out of the 11 respondents noted that a more open migration policy is likely to be implemented for Ukrainian nationals of Hungarian origin within the framework of the government’s citizenship policy.

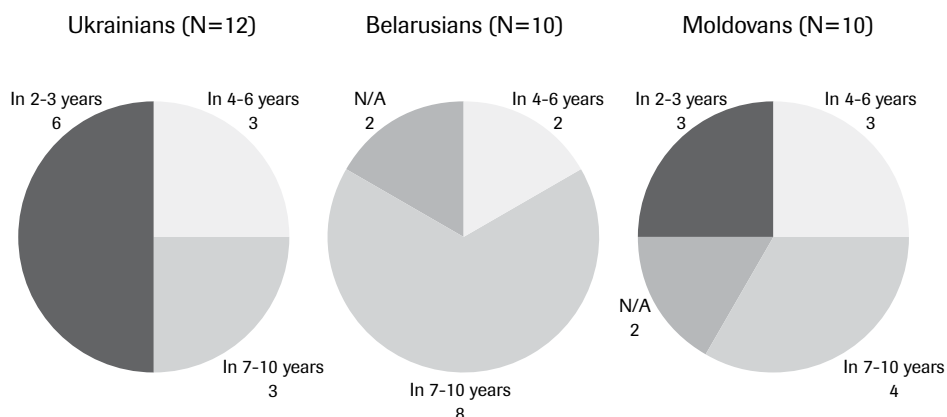
Figure 19. Expected changes in the inflow of migrants upon lifting labour market restrictions in Hungary (in a short-term horizon of three years after restrictions are abolished)



Source: Delphi survey Hungary 2013-2014

Although respondents predicted no substantial changes in the inflow of Belarusian and Moldovan migrants in the next decade, the picture would change significantly if Hungary allowed greater access to its labour market for the aforementioned citizens. As shown in Figure 19, the clear majority of those surveyed (8 out of 11 with respect to Belarusians and all respondents with respect to Moldovans) claimed that the inflow of both nationalities would at least be higher, whereas 8 out of 12 respondents expect that lifting labour market restrictions would result in a much higher increase in the inflow of Ukrainian migrants in comparison with the present inflow.

Figure 20. In which time perspective do you expect that Schengen short-term visas for Ukrainians, Belarusians and Moldovans may be abolished? (answers for Hungary)



Source: Delphi survey Hungary 2013-2014

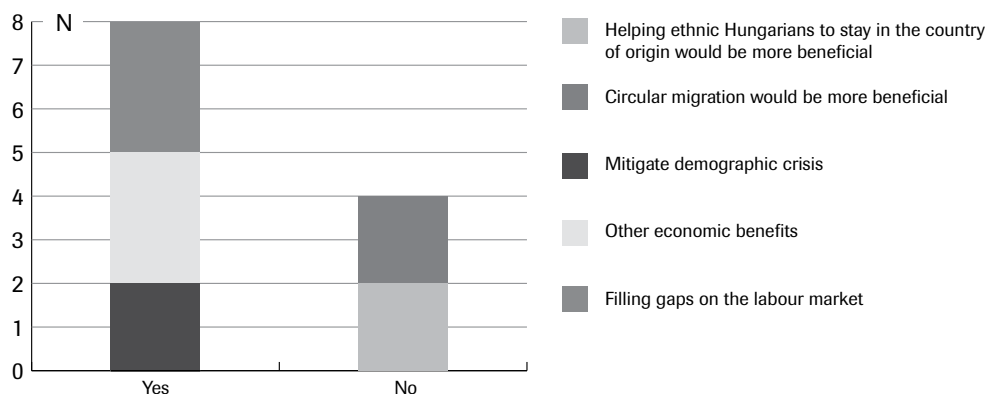
The survey shows a great variance in experts' opinions in terms of the time perspective in which short-term travel visas to the European Union may be abolished. While a large majority of respondents (8 out of 10) believe that for Belarusian citizens abolition of the visa regime will not be possible in the near- or even medium-term (in 4-6 or 7-10 years), with respect to Moldova, respondents' forecasts are distributed fairly equally among categories. Finally, according to half of the 12 respondents, Ukrainians might be able to enjoy visa-free travel to the Schengen area within 2-3 years, while the other half expect the restrictions to be maintained for at least 4 years.

Challenges, opportunities and risks of further immigration

Respondents of the Delphi survey were asked to evaluate the importance of each impact on a 5-point scale, where the score of 5 means "most important" and the score of 1 means "least important". Comparing their answers, we can see that respondents painted a rather positive picture regarding the overall impact of future migration on Hungary. There were no respondents who believed that the migration of Ukrainians, Belarusians and Moldovans has no positive impact on Hungary at all. Overall, respondents also attributed less significance to negative impacts (such as the emergence of ethnic problems in society, problems with migrants' integration, increased competition with local workers or increased burden on social services) than to positive ones. Nevertheless, it should be noted that most of them believe that immigration of Ukrainians would have a slightly more positive impact - on filling labour

market shortages, mitigating the consequences of demographic crisis or bringing new students into the educational system compared to the other two nationalities. The only positive impact factor with a more significant disparity concerns the immigration of ethnic Hungarians.

Figure 21. Desirability of immigration of ethnic Hungarians



Source: Delphi survey Hungary 2013-2014

We can conclude that the majority of respondents regard economic as well as demographic benefits to Hungary as the most significant in terms of the positive impacts of migration in general. However, we can also count on other minor but nevertheless positive impacts which Hungary could benefit from – such as the increased number of students in the educational system. At the same time, two of the respondents noted that instead of helping ethnic Hungarians in their endeavour to establish permanent residence in their national homeland, facilitating circular migration patterns would be even more beneficial in economic terms.

The experts’ assessment of the current political debate in Hungary around the issue of visa abolishment for Eastern Partnership states also seems to confirm our previous findings. According to 11 respondents, visa liberalisation is not an important topic for the general public, while 9 of the 12 believe that it does not constitute an essential part of the political debate either. In contrast, 10 of them perceive that business circles are favourable to visa abolishment which has a strong correlation with immigrants potential to fill existing skill gaps in the Hungarian labour market and gaps in the labour force. Furthermore, the general public disinterest and lack of concern regarding the issue of visa liberalisation suggests that people do not perceive future immigration as a potential threat.

Taking into consideration all the negative and positive impacts of visa liberalisation, we can say that respondents do find the abolition of visas for Ukrainians, Belarusians and Moldovans desirable from Hungary's point of view. No respondent indicated otherwise with respect to Ukrainian citizens, while a minority of them (4 out of 12 with respect to Belarusians and 3 out of 12 with respect to Moldovans) stated that visa liberalisation for the other two nationalities is not in Hungary's interest.

Conclusions

Given the historical and cultural ties, as well as geographic proximity, it is Ukraine, and most importantly its border region of Transcarpathia, which plays the major role in immigration processes to Hungary, especially because a considerable share of its population is ethnic Hungarian. Ukrainian migration is, however, not limited to this particular group, as ethnic Ukrainians also come to Hungary. In comparison, immigration from Belarus and Moldova is negligible.

The simplified naturalisation process made it possible for ethnic Hungarians in Ukraine to receive Hungarian citizenship, thus their free movement to Hungary is guaranteed with or without an alteration to the current EU visa regime. Nonetheless, there is a consensus among Hungarian experts surveyed under Delphi research that the abolishment of Schengen visa requirements would serve Hungary's national interests. On the other hand, experts are more cautious with Belarusian and Moldovan citizens in this respect, but still they have a generally positive approach to the issue.

Coupled with the recent political crisis in Ukraine, most Delphi experts believe that the number of immigrants from that country would rise considerably if no visa for short-term stay were needed to enter Hungary from the Eastern Partnership countries. There was somewhat anxious coverage of the events in the Hungarian mass media which might have had an influence on the responses. No significant inflows are expected in the nearest future, however, from Belarus and Moldova.

Regarding policy recommendations, for Visegrad countries the importance of strategy building was stressed by most Hungarian experts surveyed under the Delphi research. Also, a less bureaucratic management in state administration and recognition of qualifications would be an important step ahead. Promoting bilateral cooperation in different areas with the Eastern Partnership countries

would also be crucial. The European Union is seen by Hungarian experts as the key actor for development of the Eastern Partnership countries in terms of technical aid and investment. Liberalisation of the visa regime is also urged by the respondents, while the accession of these countries to the EU is not really seen as desirable. Instead, Finally, EaP countries also have their work cut out on improving the current situation. Hungarian experts believe that combating corruption, implementing socioeconomic reforms and strengthening democracy would largely reduce the drivers for emigration. Very importantly, Ukraine's future path should remain within the realm of peaceful solutions.

4. MIGRATION BETWEEN THE EU, V4 AND EASTERN EUROPE: THE PRESENT SITUATION AND THE POSSIBLE FUTURE. THE PERSPECTIVE OF SLOVAKIA

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Introduction

The major challenge for Slovakia and the new EU MS in the foreseeable future will be immigration. The question is not if, but from where the possible immigrants might come, if Slovakia and Central European countries wish to maintain their economic growth and living standards. The neighbouring regions could become the most suitable ‘providers’ of mutually beneficial migration and among them (preferably for Slovakia) countries like Ukraine, Belarus, and Moldova. Therefore, the possible abolition of Schengen short-term visas for those countries and future migration flows from Eastern Europe are important issues for both the foreign policy and migration policy of the Slovak Republic⁶⁵.

The number of foreign workers in Slovakia has not yet reached a significant volume. Even when considering the potential presence of irregular migrants on the Slovak labour market, it probably does not constitute too high a level. However, it will certainly become more important in the years to come when Slovakia should make economic progress within the EU and thus become a more attractive destination for permitted or unpermitted labour migrants.

The aim of this chapter is to present the role of Eastern European migration in a immigration profile of Slovakia, to investigate whether (or not) Ukraine, Moldova and Belarus may become important countries of origin of incoming migrants and what risks and opportunities this process may bring. The chapter was compiled based on the outcome of desk research and a Delphi forecast expert panel among Slovak migration experts. Statistical data in the report have been provided by three state institutions: Ministry

⁶⁵ V. Benč, J. Buzalka, *Analysis of the visa systems of the Visegrad countries – the case of Slovakia*, (in:) M. Kindler & E. Matejko (eds.), „Gateways to Europe: Checkpoints on the EU External Land Border Monitoring Report”, Stefan Batory Foundation, Warsaw 2008.

of Interior⁶⁶, the Statistical Office and the Central Office of Labour, Social Affairs and Family.

Delphi research was conducted from November 2013 to March 2014, addressing 34 Slovak migration experts including academia, the NGO sector, governmental institutions, international organisations and independent experts. Sixteen of them returned questionnaires for the first round of evaluation and fourteen returned questionnaires in the second round.

Immigration profile of Slovakia - a brief description

Slovakia is not yet one of the traditional destination countries for migrants – it has in fact one of the lowest proportions of migrants *per capita* among the EU MS. However, in relative terms, in years 2004-2008, Slovakia experienced one of the hugest increases in migrantes population among the EU countries and the Bratislava region received the second largest concentration of foreigners in Europe after London⁶⁷. The main reasons for that unexpected increase are as follows: sustainable economic growth over the last two decades, a rapid inflow of foreign direct investments and the close proximity of Bratislava to Vienna.

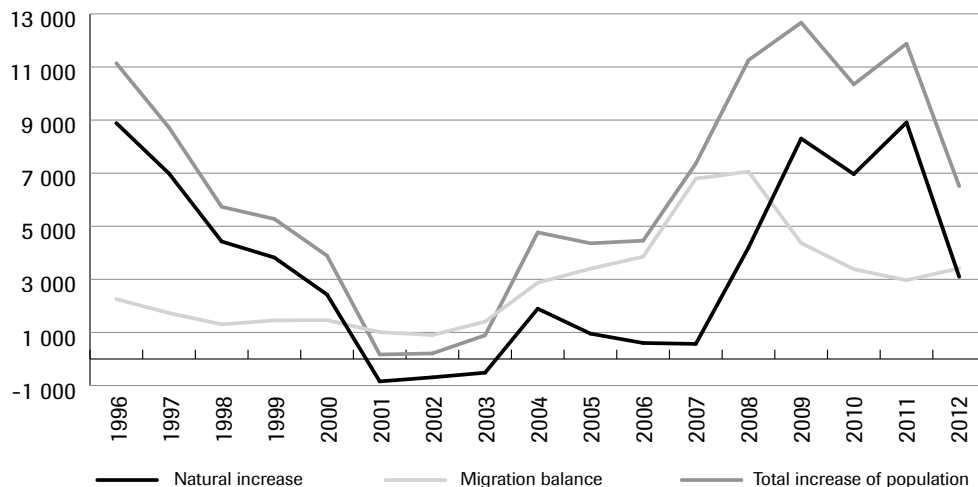
Moreover, migration plays a very important role with regard to population growth in Slovakia. If there had not been a positive balance from international migration, Slovakia would have experienced a fall in population in years 2001-2002. But it is also necessary to state that the statistics on Slovakian emigration do not reveal the full picture. Divinský⁶⁸ for example, points out the large differences between the official Slovak statistics on emigration, in comparison to the high numbers of Slovak immigrants recorded by statistical institutes of traditional Slovak migration destinations, e.g. Czechia, the USA, Canada, Great Britain and Germany. Striking differences arise mainly from lax population registry. Moreover, there is no research that would address these inconsistencies in the records of migratory movements.

⁶⁶ Specifically by the Bureau of Border and Alien Police of the Presidium of the Police Force, and by the Migration Office of the Ministry of Interior of the Slovak Republic.

⁶⁷ IOM Slovakia data, online: <http://www.iom.sk/downloads/iom/facts-and-figures-migration-in-slovakia.pdf>

⁶⁸ B. Divinský, *Migračné trendy v Slovenskej republike po vstupe krajiny do EÚ (2004-2008)*, [Migration trends in Slovak Republic after the country accession to the EU (2004-2008)], IOM Bratislava, 2009, in Slovak.

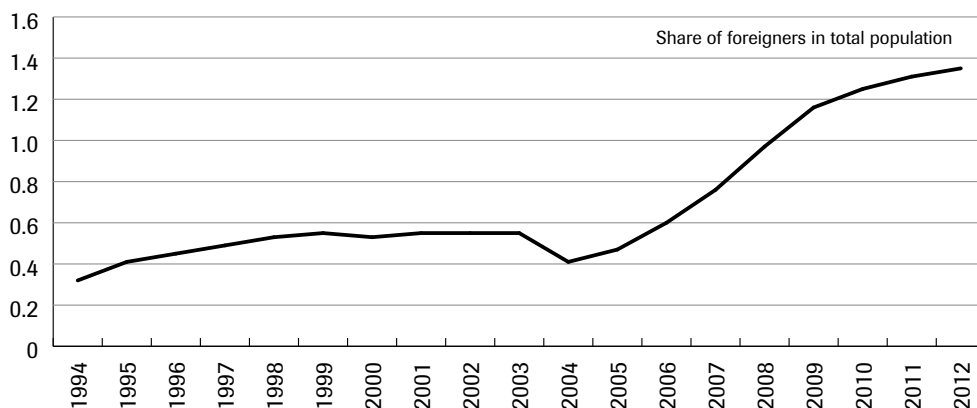
Figure 22. Slovakia: contribution of migration to population growth



Source: Own calculations based on Slovak Statistical Office data

Immigration to Slovakia has been gradually rising since Slovakia’s accession to the EU in 2004, although the growth has been slowed by the economic crisis in recent years. The total share of foreigners among the overall population reached 1.35% at the end of 2012. The number of registered immigrants amounted to almost 73,000 at the end of 2012, as compared to 22,251 in 2004.

Figure 23. Share of foreigners in total population in Slovakia in 1994-2012 (in %)



Source: Own calculations based on Slovak Statistical Office data

Traditionally, the greatest number of foreigners arrives from neighbouring countries, namely Czechia (14,744), Hungary (9,920), Poland (7,005), Germany (4,415) and Austria (2,308), according to data for the end of 2012. Since Romania’s accession to the EU in 2007, the number of Romanian citizens increased to 5,962 at the end of 2012 (for comparison, it totalled 3,005 in 2007).

However, the share of migrants coming from non-EU countries has increased slightly. Third-country nationals accounted for around 17,000 people, constituting around 23% of all the foreigners residing in Slovakia as of end of 2012. The highest number of third country nationals residing in Slovakia came from: Ukraine (3,915), Russian Federation (1,835), Vietnam (1,544), China (875), United States (861), Serbia (716), South Korea (598), Croatia (465), and Macedonia (403). The number of legal migrants from Moldova (57) and Belarus (165) is very small.

The highest concentration of migrants can be found in western Slovakia, mainly due to better employment possibilities in this region. According to 2012 Statistical Office data, around two thirds of immigrants are male (59.8% of foreigners). Males dominate even more on the labour market, while almost 80% of registered migrants that are legally employed are male (see Table below). On average, migrants from third countries are in a younger age category (20-34 years) than those from the EU countries (mid-age: 35-64 years). A 'typical' migrant living in Slovakia is a younger single man with higher education coming from the EU.

Table 30. Migrants in Slovakia, 2007 and 2012 (at the end of a year)

	2007	2012	
Total Population	5,400,998	5,410,836	
SK Nationals	5,360,094	5,337,911	
Other EU(-27) Nationals	25,909	55,909	
Share in total population in %	0.48	1.03	
3 rd country nationals	14,995	17,016	
Share in total population in %	0.28	0.32	
<i>Most important third country nationals + BY, MD:</i>			
	Ukraine	3,745	3,915
	Vietnam	1,432	1,544
	Serbia	1,418	716
	Russian Federation	1,354	1,835
	China	1,198	875
	Republic of South Korea	1,136	598
	United States of America	769	861
	Macedonia	651	403
	Croatia	328	465
	Turkey	171	214
	Belarus	122	165
	Moldova	76	57
Others	2,595	5,368	

Source: the Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic 2014

Access by foreigners to the Slovakian labour market is currently not regulated by quotas or similar restrictive measures. The number of employed migrants surged noticeably after the accession of Slovakia to the EU and is continuing to grow (from 2,761 in 2004, 18,247 in 2010, to 21,265 in 2012). The most numerous group of registered employed migrants is constituted by Romanians, followed by nationals from neighbouring countries. The number of employed migrants from France and South Korea is also high due to huge foreign direct investments (FDI) within the automotive industry on behalf of those countries. The number of employed Ukrainians reached almost 1,000 in 2012, though the number of working Belarusians (62) and Moldovans (29) is negligible.

It can be concluded that migrants do not have a major influence on the labour force supply extent in Slovakia at the present time. Most of the migrants from Western European countries work in Slovakia as high-skilled employees: managers of companies, lecturers at schools or universities, consultants, trade representatives and similar positions. Their work requires specific skills and experience, is mainly temporary (e.g. for one year) and concentrated in the largest Slovak cities (Bratislava, Košice) and industrial parks where factories receiving FDI are located⁶⁹.

Migrants coming from countries of the Balkans, Eastern Europe and Asia are frequently employed as small entrepreneurs, retailers, vendors, construction or industrial workers (in poorly paid areas such as textile and clothing, shoe-making and food industries), agricultural workers and in the household sector. There are differences within this group: Ukrainians prefer working in industry and construction, Asians prefer the retailing and gastronomy sectors, while the citizens of Balkan states lean towards entrepreneurship.

Table 31. Employment of foreigners in Slovakia in 2008, 2010, 2012 (at the end of a year)

	2008	2010	2012
Total	10,536	15,324	21,265
of which from:			
Romania	2,279	2,387	4,134
Czechia	1,589	2,246	2,884
Poland	1,011	1,394	2,125

⁶⁹ B. Divinský, *Migration Trends in Selected Applicant Countries*, Volume V - Slovakia, An Acceleration of Challenges for Society, IOM Bratislava, 2004.

	2008	2010	2012
France	802	691	798
Hungary	737	1,422	2,078
Germany	556	750	803
Ukraine	501	929	971
Republic of South Korea	403	579	946
Bulgaria	328	465	743
Great Britain	314	376	427
Austria	314	497	569
Italy	238	392	578
Vietnam	115	375	310
Moldova	40	41	29
Belarus	9	33	62
of which <i>men</i>	8,420	12,303	16,853
of which <i>men</i> (as % of total)	79.9	80.3	79.3
of which registered in Bratislava city	3,442	5,457	7,803
of which registered in Bratislava city (in % of total)	32.7	35.6	36.7

Source: Central Office of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of Slovakia 2014

It is also believed that the potential extent of irregular migrants' work probably does not amount to a great deal. The exact contribution of irregular migrant labour to the national economy is hard to discern owing to the lack of any well-founded studies, surveys or estimates and may thus remain on an anecdotal level⁷⁰. The only analysis made in this connection is the report compiled by Boris Divinský⁷¹. Based on questionnaire research and estimates by the representatives of state authorities and nongovernmental organisations, Divinský estimates that as of the end of 2007 the number of irregular migrants residing in the SR reached approximately 15,000-20,000 individuals. Divinský estimates that Ukrainian nationals constitute at least half of the irregular migrant population in Slovakia, although he does not verify that estimate.

It may be assumed that due to the significant decline in the number of migrants apprehended and the decreasing number of asylum seekers, the phenomenon of irregular migration in Slovakia has decreased in recent years. The number of migrants apprehended (either for illegally crossing the border or for illegally residing in the SR) reached its peak in 2001 (15,548 people), while in 2013 it touched a historical low (1,091). Since 2007, the number of detections for illegal

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

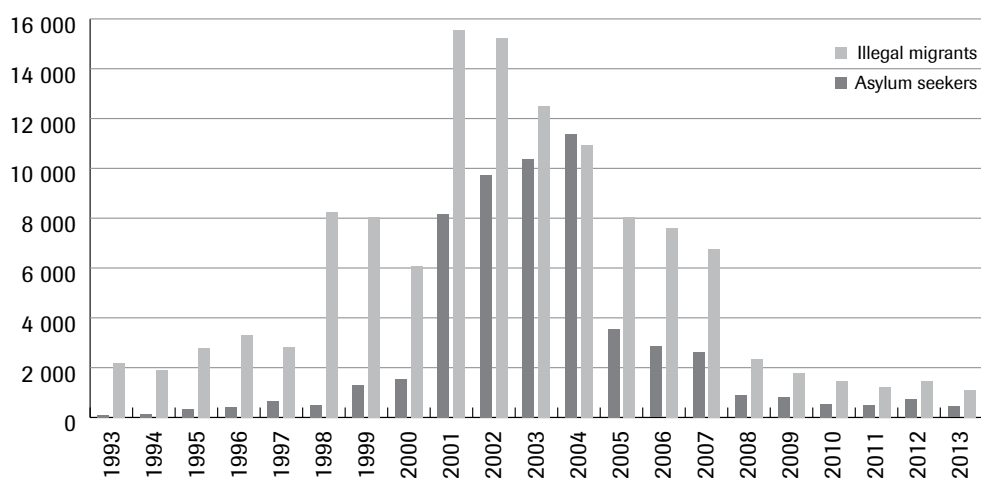
⁷¹ B. Divinský, *Migračné trendy v Slovenskej republike po vstupe krajiny do EÚ (2004-2008)*, op.cit.

stays exceeded the number of detentions for illegal border crossings. According to Border and Alien Police data, currently around 60% of all apprehended irregular migrants are those accused of breaking the rules of stay in Slovakia (undeclared employment, visa over-staying, etc.).

As far as ethnic composition is concerned, irregular migrants come to the SR from three main regions - FSU countries (Ukraine, Moldova, Russia, and Georgia), some Asian countries (Vietnam and China, India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh), and Western Balkan countries (Serbia, Kosovo, Albania, and Macedonia).

Since Slovakia's accession to the EU, the number of asylum seekers has also been gradually declining, from 3,549 in 2005 to 441 in 2013. The number of people granted international protection remains consistently low. From 1993 to the end of 2013, refugee status was only granted to 631 applicants and 532 applicants were provided with complementary protection. The chances of an asylum seeker obtaining citizenship in Slovakia are close to nil, while over the last 20 years only 221 asylum seekers received citizenship.

Figure 24. Apprehended irregular migrants & asylum seekers applications in Slovakia in 1993-2013



Source: Migration Office of the SR & Bureau of Border and Alien Police (UHCP)

The Delphi survey on migration trends between the EU/V4 and Eastern Europe conducted among Slovak migration experts was quite a challenge because of significant differences in their views. It is quite possibly a consequence of the absence of migration statistics, as well as a lack of sociological research on the migration of Moldovans and Belarusians to Slovakia.

The Slovak experts estimate that currently approximately 16,000 Ukrainians, 1,300 Belarusians and 1,800 Moldovans are living and working in Slovakia, both legally and in an irregular manner (see Table below). However, the range of responses is quite large, especially in the case of Ukrainian and Moldovan nationals. Surprisingly, the estimates for Belarusians and Moldovans are very high compared to official statistics. The estimated number of Ukrainian migrants is comparable to official statistics and to the figures in the study of Divinský (2009) mentioned above, where he estimates the number of irregular migrants from Ukraine to be in the range of 7,500-10,000.

Table 32. Estimates of a number of migrants from Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova in Slovakia (including irregularly staying ones)

Nationals	AM SD	Answers from – to
Ukrainians	15,921 9,967	6,000 – 26,000
Belarusians	1,257 2,344	1,000 – 3,600
Moldovans	1,815 1,474	300 – 3,300

Source: Delphi survey (Slovakia) on migration trends 2013-2014

Notes: AM - arithmetic mean, SD - standard deviation

The estimates of Slovak experts on the current proportion of irregular immigrants (illegally staying and/or performing undeclared work) in the stock of migrants from Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova are close to 30%. They estimate that 33% of Ukrainian migrants are irregular, 28% of Moldovans and 15% of Belarusians. Compared to estimations by Divinský, the numbers are lower, so we can assume that migrants in recent years have tended to legalise themselves and strict migration policy has been successful in this respect⁷².

Table 33. Proportion of irregular immigrants in the stock of migrants from Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova in Slovakia

Nationals	AM SD	Answers from – to (in %)
Ukrainians	33 12	21 – 45
Belarusians	15 13	2 – 28
Moldovans	28 23	5 – 51

Notes: AM - arithmetic mean, SD - standard deviation

Source: Delphi survey Slovakia 2013-2014

⁷² *Ibid.*

According to the experts, apart from Ukrainian nationals, Slovakia is not a major destination country for citizens of Moldova and Belarus. From this point of view, the carrying out of undeclared work by nationals of Moldova and Belarus in the Slovak Republic can be regarded as rather sporadic.

The Slovak Delphi experts regard Ukrainians as more likely to prefer settlement migration than Moldovans and Belarusians. However, circular migration is said to be the preferred type for all three nationalities. The Delphi survey confirmed the previous expert view (e.g. Divinský 2009) that Moldovans and to some extent Belarusians are coming to Slovakia merely for short stays and their ultimate intention is to leave for further EU destinations.

Generally, the Slovak migration experts concluded that there are no major problems with integration of Ukrainian or Belarusian migrants into society, while they are of the opinion that there may be some problems with integration of Moldovan migrants. It is likely connected with language barriers, where experts perceive a good understanding of the Slovak language by Ukrainians and partly by Belarusians, while there may be linguistic difficulties on the part of Moldovans.

The experts' view on the profile of the immigrants is in line with official statistics. A typical migrant from Ukraine, Moldova and Belarus, according to the Delphi survey, is a young male, mostly working manually in the construction or agricultural sectors. Experts also mentioned that some Ukrainians are working as highly qualified specialists (engineers, IT specialists, teachers, doctors, etc.). These evaluations were probably influenced by current public discussions about the immigration of doctors from Ukraine. A series of strikes by Slovak hospital doctors in recent years has raised the question of whether more Ukrainian doctors should be invited to Slovakia⁷³.

It should be emphasised that due to the negligible number of migrants from Eastern Europe in Slovakia and the lack of in-depth empirical data and scientific and analytic investigations, experts' opinion may to some extent express their perceptions rather than the true picture.

⁷³ See media articles: Aktuality.sk, online: <http://www.aktuality.sk/clanok/237677/slovenski-ukrajinski-lekari-by-podla-ministerky-zvolenskej-mohli-uzsie-spolupracovat/>; I-health.sk, online: http://www.i-health.sk/inekomentare/1434_o-prichode-ukrajinskych-zubnych-lekarov-na-slovensko; SME, online: <http://ekonomika.sme.sk/c/7042242/nasi-zubari-sa-boja-ukrajinskych-ktorych-je-len-zopar.html>

Main determinants of immigration processes to Slovakia

For the target country, economic gains from migration are represented by the share of GDP contributed by immigrants and a low-cost, qualified workforce capable of filling gaps in the labour market. Nevertheless, the employment of immigrants can produce secondary effects on the labour market, potentially leading to higher unemployment among local inhabitants and wage stagnation, as well as possible effects on the wider society, such as extra spending on social services for immigrants.

The fundamental *push* factors for recent migration from Eastern Europe are mainly the difficult economic and social conditions in the countries of origin, the lack of jobs, and poverty. Secondly, issues with persecution on racial, religious, ethnic or political grounds, and the violation of human rights and freedoms. The current situation in Ukraine may also provide a strong *push* factor for migration, and not only in the short term. It is worth noting the example of the Balkan wars, which resulted in a huge number of refugees to the EU – large waves of asylum seekers from the Balkan states were seen even until 2005.

The Slovak Delphi experts stated the most important factors for Ukrainian, Moldovan and Belarusian migrants coming to Slovakia as being geographic proximity and low travel costs, cultural and language proximity, and poverty and social tensions in the sending countries. Experts agreed that the main *pull* factors for migrants entering the territory of the Slovak Republic are, among others: aspirations for a better life, better job and education opportunities, and opportunities to pursue entrepreneurial activities. Further influencing factors may be the cultural, religious and psychological affinities of a certain share of migrants to the Slovak environment along with easier language communication. The language barrier is fairly small in the case of Ukrainian migrants, and to a greater extent in the case of Belarusian nationals. Ethnic factors may play a part as well. Representatives of the Slovak minority in Ukraine are entitled to the status of Foreign Slovaks, and therefore possess certain privileges.

However, most of the experts surveyed are convinced that only a low percentage of migrants crossing the borders of the Slovak Republic wish to stay there for a longer period or to settle down. The essential *pull* factor for them is rather the fact that Slovakia is a transit country to the EU. Migrants therefore may see a good opportunity to continue from Slovakia towards countries of Western and Northern Europe with a better economic situation and living standards.

The role of family, friends, acquaintances or migrants' organisations in encouraging international migration is indisputable and it may be the same for migrants entering or staying in the territory of the Slovak Republic. Communities of migrants – either official or unofficial – facilitate migrants' stay, assist in job seeking, finding a place of residence, or securing a school place, as well as with many other matters that may be trivial for the native-born citizens. However, Moldovan and Belarusian communities are not present in Slovakia. The situation is different for Ukrainians, whose community is also supported by the presence of a sizeable Ukrainian minority which has been settled in Slovakia for several centuries. Several associations of Ukrainians disseminate essential information and assist Ukrainian migrants with legal consultations and job seeking, but also by the organisation of cultural and sporting activities and religious events, among other things.

The economic attractiveness of Slovakia plays an even more important role in luring migrants year after year. All Slovak regions are converging towards the EU average and are catching up with more developed EU regions. Slovakia converged to 76% of GDP *per capita* compared to the EU27 average in 2012, while it was only 47% in 1995⁷⁴. In 2011, the Bratislava region became the fifth richest region in the EU⁷⁵. Nevertheless, the economic situation following the global economic crisis remains unsatisfactory. Moreover, Slovakia has been facing huge problems in the labour market. Even for a small country, there are significant regional disparities and some regions have for several years suffered from very high unemployment, reaching more than 25% of the economic active population in some regions. Slovakia has also been witnessing problems with the long-term unemployment of certain vulnerable groups, especially elderly people (50 years old or more) and socially excluded groups such as the Roma. In recent years, the problem of youth unemployment has also emerged. Such a situation creates obstacles for economic migration from other countries, but also puts the government under pressure not to liberalise migration policy towards third countries.

From another perspective, all Slovak governments have historically made use of legislation and administrative measures to limit the access of foreigners to the labour market. Slovak legislation on employment of foreigners is rather

⁷⁴ Eurostat, online: <http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/tgm/table.do?tab=table&init=1&plugin=1&language=en&pcode=teco0114>

⁷⁵ Eurostat, online: http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY_PUBLIC/1-27022014-AP/EN/1-27022014-AP-EN.PDF

complicated and creates a number of different employment regimes: some categories of migrants cannot work full time or they cannot work under certain types of contracts. Some, especially asylum seekers, cannot start working sooner than one year after arrival or cannot work at all. Specific restrictions in connection with the employment of migrants relate to persons granted temporary residence, for the purpose of employment or business, for example, or tolerated stay. It has been believed that in some cases migrants are de facto forced by the state to perform illegal activities in order to survive, or else leave the country⁷⁶.

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in a recent study on the integration of migrants into the labour market made some critical comments regarding Slovakia: “Despite a solid legal framework, the application of equal-treatment and non-discrimination laws is poor. Beneficiaries of international protection experience unequal treatment and discrimination during the job-searching process”⁷⁷. Slovakia lacks programmes to help migrants integrate into society, alongside legal provisions that give them a fair chance of earning a secure living. Participation in the labour market is the key to integrating migrants into any society, but Slovakia lacks genuine motivation and willingness to realize the potential of migration. The desire to protect the country from immigration is in fact considered a major deciding factor, supervening economic and social reasons⁷⁸.

Slovak visa policy represents another example from the past. Slovakia has frequently used visa policy as a restrictive tool for mitigating possible immigration. Only within the last two years, has Slovakia started to liberalise its visa system towards EaP countries. This is evident in the increasing number of applications for EU uniform and Slovak national visas, with a particularly large increase in Ukraine and Russia.

⁷⁶ Z. Bargerová, B. Divinský, *Integrácia migrantov v Slovenskej republike. Výzvy a odporúčania pre tvorcov politik.* [Integration of migrants in the Slovak Republic. Challenges and recommendations for policy makers], IOM Bratislava, 2008, in Slovak.

⁷⁷ *Access to Employment for Beneficiaries of International Protection in Bulgaria, Poland, Romania and Slovakia*, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Regional Representation for Central Europe, 2013.

⁷⁸ See e.g. research outputs of the Centre for the Research of Ethnicity and Migration Culture, online: <http://www.cvek.sk/main.php?p=dokumenty&lang=sk>, the Institute for Public Affairs, online: <http://www.ivo.sk/145/sk/aktivity/knizne-publikacie?rok=all>, or the Foundation of Milan Šimečka, online: <http://www.nadaciamilanashimecku.sk/index.php?id=12>

Table 34. Applications for EU uniform and national Slovak visas according to citizenship in 2010-2013

Nationality	2010	2011	2012	2013
Ukraine	22 820	40 882	44 093	88 095
Russia	13 505	18 147	18 003	28 196
Belarus	2 631	4 083	4 277	6 259
Turkey	1 027	1 164	1 164	1 271
China	786	1 138	1 359	1 461
Kuwait	853	943	843	950
India	529	635	748	704
Georgia	649	624	680	n.a.
Moldova	362	less than 180	less than 134	less than 117
TOTAL	49 873	73 482	76 937	132 466

Source: the Bureau of Border and Alien Police of the Slovak Republic 2014

Table 35. Number of visa applications and visa refusals at the General Consulate of Slovakia in Uzhgorod in 2005-2012

Years	Visa applications	Refused applications	Share of refused applications (%)
2005	25,220	511	2.03
2006	36,595	425	1.16
2007	25,220	882	3.50
2008	15,825	1,264	7.99
2009	10,651	266	2.50
2010	12,158	286	2.35
2012	20,533	283	1.38

Source: the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Slovak Republic 2014

Media and public discourse on migration

The migration domain is rather a marginal theme for Slovak politicians and public opinion, even since the government's enacted key political legislation related to migration in 2011. This situation has also been reflected in somewhat short and vague sections on migration policy in the electoral programs of the main political parties.

Generally, non-state actors criticise all the post-independence governments of having had a very restrictive approach to migration. They maintain that the aim

of the governmental institutions is to eliminate immigration rather than manage it. Governmental institutions' typical presentation of migrants (especially from third non-EU countries) is as a threat to society and to national security.

Many Slovak people do not recognise the differences between migrants, asylum seekers, refugees, or aliens as such. Slovak society considers migrants as a burden on the state budget. Migrants are often ranked among the category of undesirable persons. Public opinion is mostly not positively disposed toward migrants but, to a different extent, people in Slovakia are in certain cases expressly open to migrants and regard them positively or in a neutral manner when it does not require any actions or contacts from their side⁷⁹.

The extent of prejudices among Slovaks is marked and depends on the level of education. The more educated people are, the more positive their attitude towards migrants. Another factor is age; younger generations are more open-minded. The next important factor is the experience of people from living abroad. Then there is the urban/rural aspect – people from larger cities and developed regions are more tolerant of migrants than those from remote, isolated regions or from the countryside. And, of course, there are personal contacts; this factor could be the most important one in combating prejudices, and not only in Slovakia⁸⁰.

Information gained via several public opinion surveys may be summarised as follows:

- About 2/3 of the Slovak population agrees with the opinion that refugees should be accepted in Slovakia, if they escaped from the motherland for serious reasons;
- A considerable part of the population, however, has negative feelings about the presence of refugees in the territory of Slovakia;
- Almost 3/4 of the respondents agree with the statement that refugees are costly to the Slovak Republic⁸¹.

⁷⁹ M. Vašečka, *Public attitudes toward foreigners and international migration in Slovakia*, IOM Bratislava, 2009, in Slovak.

⁸⁰ S. Letavajová, *Predstavy a skutočnosť o utečencoch na Slovensku* [Perceptions and reality concerning refugees in Slovakia], in: *Etnologické rozpravy*, No.8, 2001, pp. 40-61.

⁸¹ B. Divinský, 2005, *op.cit.*

In general, it is impossible to speak about explicitly unfriendly or even racist attitudes of the Slovak population towards foreigners. Nevertheless, there is a high degree of more or less latent discrimination.

Xenophobia and discrimination are a natural reflection of the prevailing images of migrants in the media. The positive cases, e.g., about the integration of migrants into society, are seldom shown. Migration issues are in general not objectively presented by the media, so the public cannot change its reasoning and is not prepared to countenance a larger movement of people from abroad. It is not stressed that migrants pose no threat to society, on the contrary – they enrich the indigenous society through their cultures⁸². But it is not just about the media. Politicians do not deal sufficiently with migration questions and do not inform the public about their opinions on this subject. Some governmental institutions are not adequate advocates for migrants, although this should be their duty. Other institutions often neglect obvious manifestations of intolerance and discrimination (even the police). Seen from this angle, public opinion only reflects the approach of state policy in this field.

Prognosis of immigration – a brief summary

The expectations of Slovak migration experts surveyed under the Delphi research are that, over a ten year perspective, migration inflows, especially labour migration from Ukraine and Moldova, will increase (depending on the political and economic situation). For migrants from Belarus, however, the picture is more unclear – their number could either increase or remain stable.

In the view of Slovak migration experts, migrants' employment may increase, especially that of highly skilled migrants who can be competitive in the Slovak labour market. All 14 experts interviewed in the Delphi survey expect an increase in the inflow of labour migrants, 2 of them expect a substantial inflow and 12 are expecting a moderate inflow over the next decade. The increase will be connected with visa liberalisation or visa abolition (e.g. the case of Moldova) by the EU and if the EU countries lift restrictions on access to the labour market for citizens of Eastern Partnership countries (though this is less likely taking into consideration current migration pressure on the EU as such).

⁸² B. Divinský, *International Migration in the Slovak Republic – The Current Situation, Trends and Impact on Society*, Friedrich Ebert Foundation & Research Center of Slovak Foreign Policy Association, Bratislava, 2005.

Slovak experts also expect that the number of female migrants will increase, as well as the number of university graduates. They also anticipate that the range of economic sectors in which migrants will be involved will expand. Some experts, however, draw attention to potential problems, in particular the increased opportunities for labour exploitation and illegal employment due to the existence of higher social contributions, a greater tax burden and further problems related to high unemployment in Slovakia.

According to the Delphi survey, Slovak migration experts estimate that Slovakia's migration policy will undergo a transformation. Most of them estimate that state migration policy will be oriented to greater openness for migrants from the EaP countries. Most probably it will be more suitable for skilled and highly skilled migrant groups. On the other hand, four Slovak experts think that migration policy may become even more restrictive. Their assumption can be based on current developments in Ukraine that are of concern to the Slovak government, where the situation can not only create an influx of short-term refugees but also precipitate long-term migration. There are also concerns about the increase of irregular migration, with the anarchic situation in Ukraine potentially enabling organised crime groups that smuggle migrants to increase their activities.

Challenges, opportunities and risks of further immigration

There are several factors which could stimulate further migration from Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova to Slovakia, among others: ageing of the population and shortages in the labour market. On the other hand, fears of migrants are deeply rooted in Slovak society. Moreover, the current situation in Ukraine and the use of minority politics as a domestic foreign policy tool by several countries in Europe is leading to a climate of growing radicalisation in society.

However, when considering immigration to Slovakia from an economic point of view, the need for a highly skilled workforce will increase. For this reason, it will be necessary to supplement the workforce by immigration or temporary migration from third countries. In terms of sustainability and stability, the possibility of simplifying circular or temporary migration into the Slovak and European job markets becomes a priority. Most Delphi experts recommended that Slovakia needs to fill labour market shortages and acquire a labour force with the requisite vocational skills from those countries whose migrants would be expected to assimilate readily in Slovakian society.

Another major challenge lying ahead is the transformation of current EU visa policy. In order to make further progress in the EU's visa policy toward Ukraine and Belarus, it is essential to keep the twin processes of facilitation and liberalisation close together. Furthermore, in the process of visa liberalisation the EU should more clearly distinguish technical from political benchmarks for progress. Although any final decision on lifting the EU's visa requirement is likely to be political, Ukrainian citizens should clearly understand what measurable progress there has been on the technical aspects of visa liberalisation. The Slovak Delphi experts are in favour of visa abolition for Ukraine and Moldova⁸³. The process, however, must be accompanied by an amended migration policy that would foresee migrants' integration policy.

Non-state actors are claiming that Slovakia has no reason to fear the influx of migrants to an extent that would threaten national security. Conversely, Slovakia needs and will continue to need labour from third countries and the government should establish mechanisms for integrating and utilising the human, intellectual and linguistic capital that migrants possess. However, Slovak authorities have so far held a different view. The strategic document "The Principles of the Migration Policy of the Slovak Republic" was approved as early as in 1993 but until 2005 Slovak migration experts were pointing out the "practical non-existence" of the state migration policy. Only at the beginning of 2005 did the government approve "The Conception of State Migration Policy of the Slovak Republic" as a relatively comprehensive document.

The 2005 Migration Policy Concept was later updated through the document "Conceptual Plans of the Migration Policy of the Slovak Republic for the Period 2011-2015", which was followed by the new strategic document "the Migration policy of the Slovak Republic with a view to 2020". It aims to create the appropriate conditions in the area of legal migration with regard to the priorities, needs and reception capacities for migrants, and to participate in building a partnership with countries of origin and of transit. The document prioritizes immigration of highly-skilled workers with an emphasis on culturally related countries. Additionally, a new topic of this policy paper is the connection between migration and development, in particular by focusing official development aid on countries relevant from the perspectives of migration flows, as

⁸³ Authors' note: visa-free travel for Moldova became reality on 28th April 2014 - three months after the Delphi survey was finalised.

well as using the potential of circular migration when supporting the development of third countries.

On the other hand, in 2012 Slovakia adopted the new Act on Residence of Aliens. This new law unified previous legal regulations concerning border control with the law regulating the entry and residence of foreigners, a move largely criticized by NGOs as creating a climate of state and border police endangerment of migrants. This approach is also reflected in the significantly more restrictive entry regulations in stricter conditions for granting temporary residence for third country nationals.

The majority of Slovak experts surveyed under the Delphi research (10 of 14) are in favour of a more liberal migration policy. In particular, experts from NGOs and academic sectors called for transparency within migration policy and practice. One of the key recommendations for the government was to design and subsequently to implement proper migration strategy. Most of the experts also called for the development of rules for controlled opening of borders towards EaP countries. Almost all Slovak experts agreed that it is necessary firstly to elaborate analysis of the labour market needs to make clear which professions and qualifications Slovakia requires and whether the potential brain drain hurts the countries of origin. This should be accompanied by a wide public debate about the positives and benefits of migration.

On the other hand, some governmental experts expressed the view that Slovakia should be prudent when it comes to discussing the possible liberalisation of migration policy. The general liberal policy approach should take into account how many migrants actually fulfil the declared purpose of stay. One of the governmental experts even added: “there are unrealistic assumptions that migrants travelling as tourists or business travellers may economically contribute to the EU.” Governmental experts also called for an integrated approach in compliance with the EU’s strict conditions with regard to countries of origin, and to focus on more enhanced procedures for ascertaining the true profile of migrants and their purpose of travel.

Conclusions

On the basis of empirical data, legal documents and also the Delphi research, it can be concluded that the Slovak Republic is currently at a turning point as to international migration. From a country with a low immigration level,

Slovakia has undergone an important transformation during the past 3-5 years. The inflow of migrants has grown to unanticipated proportions, carrying with it great challenges. There is great fear within Slovak society that liberalisation of migration policy may lead to growing unemployment or even an increase in criminality.

The Delphi research has proven that most Slovak migration experts are in favour of liberalising migration policy, especially towards Ukraine, Moldova and, in the medium term, towards Belarus also. The abolition of short-term Schengen visas could be one of the appropriate measures to take. The experts welcome the intention to abolish the visa regime and argue that the national economy may profit from both arrival of less qualified migrants searching for any job in particular and the presence of high-skilled experts from abroad. Migration could in the future become an important contribution to improving the further societal development of Slovakia.

Currently, state migration policy is not a priority topic for the government and the public is not well informed about it. State migration policy should represent a comprehensive approach, encompassing not only the preparation of legal norms, however important, topical and wide-ranging they are. It should also comprise a set of responsible institutions operating in synergy with long-term strategic conceptions, legislative plan, public relations and the like. It is also necessary to change adverse public opinion towards migrants and to decrease the degree of xenophobia and discrimination in the country. It is highly appropriate that the Slovak government conducts education at schools in a pro-migration way, to provide more positive examples in the media, to organise informational campaigns, and finally to better collaborate with NGOs and local authorities.

5. MIGRATION BETWEEN THE EU, V4 AND EASTERN EUROPE: THE PRESENT SITUATION AND THE POSSIBLE FUTURE. THE PERSPECTIVE OF UKRAINE

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Introduction

After becoming independent, Ukraine was characterised by substantial emigration flows. According to recent surveys, there are 1.2-2.0 million Ukrainian labour migrants abroad. This number does not include Ukrainian citizens that left the country in the beginning of the 1990s due to ethnic reasons. The majority of migrants come from Western regions of the country, likely due to comparatively lower labour opportunities as compared to the industrialised Eastern regions. Over the years, migration became a coping strategy for households whose members either could not find work or whose salaries did not cover basic needs. In particular, while the unemployment rate (by International Labour Organisation methodology) remains comparatively moderate (at 7.2% of the economically active population of age 15-70 years old in 2013), employment does not always guarantee a decent income due to wage arrears as well as a shortened working week or unpaid leave. Such strategies are utilised by Ukrainian employers, especially at times of financial difficulties.

The geographical location of Ukraine determines the major destinations for migration. In particular, more than 40% of migrants go to Russia and almost the same share of labour migrants work in the EU countries. Russia is likely to be a major destination due to language proximity and the absence of barriers to mobility, while the EU countries are more attractive due to wage differentials. Countries such as Poland and Czechia are among the most important countries, also likely due to cultural proximity.

Regardless of substantial migration dynamics, migration policy was not a priority for all of Ukraine's governments in the past. Under pressure from civil society, more attention was devoted to migration after Ukraine received a Visa Liberalisation Action Plan from the EU in 2010, a section of which is related to migration issues. Taking into account the large number of Ukrainian migrants already working in the EU countries, estimating the possible increase in migration flows following visa liberalisation becomes an important issue for both Ukraine and

the EU. On the one hand, further ‘brain drain’, ‘brain waste’ (waste of talent) and depletion of the labour force are unwelcome potential trends for Ukraine. On the other hand, the higher number of Ukrainians in the EU countries will increase pressure on their labour markets, which is already high.

Current political unrest in Ukraine has raised fears that migration flows might increase further if the security situation does not calm down in the near future. At the same time, current trends suggest higher internal migration, when people from the South and East of Ukraine go to Western Ukrainian regions. In the longer run, however, if unrest in Eastern Ukraine and tensions with Russia escalate one could expect external migration to gather pace. Currently, general statistics at the EU level that would show the asylum claims and migration dynamics of Ukrainian nationals since the political crisis erupted at the end of 2013 are not available. In January-June 2014, around 600 Ukrainians asked for asylum in Poland, among them approximately 50 individuals that fled from Crimea after its annexation by Russia, which represents a rapid however not dramatic inflow. It may be assumed that major destinations for Ukrainian migrants are not likely to change. Individuals from Eastern and Southern Ukraine may likely migrate primarily to Russia, while from Western regions they would favour EU member countries.

The major aim of this chapter is to analyse the emigration profile of Ukraine with attention to the current stock of migrants abroad, particularly in the EU and V4, and potential changes in migration dynamics after the EU’s possible lifting of the visa requirement for short-term stays. Alongside this, the main determinants of emigration as well as current public discourse on migration will be also outlined.

The following country chapter is based on several data sources. In particular, there is the Delphi survey on migration trends between EU/V4 and Eastern Europe (referred to below as *Delphi survey Ukraine*), which was conducted within the current project. The Delphi survey was conducted over two rounds: in November-December 2013 and February-March 2014. The number of participants was 19 and 16, respectively, in each round. Respondents included representatives of scientific institutions, NGOs, the international community and the Ukrainian government. Secondly, two nationwide surveys on migration were used. The first survey – the Modular Population Survey on Labour Migration Issues – was carried out by the National Statistical Service of Ukraine (Ukrstat) in cooperation with the Ukrainian Centre for Social Reforms, the Open Ukraine Foundation, the International Organisation of Migration and the

World Bank in May-June 2008⁸⁴. The second survey was conducted within the framework of the European Union-International Labour Organisation project “Effective Governance of Labour Migration and its Skills Dimensions” in May 2012⁸⁵. The definition of labour migrants in these surveys includes employees as well as self-employed individuals, both with regular and irregular status. However, cross-border commuting is not taken into account. If a migrant was absent then another household member answered questions. In this chapter, these surveys are referred to as *Labour Migration Survey* (LMS-2008 and LMS-2012, respectively). The data on registered migration flows as reported by the National Statistical Service are rarely used here as they significantly underestimate migration flows.

Emigration profile of Ukraine – a brief summary

Large cross-border migration outflows were typical for Ukraine over many years. However, a precise estimate of Ukrainian migrants abroad is still open to question. According to the World Bank, 6.5 million individuals who were born in Ukraine lived abroad in 2010. This number is often cited whenever the migration issue is discussed by politicians. However, many of these individuals already have citizenship in other countries and so cannot be counted as Ukrainian migrants. According to official data reported by the National Statistical Service in the period 1992-2004, around 2.5 million Ukrainians left the country on a permanent basis, e.g. they were leaving for good so they de-registered themselves with the Ministry of Interior. Later, Ukrainians tended to prefer temporary labour migration, which cannot be captured by administrative means. Although a national census could certainly provide some new estimates, the last one was conducted back in 2001 and the new one planned for 2011 was re-scheduled to an uncertain date. Therefore, in the case of Ukraine, sociological surveys seem to be the best statistical

⁸⁴ This is a nationally representative survey, which was based on a sample of households covered by the monthly Labour Force Survey and Household Budget Survey (more than 22,000 households and 48,000 individuals of working age). This survey reports migration between 2007 and 2008 with some numbers for 2005; *Зовнішня трудова міграція населення України, Київ, 2009* [External labour migration of Ukrainian population, Kyiv, 2009], in Ukrainian.

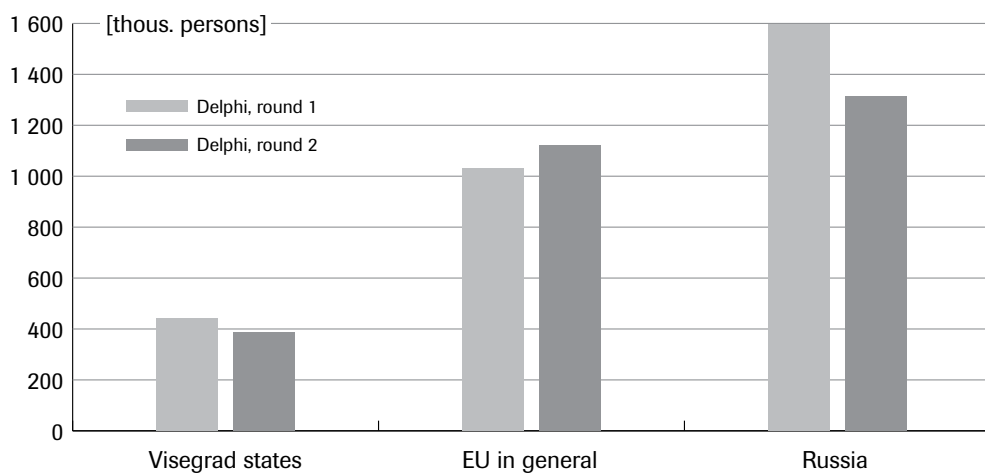
⁸⁵ This survey was conducted by Ukrstat with cooperation with the World Bank, IOM and the Institute of Demography and Social Science. It is also a nationwide survey with the total number of households covered at 23,500. This survey reports migration between 2010 and mid-2012: *Звіт щодо методології, організації проведення та результатів модульного вибіркового обстеження з питань трудової міграції в Україні. Міжнародна організація праці, 2013*, [Report on methodology, organization and results of module survey on labour migration in Ukraine, ILO, 2013], in Ukrainian.

instrument for capturing migration dynamics, particularly that significant segment of Ukrainian migrants abroad who stay and/or work there in an irregular manner.

In particular, LMS-2012 indicates that 1.2 million individuals (3.4% of the population in the 15-70 age bracket) either worked or looked for a job abroad in the period of January 2010-June 2012. This is lower than the 1.5 million individuals that were reported to be working abroad between 2005 and 2008, according to the LMS-2008. The share of labour migrants in the labour force fell from 5.1% in 2005-2008 to 4.1% in 2010-2012. Such a decline might be explained by the depletion of demographic potential as well as fewer job opportunities in destination countries due to economic stagnation.

According to both LMS, the EU and Russia are major destinations for Ukrainian migrants. According to LMS-2012, 602,500 migrants (51% of surveyed labour migrants) either worked or were looking for work in the EU, with a higher share of migrants in Poland, Italy and Czechia. The number of migrants in Russia declined to 511,000 (or 43.2%) during 2010-2012.

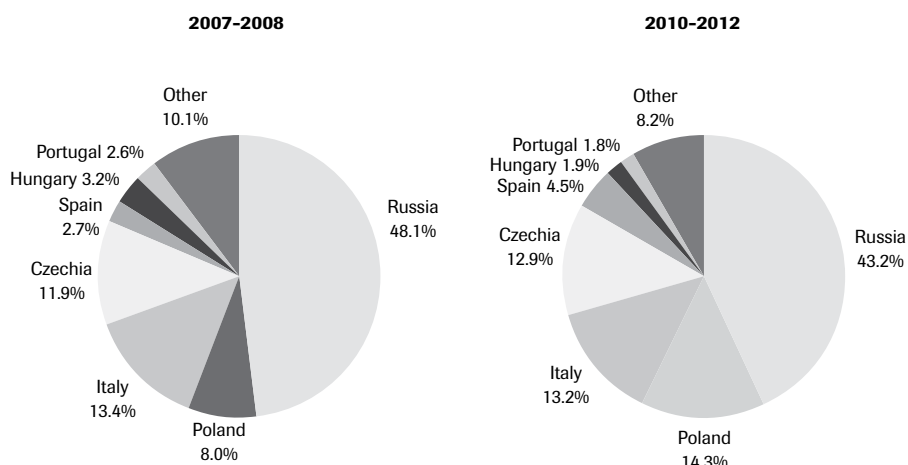
Figure 25. Estimated numbers of Ukrainian migrants abroad (V4, EU, Russia)



* Note: average number reported by respondents

Source: Delphi survey Ukraine 2013-2014

Figure 26. Main destination countries for Ukrainian migrants (2007-2008, 2010-2012)



Source: Modular sample survey on labour migration in Ukraine (State Statistical Committee of Ukraine and others 2010, International Labour Organization 2012)

However, these figures do not correctly reflect the degree of permanent migration as the survey covered only those labour migrants who were in Ukraine during the survey or whose families were at home. As a result, labour migration of Ukrainians in the EU is likely to be larger than revealed by the survey⁸⁶. According to Eurostat, the number of Ukrainians with a residence permit in 2011 was at least 648,000 individuals⁸⁷. In particular, the number of migrants depicted by the LMS-2012 survey stood at 156,000 in Italy and 27,800 in Germany, while according to Eurostat, the number of Ukrainians holding a residence permit amounted to 200,700 and 136,300 in 2011, for Italy and Germany respectively. During recent years, the number of short-term as well as long-term visas issued by EU member states to Ukrainian nationals increased. Alongside this, there is a trend for more Ukrainian citizens to receive either permanent or temporary residence permits in the EU as they attempt to legalise their status.

Based on all these sources, it may be assumed that the current level of Ukrainian migrants stock in the EU stands at around one million people⁸⁸. According

⁸⁶ К. Кравчук, Трудовая миграция как фактор экономического роста в Украине [К Kravchuk, Labour migration as a factor of economic growth in Ukraine], in Russian, IER, (to be published).

⁸⁷ <http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/submitViewTableAction.do>

⁸⁸ M. Jaroszewicz, W. Strielkowski, T. Duchac, *Ukrainians EU migration prospects*, OSW Commentary, March 2014.

to the Delphi survey results, the average estimate of Ukrainian nationals residing in the EU (as of February 2014) amounted to 1.1 million. The number of migrants in V4 countries was estimated on average at 386,000 individuals. The number of migrants in Russia was estimated on average at 1.3 million, which is much higher than the figure of 440,000-616,000 labour migrants revealed by the survey of the Centre for Ethnopolitical and Regional Studies (Russia) in 2011⁸⁹. Taking these numbers into account, the overall level of labour migration might *de facto* exceed 2 million Ukrainians. A similar estimate of 2.1 million migrants was made by Oleksii Poznyak on the basis of the LMS-2008 survey⁹⁰.

Both the LMS-2012 survey and Delphi survey indicate that the major destination countries are Russia, Poland, Italy, Czechia, and Spain. Russia, Poland and Czechia are likely to be more attractive for Ukrainians primarily due to lower travelling costs as well as cultural and linguistic similarities. Italy and Spain were traditional destinations for Ukrainians due to large differences in earnings and recently developed social networks are becoming a more important factor for Ukrainians to work there. Construction is the major employment sector for migrants in four major destination countries, apart from Poland where agriculture prevails. The migrants' profile by education level and skills differ according to country.

The LMS-2012 revealed the social and demographic characteristics of labour migrants. In particular, two thirds of labour migrants were men (nearly 5% of economically active men and 2% of economically active women were labour migrants). There are great disparities between destination countries with regard to gender proportions. However, female migration in general seems to be on the rise. 57% of labour migrants were aged between 30 and 49 years old with the average age at 37 years old. Men become more active in migration from 25, while women go for migration after 30. Women migrate more actively than men after 50, which may be explained by differences in the employment sector. In particular, men are more often employed in sectors that demand physical strength (e.g. construction). Additionally, this might also be explained by family status as women usually migrate after their children grow up.

⁸⁹ M. Denisenko, E. Varshavskaya, *Migrants at the Russian Labour Market: Characteristics, Status, Mobility*, National Research University-Higher School of Economics, 2013, No. WP3/21, <http://publications.hse.ru/preprints/91006949>

⁹⁰ O. Pozniak, *External Labour Migration In Ukraine As A Factor In Socio-Demographic And Economic Development*, CARIM-East Research Report 2012/14.

The LMS-2012 survey indicates that 46% of Ukrainian migrants worked in construction, while 18% provided household services. Only 4% were occupied in industry. Another important sector of employment is seasonal agricultural jobs, which was also confirmed by respondents of the Delphi survey.

Table 36. Major characteristics of Ukrainian migrants abroad, 2010-2012 in %

	Duration of work for more than a year %	Major sector of activity	Professionals, technicians, %	Craft and related trades workers, %	Elementary occupations, %
All migrants	17.3	Construction (45.7%), individual services (18.3%), agriculture (11.3%)	10.8	24.7	39.1
Russia	8.7	Construction	8.2	36.9	28.3
Poland	2.3	Agriculture	1.7	10.8	55.9
Italy	44.2	Individual services	7.0	2.4	68.8
Czechia	9.0	Construction, hotels and restaurants	22.1	29.8	31.3
Spain	64.0	Individual services, Construction	13.3	25.5	26.8

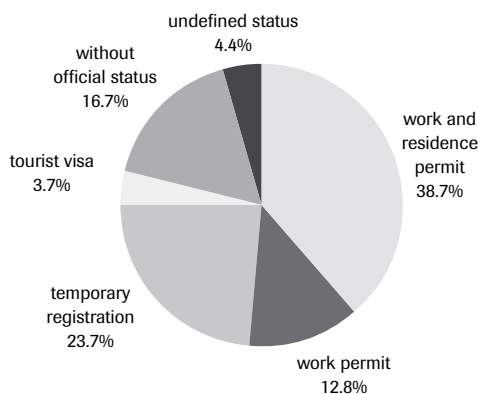
Source: LMS-2012

According to the Delphi survey and the LMS (2008 and 2012), the share of migrants in seasonal jobs as well as circular migration increased during recent years. This might partially be due to friendlier visa and migration procedures in the destination EU countries. In particular, between 2010-2012, one labour migrant made on average three trips for work, not necessarily to a single destination country (LMS-2012). The average duration of work was 5 months, while only around 17% of migrants worked abroad for the period of 6 to 12 months. Overall, the number and length of trips taken depends on the destination country. Shorter and more frequent trips are typical for migration to neighbouring countries, likely due to lower travelling costs.

The change in EU migration policies and visa procedures might have also contributed to a decline in the share of irregular labour migration. In particular, the share of migrants that had either a work permit or residence permit or both accounted for 51.5% (LMS-2012). Nearly 17% of migrants worked without any official status. The share of irregular migrants varied between countries: the share of migrants without a work permit stood at 17% in Czechia and 65% in Russia. Experts that participated in the Delphi survey indicated the highest share of irregular migration at around 40% in Russia and Italy. The high share of irregular

migrants raises concerns about their current social protection as well as their future upon reaching retirement age. In particular, only a small percentage of labour migrants is covered by social protection in the destination country.

Figure 27. Legal status of Ukrainian migrants abroad in 2010-2012



Source: Modular sample survey on labour migration in Ukraine (International Labour Organization 2012)

The education profile of labour migrants also differs by country. In particular, an overwhelming majority of migrants working in Germany had completed higher education (as the majority of males were employed in engineering and other technical activities), while only 10% of migrants had such a level of education in Czechia (where the most popular sectors for the employment of Ukrainians was construction). Overall, it is determined by the policies of destination countries regarding employment of foreigners as well as the typical sectors of employment. In the past, Germany conducted broad-based recruitment campaigns to obtain foreign IT specialists, while Poland and Czechia mainly addressed their offer towards low-skilled immigrants wishing to work on a circular basis. On average, most Ukrainian migrants had completed secondary education; however, they often do non-qualified work.

Table 37. Education of Ukrainian migrants, 2010-2012

Destination country	Total, in thousands of individuals	Migrants by level of education, %			
		Completed higher	Basic higher or uncompleted higher	Completed secondary education	Basic or primary education
Number of labour migrants (in thousands)	1,181.6	15.4	15.1	64.9	4.6
<i>In particular, in following countries:</i>					
Russia	511.0	12.5	10.0	72.1	5.4

Destination country	Total, in thousands of individuals	Migrants by level of education, %			
		Completed higher	Basic higher or uncompleted higher	Completed secondary education	Basic or primary education
Poland	168.4	12.4	18.0	61.8	7.8
Italy	156.0	14.9	28.7	54.0	2.4
Czechia	153.0	9.5	11.1	74.1	5.3
Spain	52.6	19.8	33.3	46.9	–
Germany	27.8	89.6	3.2	7.2	–
Hungary	23.0	19.6	14.3	66.1	–
Portugal	21.7	–	6.5	93.5	–
Belarus	21.5	–	23.3	76.7	–
Other countries	46.6	42.3	16.3	38.2	3.2

Source: LMS-2012

According to the LMS-2012, 39% of migrants worked in the most basic professions and nearly 11% were professionals and technical staff. This does not correspond to the occupational structure of employment in Ukraine, which raises concerns about occupational downshifting ('brain waste') of Ukrainians working abroad⁹¹.

Main determinants of emigration processes

The major reasons for emigration have changed over the course of Ukraine's independence. In the beginning of the 1990s, Ukrainians left the country permanently primarily due to ethnic reasons. In particular, according to the 2001 population census data, the number of Russians, Moldovans, Belarussians and Poles declined over the previous decade by more than 20%. The most dramatic decline occurred for the Jewish minority, whose number dropped by nearly 80%. Simultaneously, Crimean Tatars received the opportunity to return to Crimea after being deported mostly in 1944 (248,000 Tatars lived in Ukraine in 2001, compared to 38,000 in 1989). However, ethnic reasons as a push factor for migration diminished in importance after the initial emigration of minorities took place.

By the mid-1990s, following a period of rapid decline in real GDP and hyperinflation, migration became a strategy for coping with poverty for many Ukrainians

⁹¹ O. Kupets, *Brain gain or brain waste? The performance of return labor migrants in the Ukrainian labor market*, EERC Working paper No 11/06E; T. Coupé, H. Vakhitova, *Costs and Benefits of Labour Mobility between the EU and the Eastern Partnership Partner Countries. Country report: Ukraine*, EuropeAid/130215/C/SER/Multi.

during times of scarce employment opportunities and wage arrears. Since the 2000s, the mobility strategy changed from petty trade to labour migration⁹². Still, economic reasons remained the major factor for migration as individuals attempted to ensure higher earnings. In particular, the income disparities between Ukraine and the major migration destination countries remain substantial. In 2010, disposable income per household in Ukraine was nearly three times lower than in Russia, Czechia and Poland and more than ten times lower than in Italy and Spain.

Changes in migration outflows were anticipated in Ukraine during the global economic crisis of 2008-2009, primarily in the form of a higher return of migrants. However, Delphi survey experts believed that there were rather moderate changes in migration flows as a consequence of economic crisis in the EU. In particular, migrants did not return *en masse* to Ukraine due to the worse economic situation at home, where real GDP declined by 15% in 2009. Ukrainian migrants attempted to stay in the destination countries and agreed to lower wages and a change in employment sectors. On the other hand, weak employment opportunities in other countries constrained new migration outflows from Ukraine.

The worrying economic trends in Ukraine are foreseen in 2014, when real GDP is expected to drop by 3-5%. Real disposable income and real wages will also decline. However, the unemployment level (according to ILO methodology) is expected to be around 8% of the economically active population aged between 15 and 70 years old, which is still lower than in many destination countries.

Overall, in the Delphi survey most experts reported high wages in the destination country as a major *pull* factor for migration. Individuals are also more eager to leave Ukraine when poverty and social tensions increase. These reasons are confirmed by the regional origin of Ukrainian migrants. In particular, according to the LMS-2012 survey most Ukrainian migrants come from the Western part of Ukraine (72%), where poverty is on average higher and wages are on average lower than in the Eastern part of Ukraine. The share of working poor (working people whose incomes fall below the poverty line) is also higher in the Western part of Ukraine, which pushes people to look for higher earnings. According to the LMS-2012 survey, Ukrainian migrants earned on

⁹² O. Malynovska, *International Labour Migration From Ukraine: The Last Ten Years*, Ukrainian Academy of State Management, Kyiv 2004; M.I. Baganha & M.L. Fonseca (ed.), *New Waves: Migration From Eastern To Southern Europe*, Lisbon 2004.

average nearly USD 930 per month, while the average wage in the home country was almost three times lower (see Table below). The wage level varied between countries. Wages in Italy and Czechia were around USD 1100 as more migrants work there, particularly in construction. At the same time, wages at USD 600 in Poland were likely to be attributed to the fact that typically Ukrainians are occupied there in seasonal agricultural jobs.

Table 38. Average earnings of Ukrainian migrants abroad, 2010-2012

Average wage in Ukraine in 2010–2012: USD 329	Total, thous. pers.	Distribution of earnings in USD, %					Average monthly earnings, USD, 2010–2012
		<250	251–500	501–1000	1001–2000	>2000	
Number of labour migrants that reported earnings	1,002	4.4	21.8	43.1	24.8	5.9	930
Russia	407,7	2.6	24.8	46.2	23.0	3.4	874
Poland	151,4	14.9	40.4	38.4	5.4	0.9	560
Italy	146,6	4.4	11.5	47.1	27.4	9.8	1056
Czechia	131,6	2.7	6.0	41.5	44.3	5.4	1137
Spain	43,5	–	19.8	49.4	26.7	3.9	943
Germany	27,8	–	–	25.5	25.5	48.9	1798
Hungary	19,6	–	–	70.9	29.1	–	969
Portugal	18,6	–	10.8	53.8	31.2	4.3	1019
Other	37,7	–	20.2	16.7	46.7	16.2	1306

Source: LMS-2012

The tradition of political emigration never gained much importance in Ukraine. Asylum claims from Ukraine in the EU member states are rather rare – Ukrainian nationals are not present among the thirty most popular national groups whose representatives request asylum in the EU. In the past, Ukrainians mainly claimed international protection abroad due to persecutions over sexual orientation or professed beliefs. Under the Presidency of Victor Yanukovich there occurred, however, individual claims related to political activity or persecution at the hands of Ukrainian judicial authorities. During the current political crisis, Ukrainians have sought protection abroad due to the poor security situation in the state, political persecution (particularly refugees from Crimea), criminalisation and the brutalisation of everyday life.

Since the end of 2013, political uncertainty has rapidly increased in Ukraine. The situation worsened even more in the beginning of 2014 due to the annexation of Crimea by Russia and unrest in the Eastern part of Ukraine. This raised

fears particularly in the EU countries of an upsurge in Ukrainian migrants, especially asylum seekers. However, recent evidence suggests that at present it is actually internal migration within Ukraine that has increased. If the situation does not improve in the near future one could expect an increase in the number of Ukrainian migrants. Concurrently, the major destinations are likely to remain the same: the EU and Russia. Nevertheless, the destination of migration flows may be more than ever conditioned by migration policy, e.g. whether and which EU states will be willing to liberalise migration policy towards Ukrainian migrants and whether Russia decides to toughen the admission and stay rules for Ukrainian nationals as a means of pressuring the Ukrainian government.

According to the Delphi survey, the existence of a liberal migration and visa policy in a destination country plays an important role in migrants' decisions. According to the monitoring prepared by *Europe Without Barriers*, Ukraine is surrounded by substantial and asymmetrical visa barriers. Overall, migration and visa policies were named as the most important factor that determines the choice of Ukrainians to work in such V4 countries as Hungary, Poland and Slovakia. The importance of migration policy as an attracting factor in the case of V4 states that provides possibilities for legal stay was also confirmed in the Delphi survey. In a similar manner, unfriendly visa policy and harsh migration measures in some countries deter Ukrainians from working there. In particular, in 2012 and 2013, Czechia was defined as the country that has a 'problematic' visa practice.

Language and cultural proximity were also named by Delphi experts as a factor that impacts Ukrainians' selection of a destination for labour migration. Furthermore, geographical proximity primarily determines the duration and frequency of migration. The share of migrants from Western Ukraine may also be higher due to proximity to the EU countries. Only 10% of Ukrainian migrants to the EU come from the Eastern part of Ukraine.

Moreover, during recent years, social networks have become more important in defining the destination country. In particular, 77.3% of Ukrainian migrants between 2010 and 2012 found their job in destination countries through friends, relatives and acquaintances (LMS-2012). Overall, the evidence shows that most social networks remain informal and small. This might be small groups of people who are either friends or acquaintances (e.g. from one locality). Alongside this, the major formal organisation that is considered to unite Ukrainian migrants abroad is the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church (UGCG) and also the charity organization Caritas, which is closely linked with it. Ukrainians often meet during

church services in the UGCG, after which they might socialize and address certain issues, including employment opportunities. Private agencies helped to secure employment for only 4% of migrants. According to the State Employment Office, licenced agencies are mostly active in the recruitment of sailors.

The evidence indicates that migration due to family reunification is increasing, particularly owing to the absence of improvement in the economic situation. This was also reflected in respondents' answers in the Delphi survey. In particular, parents that have legal and permanent jobs abroad try to take their children to the destination country as returning home does not grant them good employment opportunities.

Media and public discourse about emigration

Regardless of the extensive labour migration of Ukrainians, migration does not seem to have been a profound topic of public debate over recent years. Migration is somehow present in public debate mainly due to the activities of different migrant organisations and those dealing with either migration (e.g. Caritas) or human trafficking (La Strada). In particular, migrant organisations lobbied for approval of a special law on external labour migration, which would provide migrants with special status as well as introduce policies for reintegration. Although the text of the law was elaborated by civil organisations in 2013 and submitted to the Ministry of Social Policy (responsible for policies in the sphere of labour migration), it has not been approved so far. However, some attention in the media was devoted to the topic due to the drafting procedure of the respective law and discussion of major provisions in the second half of 2013.

Lobbying from civil society also made possible public hearings at the Parliament "Ukrainian labour migration: situation, problems and ways to solve them" held on July 3, 2013. However, not many parliamentarians attended these hearings and not much has changed since. One thing worth noting is that the Delphi survey points out that most experts believe that migration policy has not changed for many years. Even though there were some formal changes (new laws and regulations), the policy *de facto* remained the same.

Migration is often covered in the media as a negative factor of Ukraine's development, even though some positive features are also outlined⁹³. The economic

⁹³ О. Ровенчак, В. Володько, *Порівняльний контент-аналіз українських видань щодо висвітлення питань міжнародної міграції та місця в ній України* // Статистика України,

and social impacts of migration are often discussed. In general, the economic impact is mainly assessed positively, especially the role of remittances. However, the possible problems with pension payments after migrants return are also debated in the media. At the same time, the social impact is often assessed negatively as it relates to family problems, when one or both of the parents leave for migration (which leads to family breakup), while children often stay home with their grandparents. The resulting social problems concerning childcare are discussed. Furthermore, migrants are frequently portrayed in the media as passive victims of the domestic economic situation (e.g. unemployment, low or absent earnings) and are sometimes perceived more as 'losers' rather than active people who seek to ensure a better life for their families. Human trafficking problems as well as bad treatment of Ukrainian migrants by employers abroad are among other important migration topics in the media.

Issues of visa liberalisation by the EU states are covered in the media much more than migration. This relates to the time framework of visa liberalisation as well as the steps needed to be approved by the Ukrainian government to ensure faster visa abolition. In particular, there were heated debates on the legislation required to be approved for moving forward to the second phase of the Visa Liberalization Action Plan (VLAP) in 2013. However, once again this topic was largely supported and promoted by civil society organisations and initiatives.

The changes that have already occurred in migration policy – namely the approval of the Migration Policy Concept – have been primarily explained by the implementation of the VLAP from the EU, initiated in November 2010⁹⁴. As future visa liberalisation will make it easier for Ukrainians to travel to EU countries, it is not surprising that, according to the Delphi survey, the topic of visa liberalisation is an important issue for general public debate. In addition, all the experts pointed out the importance of this issue for business development. While there is a consensus on the importance of the visa liberalisation issue

2010, № 3(50), p. 52-58 [O. Rovenchak, V. Volodko, *Comparative content-analysis on the discourse of migration in Ukraine*]; In Ukrainian; В. Володько, Особливості репрезентації сучасних міграційних процесів в українській та польській пресі // *Методологія, теорія і практика соціологічного дослідження сучасного суспільства: зб. наук. праць* — Харків: ХНУ ім. В. Н. Каразіна, 2007, р. 376–380. [V. Volodko, *Representations of modern migration processes in Ukrainian and Polish printed media*], in Ukrainian.

⁹⁴ О. Малиновська, *Міграційна політика в Україні: формування, зміст, відповідність сучасним вимогам*. Аналітична записка М1/2014, Інститут економічних досліджень та політичних консультацій, [O. Malynovska, *Migration policy in Ukraine: formation, content and correspondents to current challenges*. Analytical brief M1/2014, Institute for Economic Research and Policy Consulting], in Ukrainian.

among the general public and business circles, only 14 out of 17 respondents thought the issue of visa liberalisation was essential for political debate.

The general conclusion is that the visa liberalisation issue is more prominent in the media and in public discourse than migration policy as such. Due to the problems of 'brain drain' and depletion of the labour force, officials refer to issues of reintegration policy for migrants wishing to return home, as Ukraine currently lacks highly skilled labour. At the same time, Ukrainian government representatives claim during meetings that immigration policy issues are likely to become more important in the near future, as the desirable return of migrants requires tremendous efforts towards improving the economic situation in the country.

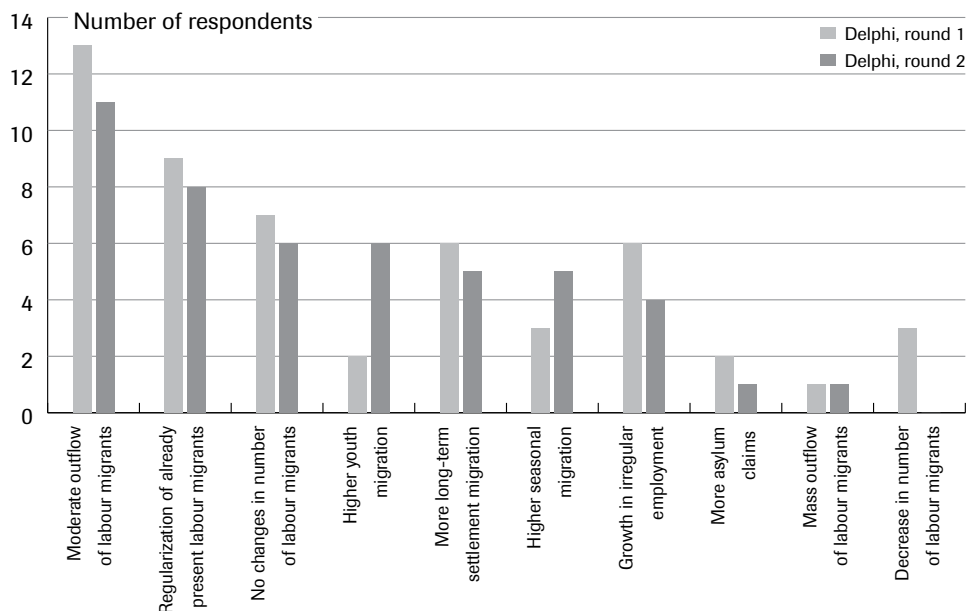
Prognosis of emigration - brief summary

There are fears in the EU that the lifting of visa requirements for Ukrainians for short-term stays will result in increased migration flows. In concert with this, the timing and magnitude of the change in migration flows needs careful assessment, which is a tricky task considering the lack of necessary data.

The migration experts that participated in the Delphi survey were asked for their assessment on the timing of the elimination of requirements for short-term EU visas for Ukrainians. Their answers revealed that this is expected to be a step taken by the EU in the near future (which is more likely after the Ukrainian parliament approved legislative changes in May 2014 that should result in a move to the second phase of the VLAP). In particular, 10 out of 16 experts anticipate that uniform short-term visas to EU states are to be abolished by the EU within 2-3 years, while 2 more think that it will happen in 4-6 years. Other experts think that it will happen sooner (by mid-2015).

Nevertheless, experts do not expect that migration flows to the EU will increase sharply afterwards. 10 out of 16 respondents stated that migration flows might increase moderately over the next ten years subsequent to visa liberalisation. Somewhat higher migration flows are explained by the difficult economic situation in Ukraine, which will push Ukrainians to look for a job abroad, as well as family reunification processes. Moreover, more young people are expected to go to EU countries to study in universities. Other respondents said that migration flows will not change as emigration potential is exhausted primarily due to an ageing society. The migration stocks forecast model conducted within our project also suggests that lifting the requirements for short-term EU visas for Ukrainians should not cause an increase in the number of Ukrainians emigrating.

Figure 28. What can be expected to happen (in 3 years perspective) if visas for short-term travel up to 90 days to the Schengen zone for Ukrainian nationals are abolished? (answers for Ukraine)



Source: Delphi survey Ukraine 2013-2014

The expectation that migration flows will not increase sharply is also partially borne out by other research⁹⁵. According to the LMS-2012 survey, by the end of 2012, 2.6% of surveyed household members (876,000 people) indicated plans to travel abroad. From these individuals, 52% were planning to go there for travel purposes, 26% were going to work abroad, while 14% wanted to look for a job abroad. However, according to the survey of the Institute of Sociology, nearly 4 million Ukrainians declared an intention to work abroad in 2013, which is more than in 2012. The rise in potential migration is explained by the decline in the living standards of Ukrainians. The actual share of those who *de facto* go for work abroad is typically lower than those who declare their intention of doing so. Still, it should be noted that surveys on migration intentions should

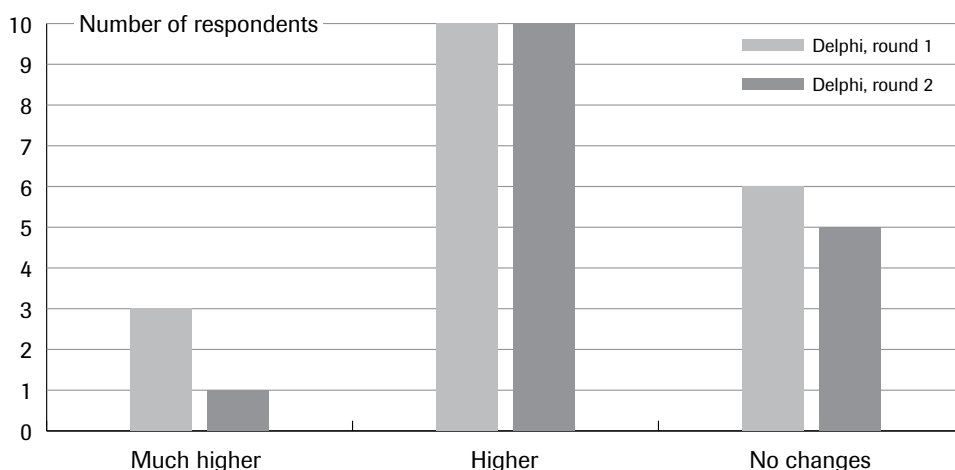
⁹⁵ Донецький інститут соціальних досліджень і політичного аналізу, Міграційний потенціал України в контексті набуття безвізового режиму з ЄС, листопад 2011, [Migration potential of Ukraine in the context of visa abolishment], Donetsk Institute for Social Studies and Political Analysis, November 2011, in Ukrainian; I. Прибиткова, *Структура міграційних потоків і пересувні ринки праці в Україні*, Українське суспільство 1992-2013. Стан та динаміка змін. Соціологічний моніторинг. За ред. д.ек.н. В.Воронин, д.соц.н. М. Шульги – К.: Інститут соціології НАН України, 2013 [I. Prybytkova, *Structure of migration flows and mobile labour markets in Ukraine*, Ukrainian society 1992-2013. Situation and trends. Social monitoring, V. Voronin, M. Shulga (eds.), Kyiv, Institute of Sociology of Academy of Science of Ukraine, 2013], in Ukrainian.

be treated with the utmost caution since they primarily indicate respondents' assessment of the economic/political etc. situation in a given country, and only partially reflect genuine intentions and motivations to migrate.

Therefore, overall migration potential does not seem to be much larger than current migration flows. However, it might sharply increase if the economic situation in the country fails to improve and political unrest escalates. Obviously, if current instability and the security threats observed in Eastern Ukraine will continue or spread to other regions, it may exacerbate politically-motivated migration. After Crimea's annexation by Russia, people emigrated primarily from Crimea to other parts of Ukraine, though in the longer run they may ask for asylum abroad if the situation does not improve.

In the case of visas for Ukrainians for short-term travel to the Schengen zone being abolished, respondents of the Delphi survey expect migration strategies to change. 8 out of 16 migration experts expect the regularisation of already present labour migrants, which is likely to increase their social protection. Besides, abolition of short-term visas would lead to an increase in circular migration and seasonal jobs. Migration is expected to become younger in terms of age profile, primarily due to the trend towards family reunification as children join their parents in destination countries.

Figure 29. Possible migration outflows from Ukraine after possible EU labour markets opening (in 3 years perspective)



* Note: none of respondents reported decline in migration outflows

Source: Delphi survey Ukraine 2013-2014

There is no consensus among respondents of Delphi survey concerning the economic performance of labour migrants. In particular, some experts expect an increase in remittances due to moderate increase in migration. In turn, other experts stress that family reunification might result in lower monetary transfers to Ukraine as family members also migrate to other countries. The employment sectors of Ukrainian migrants are also expected to change as regularisation of migrants might allow them to work at more qualified and better jobs.

Higher social protection of labour migrants is expected due to more active work by the Ministry of Social Policy in the sphere of negotiating respective agreements with other (primarily EU) countries. In particular, the agreement with Italy is one of the most important issues as it is a destination for many Ukrainian migrants.

Moreover, according to the Delphi survey, 10 out of 16 experts believe that migration policy will change over next ten years. In the future, the Ukrainian government is expected to focus more on reintegration policies and put more emphasis on immigration policy to counterbalance the workforce losses due to labour emigration. In particular, discussions on the reintegration of returned migrants into the Ukrainian labour force have been conducted. This is seen to be important due to the brain waste problem. Debates on the recognition of informal skills are also thought to be helpful as a comparatively large share of migrants work abroad in sectors other than formal education. At the same time, there seems to be an understanding that return of migrants will be possible only after the economy is firmly on the growth path, which requires comprehensive economic and structural reforms and a favourable business climate.

Challenges, opportunities and risks of further emigration

Labour migration usually has benefits and costs, which impacts the development of the country. Further emigration might increase already existing costs and benefits for Ukraine, though it is not likely to create substantial new risks. To address this issue, the participants of the Delphi survey were asked for their opinion on the benefits and costs of the migration. 16 out of 18 respondents pointed out an important benefit from migration in terms of lessening social and economic tensions, reducing poverty and unemployment, and providing remittances. Moreover, the potential for growth in entrepreneurship is considered significant. However, the latter is limited by

the lack of a favourable business climate as well as the substantial starting capital required. Furthermore, 17 out of 18 respondents reported that depletion of labour force and ‘brain drain’ are among the most important negative consequences of migration.

Two nationwide migration surveys showed that while migrants initially planned to work abroad for short periods of time and then return, in reality many of them stay for much longer. As a result, temporary migration turns to be permanent over time⁹⁶. This creates risks for the subsequent demographic structure of Ukraine as it contributes to the ageing of society through several channels. Firstly, mostly younger people leave the country and they may choose to stay abroad on a permanent basis. Secondly, migration is likely to lead to fewer children in migrant families. Moreover, social connections break down, which includes family breakup. The extended absence of one or both parents (especially the mother) results in the negative social externality of psychological disorders among their children.

In spite of this, labour migration also serves to lessen pressures on the labour market. In particular, the unemployment rate could have been 1.6 times higher than reported in Ukraine (the Institute of Demography by Ptukha at the Academy of Science of Ukraine) if emigration had not occurred. However, there is a high level of skills mismatch, when regions with higher migration (e.g. Western Ukraine) lack such highly skilled specialists as doctors and teachers, who go for work abroad due to very low wages paid in health care and education at home.

Remittances make a positive impact on the domestic economy⁹⁷. They are estimated to reach USD 6-7 billion a year, which contributes to a lower current account deficit. They also result in higher private final consumption, which is a typical driver of economic growth in Ukraine, and thus, improved welfare of migrants’ families. Additionally, remittances are also invested in the maintenance of existing housing or the acquisition of new housing. Some proportion

⁹⁶ *Трудова міграція: соціальні наслідки на шляхи реагування*, Аналітична доповідь, Національний інститут стратегічних досліджень, Київ 2011 [*Labour migration: social impact and ways to react*, Analytical report, National Institute of Strategic Studies, Kyiv, 2011], in Ukrainian.

⁹⁷ O. Kupets, *The Development and the Side Effects of Remittances in the CIS Countries: the Case of Ukraine*, CARIM-East Research Report 2012/02; W. Strielkowski, O. Glazar, B. Weyskrabova, *Migration and remittances in the CEECs: a case study of Ukrainian labour migrants in the Czechia*, IES Working Paper, 19/2012.

of received transfers is used for the education of migrants' children, thus contributing to the improvement of human capital. However, remittances have limited impact on the development of business, which could be explained by the unfavourable business climate in Ukraine. In particular, tax administration is complex, while the regulatory climate is usually considered by companies as a barrier to their development.

There is a deterioration in the skills of Ukrainian labour migrants (LMS-2008 and LMS-2012). As a result, they also have difficulties with reintegration into the Ukrainian labour market after coming home. At the same time, the lack of recognition of informal skills in Ukraine hinders their employment in sectors other than formal education once they return home.

Another risk relates to the social protection of migrants. In particular, irregular migrants do not have any social insurance, while not all regular migrants have full coverage of social protection. Ukraine still has relatively few agreements with other countries on the employment and social protection of migrants (e.g. with Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia, Czechia, Portugal and Spain). As a result, after returning home for retirement many migrants may face the risk of not receiving pension payments. However, they would be eligible for social protection in Ukraine, thus creating pressure on public finances.

Ukraine could face a severe problem in terms of labour deficits in 10-12 years due to a shrinking and ageing society (e.g. according to World Population Prospects (UN), during the next 10 years the population could decline by up to 6%, while the labour force could shrink by more than 7%). As a result, immigration to the country may increase if Ukrainian migrants do not return and demographic patterns do not improve while the economy is in a growth trend⁹⁸.

Another of the costs of migration is the increase in youth migration. This especially relates to students who go to study abroad. Family reunification is one of the reasons behind the higher number of Ukrainian students abroad (see Table below). Another reason for student migration is related to the destination countries' policy of attracting educated young people. In particular, over recent years Poland has become more active in attracting Ukrainian students,

⁹⁸ О. Позняк, *Євроінтеграції України. Міжнародна міграція*, жовтень 2012, дослідження Фонду Фрідріха Еберта; [O. Pozniak, *Social Impacts of Eurointegration of Ukraine: International Migration*, October 2012, Research of the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung Fund], in Ukrainian.

which is manifested in a near threefold rise in students based there over the last four years. For Ukrainian youth, such a possibility is attractive as it opens the external labour market for them and, in any case, it is often not much more expensive than commercial programs in Ukrainian universities (including the need to occasionally pay bribes for securing places at tertiary education establishments).

Table 39. Number of Ukrainian students abroad in 2008-2013

	2008–2009	2009–2010	2010–2011	2011–2012	2012–2013
Russia	4,236	4,055	4,919	4,644	–
Poland	2,831	3,499	4,879	6,321	9,620
Italy	800	1,043	1,314	1,556	1,727
Czechia	1,046	1,364	1,456	1,647	1,782
Spain	558	641	840	1,114	1,323
Germany	8,557	8,818	8,830	8,929	9,044
USA	1,716	1,727	1,583	1,535	1,490
France	1,349	1,388	1,447	1,482	1,282
Austria	739	855	926	1,055	1,249
Hungary	829	896	862	763	803
Australia	614	636	721	692	636
Bulgaria	275	296	333	367	411
Moldova	271	235	202	157	165

Source: Centre of Society Studies, <http://www.cedos.org.ua/osvita/kilkist-studentiv-ukraintsiv-za-kordonom-denna-forma-navchannia-interaktyvnyi-hrafik>

To conclude, migration also raises the pressure on the Ukrainian government to conduct social and economic reforms and foster economic growth, which, although feasible, is in practice not very easy to accomplish. According to the migration experts that participated in the Delphi survey, such policies are important for preventing migration flows from growing, and thereby reduce risks and costs. Higher economic growth might then substitute a decline in remittances for an increase in domestic income, which is important for keeping consumption high.

Conclusions

Large cross-border migration flows have been typical for Ukraine over many years. However, the reasons for migration have partially changed. At the demise of the USSR and in the beginning of independence, ethnic reasons

prevailed. In the mid-1990s and in the 2000s, the major push factors for migration became poverty and unemployment. Therefore, migration became one of the strategies for Ukrainians to cope with poverty.

Russia and the EU countries are major destinations for Ukrainians who have decided to work abroad. The wage differential remains the major push factor for migration. In addition, other reasons for migration which determine the destination country include visa procedures and migration policies, language and cultural proximity, as well as social networks. These latter factors play a more important role in the attractiveness of the V4 countries, where wages remain on average lower than in Western European Countries.

According to the Delphi survey, major costs of further migration from Ukraine include the 'brain drain' and the so-called 'brain waste', where existing talent or skills are underutilised. Moreover, it leads to depletion of labour especially taking into account the ageing and shrinking population of Ukraine. On the other hand, migration mitigates social and economic tensions as it contributes to lower poverty and unemployment. Alongside this, it supports balance of payments and economic growth through remittances, which are primarily spent on consumption. Nevertheless, the contribution of migration to business development remains rather low due to the unfavourable business climate.

Lifting the requirements for short-term EU visas for Ukrainians is not expected to result in a sharp increase in the number of Ukrainians emigrating. Most experts that participated in the Delphi survey expected a moderate rise in migration flows immediately after visa liberalisation. The magnitude of circular migration is likely to climb due to easier access to the EU countries. Migration might become younger in age profile due to the higher share of Ukrainian youth going to EU countries for study, which would open up to them the labour market of other countries. The migration stock might grow somewhat after visa liberalisation due to regularisation of labour migrants already working in the EU as well as family reunification. At the same time, the migration forecast indicates that migration flows will somewhat decline after 2026-2028, which might also result in a lower migration stock. This would require Ukrainian government to conduct economic and social reforms aimed at ensuring sustainable economic development in the country.

However, there is a risk that migration flows might increase more than expected if political tensions with Russia increase and unrest in Eastern Ukraine

escalates and spreads to other regions. In this case, one could expect a rising number of asylum-seekers. Nevertheless, Russia and the EU countries (in this case probably V4 countries, mainly dependent on their migration policies) will remain major destinations for Ukrainian migrants.

6. MIGRATION BETWEEN THE EU, V4 AND EASTERN EUROPE: THE PRESENT SITUATION AND POSSIBLE FUTURE. THE PERSPECTIVE OF MOLDOVA

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Introduction

Contemporary Moldova has been especially strongly affected by mass labour migration. According to various estimates, which will be discussed further in this chapter, around 15-20% of its population (circa 3.5 million) are currently staying abroad. One in three families in Moldova declares that one or more of its members are working abroad⁹⁹. Labour migration started soon after the collapse of the Soviet Union. It was a consequence of the sudden deterioration of the economic situation in this small state, devoid of natural resources and industry. Moldovan labour workers primarily seek employment in Russia and the EU, although some of them also work in Turkey, the USA, Israel and the United Arab Emirates.

Moldova has for many years been ranked last in Europe in terms of GDP *per capita*. For many Moldovans, remittances from their relatives working abroad are the foundation of their home budgets. From the state's point of view, labour migration has made it possible to soothe social tension and maintain the unemployment rate at a relatively low level. However, the social costs of so many citizens working outside the country are enormous. These include: the loosening of family bonds, problems with bringing up children and, last but not least, the deepening demographic crisis and the increasing burden on the pension system.

This chapter presents the results of the Delphi survey on migration trends between EU/V4 and Eastern Europe (Moldova), which was conducted between December 2013 and March 2014 in two rounds. Seventeen Moldovan experts took part in the first round and fifteen in the second. The experts participating in the survey filled in the questionnaires concerning Moldovan emigration abroad, especially to the EU and Visegrad states.

⁹⁹ This data originates from the Nexus Moldova project. The survey was conducted between May and August 2013 on a sample of 20,850 households in Moldova.

Due to time restrictions, the present Russian-Ukrainian crisis, which began in late February 2014, was not taken into account by the experts participating in the survey. Meanwhile, it might affect emigration from Moldova. On the one hand, the situation in Ukraine, and in particular reports on attacks on people travelling via Ukraine published in the Russian media, have discouraged some Moldovans from seeking jobs in Russia. On the other hand, the deteriorating economic and political situation in Ukraine has adversely affected the trade volume between Moldova and Ukraine as well as the financial situation of those Moldovans who have earned their living through small cross-border trade with Odessa region. Both of these factors might contribute to increasing the number of Moldovans seeking employment in the EU.

Emigration profile - a brief description

The demographic profile of Moldovan emigrants depends primarily on the country of destination. Moldovans who decide to leave for Russia are predominantly men with secondary education usually hired as manual workers, mostly in construction sector. In their case, emigration is usually circular. In turn, women predominate among the emigrants leaving for the EU. Moldovan emigrants in the EU mostly find employment in the services sector and trade. Migrants are usually young, with as many as one third of them aged between 25 and 34. Furthermore, children and adolescents form a relatively numerous group. Three quarters of those who decide to leave abroad come from rural areas, thus contributing to depopulation of villages, most of whose residents now are old people and children. This is a problem for both the economy and society¹⁰⁰.

As regards the general characteristics of Moldovan migrant workers obtained as part of the Delphi survey, most of them are unqualified ones. Given the linguistic similarities between Romanian and Italian or Spanish, Moldovan emigrants quite quickly pick up the language of the country they work in. Although their command of the language is usually moderate, they can freely communicate in the local environment. A small majority of the respondent experts concluded that Moldovan emigrants in the EU prefer short-term circulatory emigration over settlement one. Young people predominate, although the average age has been constantly rising.

¹⁰⁰ This data originates from the report by the Moldovan National Statistical Office, *Migrația Forței de Muncă*, 2013 and V. Ganta, *The demographic and economic framework of circulatory migration in Moldova*, 2012.

The experts who took part in the Delphi survey disagreed about the number of Moldovan emigrants in the EU and Russia. The differences in their estimates were partly a result of the fact that some of the respondents stating the number of migrant workers had in mind only those who are working abroad currently, while others also included those circular migrants who had returned to Moldova for a short time. According to the experts, the average estimate of Moldovans working in the EU and Russia is around 554,000 as of February 2014. That estimate was higher than the one presented in the National Statistical Office report (around 430,000) and was comparable to the result of the *Nexus Moldova 2013* survey (over 550,000). The number of Moldovan labour workers in the EU indicated by Delphi experts ranged between 120,000 and 500,000. Big differences were also seen in the estimates regarding the number of Moldovans staying in V4 countries.

Table 40. Main destination states for Moldovan migrants

No.	Country	Mostly regular/ Mostly irregular migration
1.	Russia	Irregular
2.	Italy	Regular
3.	Spain	Regular
	France	Regular
4.	Turkey	Regular
5.	Portugal*	Regular

* Similar number of experts placed Portugal on 4th and 5th position

Source: Delphi survey Moldova 2013-2014

The Russian Federation remains the main destination for Moldovan labour migrants. As a consequence of the economic crisis in the EU, the number of Moldovan job seekers in Russia has clearly increased since 2008. According to the Delphi estimates around 315,000 Moldovans are currently staying in Russia, most of them illegally. Such a large number of irregular migrants is to a great extent an effect of stricter immigration regulations having been introduced in Russia since 1 January 2014. Furthermore, Moldovans very frequently do not hold work permits as required under Russian law.

The next most popular destination states are Italy, Spain, France, Turkey and Portugal. According to the Delphi experts' calculations, almost 240,000 Moldovan emigrants are residing in the EU (as of February 2014). The Moldovan embassy in Rome estimates that around 150,000 Moldovan nationals are staying in Italy. A clear majority of them are regular migrants, employed primarily in

the service sector, households or construction¹⁰¹. Over the past few years, Italy has lost its popularity to France and the United Kingdom due to the economic crisis. According to various estimates, between 25,000 and 60,000 Moldovan emigrants are currently based in France. Moldovans are usually staying there legally, either holding Romanian passports either other EU passports. Most Moldovans in France work in the construction, hotel and restaurant sectors. Portugal used to be a very popular destination for Moldovan emigrants prior to the economic crisis. According to data from the Moldovan embassy in Lisbon, the number of Moldovan emigrants in Portugal exceeded 20,000 in 2009. At present, less than 10,000 Moldovans live in Portugal, according to official data. Such a radical decrease stems from the deteriorating economic situation in this country and also the fact that Portuguese citizenship has been granted to over 6,000 Moldovan migrants over the past few years. Moldovans in Portugal work predominantly in the services, construction and household sectors, which is similar to the situation in Spain.

The Visegrad Group states are not an appealing destination for Moldovan migrant workers. According to the Delphi experts' estimates, the total number of Moldovan migrants staying in the V4 countries is slightly above 11,000 (as of February 2014). This is mainly due to: lower wages offered than in Western Europe, the absence of migrant networks, and the language differences. Before the economic crisis, Czechia was the most popular V4 destination for Moldovans. However, Poland has been the most frequent choice for some time now. This is because Poland has adopted a more liberal migration policy which contributes to short-term migration from Eastern Europe. For example, according to the records of the Polish Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, in 2013, Polish employers issued more than 9,000 employer's declarations enabling temporary employment of Moldovan citizens, i.e. almost double the number of declarations issued to Belarusian workers.

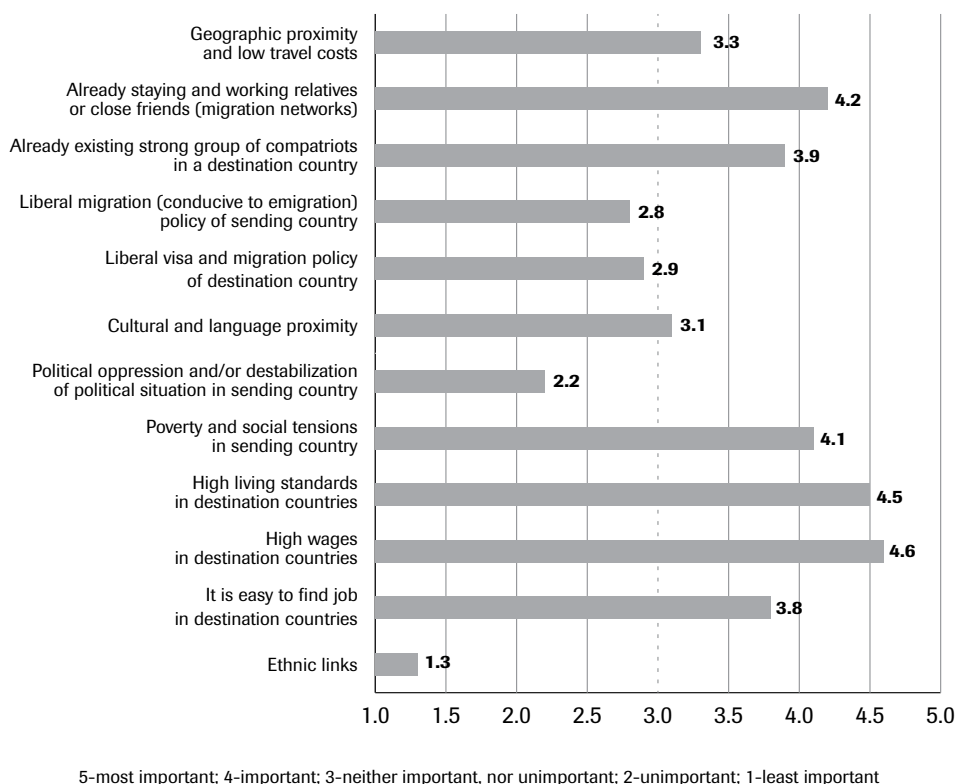
Main determinants of emigration processes

The factors which determine migration processes may be economic, social and political. The first two categories are seen as the most important by Moldovan Delphi experts. As regards EU member states, the Delphi experts concluded

¹⁰¹ Unless otherwise stated, all data concerning the number of Moldovan migrants in EU member states and their employment originate from the report by D. Cheianu-Andrei, *Mapping of the Moldovan Diaspora in Italy, Portugal, France and the United Kingdom* published in Chisinau in 2013 in co-operation with the Moldovan government and the IOM.

that the most appealing were the high wages, high living standards and the presence of relatives and close friends in the destination country. At the same time, the respondents emphasised that the factor which most frequently pushed Moldovans into labour migration were poverty and related social tensions rather than the political situation or repression in their country of origin.

Figure 30. What are the main push and pull factors of emigration pushing from Moldova and attracting in the EU? (average results)



Source: Delphi survey Moldova 2013-2014

The impact of the economic factor on migration is fully understandable. The average monthly wage in Moldova at the end of 2013 was around EUR 200 (data provided by the National Statistical Office), while a labour migrant in the EU may earn more than EUR 1,000 monthly¹⁰². Thus, labour migration is a very effective step and sometimes the only way to protect one's family from poverty. Almost one third of families who have not used the benefits of the labour migration system live below poverty line. While this problem affects only one in

¹⁰² D. Cheianu-Andrei, *Moldovan Diaspora Mapping Series II. Mapping of Moldovan Diaspora in Italy, Portugal, France and the United Kingdom*, Chisinau 2013.

ten families where one of the spouses works abroad, and only a few percent of the families where both spouses are labour migrants¹⁰³.

The existence of well-developed migration networks is also a key factor which determines the choice of the destination state. 63% of Moldovans based in Italy have admitted that the “presence of friends or relatives” was the main reason for choosing this country. In the case of France, this answer was chosen by 56% of emigrants, and in the case of Portugal by 46%¹⁰⁴. The presence of the diaspora makes it easier to find a job and handle formalities in the destination state, and also soothes the negative consequences of a change in one’s social environment.

Since 28 April 2014, when the EU lifted the requirement for Moldovan citizens to hold short-stay visas, the visa policy of a given destination country has not been a factor which determines the choice of migration destination. But even before the lifting of the visa regime, only a small percentage of Moldovans who decided to leave for one of the EU member states, declared that easy access to visas determined their choice of destination state¹⁰⁵.

Media and public discourse on emigration

Moldovans generally view labour migration as a necessity resulting from the poor economic situation at home rather than an opportunity for development or a chance to gain experience. Given this approach, the Moldovan public usually reacts with resistance to any attempts at presenting emigration as something desirable. Moldovans want to be well-informed about possible migration destinations, legal regulations on migration in a given country, and the scope of required visa formalities, but when they begin to see signs that emigration is being promoted they clearly resist this. This resistance is especially strong when public figures, such as artists or politicians, encourage them to leave the country¹⁰⁶.

¹⁰³ Н.Мкртчян, *Социо-политическое влияние трудовой миграции на страны происхождения: Сравнительный анализ статей социально-политического модуля проекта Карим-Восток*, [N. Mkrтчyan, *Socio-political influence of labour migration on the countries of origin. The comparative analysis of articles from the socio-political module of CARIM-East*], CARIM-East 2012/2013, European University Institute, 2012, in Russian.

¹⁰⁴ D. Cheianu-Andrei, 2013, *op.cit.*, p. 27.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibidem*.

¹⁰⁶ The campaign aimed at encouraging Moldovans to participate in the US green card lottery in autumn 2013, in which Moldovan celebrities were actively engaged, was a good illustra-

Since emigration plays a major role in the lives of Moldova inhabitants, it is not surprising that liberalisation of the visa regime with the EU raises massive interest in this country. All the experts who took part in the Delphi survey agreed that visa liberalisation is a very important issue for the average Moldovan and is given a great deal of attention in public debate. In the public opinion poll conducted in April 2014 by the Moldovan Public Policy Institute, 50% of respondents stated that lifting the visa regime was important or very important to citizens of Moldova. This, however, does not mean that Moldovans are well-informed about the essence of the visa liberalisation process. According to the same poll, as many as 34% of respondents were unaware of the fact that lifting the visa requirement alone will not give them the right to work in the EU. Furthermore, a significant proportion of Moldovans do not understand the complex negotiation process which Chisinau and Brussels were conducting in order to introduce a visa-free regime. This is because the Moldovan government has failed to hold a public campaign on the European integration process in the broad meaning of the term, including visa liberalisation issues. For example, despite declarations from Brussels that the visa requirement would be lifted soon, only 46% of Moldovans stated in November 2013 that Moldova had a chance of achieving a visa-free regime with the EU at all¹⁰⁷.

In the official discourse, politicians do not encourage Moldovans to leave, but they clearly emphasise their right to labour migration and support any initiatives aimed at offering greater opportunities for Moldovan citizens to work abroad. For this reason, the visa liberalisation with the EU has been backed by all political parties in parliament, regardless of attitude to the European integration process itself. Moldovan Communists, who stick to the idea of integration with the Customs Union promoted by Russia, not only support lifting the visa requirement for Moldovans travelling to the EU but they also clearly emphasise that it was them who commenced negotiations on this issue back in 2006-2007.

Migration issues have also been the topic of a broad public debate in Moldova; at expert level and in the media. This debate is primarily focused on the threats

tion of this approach. This action was broadly criticised by the public. Moldovans did not merely dislike the fact that they were encouraged to leave but also that they were encouraged by individuals who should have proven by their achievements that success was also possible in Moldova.

¹⁰⁷ Barometrul de Opinie Publică, Institutul de Politici Publice, online: http://ipp.md/public/files/Barometru/BOP_11.2013_prima_parte_finale.pdf

inherent in migration, especially social and demographic ones. It has been emphasised that migration is conducive to the breakup of families and adversely affects the process of bringing up children. Expert circles are trying to find how further increases in emigration could be stopped and how Moldovans abroad can be encouraged to come back home. The discussion on possibilities for encouraging Moldovans living abroad to invest in their home country has become increasingly popular over recent years.

Prognosis of emigration - brief summary

The recent EU lifting of the requirement to hold visas for short-term stay for citizens of Moldova is unlikely to cause a rapid growth in the number of migrants from this country. The experts who took part in the Delphi survey agree that the number of migrants will increase, but the growth will be moderate. This is linked to four key factors.

Table 41. How big an outflow of migrants from your country will there be if the European Union lifts restrictions on access to the labour market for your country nationals (in a short-term horizon of three years after restrictions are abolished) in comparison with the present inflow?

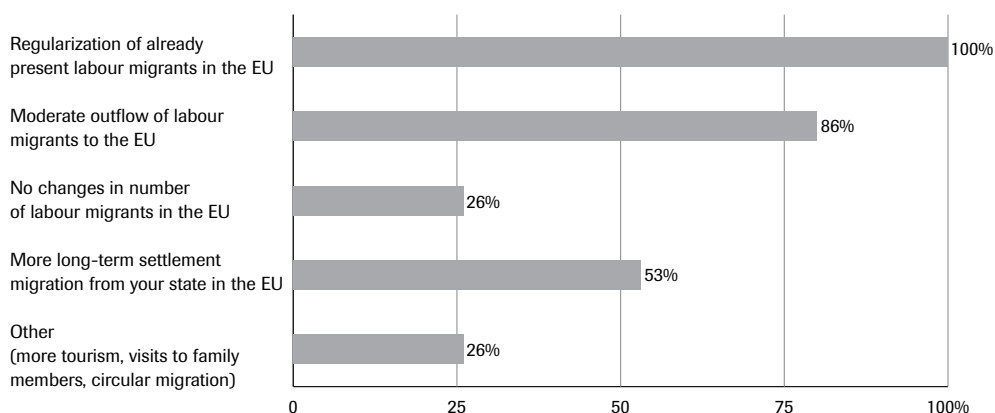
Much higher	0%
Higher	80%
No change	13%
Lower	0%
Much lower	0%
Don't know	7%

Source: Delphi survey Moldova 2013-2014

Firstly, a clear majority of Moldovans who wanted to find jobs in the EU have already done this, for example, by using the opportunity to be granted Romanian citizenship. The Soros Foundation estimated in 2013 that around 500,000 Moldovans already held Romanian passports, and the number of passport applications was falling. Furthermore, according to the Nexus Moldova survey, 91% of Moldovans who have not emigrated so far do not intend to seek employment abroad. Secondly, a possible increase in the migrants outflow resulting from the introduction of the visa-free regime with the EU will be compensated within a timeframe of several years by older emigrants returning to Moldova who have achieved their migration goal (earned enough money to buy real estate in Moldova, provided education to their children, etc.) and do not wish to

stay abroad for the rest of their lives. At present, most Moldovans working in the EU declare that they want to return home at some point¹⁰⁸. The poor demographic situation is the third factor which allows assuming that enhanced mobility with the EU will not bring about a significant upsurge in migration outflows in the medium or long term. As the population of Moldova is dramatically shrinking and ageing, the number of potential emigrants is diminishing. Fourthly, the EU's lifting of the requirement to hold short-stay visas neither grants the right of long-term stay in EU MS nor does it allow work there without holding work permits.

Figure 31. What can be expected to happen (in a short-term horizon of three years) if visas for short term travels for up to 90 days to the Schengen zone for Moldovan citizens are abolished?



The result do not total 100% because the respondents could choose more than one answer

Source: Delphi survey Moldova 2013-2014

The Delphi experts expect that short-term visas abolition may contribute first of all to legalising the stay of Moldovan emigrants currently in the EU. However, this depends on the policy the individual EU member states will adopt, since as a consequence they would have to temporarily liberalise their migration regulations and enable Moldovan visa *over-stayers* to legally leave the EU and then return. The respondents have pointed to the fact that the current liberalisation of the visa regime will in the longer term contribute to an increase in circular migration. Moreover, Moldovans working in the EU will be able to bring their spouses, children and sometimes even parents to the country they are based in. Consequently, reunification of families will

¹⁰⁸ D. Cheianu-Andrei, 2013, *op.cit.*, p. 39.

directly result in a reduction of remittances sent home by labour migrants. It is also very likely that the share of students among the total number of migrants will increase, both as a consequence of the improved travel opportunities and of Moldovan students being covered by EU student exchange programmes.

The Delphi experts agreed that the position of Moldovan migrants on EU labour markets should improve within the next ten years. This change should result from three factors: the increasing share of young people educated, in Romania or other EU states among the emigrants, their further integration with the local communities and continuing legalisation of their stay. Well-integrated emigrants who have lived in a destination country for a sufficiently long time and know the language stand a better chance of getting a better-paid and more prestigious job. This is evident even now, and statistics indicate that long-term migrants tend to earn more than temporary ones.

Although Moldovans have become slightly more interested in work in V4 countries, their key emigration destinations are still Italy, Portugal, Spain, Turkey and Greece. The popularity of these destinations depends primarily on their economic performance. Further development of Russia's policy will also have a noticeable impact on the structure of Moldovan emigration. Stricter Russian migration regulations may make Moldovans less interested in Russia as an emigration destination in the short term.

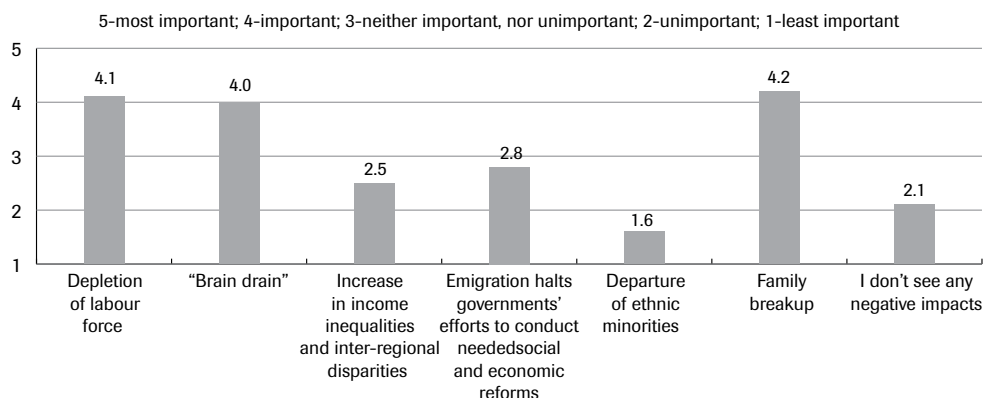
It is still an open question how visa liberalisation will influence the residents of Transnistria. Although Transnistria is *de facto* an entity independent of Moldova, its residents can also benefit from visa-free regime with the EU on condition that they hold Moldovan biometric passports. According to data from the Moldovan Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Moldovan passports (mostly non-biometric) are held by around 300,000 people in Transnistria. The number of migrants from Transnistria in the EU is unlikely to grow following the lifting of the visa requirement. Russia is still the most popular destination among migrants from this region, while the number of Transnistrian job seekers in the EU is marginal.

Challenges, opportunities and risks of further emigration

The key risks linked to further migrations of Moldovans are first of all: the separation and consequent breakup of families, the increasing number of

so-called migration orphans, the outflow of young workers and the related reduction in the sources of economic and demographic growth of the country, and the ‘brain drain’.

Figure 32. Negative impacts from future migration from Moldova to the EU by relevance (average results)



Source: Delphi survey Moldova 2013-2014

Labour emigration contributes to improving of the living standards of Moldovan families, but it has a very negative impact on keeping families together and the process of raising children. According to surveys conducted by the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), when one or both of the parents leave to work abroad, the family’s financial situation improves significantly and access to medical services and education improves. Unfortunately, children who have been abandoned by one or both of the parents for a long time, usually have problems with adaptation and accepting the social norms. Many of them are forced to take over the obligations of the parent who have emigrated. The negative impact of emigration is evident from police statistics, which suggest that one in four juvenile offenders comes from a family where at least one parent works abroad. The estimated number of so-called migration orphans or semi-orphans in Moldova currently exceeds 100,000. Emigration is a frequent cause of family breakup. When a family where the woman works abroad is divorced, the court often grants the right to take care of the children to the father, who is then forced to seek employment abroad, because the wife who had supported the family financially has left. As a consequence, many children are taken care of by their more distant relatives.

Mass emigration coupled with the deteriorating demographic situation of Moldova has a very strong negative impact on the country’s economy. According to data from the National Statistical Office, the share of people of working age

in the total population fell from 45% to 33% between 2003 and 2013. As a result, labour resources are shrinking, and entrepreneurs as well as public authorities complain about a shortage of young employees¹⁰⁹. If the scale of emigration continues to grow, the resulting labour shortage may impede the development of the Moldovan economy and cause a significant fall in the value of foreign investments and paralysis of the state apparatus, which will lack sufficient human resources to operate effectively. A deteriorating demographic situation also gives rise to concerns about the efficiency of the Moldovan pension system. At present, the proportion of workers per retiree in Moldova is 1.8:1. According to estimates, this proportion will fall to a ratio of 1:1 within the next five years. This will impose a very serious burden on the state budget. According to scholars from the Moldovan Academy of Sciences, as a consequence of population ageing, the share of people older than 60 among the population will rise from 14.4% in 2013 to over 30% by 2050¹¹⁰. One side effect, and apparently the only positive one, of the shrinking number of people able to work is the low unemployment rate compared to the EU, which oscillates between 4% and 8%. Moreover, in the respondents' opinion, migration might to a certain extent slow down the process of necessary reforms, since the public pressure on the government is thus reduced.

The 'brain drain' phenomenon has been apparent in Moldova since the early 1990s and is directly linked to mass emigration. This phenomenon concerns two categories of residents: highly qualified specialists (e.g. doctors, IT specialists, etc.) and students. According to the Nexus Moldova survey, around 18,500 Moldovans are currently studying at foreign universities. This number is equivalent to approximately 20% of all Moldovan students. Around 90% of Moldovan students abroad fall on Romania. A significant proportion of this group choose to stay abroad after graduation. Mass emigration of highly qualified specialists hampers the development of some sectors of the economy (e.g. the high-technology sector), and doctors' emigration has adversely affected the efficiency and quality of the Moldovan healthcare system. Around 40% of all Moldovan physicians had resigned from work since the country proclaimed independence; most of them emigrated¹¹¹. In 2010, the Moldovan government in collaboration with the International Organisation for Migration made some limited attempts at counteracting this, offering grants to those Moldovan

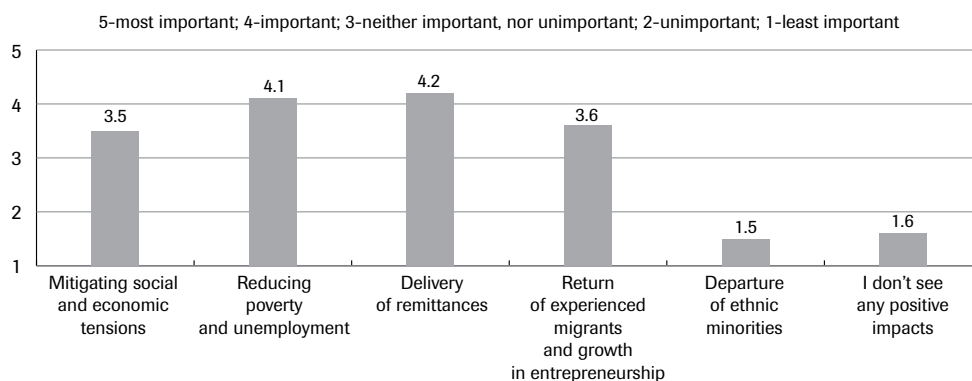
¹⁰⁹ Online: http://www.businessclass.md/HR/Kadrovii_defitit/

¹¹⁰ Migration has not been taken into account in this calculation due to the methodology applied.

¹¹¹ According to Mihail Ciocanu, Moldova's deputy minister for health.

students studying abroad, if they decided to return. However, this programme covers a very small number of students and is unable to tangibly reduce the scale of the problem. It is worth noting that the share of people with higher education in the total number of emigrants has been visibly decreasing over the past few years. In 2006, they accounted for 19.2% of all emigrants (data from CBS-AXA), while in 2011 their share was only 10.6% (data from the National Statistical Office).

Figure 33. Positive impacts from future migration from Moldova to the EU by relevance (average results)



Source: Delphi survey Moldova 2013-2014

Well-managed labour migration might still be used as a base for Moldova's economic growth. It enables money transfers into the economy, thus laying the foundations for the development of entrepreneurship, contributes to reducing unemployment and poverty, allows emigrants to gain the experience and know-how necessary to develop their own businesses and others. Remittances from labour migrants are one of the pillars of the Moldovan economy. According to data from the National Bank of Moldova, remittances exceeded USD \$1.6 billion in 2013; this being the equivalent of almost one quarter of the country's GDP. It should be noted that these statistics took into account only registered operations. According to data from the World Bank, remittances in aggregate could reach an equivalent of one third of Moldova's GDP in the coming years.

Short-term and circular emigration may be beneficial for Moldovan society. However, its direct impact on the condition of the country's economy is relatively small. In turn, savings accumulated by long-term migrants who have settled abroad could potentially offer large benefits to the Moldovan economy. According to data for 2013, as much as 37% of income generated by this group of emigrants is kept outside the country. According to estimates from the Nexus

Moldova survey, this could amount to EUR 1.6 billion. If migrants are successfully encouraged to invest at least part of this sum in their home country, this would provide a serious stimulus to the Moldovan economy.

The PARE 1+1 programme, launched in 2010, is the flagship project aimed at achieving this goal. Under this programme, if a Moldovan emigrant invests a certain sum to launch his/her business in Moldova, the state will match this money with an equal sum. However, there are serious restrictions as to the kind of business activity launched by emigrants, and a single subsidy cannot exceed 200,000 lei, i.e. a little more than EUR 10,000. Even though 313 businesses were started as part of PARE 1+1 during the first three years of its operation (from late 2010 until early 2014), it cannot be said that this programme has fulfilled its role in a satisfactory manner. The ineffectiveness of this programme becomes even more obvious, when one considers the fact that within the same timeframe Moldovan emigrants, according to Italian migration services, started almost four thousand firms without any additional support from the local government. In the opinion of the surveyed Delphi experts, attracting emigrants' capital does have a huge development potential, but this should be based at the improvement of the Moldovan economy competitiveness and its thorough liberalisation, rather than on using subsidies to attract investors.

However, PARE 1+1 is not the only governmental initiative aimed at attracting investments from migrants. In October 2012, the Moldovan government set up the Bureau for Diaspora Relations subordinated directly to the Prime Minister. Its goal is to maintain and develop links between Moldovan migrants (particularly long-term) and the home country, help them to preserve their identity and encourage them to tie their future to Moldova, for example, by launching businesses in the country.

Conclusions

The EU's lifting of the visa requirements for Moldovan citizens is unlikely to have any tangible impact on EU MS. No major increase in the number of migrants from Moldova should be expected. The Visegrad Group states probably will not feel any effects from liberalisation of the visa regime for citizens of Moldova at all, although Moldovan migrants could become more interested over the long term, particularly in Poland. One of the anticipated positive outcomes of the visa-free regime being introduced will be a decrease in the number (which is already small) of irregular Moldovan migrants in the EU. Another possible consequence of liberalising the travel rules could be the intensification

of the process of family reunification among Moldovan migrants. This may reduce the volume of remittances received in Moldova from emigrants and will contribute to increasing the scale of long-term settlement emigration. On the other hand, visa liberalisation may activate circular and short-term migration. Emigrants will no longer have to worry about the next stay visa and will visit their home country more often. However, the fact that one third of the Moldovan public are convinced that lifting the visa requirement to the Schengen area gives them the right to work in the EU is still a problem. Migration to Russia is likely to decline to a certain extent, both due to the present Ukrainian-Russian crisis and a stricter policy on migrants being adopted by the RF.

In the longer term, further emigration of Moldova's residents will adversely affect the domestic economy. To minimise this negative impact, Moldova must create conditions that will genuinely attract foreign capital accumulated by emigrants abroad. The experts who took part in the Delphi survey were asked what changes should be made to the migration policies of the EU, V4 states and Moldova to maximise the benefits of migration for each of the parties concerned. In their opinion, the EU and the V4 should above all take action to promote circular migration. They also recommended that EU MS should amend their respective legislation so that recognition of Moldovan emigrants' qualifications and education is possible. This would allow them to find jobs in accordance with their qualifications and prevent them from losing competences. The Moldovan experts indicated developing and implementing a policy for sustainable economic growth and ensuring adequate investment climate as key issues for the Moldovan authorities. Further recommendations concerned developing adequate aid programmes targeted at members of those families left at home by emigrants and improving contacts with the diaspora.

7. MIGRATION BETWEEN THE EU, V4 AND EASTERN EUROPE: THE PRESENT SITUATION AND THE POSSIBLE FUTURE. THE PERSPECTIVE OF BELARUS

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Introduction

Any research on migration issues in Belarus faces the challenge of a lack of trustworthy migration data. Meanwhile, although official statistics report that Belarus is a positive net migration country alternative research begs to differ. This research concludes that Belarus has in fact had a negative net migration of up to 150,000 since its independence. The figure of emigration is much larger (almost 700,000) if one counts migrants on the basis of their place of birth, since many Belarus-born people emigrated from Belarus in Soviet times and did not return.

Since the mid-1990s, migration flows have been modest. However, despite the rather low migration propensity of Belarusians, even moderate volumes of permanent out-migration (a few thousand people per year), coupled with a constant natural population loss (from 10.2 million in 1993 to 9.5 million in 2013) and an increase in the demographic pressure since 2008, pose a significant challenge for the country. External migration aggravates age distortions and contributes to the loss of human capital, since emigrants from Belarus are, on average, younger and better educated, while immigrants are older, with a larger proportion of people past working age and less-skilled. Temporary labour migration, which increased after the domestic 2011 macroeconomic crisis, has created a deficit of specialists in some economic sectors but has eased unemployment and provides remittances from the migrants to their communities.

While some states such as the US or Germany have preserved their status as important destination countries for Belarusians since the country's independence, some others, including neighbouring Russia and Poland, have significantly increased their migration attractiveness for Belarusians during the last decade. Furthermore, both Poland and in particular Russia have recently simplified procedures for obtaining their citizenship for some categories of Belarusians. In the case of Poland, the holders of the Card of the Pole are meant to acquire a permanent residence permit and Polish citizenship within three years. Belarusians whose ancestors used to reside on present-day Russian

territory back in Soviet or even Tsarist times are able to apply for Russian citizenship and to acquire it within a few months. Since part of the Belarusian population has rather weak national identity and the Belarusian economy is no longer able to produce high GDP growth, Belarus risks losing its valuable human capital to its neighbours.

This chapter focuses on current and future migration trends between Belarus and the European Union as a whole and the Visegrad countries in particular. It aims at presenting the current and future role of the EU/V4 in Belarusian migration plus the impact of possible short-term visa abolition by the EU states. Following the introduction, a section describing the profile of Belarus emigration follows. The third section, “Main determinants of emigration processes”, looks into the importance of the attractiveness of EU countries for potential Belarusian emigrants. The impact of EU visa policy on out-migration from Belarus is also reviewed here. Media and public discourse about emigration is briefly presented in the fourth sub-chapter, followed by the analysis of the challenges, opportunities and risks of further emigration in the fifth. The author’s conclusions close the chapter. This chapter makes use of the results from the two-round Delphi survey on migration trends between Belarus and the EU/V4 carried out by the author in November 2013 - March 2014 among sixteen Belarusian and international migration experts representing academic institutions, NGOs, governmental bodies and international organisations based in Belarus.

Emigration profile of Belarus - a brief description

During the last decade, Belarus has had negative net migration with the Western European countries, USA and Canada but positive external migration balance with the post-Soviet states. Temporary labour migration of Belarusians to the European Union has remained rather limited, while labour migration flows towards Russia have increased.

Official statistics dramatically underestimate the figures for temporary labour migration. They count only those migrants who sign agreements with foreign employers via the official employment agencies. The number of Belarus nationals who undertook this procedure in 2013 reached just 5,715 people¹¹².

¹¹² Е. Прус, *Более 5,7 тыс. человек выехали в 2013 году из Беларуси на работу за границу на основании договоров и контрактов*, БелТА, 04.02.2014 [More than 5.7 thousand individuals left Belarus for work based on agreements and contracts], in Russian, online: <http://>

In fact, an outright majority of Belarusians seeking employment abroad do so without addressing official employment agencies and therefore they are not included in these statistics. Belarusian officials themselves have repeatedly recognized that the actual figure of Belarus' labour migrants in Russia stands at between 100,000 and 300,000¹¹³. Some experts give even larger assessments of migrants – up to 500,000-700,000 – on the Russian labour market, which is largely believed to accumulate 80-90% of all Belarusian labour migrants. Russian official statistics on Belarusian labour migrants are incomplete also, since a considerable share of migrants work without proper registration. The results of the Quarterly Labour Force Surveys (LFS), which were launched in Belarus in early 2012, also considerably underestimate the number of labour migrants – surveyed households reported about 56,000 labour migrants in 2012 and 64,000 in 2013. Half of the labour migrants are aged 20-34, most of them have secondary, specialized secondary or vocational education, and the share of labour migrants with higher education has a tendency to rise (from 9,5% of in 2012 to 13% in 2013), the aggregated annual LFS results show¹¹⁴.

The specifics of the migration accounting likewise results in underestimation of the volume of permanent out-migration. The National Statistics Committee only accounts for those individuals who report their intended departure (i.e. with the intention of staying abroad for a period longer than one year) and subsequently register at Belarusian consulates abroad. As long as many migrants are reluctant to communicate their intention of moving abroad to relevant official bodies, these individuals are not included in the statistics. Distorted official statistics on the basis of poor migration accounting have been replicated in many publications made under the aegis of state academic institutions. Furthermore, dubious conclusions regarding the external migration statistics make their way into state policy documents on migration and reinforce an erroneous official discourse about the positive net migration that Belarus has allegedly enjoyed since its independence in 1991. For instance, the National Programme on the Demographic Security of the Republic of Belarus (2011 – 2015)

www.belta.by/ru/all_news/society/Bolee-57-tys-chelovek-vyexali-v-2013-godu-iz-Belarusi-na-rabotu-za-granitsu-na-osnovanii-dogovorov-i-kontraktov_i_658906.html

¹¹³ E.g. in 2006 the Head of the Ministry of Interior's Migration and Citizenship Department gave a number of 150,000-300,000 labour migrants, online: <http://www.newsru.com/world/09oct2006/migrant.html>

¹¹⁴ The LFS results have not been made public despite the initial promise of the Belarusian authorities. However, partial LFS results for the years 2012/13 were presented by the National Statistical Committee to the author's request for the purposes of this study.

defines the goal of “improving the net migration rate to 60,000”, which is absolutely unrealistic.

A number of alternative assessments (including by the UN Population Division) and estimates refute these claims. One recent study, employing census data for 1989, 1999 and 2009 and data on the natural movement of the population, shows that Belarus, since its independence up to 2010, has had a negative net migration of about 130,000 people¹¹⁵. Estimates based on statistical data from the main receiving countries¹¹⁶ corroborate this conclusion.

Asked to list the top destination countries, all the experts surveyed in Belarus under the Delphi research on migration trends between the EU/V4 and Eastern Europe considered Russia to be in first place. The Delphi experts assessed the current migration stock of Belarusians in Russia at 542,000, with a 167,000-strong standard deviation (as of February 2014). Indeed, according to the Russia’s Federal Migration Service, as of March 2014, 395,000 Belarusian nationals resided in Russia¹¹⁷. This figure does not include an unknown number of temporary labour migrants who work without registration. The next most important destinations states were listed in the following order: Poland, the USA, Germany, Ukraine and the Baltic states. Interestingly, the list of top receiving countries conforms to the results of nationwide polls on the migration propensity of Belarusians. Germany, Russia, the USA, and Poland were named as the most attractive for either temporary labour migration or permanent emigration in national surveys measuring migration intentions¹¹⁸.

The experts who took part in the Delphi survey assessed the overall number of Belarusian migrants in the EU as a whole at around 150,000 with a 70,000-strong standard deviation (as of February 2014). At the same time,

¹¹⁵ V. Zagorets, I. Zagorets, *Methodology of Determining the Extent and Results of External Migration of Population of the Republic of Belarus*, *Journal of International Law and International Relations* 2011, in Russian.

¹¹⁶ A. Yeliseyev, Big Statistical Lie, BISS-Blitz, 25.03.2013, in Russian, online: <http://belinstitute.eu/ru/node/818>; A. Yeliseyev, *In 2013 population of Belarus increased merely on paper*, 11.02.2014, in Russian, online: <http://belinstitute.eu/ru/node/1806>

¹¹⁷ Statistical data in relation to the foreigners residing on the territory of the Russian Federation [in Russian], Russia’s Federal Migration Service, in Russian, online: <http://www.fms.gov.ru/about/statistics/foreign/details/54891/>

¹¹⁸ V. Zhakevich, *Migration intentions of the population of the Republic of Belarus: sociological analysis*, PhD thesis, Minsk 2009, in Russian, pp. 60-64.

the number of Belarusian migrants in the V4 countries was assessed at 70,000, with quite a large deviation in views (37,000). The assessment of the Belarusian migrant stock in the EU given by the Delphi experts seems to be an exaggeration, as migration data of the receiving countries show.

There is a consensus among the Delphi experts that most migrants of Belarusian origin reside abroad and perform their economic activities legally. On average, the Delphi experts surveyed agree that the share of regular migrants among the total number of Belarusian residents in the top receiving countries exceeds 80%.

At the end of 2013, 11,159 Belarusian nationals were residing under different types of status (permanent or temporary residence permits) in Poland (data from Polish Office for Foreigners). Under the simplified temporary employment scheme, which does not require a work permit, 5,194 permissions issued to Belarusians were registered in 2013. As for the work permits, 2,004 Belarusians were entitled to them in 2013, mostly in the transport and construction sectors (data from Polish Ministry of Labour and Social Policy). Furthermore, about 55,000 of the Cards of the Pole were issued in Belarus by the end of 2013. The Card of the Pole, *inter alia*, authorizes its holder to seek employment in Poland without a work permit, to carry out economic activity in Poland on the same basis as Polish citizens and, since May 2014, to obtain a permanent residence permit easily. Some Belarusian holders of the Card, who live permanently or temporarily in Poland on national long-term visas, may not be accounted for in the official Polish statistics on employment of foreign nationals.

Recently, Poland has also considerably eased access to its higher education system for Belarusians (at present, about 3,000 Belarusian students study at Polish universities). Firstly, the holders of the Card of the Pole are entitled to the same rights as Polish nationals when entering a higher education institution (including stipends) or applying for a job. Moreover, Poland has a number of scholarship programs for students who come from Eastern European states, including the Kalinowski program for those Belarusian students who cannot enter universities in Belarus or continue their studies because of their pro-democracy activity.

According to Eurostat data, the number of Belarusians residing in Hungary and Slovakia stands at approximately 200 in each of these two V4 countries. Indeed, past research shows that legal immigration of Belarusian nationals,

including for temporary jobs, into these two V4 states is negligible. At present, about 4,000 Belarusians legally reside in Czechia. As for the rest of the EU states outside the V4, they report about 60,000 Belarusians with residence permits. According to Eurostat, about 20,000 Belarusians reside in Germany. The number of Belarusian nationals residing in Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia are comparatively low and do not exceed 2,000-4,000 for any of three Baltic states. However, the numbers of Belarus-born residents in those states are rather large and are explained by large emigration flows during Soviet times. At present they either have the nationality of a destination state, or at least non-citizen passports (as individuals who have not naturalized they are given the same rights as Latvian or Estonian citizens except the usual passport entitlement and entitlement to vote or to hold a public office).

There are some assertions as to the profile of Belarusian residents in the EU that most experts surveyed under the Delphi research agree upon: migrants are young, many of them work in the service sector but also in construction, household and agriculture. Less frequent are responses that Belarusian residents in the EU work as highly qualified specialists (engineers, IT specialists etc.), or are involved in manually demanding jobs. In fact, these experts' views are supported, at least to some extent (since data on the migration profile of Belarus are rather scarce), by evidence presented in earlier opinion polls and empirical data on the profile of emigrants collected by the National Statistical Committee via the Ministry of Interior. The latter shows that most Belarusian emigrants are in their most active reproductive and working years. A past research project¹¹⁹ established that Belarusian migrants working in Poland can be roughly divided into two categories. The first category consists of those immigrants who are highly qualified. Immigrants in the larger second category seek jobs which require no specific qualifications, such as agriculture or household services¹²⁰.

Most of the surveyed Delphi experts (12 out of 16) agree that labour migration increased as a result of the 2011 financial crisis and, to a lesser extent, the 2009 ruble devaluation. Experts also agree that circular migration increased and that Russia remained the dominant destination, while none specified that labour migration increased to the EU in the period under review. Demographic

¹¹⁹ R. Krčmář, O. Ozernaya (eds.), *The situation of migrants from Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine on the Labour Markets of Latvia, Lithuania, Hungary, Poland and the Slovak Republic. Final Report*, European Commission, 2009, pp. 41-42.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*

patterns of migrants remained untouched, according to most (10) of the experts. Money transfers increased *inter alia* thanks to migrants employed on the Russian market.

Experts who took part in the Delphi survey also noted that female migration is important, along with male migration. In the emigration outflows captured by the official statistics, the share of women is 52-53%. According to Eurostat data, in 2009 women constituted 69% of Belarusian residents in Germany and 80% of all registered Belarusian migrants in Italy. At the same time, males prevail in temporary labour migration, especially to Russia and the Baltic states¹²¹.

Main determinants of emigration processes

There is very strong economic and political cooperation between Belarus and Russia. Border controls between those two countries were removed back in 1996. The Treaty on Granting Equal Rights to Citizens of 1998 established identical rights for the citizens of Belarus and Russia in the labour relations. The Eurasian Economic Community agreement adopted in 2010 allows Belarusians to work in Russia or Kazakhstan without work permits. Coupled with the geographical proximity of Russia, the ease of travel, the absence of language barriers, and significantly higher wages in Russia, all of this makes its Eastern neighbour an especially attractive option for many Belarusians. The legal framework of Eurasian integration, which aims at establishing a single Eurasian labour market, may complicate Belarusian efforts to prevent larger temporary labour migration to Russia. Since Russia toughened the access to its labour market to certain categories of Ukrainian labour migrants by introducing a 90 days in 180-day period rule in 2014, Belarusians have found themselves in an even more favourable position on the Russian labour market in comparison to Ukrainians.

According to the Delphi experts surveyed, the strongest migration *pull* factors are higher wages and generally high living standards in destination countries and the presence of migration networks, i.e. residing/employed relatives or close friends, or at least the existence of a strong group of compatriots in a destination country. It should be noted that formal organizations created by Belarusian migrants in the EU are either inoperative or are still at an early stage of development and are unable to provide lasting support for their compatriots.

¹²¹ A. Bobrova, L. Shakhotska, G. Shymanovich, *Social impact of emigration and rural-urban migration in Central and Eastern Europe. Final country report, Belarus*, 2012, pp. 10-11.

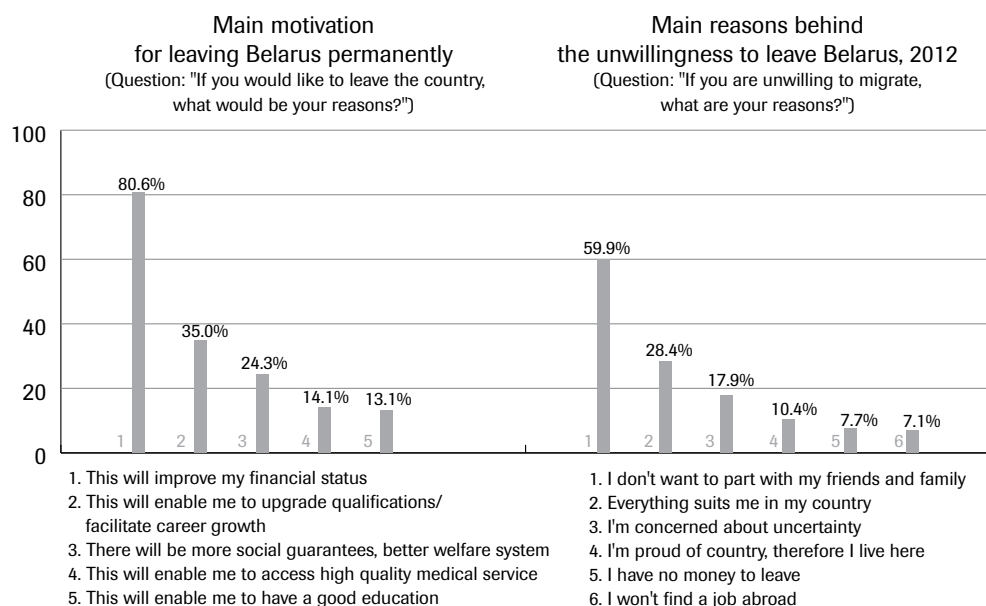
Associations formed by Belarusian diaspora abroad mostly concentrate on the promotion of cultural traditions rather than providing recent migrants with necessary information or material support¹²². Informal networks facilitate the migration of Belarusians to some extent. However, there is a deficit of research in this field.

In addition to higher wages in a foreign country, geographic proximity, low travel costs and the easiness of finding work in a destination country were determined to be important *pull* factors. Delphi experts believe that the linguistic and cultural proximity of Belarus to V4 states is important but should not be overestimated, since the most attractive factor for labour migrants is economic-based (i.e. high wages and ease of finding employment) and some investment in learning a local language is still needed. Respondents were rather skeptical in their assessments regarding the attractiveness of visa and migration policy of the V4.

A number of previous research studies and polls have shown that economic factors dominate in the decision of Belarusian nationals to migrate. According to the nationwide opinion poll (conducted in December 2012 – January 2013) commissioned by the Belarusian Institute for Strategic Studies, a desire to improve financial status appeared to be the main motivation for leaving Belarus permanently (80.6% of those who intended to emigrate). An opportunity to upgrade qualification/facilitate career growth as a motivation factor was chosen by 35% of respondents. Better welfare systems were selected by 24.3%, while access to high quality medical services received 14.1% and the opportunity of obtaining a good education was chosen by 13.1%. At the same time, the dominant reason why Belarusians are not willing to migrate is reluctance to part with family and friends (59.9%). Still, it should be noted that surveys on migration intentions should be treated with a good degree of caution since they primarily indicate the respondents' assessment of economic/political etc. situation in a given country, and only partially indicate their real intentions and motivations to migrate.

¹²² P. Kaźmierkiewicz (eds.), *The situation of migrants from Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine on the Labour Markets of Latvia, Lithuania, Hungary, Poland and the Slovak Republic. Regional Report*, European Commission 2009, p. 86.

Figure 34. Main motivations for leaving Belarus/unwillingness to leave the country, according to the results of the 2012/13 national poll



Source: Belarusian Institute of Strategic Studies 2013

Differences in the economic wellbeing of the population seem to be an important explanatory factor for why labour migration to the EU has been less popular among Belarusians, in comparison to Ukrainians and Moldovans. In terms of GDP *per capita* based on purchasing power parity (PPP), which reflects differences in incomes among the countries, Belarus apparently ranks higher than Ukraine or Moldova. According to the World Bank, the GDP *per capita* in Belarus in 2012 was 15,300 international dollars, while the equivalent indicator for Ukraine and Moldova stood at 7,300 international dollars and 3,400 international dollars respectively. As for the average monthly salaries in Poland and Russia in the sectors most popular among migrants (construction, transport, trade, repairs of motor vehicles, manufacturing, agriculture), they exceed those in Belarus by two to three times.

The 2008-2010 world financial crisis did not result in economic stagnation in Belarus and the dynamics of GDP growth remained positive. Apart from the 20% ruble devaluation in early 2009, no dramatic worsening of the economic situation for the general population took place. However, as a result of loose macroeconomic policies in previous years when economic growth in the country was instigated by domestic demand, at the very same time as Belarusian goods found themselves less competitive on foreign markets, Belarus was hit by a severe macroeconomic crisis later, in 2011. Then the annual

inflation rate reached 109% and the Belarusian ruble devaluated by around 65% in 2011.

Some peculiarities of Belarusian labour market rigidity which influence migration trends bear mentioning. Firstly, it has been state policy to ensure the highest level of employment possible (the share of employment in the public or semi-public sector is almost 70%, comparable to the share of GDP produced by the public sector). Sometimes it results in the preservation of outdated and economically unjustified jobs. Labour migration is to some extent reduced by the availability of employment at home. However, such redistributive economic policy contributes to the replacement of highly-qualified workers by the less qualified. As a result, it enhances the out-migration of highly-skilled workers. Secondly, Belarus operates a mandatory placement scheme for graduates. This means that students who graduate from state universities where the tuition for their study was paid by the state have to work for an employer assigned by the state for two years following graduation. Those who refuse to take an assigned job, have to repay a large sum of money for having had their studies subsidized by the state. Often graduates are assigned to unsatisfactory low-paid jobs in rural areas and small towns. This mechanism, which limits labour mobility for young people, discourages some graduates from seeking work abroad, since the compensation to the state in this case is too high.

There is great divergence in Delphi experts' views concerning state emigration policy over recent years. With two respondents uncertain, the remaining respondents were divided equally (seven in each of two groups) over the question whether Belarusian emigration policy has changed. We are of the opinion that the group of experts who point to a harshening of emigration policy is closer to the truth. Instead of creating the required economic incentives, the authorities have resorted to an arguably illegal mechanism of preventing an outflow of certain labour market professionals abroad. The ordinance No. 9 "On additional measures to develop the woodworking industry" adopted in December 2012 requires all those employed in the woodworking sector to sign fixed-term labour contracts which shall subsequently be prolonged by the maximum possible period. Employees cannot quit a job without the employer's consent and those released for performing their duties improperly have to repay all of their monthly bonuses, which may form a significant part of their salary. The authorities have also recently voiced the suggestion that families of labour migrants should pay the entire cost of housing services (rather than a reduced sum subsidized by the state); however, no law has so far been adopted to address this idea. Additionally, deliberations among state agencies are in

progress over a law that would impose tax on the unemployed who are not officially registered at state employment agencies. The aim of this legal initiative is to tax individuals who either work illegally abroad or work informally in the domestic sector without paying taxes and social allowances. Such policy aimed at discouraging migration by administrative means certainly does not hamper emigrants with a genuine desire to leave the country, particularly in the case of settlement migration. However, it may reduce temporary labour migration, or at least discourage migrants from disclosing their work abroad to the authorities which makes migration statistics even more far from real picture.

In fact, paltry unemployment benefits in Belarus (about EUR 10 per month, which is 15% of the state poverty level) discourage unemployed individuals from registering with state employment agencies. As long as the national legislation considers as “unemployed” those working age citizens who are registered with the state employment agency, the authorities can use statistical sleight of hand, declaring that the official unemployment rate in Belarus is only about 0.5%. Meager unemployment benefits in Belarus and higher wages in neighboring Russia lead to a shortfall in some professionals on the Belarusian labour market, mostly in construction, transportation, communal services and heat and power engineering. Since effective emigration policy requires substantial financial means which are beyond the capabilities of the Belarusian budget, we expect further attempts from the authorities to erect barriers for potential emigrants to the EU, which, nevertheless, will only be marginally successful.

There is no significantly larger propensity to emigrate among the ethnic minorities, since they are rather well integrated into society. However, liberalization of access to the Polish labour market creates incentives for Polish minority to undertake temporary or permanent emigration to Poland.

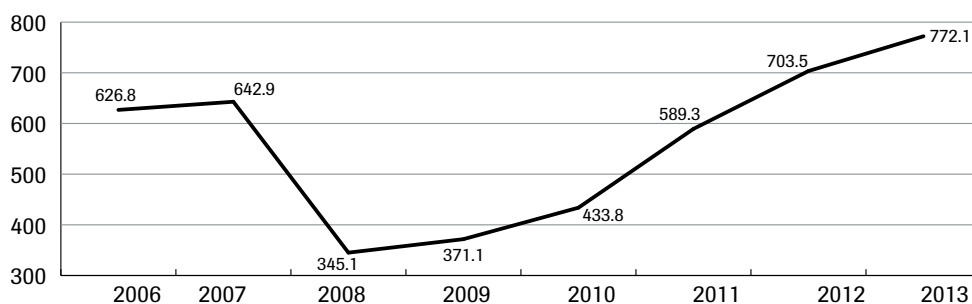
There is no clear link between emigration from Belarus and political and visa relationships between the EU and Belarus. It should be emphasized, however, that Belarus lags behind all other EaP countries in terms of progress towards visa liberalization with the EU. Until 2010, EU institutions linked visa facilitation with Belarus with progress in political reforms and human rights and therefore the EU considered such negotiations premature. This approach was eventually changed and in June 2011 the European Commission sent Belarus an invitation to start negotiations on visa facilitation and readmission. However, by that stage the situation had changed completely: now it was the Belarusian authorities who considered any progress on the visa issue premature, referring to the EU's sanctions policy and suspension of top-level contacts. After

a two and a half year delay, at the EaP Summit in Vilnius in late November 2013, the head of the Belarus MFA, Uladzimir Makiej, finally declared Belarus's interest in proceeding with the visa facilitation and readmission negotiations, and these officially started in early 2014. There is good reason to believe that the agreements will come into force no later than the first half of 2015.

The Belarusian authorities have also been delaying the launch of local border traffic agreements with Lithuania and Poland, which could significantly enhance the mobility of border residents. This is explained by a combination of political and economic considerations. Firstly, Belarus's relations with Lithuania and Poland cooled as a result of the latter's proactive position concerning the introduction of EU sanctions and the policy of democratization towards Belarus. Secondly, increase in purchases of consumer goods in the EU (primarily in Vilnius, Lithuania and Bialystok, Poland) would further aggravate the negative balance of payments problem. Finally, a greater awareness among Belarusians of their western neighbours' living standards could enhance pro-European sentiments within society.

Despite sluggish progress towards visa facilitation with the EU, Belarus has been doing rather well in practical terms of visa statistics. Belarus occupies fourth place in the world for absolute numbers of uniform Schengen visas received, after Russia, Ukraine, and China. Since Serbia and Montenegro were designated to the list of countries with visa-free access in 2009, Belarus became the leading country among some 140 states with visa regimes with the EU according to Schengen visas issued *per capita*. In 2013, about 772,000 uniform Schengen visas were issued in Belarus, or about 80 visas per 1000 inhabitants.

Figure 35. Number of short-term visas issued by the consulates of the EU MS in Belarus in 2006-2013 (in thousands)



Visas issued by the consulates of Romania, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Great Britain and Ireland are not included

Source: Author's compilation on the basis of the European Visa Database, <http://www.mogensholth.dk/evd/>

Belarus also enjoys in EU consulates one of the lowest refusal rates in the world (0.5%). This means that potential irregular migrants do not have difficulties in preparing a proper set of supporting documents in order to enter the Schengen area legally on a valid visa with the aim of overstaying it. There are good reasons to believe that the existing visa regime between the EU and Belarus does not serve as an effective barrier to irregular migration. It is instead more of an obstacle for *bona fide* travelers. Variations in the numbers of issued visas in Belarus during the last decade have not resulted in any significant changes in permanent or labour migration patterns of Belarusians in the EU *per se*. The increase in temporary labour migrants and permanent settlers in Poland over recent years was largely a result of the introduction of changes in Polish national legislation which facilitate employment of temporary workers and ease labour market access for foreign graduates and holders of the Card of the Pole. Thus, the visa regime has not had an apparent impact on either permanent or labour out-migration trends from Belarus to the EU.

Media and public discourse on migration

Public discourse on migration is mostly influenced by the official governmental position. Opposition political parties are not represented in either the legislative or executive branch of power, due to the falsification of elections. No genuine debates about migration issues take place in parliament, which is de facto nominated by the executive. Driven out from the actual political process for more than a decade, alternative political views do not get genuine circulation in the public sphere, as the media are under substantial governmental control. This situation makes true political and societal discussion of the emigration issues largely absent.

An important public discourse being pursued by the Belarusian authorities and state academic institutions is that Belarus has allegedly enjoyed positive net migration since 1991. Despite the fact that state institutions occasionally use the figure of 3.5 million Belarusians and descendants living abroad and that they formally recognize the large demographic and financial potential which the diaspora offers the country, state diaspora policy is fragmented, incoherent and contradictory. After a long period of consultations between the state institutions, the draft law on the diaspora (“On Belarusians living abroad”) was introduced to parliament in August 2013. It is expected to be enacted some time in 2014. Although the draft law sets a legal framework for cooperation with the diaspora, it does not contain specific commitments of the state in this area and does not take into account views expressed by

diaspora organizations (e.g. on cheaper or free Belarusian visas for the diaspora representatives).

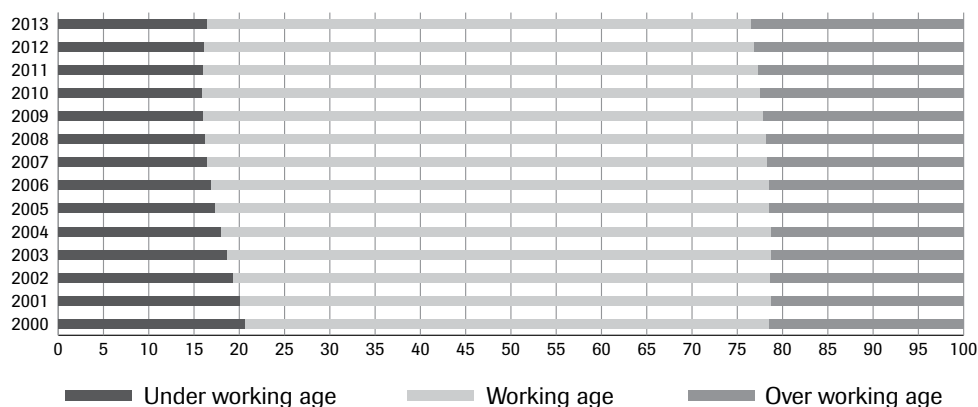
Public attitude towards foreign migrants is somewhat neutral. A recent sociological survey shows that half of the Belarusian youth is indifferent towards immigrants, and that 15% and 35% have a negative or positive attitude respectively towards migrants¹²³. Increased cooperation of Belarus with China and bilateral plans to set-up a joint industrial park in the vicinity of Minsk provoked speculation in sections of the mass media that Belarus intends to issue worker visas to tens of thousands of Chinese nationals. Although this provoked some concern among the general public, this information was later officially refuted. There are no studies that would investigate in detail the attitude of Belarusian society towards the phenomenon of migration as such. Public concern over the specifics of the existing visa regime between the EU and Belarus is worth noting. Opinions that the visa procedures are excessive, overly expensive and time-consuming (and at times even humiliating) are rather wide-spread. Incomprehension as to why the EU does not facilitate visa procedures decisively or even remove the visa regime unilaterally persists among the general public, which undermines the EU's public image among part of the Belarusian population.

Prognosis of emigration – a brief summary

Most experts surveyed under the Delphi research (13 out of 16) believe that in the next ten years emigration flows from Belarus will increase, at least slightly. In relative terms (the share of the emigrants to the whole population), this will apparently matter in terms of the demographic development of the country. In absolute terms, however, this will not represent a sizeable increase. Population decline (it fell from 10.2 million in 1993 to 9.5 million in 2013) and population ageing mean that even in the case where out-migration increases (in relative terms), the absolute numbers of migrants will likely remain unchanged or at least they are not likely to increase significantly. As shown in the figure below, the share of people under working age in the total population fell from 20.6% in 2000 to 16.4% in 2013, while the share of those above working age is rising, from 21.5% to 23.5% for the period under review. It is estimated that between 2011 and 2020, nearly 1.5 million people will drop out of the working age population. The population is ageing so emigration matters over a long-term perspective.

¹²³ S. Zamogilnyj, N. Dikun, *Sociological aspects of attitude towards migrants among Russian and Belarusian youth*, *Sovremennyje problemy nauki i obrazovania*, in Russian, №1, 2012, online: <http://www.science-education.ru/101-5368>, in Russian.

Figure 36. Share of main age groups in total population of Belarus, 2000-2012 (beginning of year; %)



Source: Belarusian National Statistical Committee

Most surveyed Delphi experts predict that migrants’ economic performance will change, partly as a result of the move towards more productive sectors. Although most experts agree that more highly qualified Belarusians would leave the country, there is no consensus as to the hypothetical changes in state emigration policy. Ten experts believe that it will change, while the remaining six respondents tend to disagree. Five specialists surveyed argue that the state would more actively promote return migration, another two point to additional artificial barriers that the state would erect to prevent larger emigration. We believe that the authorities will try to impose barriers to emigration but they will largely be ineffective and will hardly stem the outflow of migrants. Taking into account the specifics of the Belarusian labour market (low return on education), the out-migration of especially highly-qualified specialists will likely keep increasing, while overall out-migration volumes in absolute numbers will likely remain as they are at present, or will increase insignificantly.

Most of the Delphi experts foresee a moderate outflow of labour migrants (14 experts), regularization of already present irregular migrants (13) and more long-term settlement migration (12) after EU short-term visas are abolished. Another highly expected outcome is an increase in various forms of tourism and business contacts (5). As shown earlier, the existing visa-regime with the EU, taking into account a meager refusal rate, does not prevent potential Belarusian irregular migrants from entering the EU. However, visa regime abolition may indeed be viewed by some as providing a more favourable momentum for trying their luck on foreign labour markets. Asked how big the outflow of migrants from Belarus would be if the European Union lifted restrictions on access to the labour market for the nationals of Belarus (to capture the main

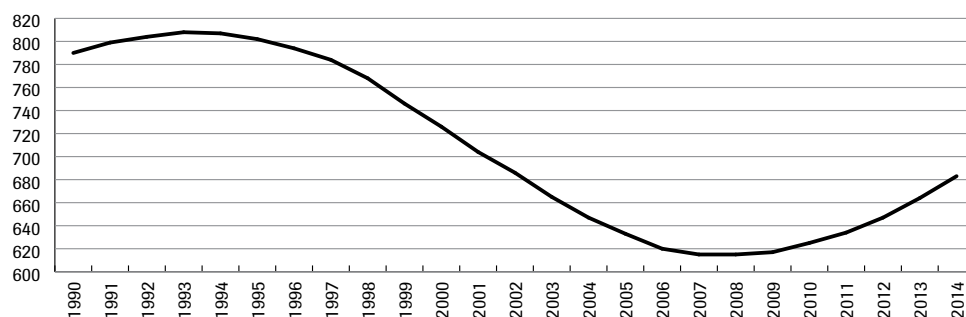
determinants of emigration since opening the EU labour market for Belarusians will not likely happen soon), all experts expected either a higher (11), or much higher (5) outflow to take place within three years after restrictions are abolished.

The experts agree that abolition of the visa regime for short-term stay between Belarus and the EU is not a near-term perspective in any case. Asked when visa-regime between the EU and Belarus would be removed, most of the Belarusian experts surveyed under the Delphi research on migration trends (11) believed this may become possible in 7-10 years, while only four respondents considered this feasible within a shorter perspective of 4-6 years. At the same time, one of the experts is of the view that short-term travel will not be visa-free even within a ten year period. As for the prospects of visa-free regime between the EU and Ukraine Belarusian experts are much more optimistic.

Challenges, opportunities and risks of further emigration

The consequences associated with future migration trends should be viewed in the context of demographic tendencies and the particulars of the economics of Belarus. Despite the sharp decrease in population since the mid-1990s, the high fertility rate of 1984-1988 and a consequent steep drop in births in the early 1990s secured a period of demographic dividend in Belarus, associated with the increasing share of population of working age up until 2008. Since 2009, the trend reversed and the share of labour resources in total population started declining year after year. Currently, the smaller cohorts born in the early 1990s are entering childbearing age. Coupled with the negative net migration, population ageing and the declining working age population makes labour migration a potentially acute problem for Belarusian society and for the Belarusian economy.

Figure 37. The number of persons in non-working ages per 1000 working-age population (age dependency ratio) in Belarus in 1990-2014 (beginning of a year)



Source: Compiled by the author based on the National Statistical Committee of Belarus data

The share of people above working age among immigrants exceeds the share among Belarusian emigrants threefold, according to the official data on permanent departures/arrivals. Taking into account unregistered emigration flows, the ratio is surely even more disadvantageous for Belarus. This aggravates the problem of an ageing Belarusian society and increases the welfare support load of the working population. Furthermore, Belarusian emigrants to the EU are better educated and more economically active than immigrants arriving to Belarus. Among officially registered permanent emigrants in 2000-2010, the proportion of people with higher education was 33%¹²⁴. In the World Bank research report, the 'brain drain' rate for Belarus is estimated at 3.2% for 2000 (3.6% for Ukraine, 1.5% for Russia)¹²⁵. The brain drain will likely increase, as long as economic growth is slowing down and small wage returns on education persist in Belarus. When asked about the negative effects of migration to the EU for Belarus, Delphi experts did indeed specify 'brain drain' and depletion of the labour force, and less so – the break-up of families.

Strong economic growth in Belarus in the 2000s was not a result of increased competitiveness in the national economy following the structural reforms. It was mainly due to a number of temporal and/or exogenous factors, including cheap Russian energy deliveries and an increase in domestic demand stimulated by the growth of incomes. At present, even the remaining external rent from Russia (cheap natural gas, highly profitable sales of oil products, beneficial loans) cannot secure any longer the previous strong economic growth of the Belarusian economy. In 2013, slowing productivity growth, a widening gap between the increase in real wages and labour productivity growth, and lower competitiveness of Belarusian goods on external markets all became evident. This leaves the national economy facing stagnation, at least for the near future.

Changed economic circumstances and negative demographic trends in Belarus necessitate the implementation of effective sweeping reforms to the social security system, education, the labour market, etc. Without much-needed structural reforms and liberalisation of the labour market, Belarus risks seeing a larger outbound migration of highly-qualified individuals to the EU and even larger temporary labour migration of a variety of skills to the Russian market, which would support their families by providing money transfers.

¹²⁴ M. Timoshenko, *Improvement of the regulation system of the labour migration in the Republic of Belarus*, PhD thesis, Homyel 2010, in Russian, p. 56.

¹²⁵ M. Beine, F. Docquier, H. Rapoport, *Measuring International Skilled Migration: New Estimates Controlling for Age of Entry*, World Bank Research Report, 2006, p. 26.

Nevertheless, emigration should not only be viewed in a negative light. There are some advantages that outbound migration provides for Belarus. As for temporary migration, it eases pressure on the domestic labour market, reduces poverty through the transfer of remittances by labour migrants to their families, and allows migrants to acquire additional skills and experience for subsequent use in the home country. Indeed, the Delphi experts see two main positive impacts for Belarus arising from future migration to the EU. These are delivery of remittances and the return of experienced migrants that would contribute to the growth in entrepreneurship. At the same time, almost half of respondents hold the view that increasing migration flows to the EU would not bring any positive impacts for the country. Obviously, they mean that neither remittances nor benefits brought by return migrants would balance the expenses that such outflows bring.

What measures do the Belarusian migration experts suggest on behalf of the V4 countries, the EU as a whole, and the Belarus authorities in order to manage migration flows better and to make migration more beneficial for all sides? Acknowledging that Belarus loses more than it acquires from emigration, experts nevertheless do not view restriction of migration as an easy way out. On the contrary, they believe that the migration policies of the destination countries, the V4 and the EU as a whole should be liberalised, circular migration facilitated, and that EU countries should assist their Eastern neighbours in undertaking economic reforms and developing human capital. Interestingly, experts also point to the need for improved migration statistics for all the state actors.

The Delphi experts recommend that V4 states open the educational system to foreign students, launch additional programs of cultural and scientific exchanges, and demonstrate a friendlier approach towards visa applicants in the V4 consulates abroad. Indeed, Hungary, Slovakia and in particular Czechia are among the most unfriendly consulates in Belarus in terms of the share of multiple visas issued and refusal rates. Experts surveyed for the purposes of this research recommend that Belarusian authorities, in order to make migration more beneficial for all sides, should sign the readmission agreement with the EU (such negotiations are indeed in progress), and create more favorable conditions for remittances transfers via official channels. They should furthermore develop border cooperation *inter alia* by launching local border traffic regimes and establish better coordination between state institutions dealing with migration. The implementation of socioeconomic and democratic reforms in order to secure long-term sustainable economic development was also highly

recommended by the experts as a measure for the Belarusian authorities to undertake.

Conclusions

Since there is a scarcity of migration research in Belarus and migration statistics leave much to be desired, the Delphi-based survey of established migration experts is an important tool for verifying the reliability of past studies. Economic factors are the most important for Belarusians in making their migration decisions. Larger disparities in wages with destination countries seem to be the main *pull* factor of migration for Belarus nationals. Significant differences in GDP *per capita* based on purchasing power parity in Belarus, Ukraine, and Moldova, the larger public sector in Belarus and some specifics of the Belarusian labour market such as mandatory job placement for graduates serve as important explanatory factors as to why Belarusian migrant communities in the EU are significantly less numerous than the ones formed by the Ukrainians or Moldovans.

An important exogenous factor influencing Belarusian migration flows to the V4 countries and the EU as a whole is the state of Russia's economy and political relations between Belarus and Russia. At present, Russia is the predominantly preferred destination country for Belarusian labour migrants for a number of reasons, including institutional (equal rights on Russia's labour market) and economic (wage differentials). Should the Russian economy experience a long stagnation period or – very unlikely but hypothetically possible – political relations between Belarus and Russia worsen along with a disruption of the existing bilateral and Eurasian migration agreements, some of the Belarusian migrants will likely reorient towards the West. At present, the cost-benefit balance for Belarusian temporary labour migrants is in favour of Russia rather than the EU labour market. Difficulties in access to the labour markets of the V4 states (with the notable exception of Poland) discourage Belarusian immigration to the respective countries. The lack of developed social networks in the EU and language barriers is further explanatory factor.

The most important recent changes in out-migration trends of Belarusians to the EU have brought Polish legal initiatives. Poland has liberalized labour market admission rules in order to attract temporary labour migration. Furthermore, it implements the system of scholarships to attract Belarusian students and increasingly uses the Card of the Pole as an instrument for attracting long-term migrants. Taking into account the widening gap in GDP *per capita*

in Poland's favour, one can expect that permanent and temporary migration flows of Belarusians to Poland will continue growing. At the same time, migration flows between Belarus, from the one side, and Slovakia, the Czechia and Hungary, on the other, are marginal and will likely remain so in the absence of meaningful liberalisation of migration rules for Belarusians akin to Poland. In addition to making access to their labour markets easier, the V4 states could conduct a more active recruiting policy in Belarus in order to attract migrant workers.

The visa regime between the EU and Belarus seems to be more of an obstacle for *bona fide* travelers rather than a barrier for potential migrants willing to reach the EU labour market. This is very well illustrated in the case of Belarus, as it has the world largest numbers of Schengen visas *per capita* issued and one of the world lowest EU visas' refusal rates. A constant increase in the numbers of Schengen visas throughout recent years have not resulted in an increase of either illegal labour migrants or permanent Belarusian settlers within the EU *per se*. An increase in the numbers of Belarusian immigrants to Poland and some other EU countries is mostly associated with the specifics of respective national legislative measures, rather than by the consequences of the Schengen *acquis*. Most of the experts argue that the visa-regime between the EU and Belarus is likely to be removed no earlier than 7-10 years time. Although the removal of the visa regime does not imply an open labour market, experts believe that visa regime abolition would likely provoke more attempts by Belarusians to place themselves on the EU labour market.

However, as the Belarus population declines and the share of the working age population has been falling constantly since the beginning of 2008, the number of emigrants in absolute terms will not likely grow significantly. Taking into consideration the existence of rather rigid labour market reforms, the low return on education and increasing demographic pressure as a result of the ageing population, the propensity to emigrate, especially among highly qualified Belarusian specialists, will likely increase.

Further out-migration, even if it is only larger in relative not absolute terms, will bring acute challenges for the national economy. Greater emigration among highly qualified experts will deplete the human capital of Belarus necessary for facilitating the much-needed modernisation of the country. Enduring labour migration flows, mostly to Russia, will further aggravate the deficit of specialists across a number of economic sectors. However, Delphi experts do not see a restrictive emigration policy to be an effective countermeasure.

In contrast, they recommend that the Belarusian authorities liberalise their migration policy and suggest that the EU assist the country in carrying out economic reforms and developing human capital, including by opening EU countries' educational systems to Belarusian students and by developing trans-border cooperation.

PART III

CRITICAL OBSERVATIONS ON VISAS AND MIGRATION BETWEEN EU/V4 AND EASTERN EUROPE

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Introduction

This chapter aims to conclude earlier deliberations and to analyse them through the prism of policy and public opinion in the EU. Previous chapters attempted to present a detailed analysis of migration patterns and forecasts for future emigration from Ukraine, Moldova and Belarus to the EU/V4 based on: the Delphi forecast survey (experts panel), the econometric model projections as well as analysis of empirical data from previous instances of visa abolition between the EU and its neighbours in Central-Eastern Europe and the Balkans. Particular attention has been paid to the investigation of a possible nexus between visa policy and migration, specifically between the functioning of the short-term visas regime and migration. The application of these research instruments allowed for the construction of some qualitative and quantitative forecasts. However, possible fulfillment of those scenarios is also subject to non-predictable and often subjective factors such as the direction of EU policy on visa liberalisation, European attitudes toward immigration, especially from EaP states, and the general evolution of EU migration policy. Moreover, even the best tailored forecast cannot predict how political crises, like the recent one in Ukraine, may influence further migration dynamics.

The following chapter opens with some critical observations on the results, obtained over the course of the project. By focusing on the short-term dynamics of the outflows from Eastern Europe, two types of migratory movements are identified: the Moldovan flow, which is not expected to represent a significant quantitative change, and the Ukrainian one, which on account of its possible volume and impact on several EU MS, could represent a policy challenge. The first section concludes with the discussion of the Delphi results for the Visegrad countries on the level of support and rationale for welcoming migration from Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine. The rest of the chapter places the project results in the current context of wider societal attitudes and policy directions within the EU. It notes the persistent concern over the influx of third-country nationals, identifying the paradox that in general the countries on the EU's southern and eastern rim are less preoccupied with immigration than are the core Member States. Further, it appears that the EU MS distinguish between legal, high-skilled immigration, which is viewed as an opportunity and irregular, unskilled labour migration, which is regarded as a threat. Consideration is then given to attitudes in the new EU MS, where, on the one hand, in line with the Delphi research, migrants are still "invisible" to society and evoke little concern but, on the other hand, the size of the existing migrant stock

is seriously overestimated. The third section considers two aspects of EU visa and migration policies, important from the viewpoint of Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova: the link between EU visa policy and security, and the broader political significance of visa liberalisation as an instrument of conditionality in relations with the EU's neighbors. This is followed by a short section with conclusions.

Critical observations on the project's results

Current migrant stock

The Delphi results collected in the three countries of migrants' origin suggest that the total stock of labour migrants from Ukraine in the EU (as of February 2014) stands at around 1.1 million people while the figures for Belarusians and Moldovans are around 150,000 and 240,000, respectively. These estimates are basically in line with earlier research. However, it should be noted that so far nobody has attempted to estimate the number of Belarusian migrants in the EU and thus the corresponding result obtained from the project cannot be confirmed. It should also be emphasized that the Delphi method yields only general estimates, not precise numbers.

According to Delphi experts' estimates, the EU accounts for less than half of the labour migrants from Moldova and Ukraine and around one-fifth of the stock of Belarusian migrants. The fact that Russia remains the top destination reflects not just the absence of a visa-free regime with those three states but foremost – facilitated access to the labour market (in particular for the Belarusians), and strong economic, social and cultural ties with the FSU states. Visegrad countries account for nearly half of all the Belarusian labour migrants in the EU and a clear majority of Ukrainian migrants working in the EU. In turn, none of the Visegrad states attract significant numbers of Moldovans who are drawn to southern European countries.

Future scenarios

The V4 Delphi experts agree that the inflows from the three neighbouring countries to their respective states will either moderately increase or remain stable over the next ten years. The same opinions were shared by the experts from Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova. On the one hand, a massive influx of EaP migrants flooding EU countries cannot be expected but, on the other hand, no decrease is highly likely either.

The econometric forecasting model for 2008-2050 considers the impact of economic growth in the EU and the three Eastern European countries on future migration flows. The results differ by country. Future flows from Moldova are expected to be rather moderate. In the case of Ukraine, they are likely to increase more visibly, and, in the case of Belarus, they may even remain stable if the economic situation in that country improves.

The case of Moldova appears to vindicate the argument that the migration potential of the country is indeed largely exhausted. Neither of the model scenarios (high, medium and low) forecasts an aggregate rise of over 100,000 people in next ten years, and the possible impact of visa abolition is likely to be temporary and concentrated on the main country of destination within the EU (Italy). The forecast that, under any of the scenarios, the stock of the Moldovan migrants in the EU should stabilise for another decade is in line with the expectations of experts from Visegrad countries who overall predicted a “stable” outlook for the inflow of this migrant group. As the long-term outlook is stable, the impact concentrated and limited, the concern over the impact of visa abolition may be expected to be the lowest with regard to the nationals of the Republic of Moldova. However, as emphasized in the Moldovan country chapter, the political and security crisis in Eastern Europe has also influenced the well-being of Moldovan citizens and may accelerate migration towards the EU.

Ukraine represents another pole as far as the policy impact of the forecasted migration dynamics is concerned. Two scenarios (low and medium) in the econometric model’s forecast of migration into the EU suggest a rather significant increase, ranging over a ten-year perspective by between half a million to a million immigrants (roughly doubling the current figures). From a policy perspective, it is of little consolation that under the medium scenario the stock would fall over time to 1.5 million migrants by 2050, due to the depletion of Ukrainian demographic potential in the long run. However, it should be borne in mind that Eurostat data applied in the model are based on residence permits data. Thus, the increase in Ukrainian migrants stock may indicate the trend to ‘legalisation’ exhibited by Ukrainian migrants, instead of new arrivals and/or issuance of residence permits to new migrants.

The medium forecast for Belarus in the econometric model indicates a possible doubling of the migrant stock but, considering the low base, the figures are not intimidating. The Delphi research in turn suggests moderate increases of labour emigration, accompanied by regularisation of the already residing migrants and a gradual rise in settlement migration. The top EU destination,

Poland, which is an avid supporter of this motion, would most likely receive a significant share of the influx. Belarus is, however, in the long run sensitive to a range of factors which, in the optimistic scenario, could keep the migrant stock stable, but, given a pessimistic turn of events, could produce a steep rise in migration to the EU.

The econometric analyses for Belarus and Ukraine have additional policy significance. In the cases of these two countries, changes in the economic and political environment could dramatically alter the migration flows. While stabilisation could bring about a decline in the volume of migration from these countries to the EU in the medium- to long-term, the deterioration of the internal situation is likely to fuel a steady rise in migratory movements bound for the EU. This forecast accords with the assessments made by experts in the countries of origin and the V4 destinations of the Belarusian and Ukrainian migrants.

Although the project did not consider the impact of the Ukrainian crisis on the scale and directions of migrant flows from Eastern Europe, it is possible to suppose that the combination of *push* and *pull* factors is going to affect the three countries of migrants' origin differently. On the one hand, the assertive policies promoting acquisition of Russian citizenship may strengthen the domination of Russia as the unrivalled pole of attraction for Belarusians, residents of southeastern regions of Ukraine, and Moldovan Transnistria. On the other hand, the citizens of Moldova and residents of western and central Ukraine are expected to continue to be drawn to the traditional destinations within the EU.

Two more quantitative aspects of possible future emigration from Eastern Europe should be also emphasised. Firstly, long-term political instability in Ukraine alongside with the deterioration of the economic situation in the whole region may stimulate family reunification processes by migrants' family members. Moreover, the attraction of the EU universities among young people in the region may grow.

Impact of abolition of EU short-term visas on the volume of migration

Delphi research indicates that the current EU visa regime is generally viewed by EaP states as a factor hampering the movement of *bona fide* travelers. Overall, the majority of surveyed EaP experts believe that the bulk of those interested in the EU as a destination have already migrated for the purpose of employment. The view is relatively similar in V4 states,

although experts from those states reiterate that the introduction of a visa-free regime for Eastern European citizens may result in the growth of undeclared employment.

The extrapolation study that analysed the impact of earlier waves of visa liberalisation for migration inflows from Central Europe and the Baltic states, Romania and Bulgaria, and finally the Balkans showed that visa liberalisation had little or no effect on the number of first-time residence permits, or on immigration flows to EU member states. In contrast, the overall number of residence permits issued to nationals of these countries decreased rather than increased. The possible explanation may be that nationals of those states, upon obtaining free right to enter the EU, became less keen about asking for a permit to stay in the EU. If visa liberalisation did not have any measurable effects on long-term migration trends regarding such a diverse range of states, it would be rather unlikely for a completely different pattern to emerge in the cases of Moldova, Ukraine and Belarus.

Desirability of visa abolition for Eastern European citizens in Visegrad states

The Delphi results from Visegrad countries suggest that business circles are the group that is most supportive of visa-free movement for the EU's eastern neighbors. This is consistent with the assessment that Ukrainian and Belarusian employees in particular help to address the domestic labour market needs. Where Poland diverges from the other countries is the strong elite consensus, which relates the question of visa liberalisation to fundamental objectives of the country's foreign policy. Politicians and state officials seem to be overwhelmingly supportive of visa liberalisation and the level of their support exceeds that found in the general public.

In Czechia and Hungary, while the majority of queried experts also support the lifting of visas, a significant minority considers the liberalisation measures undesirable "from the point of view of the country's interests". This may be related to the generally negative media portrayal of migrants in the Czech media and the recent breakdown of previous liberal migration policy, and to the distinction being made in the Hungarian debate between the desirable immigrants of ethnic Hungarian origin and the less favoured other categories of migrants. Slovak experts are rather supportive towards visa abolition, though they also emphasized the risk of irregular migration growth.

European public opinion on immigration

General concern over immigration

According to the Eurobarometer data, as of autumn 2013 one in eight respondents from the EU-28 named immigration as one of the two most important issues facing their country. Significant variation could be observed between the level of concern over immigration in different EU countries. Significantly, the lowest anxiety is found in a number of countries that are geographically close to the areas of migrants' origin: Cyprus, Greece, Portugal, Spain, Poland, Romania, Slovenia, Estonia and Finland have all recorded levels of 5% or fewer respondents concerned about immigration. The states where concern is substantial (exceeding 10%) can be divided into three groups: the states facing a rapid and substantial growth in immigration (Malta with a record 63% of concerned respondents or the UK with 33%), several traditional destinations in which integration difficulties and pressure on the welfare system have become a matter of public debate (Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Luxembourg and Sweden, in which from 11 to 17% of respondents expressed concern), and countries where immigration issues are closely linked with the question of ethnic minorities (Bulgaria with 23% of respondents and Latvia with 11%)¹²⁶.

Immigration as an opportunity or threat?

When EU citizens' attitudes towards immigration are explored in greater detail, it turns out that EU public opinion is split in their views on immigration, with slightly more viewing it as a problem while a still significant share considers it an opportunity. In the 2013 *Transatlantic Trends* survey, 44% of Europeans sided with the view that immigration is more of a problem while 41% looked upon it as an opportunity. Again, very substantial differences are observed between countries, as many as 68% of Swedes and 62% of Germans view immigration as an opportunity, while the skeptics dominate in the United Kingdom (64%), Slovakia (50%) and France (50%).

The concern over immigration is centered on irregular movement, however. Europeans are in fact relatively unconcerned about legal immigration. The difference is most striking in Southern Europe: whereas only about a quarter of citizens of Italy, Portugal and Spain are anxious about legal movement

¹²⁶ European Commission, Standard Eurobarometer, Autumn 2013, available at: http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/eb/eb80/eb80_first_en.pdf

of migrants, between 70% and 90% are preoccupied with irregular migration. The contrast is nearly as high in France, Germany and The Netherlands. While the gap is narrower in the new Member States, if 46% of Poles and Romanians view irregular migration with concern, this share drops to 27 and 18%, respectively, with regard to legal movement.

Attitudes in new EU Member States

Seemingly these results are largely in line with the earlier studies insofar as they suggest that the societies of new Member States with relatively low immigrant populations and smaller welfare systems should be less anxious about immigration. When asked whether there are “too many” immigrants in the country, only 4% of Slovaks, 6% of Romanians and 9% of Poles answered in the affirmative, compared to 24% of Germans, 37% of Dutch, 43% of French and Italians and as many as 55% of UK respondents. The general lack of preoccupation with migration in the new Member States may be explained by the observation made by Delphi V4 experts that migrants tend to be “invisible” to society. Also, the fact that migrants on the whole do not make substantial claims on the welfare system eliminates the potency of an argument found in countries with more developed social support systems, namely that immigrants constitute a burden on social transfers.

Nevertheless, resistance among the societies of the new Member States to anti-immigrant rhetoric may be more limited than it currently appears. If a broader debate were to be held, the outcome might be surprisingly similar to that found in the more established countries of destination, as the results of the latest public opinion polls indicate that Poles or Slovaks tend to overestimate the migrant population and its claims on the welfare system. For instance, the Polish respondents on average estimated the size of the immigrant group at 12%, while Slovaks set this indicator at 9%. This in turn translates into concerns over the impact of immigration on the welfare system – apart from France (57%), Slovaks were the most preoccupied with “immigrants as a burden on social services” (71%), with Poles in second place with a result equal to that of France (57%)¹²⁷.

As earlier Visegrad country chapters clearly illustrate, particularly in Czechia, Hungary and Slovakia, third-country immigrants, in which category

¹²⁷ *Transatlantic Trends: Key Findings 2013*, German Marshall Fund 2013, pp. 37-44, available at: <http://trends.gmfus.org/files/2013/09/TTrends-2013-Key-Findings-Report.pdf>

Ukrainians, Moldovans and Belarusian are usually placed, are often perceived as a threat to society, even if political elites or the expert community are of a different opinion. In general, the research has shown that the mass media play a particularly negative role when it comes to the shaping of public opinion towards immigrants. A different situation can be observed when it comes to the repatriation from Eastern Europe of ethnic Poles or Hungarians – here the public attitude is much more supportive.

EU and V4 states' attitudes towards visa liberalisation

Securitisation of EU visa policy versus conditionality principle

The EU institutions decisions on putting a certain state on 'white visa list' are adopted with consideration to the third country's potential for generating irregular migratory flows bound for the EU as well as corresponding threats to security. At the same time, regard is made to the state of bilateral relations with a given country, and reciprocity of exemption from short-term visas for EU nationals is expected in return for EU liberalisation.

The security aspect of EU visa policy is evident also in the multiannual planning documents, adopted by the EU Council. Security took a central role in the EU's priorities in the area of Freedom, Security and Justice in the Hague Programme for 2005-2010, as well the Stockholm Programme for 2010-2014. Even in those cases where the EU has embarked on a dialogue concerning visa liberalisation, visa abolition was made conditional on third countries meeting "extensive policy commitments as regards managing migration and internal security"¹²⁸.

Thus, the EU's visa policy seeks to ensure security through a parallel set of activities. On the one hand, it involves harmonisation of the rules and practices for issuing visas and crossing the external border (the Visa and Border Codes). On the other hand, it works with third countries by building their capacity to manage migratory flows. In the Western Balkans, the European Union adopted a policy of conditionality, in which the promise of visa waiver served as a strong lever to pressure for reforms, encompassing a host of issues, crucial from the point of view of the EU's ability to stem irregular migration, such as border management, document security and fighting organised crime.

¹²⁸ S. Peers, „EU Justice and Home Affairs Law (Non-Civil)”, in: P. Craig, G. de Burca (eds.), *Evolution of EU Law*, Oxford University Press 2011, pp. 281-282.

The framework for visa liberalisation with EaP states is substantially different from that offered to Western Balkan countries. While the process also involves compliance with a range of technical requirements, it does not take place within a time-bound and pre-determined accession path, which so far had characterized earlier liberalisations of the EU's visa regime. Moreover, unlike the Western Balkan roadmaps, the action plans guiding the progress of the EaP states are open-ended. At the insistence of several Member States, anxious to see more safeguards in place against the likelihood of a rise in irregular migration in the wake of liberalisation, the process was divided into two stages. While the first stage covers the relatively well-defined areas of legal and institutional approximation, the second one may be a more difficult hurdle to clear, requiring the third country to demonstrate effective implementation of migration control mechanisms.

EU Member States' positions

It may be argued that in the absence of clear accession prospects and with greater opportunities for the Member States to decide on the outcome, the visa liberalisation process takes on an even greater political significance, and is subject to an even greater conditionality. The visa liberalisation setup with those nations which have not been offered clear integration prospects leaves the entire process vulnerable to the positions of some EU pivotal states, whether in favour or opposed to the move. The split between countries supporting visa liberalisation to EaP states and those opposing it may reflect the degree of cultural proximity and cross-border trade, as well as interest in democratic transformation of the EU's eastern neighbourhood. The countries supportive of the liberalisation process are the new EU MS that are geographically close to the area, such as the Baltic States, the Visegrad Group and Romania. On the other end of the continuum one finds France, The Netherlands, Germany and Austria¹²⁹.

The split among EU MS on visa liberalisation reproduced the divisions over other elements of the Freedom, Security and Justice agenda, such as the controversy over the admission of Romania and Bulgaria to the Schengen area or the debate over reintroduction of border controls in response to migratory pressures within the control-free area. As a result, a camp of opponents to rapid visa liberalisation formed. These states are willing to extend the scope of

¹²⁹ R. Sadowski, *Partnership in Times of Crisis. Challenges for the Eastern European Countries' Integration with Europe*, Point of View, No. 36, July 2013, Center for Eastern Studies: Warsaw, p. 38.

verification to include broader aspects of justice and migration management and favour more extensive ‘on-the-ground’ missions¹³⁰. It is worth emphasising that this group of countries justify the introduction of further safeguards not only with reference to their own domestic concerns with immigration, but also argue that such reassurances would politically facilitate the process of visa liberalisation.

The other group of countries, notably including the ‘new’ EU MS, has centered its arguments on two aspects. Firstly, as states that have recently completed accession talks with the EU, the proponents of rapid liberalisation stress the principle of limiting the scope of conditionality and keeping the process transparent and predictable, focusing on technical criteria. Secondly, these countries tend to stress the aspect of external relations rather than security in the EU’s visa policy, pointing to benefits that the outcome would have for a broader agenda of democratisation and promotion of people-to-people contacts. Following the approval of visa liberalisation for citizens of Moldova, the Romanian Foreign Minister hailed the decision as “fully reflect[ing] this major priority of Romania’s foreign policy”¹³¹. Similar in tone were the statements made by foreign ministries of the Baltic States, strongly emphasising visa liberalisation as a core component of the EaP initiative, and urging the EU to work on making it possible. For instance, the Lithuanian MFA issued a statement on 2 March 2014 in the midst of the Crimean crisis, in which it exhorted both the EU and Ukraine towards “acceleration of efforts (...) in the ongoing implementation of the EU Visa Liberalisation Action Plan”, resulting in “speedy progress toward a visa-free regime for Ukrainian citizens’ short-term travel to the Schengen area”¹³².

While the Visegrad countries have scored a major success in maintaining the momentum of visa liberalisation talks with all the EaP countries ready to engage in dialogue, their position is weakened by the lack of coordination of their national policies on mobility towards the Eastern Partners. Significant

¹³⁰ P. Kazmierkiewicz, N. Dimitrova, *No shortcuts on the road to freedom of movement for the EU’s Eastern neighbours*, PASOS Policy Brief No. 2, Prague 2011, p. 10.

¹³¹ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Romania, *The Foreign Minister welcomes the European Parliament’s vote to liberalize the visa regime for Moldovan citizens*, Press Release, 27 February 2014.

¹³² *Latvia: Eastern Partnership should focus more on democracy and visa liberalization issues, Baltic Course*, 23 July 2013, available at: http://www.baltic-course.com/eng/baltic_states_cis/?doc=78138; *Lithuanian MFA statement on Ukraine*, 2 March 2014, Permanent Mission of the Republic of Lithuania to UN, New York, available at: <http://mission-un-ny.mfa.lt/index.php?1017029739>

differences of interest and of tactics could be observed in V4 states' visa policies and practice¹³³. The Delphi research results for V4 states confirm these findings, suggesting that for the foreseeable future, we should not expect convergence of positions among Visegrad states on the best way of promoting mobility of nationals of Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine.

Recent developments in the EU visa policy

Recent developments in the dialogue between the EU and EaP states have been marked by significant progress. In November 2013 the European Commission proposed that the holders of Moldovan biometric passports could travel to the EU without the need to apply for short-term Schengen visas. The proposal pointed to the low threat of irregular migration from that country as the rate of refusal had dropped from 11.4% in 2010 to 6.5% in 2012, while the number of visa applications had remained stable in that period, slightly exceeding 50,000. Following the endorsement from the European Parliament and the Council, Moldovan nationals could travel visa-free effective as of 28 April 2014. Soon afterwards, in mid-May 2014, the Ukrainian Parliament passed a crucial package of laws necessary for visa liberalisation, expected to take effect in the near future.

Visa liberalisation is taking place in the context of some major changes in the EU's position on visa policy in general, which include attempts at perceiving visa policy more through the prism of the economy and incentives for enhanced mobility and tourism development. A new approach to visa procedures was proposed by the EC in November 2012, in which it was argued that facilitating the movement of third-country nationals into the EU could stimulate economic growth throughout the Union. This was followed by a series of public consultations in mid-2013 and an impact study, which concluded that by introducing certain facilitating measures a 30-60% boost in travel from six major locations could be expected and corresponding growth of up to 1.3 million jobs in tourism. In effect, the Commission presented on 1 April 2014 a set of measures as part of the proposed "Smarter Visa Policy for Economic Growth". These include simplification of visa application forms, shortening of processing times, the possibility of applying for short-term tourist visas at EU borders,

¹³³ M. Jaroszewicz, *Kwestie mobilności i migracji w relacjach Grupy Wyszehradzkiej i Ukrainy* [Mobility and Migration in Relations between V4 and Ukraine] in: A. Gil (ed.), *Rocznik Instytutu Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej*, Zeszyt 1, Lublin 2013, pp. 35-36, in Polish.

and the introduction of a new category of visas enabling tourism between EU Member States¹³⁴.

Conclusions: migration forecasts and EU policy and public opinion

Through a combination of Delphi survey research in the V4 and the three Eastern Partnership countries, econometric modeling and the extrapolation of previous migration trends, we may conclude that visa liberalisation would merely be a contributing factor, reinforcing certain existing migratory patterns. Certain reorientation from Russia towards the EU has been clearly observed in the migration flows from Ukraine and Moldova. It must be noted that unlike the Western Balkans, the three Eastern European neighbours of the EU lack the anchor of Euro-Atlantic integration, and as the events of early 2014 in Ukraine show, continue to be vulnerable to regional security developments. The highly unstable security and political environment, coupled with the precarious economic situation, does not preclude a rapid shift in migratory patterns, and as such must be taken into account by EU policy-makers.

Paradoxically, visa-free movement for countries located between the EU and Russia could help stabilise the situation by providing a much-needed safety guarantee to the populations of these countries. The nexus between visa liberalisation and management of migratory flows is beginning to be acknowledged by Brussels and those Member States that so far had been skeptical about the virtue of speedy abolition of short-term visas. The successful completion of negotiations with Moldova, a clear perspective of liberalisation with Ukraine and the commencement of negotiations on visa facilitation with Belarus all testify to the shift in EU policy-making, undoubtedly in response to larger concerns over the territorial integrity, stability and European orientation of these countries.

What is the V4 countries' place in this process? Although these countries are likely to host a significant share of migrants from Ukraine and Belarus (far less in the case of Moldova), it seems they have not elaborated a joint policy position on the desirability of visa abolition with the eastern neighbors, and so far they have come up with separate national solutions, focusing on different priority groups. The provision of legal opportunities for migration and the integration of Ukrainian, Moldovan and Belarusian nationals has remained a subject of

¹³⁴ COM(2014) 165 final.

narrow debate among experts, rarely achieving a public or political character. As long as labour migrants from Eastern Europe remain “invisible” to the societies of Visegrad countries, there will be little incentive for politicians to take up the issue of coming up with long-term policy solutions.

Public opinion in the ‘old’ EU MS is likely to react differently to the consequences of visa liberalisation, depending on the dynamics and overall volume of post-abolition migration and on the concentration and character of the flows. To put it bluntly, a relatively small influx that is going to be directed at countries with a well-integrated group of migrants of a given nationality is unlikely to provoke a strong reaction (as is the case of Moldovans in, for instance, Italy). In contrast, a rapid increase in the migration outflows from Ukraine, which could reach countries already grappling with integration problems and geographically distant from the Eastern European region, could turn into a policy challenge.